

**The New** \_\_\_\_\_  
**INTERNATIONAL**

**May · 1942**

**NOTES OF THE MONTH**

**ROOSEVELT'S ECONOMIC PROGRAM**

**JOHN L. LEWIS: A PORTRAIT**

*By Jack Wilson*

**LITERATURE and IDEOLOGY**

*By James T. Farrell*

**WAR IN THE FAR PACIFIC**

*By Henry Judd*

*By Susan Green:*

*By R. Craine:*

**WOMEN IN INDUSTRY    TARLE INVADES HISTORY**

***Archives, Book Reviews and Other Features***

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## MANAGER'S COLUMN

The special combination subscription campaign to The NEW INTERNATIONAL and *Labor Action* was completed last month with a good deal of success. Several hundred new readers were added to The NEW INTERNATIONAL subscription lists, and many people became acquainted with America's leading Marxist publication for the first time.

The April issue of The NEW INTERNATIONAL attracted wide attention and interest. Close to 100 copies were sold on New York City newsstands and many letters received requesting additional copies.

We are counting upon our literature agents everywhere to continue their work of pushing the magazine and increasing its sales. Some agents, unfortunately, have been neglecting to send in regular payments on their bundle orders and have fallen quite a bit behind. This has increased our financial difficulties at a time when it is absolutely imperative that The NEW INTERNATIONAL continue its monthly appearance.

We are definitely counting upon hearing from these agents and receiving substantial payments before publication of the next (June) issue of The NEW INTERNATIONAL.

The June issue of our magazine is already planned and promises to have a rich and varied content. There will be an article on "England's Mortal Crisis"; various discussion articles on the anti-Hitler movements in the occupied territories of Europe; book reviews of current best-sellers, etc.

You won't want to miss this issue!

THE MANAGER.

## EDITOR'S NOTE

Lack of space compels us to hold over several articles which were scheduled to appear in the May issue. These will appear in the June issue. Among the holdover articles are the following: A discussion of the national question, by Zachary Jackson; reviews by Sentinel, Irving Howe and H. J. of the following books in their respective order: *Defense Will Not Win the War*, *The Moon Is Low* and *Industry in Southeast Asia*.

The June issue will also carry new feature articles. A review of the life of James Connolly, the Irish rebel, by Albert Gates, will be carried in commemoration of the birth of this great proletarian leader. Max Shachtman is writing an analysis of the rôle of China in the present war on the basis of the writings of Lenin. This article is a reply to the opportunist position of John G. Wright as contained in the last issue of the *Fourth International*. It will also deal with the chopped and incomplete quotations cited by Felix Morrow contained in the same issue of the *FI*. The June *NI* will contain the final installment of Zinoviev's brilliant analysis of the rise of opportunism in the German social democratic movement during the First World War. A number of reviews of recent books will complete the issue.

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Editor: ALBERT GATES

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# THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

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VOLUME VIII

MAY, 1942

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## NOTES OF THE MONTH

### Roosevelt's Economic Program

President Roosevelt has spoken once more on the main domestic problems relating to the economic mobilization of the country behind the war. War profits, production of consumers' goods, price control, rationing, the problem of inflation—these were, for the first time, treated as an integrated whole. In his speech of April 28, the President outlined his "equality of sacrifice" and "anti-inflation" program in the following way:

Yesterday I submitted to the Congress of the United States a seven-point program, a program of general principles which, taken together, could be called the national economic policy for attaining the great objective of keeping the cost of living down.

I repeat them now to you in substance:

1. We must, through heavier taxes, keep personal and corporate profits at a low, reasonable rate.
2. We must fix ceilings on prices and rents.
3. We must stabilize wages.
4. We must stabilize farm prices.
5. We must put more billions into war bonds.
6. We must ration all essential commodities which are scarce, and
7. We must discourage installment buying, and encourage paying off debts and mortgages.

Two things are immediately evident in the President's proposals: First, it is obvious from the seven points that this is not a program to reduce the cost of living but a program to reduce the standard of living of the American masses, and second, the program is so general that numerous alternative practical measures will be adopted under the guise of "equality of sacrifice" which can have no other effect but to strike directly at the working class. There is no need at this time to prove the first contention; it is the very heart of the program. In so far as the second point is concerned, it is obvious that conflicting inter-class interests prevent concrete agreement on the practical application of the program.

A great illusion persists that what Roosevelt consciously seeks in a "sportsmanlike" manner is to compel equality of sacrifice; that such equality is traditionally American; that no one shall profit out of the war, and that no group or class of Americans shall obtain advantages over another. Behind this myth, bolstered up with every deception at their command, stand the solid phalanxes of American liberalism and the divided ranks of the labor leaders. The American bourgeoisie, its kept press and the host of economic writers, experts and college professors who serve it, have joined in an attack on those parts of the President's program which *seemingly* strike at the riches which the ruling class drains off each passing day

of war production. They are determined to retain their economic "rights" under capitalism and thus far, proceeding on the premises of this social order, everything is in their favor.

### Inequality Is the Starting Point

We live under the system of capitalism. By that very fact, inequality, class inequality, and therefore, social, economic and political inequality, are the inescapable preconditions for the continued existence of this profit economy. Roosevelt's program of "equality of sacrifice" is a myth because the starting point for the program is inequality. The economic differences between the classes are enormous; the variations in the standard of living between the capitalist class and the proletariat are tremendous; the bourgeoisie has many ways of enriching itself, the proletariat lives only on its wages. Equality is possible, then, in several ways: reduce the standard of living of the ruling class to the level of the proletariat, raise the standards of the proletariat to those of the bourgeoisie, or have them equalized at some middle point. We are prepared to listen to the multitude of objections that would arise at the very mention of these ideas, for they strike at the very heart of capitalism.

The fundamental fact remains, however, that the rulers of American society base themselves on one single premise which reduces Roosevelt's program to an absurdity, namely, the inviolability of the profit motive. War sacrifices are all right, they say, provided they do not interfere with the God-given and historic right of the capitalists to earn profits! Given this premise, the real nature of the President's program becomes clarified.

The April bulletin of the National City Bank, commenting on the question of profit control, declared:

It is in the public interest to ask how much further... the government can hope to restrict earnings [they mean profits—A. G.] without so increasing the possibility of loss as to weaken the incentive to expand plant and take on more work and more risks. Granting that patriotism is the highest incentive to production, neither the war effort nor the welfare of society is served by causing the war work to be done at excessive risk.

It is obvious that the National City Bank does not refer to the working class. The *New York Times*, which has been carrying on a vile and aggressive editorial campaign against the labor movement at the same time that it vigorously defends the profit rights of big business, wrote on May 2 on the subject of a flat 94 per cent excess profits tax:

If a corporation were earning more than it was earning in the pre-war "base" years, its incentive to economy would be enormously reduced.

A more direct opinion was given by Albert W. Hawkes in the name of the United States Chamber of Commerce:

There can be no complete success from victory in this war unless we preserve the individual freedoms, the free enterprise system, private property rights and things that make Americans willing to render supreme sacrifice in order that those things may be defended.

## More of Big Business Opinion

Referring directly to the President's proposal for a \$25,000 limit on incomes, the president of the Cleveland Chamber of Commerce added the following bit of plain speaking to the roll of bourgeois opinion:

Although I have not had a chance to study the President's proposal, it in effect makes many men work for nothing. The plan was suggested in a patriotic vein but I don't believe most men are patriotic enough to work free of charge. They just aren't made that way.

The outlook of the bourgeoisie was perhaps best summarized by the slavish-minded Benjamin M. Anderson, professor of economics at the University of Los Angeles, in his published letter to the *New York Times* of May 3:

From the standpoint of the efficiency of American business again, the proposal to tax away all income above \$25,000 is an ominous thing. Recipients of large incomes, and particularly the recipients of large salaries, are in general the most efficient business leaders of the country. Leaving aside all questions of justice and fair play and looking at the matter simply from the standpoint of winning the war, it is definitely unwise to force these men into a position where they must divert their attention from the work that they are doing to a drastic readjustment of their personal affairs.

These thoughts are not confined to representatives of big business. They are the prevailing ideas of government leaders and they dominate the minds of those who direct the War and Navy Departments. Thus Colonel Knox, Secretary of the Navy, in protesting profit curbs, reflected the thoughts of hundreds of government leaders and the present labor-hating Congress when he said:

The profit motive is still relied upon as an important factor in the inducement of extraordinary war production and industrial effort.... The Navy Department starts from the premise that sufficient profits must be provided to make the profit motive work....

In the course of these notes it will be demonstrated that the seven-point program, no matter what the President professes as its aim, is directed against the proletariat, the poor farmer and the lower middle classes.

## Profits—At a Low, Reasonable Rate

With the above premise in mind, we arrive at the first point in the President's program: "We must, through heavier taxes, keep personal corporate profits at a low, reasonable rate."

What is this "low, reasonable rate?" Great silence and confusion of thought dominate in Washington. But consider first the matter of corporate profits. Tax rates have increased enormously in the past two years of the war economy. Despite these increases, profits have enormously risen (see "An Economic Review of 1941," by Albert Gates, in *The New International*, March, 1942). Big business has been greatly enriched by governmental expenditures for war purposes. The disclosures of congressional committees investigating war contracts have presented a lurid picture of the manner in which the war industries have gorged themselves with corporate profits and how big business men have paid themselves huge salaries and even larger bonuses. Whatever profit restrictions take place in the form of increased corporate profit taxes, the government accedes the *right* to profits, and these are guaranteed by the President's program. The only issue in dispute is how high they shall be.

To date, Congress has been unable to pass an excess profits tax. The pressure of the war and domestic political requirements will bring about the passage of some kind of legislation. But already committee proposals for an excess profits tax have raised the point at which these taxes shall begin after an 8 per cent "normal" profit has been earned. While the figure appears small, the size of war contracts is so great as to

guarantee enormous profits no matter what kind of a bill is passed. As a matter of fact, there remains only one genuine way to eliminate war profiteering and that is by a 100 per cent tax. But the Administration dare not even suggest it.

The section of the President's program which has caused the most comment, as we already indicated, is the proposal to limit incomes to \$25,000 a year. A completely objective point of view cannot lead to any conclusion but that this measure has only a political purpose—to soften up resistance to the remainder of the program. Bourgeois economists were quick to point out that earning power necessary to retain a \$25,000 a year salary would have to be about \$65,000 (Randolph Paul, tax adviser to the Treasury). The *National City Bank Bulletin* for May reveals that, according to the Treasury reports for 1940, there were only 13,900 taxpayers with incomes over \$50,000 a year. Even if we grant that this number increased during the war profiteering year of 1941, the increase cannot materially affect the income of the Treasury from personal earnings in the higher brackets.

We are for a drastic limitation of the incomes of the American ruling class, but we must warn the over-zealous not to take this measure too seriously for reasons which we believe to be obvious.

The bourgeoisie does not live from day to day on its yearly earnings—its living standards cannot be affected by such temporary measures as proposed by the President. It has an enormous accumulation of wealth in capital and personal incomes. If its total income were immediately halted, that class could live on for a considerable number of years without the slightest inconvenience. Moreover, big business men have all their day-to-day expenses paid; in many cases their salaries are pure income to be deposited or merely spent on living. Their great estates are often incorporated and all expenses for servants, repairs, improvements, etc., are business items which do not affect the yearly "salaries" of the big business men. Leaving these factors aside for the moment, we are not at all touched by the difficulties which these gentlemen, living by the exploitation of their fellow men, will experience on a \$25,000 yearly income.

The way in which the financial burden of the imperialist war must be met is by a capital levy upon the accumulated wealth of the bourgeoisie, both corporate and personal, and by expropriation of the "Sixty Families." Thus the real sources of wealth would be tapped.

## What Their Price Control Means

As his second point, the President said that: "We must fix ceilings on prices and rents." In concretizing this part of the program, the Office of Price Administration proceeded to freeze prices of various commodities and rents as of March, 1942! The joker in this action lies in the fact that the freezing of these prices occurs at their highest point since the outbreak of the war in Europe! Freezing of prices would have real significance if it were based upon the year 1940. As it stands now, prices are way out of line when compared to the wage standards of the entire working class!

Price Administrator Henderson already admits that prize freezing notwithstanding, prices will continue to rise as high as 10 per cent within the freezing orders. Moreover, the tendency which immediately follows such orders is a subsequent reduction in the quality of goods, and manufacturers continue to maintain their high profits through this device.

More important, however, is the question of how prices shall be genuinely controlled. No real safeguards are likely if

administrative controls are in the hands of the bourgeois-minded government bureaus and functionaries. The one guarantee against profiteering in consumer goods, even under price ceilings, is through the establishment of trade union, cooperative and consumers' committees. Such committees are the only means by which the sly and cheating consumers' monopolies, which control the means of subsistence, can be kept in check.

For political purposes the President avoided the word "ceiling" in relation to wages. Instead he said: "We must stabilize wages." It did not take long for Roosevelt to clarify his meaning. A few days after the delivery of his speech, he sent a telegram to the Shipbuilders Union convention counseling them not to insist upon the provisions of their legal contract with the shipyard owners by requesting pay increases to meet the high cost of living. The specious reasoning of the presidential letter can be summarized in the following way: The program which I presented to the country must be regarded in its entirety. If you insist upon increased wages you will upset everything because it will make it more difficult to control prices, limit salaries (at \$25,000), siphon off excess profits, etc. Therefore, despite the rise in the cost of living, and the lowering of your living standards, you must not insist on the fulfillment of your contract.

The immediate effect of the presidential utterance was to give new strength to the robber barons, the industrial rulers, who now refuse to consider wage increases to meet increasing costs of living. They reject recommendations of the War Production Board in those cases where this question is arbitrated (General Motors Co.).

While certain skilled workers in the war industries have won increases in the past year, the vast majority of the workers earn wages far below the standards indicated by the Department of Labor.

The one action which has made possible the freezing of wages was the manner in which the two labor organizations, the AFL and the CIO, have given up the ghost without a struggle. The Pearson and Allen reports from Washington describe Murray and Green as two presidential office boys. They have surrendered in advance the strike weapon of the workers, in return for which they received nothing.

The stabilization of farm prices is a meaningless gesture because it does not affect the lot of the poor farmers, tenant farmers or sharecroppers. The fact remains that this section of the farm population is heavily exploited by the rich farmers, landowners and landlords, the railroads and the big food corporations and commission houses. Farm price increases in recent years have only slightly affected the farm poor, and subsidies from the government went primarily to the rich farmers who engineered favorable legislation in their own behalf through the farm bloc in Congress (rich farmers and landowners). The poor farmer remains poverty stricken and at the mercy of his giant competitors. The Roosevelt program offers them no hope whatever of amelioration.

### **Draining Off Workers' Income**

As another means of draining off the income of the working class and the low income population, the President proposes that "we must put more billions into war bonds." Government experts know that the overwhelming majority of the population cannot possibly purchase bonds, certainly not in the fabulous amounts requested by the Administration. But already feelers have been extended to ascertain reactions to the forced buying of bonds. The Administration is playing

with the idea of "forced wage savings" whereby a certain portion of wages will be deducted, either for the compulsory purchase of war bonds or to be held in trust by the government for the duration of the war. Thus a large part of the purchasing power of the masses will be "captured" and the "inflationary spiral" checked. This section of the program is only another measure directed against the poor.

The President proposes that "we must ration all essential commodities which are scarce." In this field, too, great dangers face the masses. Undoubtedly, some commodities will be scarce, in one degree or another, for the duration of the war. Rationing, under such circumstances, is a necessity. But this rationing must be based upon equality, for otherwise the rich and the well-to-do will control the market at the expense of the great mass of the population. The only guarantee the people have in a fair rationing system is by the establishment of trade union, cooperative and consumers' committees which will control the rationing system and insure equality to the working class and the under-privileged mass of the American people.

The establishment of such controls by the people would go a long way to prevent the scandals of the "Black Market." In Great Britain the Black Market enables the rich, the aristocracy and the privileged government workers to obtain goods which are not available to the British masses. As in the case of price and rent freezing, unless there is genuine control from below, they may all easily become a grand farce at the expense of the people.

The final point in the President's program is also directed against the great mass of the people. He says: "We must discourage installment buying, and encourage paying off debts and mortgages." Whom does the President have in mind? The bourgeoisie? Certainly it is not they who engage in installment buying, who are saddled with all kinds of little debts, whose homes are heavily mortgaged. Obviously not! The latest measure enacted under this provision in the President's program is the limitation of installment buying to 40 days! It is obvious that this is a plan designed to prevent the purchase of consumer goods by the great masses of people. It puts pressure upon the indebted poor and the small home owner. On the heels of these proposals, Washington is now giving consideration to a national sales tax. This is also a measure directed against the people.

### **The Realities of War Economy**

Stripped of its vagueness and fully explained, it is clear that the President's program, when enforced, will signify a national wage-cut for the working class, a further impoverishment of the low income farm population and increased hardships for the lower middle classes. And it is just as obvious that the bourgeoisie, even though they will be compelled to disgorge themselves of some of their profits, their "hardships" will be like a drop of water in the ocean as compared to the concrete living conditions of more than 80 per cent of the American people.

The war economy is here with a vengeance and all the forecasts made about the destruction of the living standards of the people are a growing reality. The cost of living rises, wage rates, set more than a year ago in a majority of instances, are frozen, while price ceilings are set as of March, 1942. Rationing of goods begins, while no safeguards are established to guarantee genuine equality in the distribution of goods. Every possible means of draining off earnings are being prepared daily. What the working class will retain will be just

enough for their food, shelter and clothing, in order that they may live and work to produce the means of war and profits for American big business.

Leon Henderson has said that "*it is probable that in the next twelve to fifteen months we will get a civilian standard of living equivalent to 1932, which was the low of all lows during the depression.*" This is the prospect held out for the working class, the poor farmers, the lower middle class. It is obvious that the promised "1932 living standards" do not apply to the bourgeoisie now any more than they did in 1932.

## A Portrait of John L. Lewis

In the multifarious activities of the labor movement during the past eight years—since industrial unionism became a living reality in the mass production industries—we have been asked one question by union militants: What is John L. Lewis going to do? This was a big question at the AFL convention in 1934 when the industrial union issue irrevocably divided the progressives and the craft union diehards. It had been the big question long before... and ever since.

John L. Lewis has been an influential figure in the American labor movement since he assumed the presidency of the United Mine Workers in 1918. No leader, except Samuel Gompers, the father and guiding spirit of the American Federation of Labor for two decades, reached the power and stature of the "founder of the CIO." No man in the labor movement can look back at such an amazing, stormy and rugged career as can John L. Lewis. Today, as always, the curses and the praises of John L. Lewis are heard across the land. Today, as always, he is pictured as everything from a devil to the Samson of labor, from a fascist to a Lincoln, from the man-of-tomorrow to a has-been. But let us set things in their proper proportions.

Few men in life are endowed as fully with the talents and capabilities of John L. Lewis. Even as a young coal miner before the First World War, his shrewd mind, his burly, rugged body, his roaring voice, his slugging ability, made an impression on all who chanced to meet him. Small wonder that he soon worked himself into statistician for the United Mine Workers, having already attracted the eye of Samuel Gompers, who picked him as an up-and-coming figure in the union movement.

John L. Lewis began his climb upward in an epoch of machine politics in America, an epoch well described in Lincoln Steffens' muckraking works and his autobiography. And it was an epoch of flaming, passionate, revolutionary idealism and courage. John L. Lewis made his choice early in 1913, when he went to Akron, Ohio, during a city-wide rubber workers' strike. The revolutionary industrial unionism preached by Bill Haywood, one-time president of the Western Federation of Miners, left no mark on the young AFL organizer, Lewis, who sought to win the embittered strikers to the conservative union. Both Lewis and the IWW lost. Akron remained open shop until 1936, when Lewis reversed himself and supported the striking rubber workers, which led to the CIO's first major victory.

### How Lewis Became UMWA President

Functioning as an AFL organizer, and a miners' special representative, Lewis learned the ropes of machine politics

In opposition to the President's program, I place before our readers the following sections of the platform of the Workers Party:

A government levy on capital to cover the costs of the imperialist war! Confiscate all war profits!

Conscript all war industries under workers' control! (Prevent the scandals of Standard Oil, Alcoa, General Electric, the du Ponts and other Merchants of Death.)

Expropriate the "Sixty Families"—the 3 per cent of the people who own 96 per cent of the national wealth!

A. G.

during the First World War. The notorious Tammany Hall, Penrose and other political machines had their deadly counter-parts in the trade unions. Lewis plunged eagerly into this atmosphere like a duck into water, his abilities pushing him forward at a rapid pace. The almost unknown John L. Lewis became president of the United Mine Workers of America in 1919, without ever having been elected to a previous office by the rank and file. He had already served as acting president and was chosen to the highest post by the executive board, ahead of such ambitious and influential men as Van Bittner, his one-time tutor.

It was a good union when Lewis took office. It had over 400,000 members. In the war, the miners had distinguished themselves in bitter strikes, especially in the Alabama fields, where the union spent over \$2,000,000 trying to crack the open shop. The UMWA conventions voted against compulsory military training and conscription of labor, while pledging at the same time, "unqualified support to President Wilson's policies." In these actions and contradictions, Lewis was just one among many. While he devoted some energy to the "war effort," there is little doubt that much more of the abilities of the up-and-coming labor leader were spent in maneuvering for the presidency and in studying the coal mining industry until he became an acknowledged expert in the field.

In politics, the new president of the United Mine Workers was a staunch Republican. In his philosophy, a typical pragmatist, the "practical" trade union leader. Marriage to a well-read school teacher served to increase his intellectual interests. He became the best read labor leader in America, thoroughly familiar with the classics and history. His drive to power in the United Mine Workers revealed what psychologists would term "a Napoleonic complex." It was discernible in every action of the young union leader who was convinced of his rôle as leader of men, and it was a rôle he immensely enjoyed. All in all, a unique, impressive and dangerous figure.

It would be impossible to find a single unionist of the day who would have mentioned Lewis in the same breath with the giants of that epoch, Gene Debs and Bill Haywood, both of whom won imperishable fame as unflinching fighters for the emancipation of the working class. The Russian revolution left a deep impression on them, and inspired countless thousands of workers in America. But to John L. Lewis it was a terrible nightmare. And he was to make an odious record in his brutal defense of "American principles" against the "Communists seeking to undermine the foundations of the government." Lewis' philosophy, his appeal to the employers, was this: "Grind men under the employer's heel, and you invite communism. Give the men a square deal and you take



out an insurance policy against it." In this basic tenet Lewis has not changed. His belief in "liberal capitalism" is stronger than ever.

It took the coal crisis and the struggles of the United Mine Workers against the ravages of unemployment, low wages and insecurity to unfold the Lewis philosophy, to test the principles of unionism and politics he had learned from Samuel Gompers. *Coal Age*, the official magazine of the coal operators, referred to the strikes of the miners as revolutions, and to Lewis as a dictator. The 1919 strike was hardly compromised when the impact of post-war depression shook the entire union. And the 1921 strike became inevitable. The howls of the press against the UMWA were as loud as those which we heard last fall during the captive coal mine strike. Congress passed a resolution supporting President Wilson's blast at the miners in declaring any strike "illegal." Lewis replied exactly as he did 20 years later to Roosevelt: "Wilson is usurping powers not given him." Federal troops and national guardsmen marched to the coal mines. But the miners struck. Lewis, however, retreated amid shouts of "capitulator." In 1941 the coal miners struck and stayed there. Lewis stood firm. The coal strikers won!

### **A Bitter Factional Struggle**

The differences between Lewis and the progressives during the 1921 strike merely marked the first major clash. A life-and-death factional struggle without parallel in labor history occupied the next ten years of the miners' union. It was an inevitable struggle. And inevitably a bitter, cruel and ruthless struggle. For the United Mine Workers Union was born and developed in struggle. The coal barons were "uncivilized Tom Girdlers." The strike struggles bred a type of union unmatched anywhere. Perhaps the best CIO militants today approach them. The UMWA had organized Negroes and whites together, had fought all racial discrimination. It was based on industrial unionism. It had built up a fairly democratic tradition and procedure. It was in a basic industry and the fact that its principles and policies made it a CIO "twenty years ahead of the rest of the industrial workers," put it in direct conflict with the industrial rulers of America at all times. It was, in a sense, predestined by circumstances to be the storm center of the American labor movement.

Combine these factors with the chaotic conditions flowing from the post-war depression in the coal industry, its "over-production," its staggering unemployment, its marginal mines operated like feudal sweatshops, and you can understand the history of the coal miners' struggles. Out of this atmosphere of strike and misery arose hundreds of militants determined not only to build a powerful union movement but also to build a new society, socialism, which would replace the hell of capitalism.

If all the major battles which established the CIO were put together they would perhaps begin to compare in scope and violence with the struggles of the coal miners in the post-war period. The saga of the miners' fights are rich indeed. The Mingo County March, bloody Herrin, bloody Harlan, the anthracite strike—to mention a few. To most CIO unionists these are just names. To old-timers and coal miners they are sacred names, imperishable memories of battlefields where men fought and starved and died by the scores so that unionism might triumph! Nowadays unionism too often means only wages, hours and working conditions. For the coal miners it was a life and death question, a way of life. For a coal miner to be called a good union man was highest praise.

And when something or someone "wasn't union," it was just too bad.

### **Gompersism Was Not "Workable"**

The craft unions comprising the main stream of the AFL during this period did not face this kind of basic conflict. Gompers' philosophy could "work" among skilled workers whom the employers were willing, to some extent, to deal with and pay good wages to, at the expense of the unskilled masses. The Matthew Wolls, William Hutchesons and company did not face the situation that John L. Lewis met. In a major industry, in an industrial union movement, Gompersism was not "workable" if the union was to progress. It took Lewis ten years of struggle to learn this elementary fact about unionism. It partly explains why Lewis after 1934 took the road of industrial unionism in mass production industries while his AFL colleagues clung to the ghost of Gompers.

Lewis outlined his "Gompers Program" in the book, *The Miners Fight for an American Standard*. He combined the economics of Adam Smith with the trade unionism, "pure and simple," of the father of the AFL in this tract. He scorned the theories of Karl Marx and ridiculed Marx's followers as "revolutionary idealists, impractical visionaries." He fought savagely against the left-wing in his union which sought to replace the credo of Gompers with the ideas that later became the foundation ideas of the CIO movement. At times Lewis fought against the coal barons who refused his co-operation, but more often than not his heaviest blows fell on the militants. As a result the union suffered more than one "Little Steel" strike fiasco and massacre.

At every turn of events opposition leaders arose by the score to oppose the policies and leadership of Lewis. They fought the man they called "Mussolini" on trade union questions, but his knowledge of the industry, his ruthless methods, his imperiousness to all criticism, blows and defeats, together with his skill in machine politics, kept him in power. The internal struggle weakened the union and its gradual decline brought fresh ammunition to the oppositionists. There was Alex Howatt, the splendid militant from Kansas, John Brophy, William Mitch, Powers Hapgood, William Turnblazer and Ray Edmundson. These and others rose to challenge Lewis and his machine. They won elections but never took office, for the ballots usually disappeared. They rallied the ranks behind them, but the conventions were packed. Progressives were slugged, or terrified, or forced to capitulate openly. In this period Lewis was described as "the King of Labor Racketeers" by Oscar Ameringer, the Adam Coaldigger of the *American Guardian*, and a long-time favorite weekly radical newspaper among the miners.

### **Lewis Discovers a "Communist" Plot**

Lewis discovered a "Communist plot to seize the reins of government through control of the United Mine Workers." He roared at William Z. Foster, Communist Party trade union director, sitting in the galleries at a miners' convention, that they'd never win. What conventions! Fist fights, general melees, autocratic rulings. "May the chair state you may shout until you meet each other in hell, and he won't change the rule," Lewis bellowed at protesting delegates at one convention. Purge after purge followed in local unions "dominated by Moscow elements." The triumvirate of Lewis, Murray and Kennedy ruled at all costs. But the president outshined his collaborators: ruthless fighting ability and bureau-

cratic methods were two distinct characteristics of "Big Boy," as his henchmen called him.

By 1927 the once powerful United Mine Workers, torn asunder and weakened in incessant battles with the coal operators, was but a thin shadow of the giant of 1919. The mistakes made by the left wing in the forming of the independent union, the National Miners Union, following the save-the-union campaign, saved the day for Lewis. He was to prove too strong even for the Progressive Miners of America, which was formed of a large split in Illinois. Court actions supporting the UMWA, disillusionment among the miners, division in the new union and the disintegration of the industry itself, which made a good contract almost impossible for anyone to obtain, finished off the Progressive Miners Union. Today it remains but a skeleton opposition and William Green's voice in the coal industry.

The 1929 crash blasted away a thousand and one illusions about permanent American prosperity and the value of Adam Smith's theories, which millions along with John L. Lewis had held. Lewis was forced to recognize the "dog eat dog" nature of capitalism and the miserable failure of his friend, Herbert Hoover, President of the United States. The coal operators had become integral parts of the steel and railroad dynasties. Compromise and cooperation wasn't in their language, even to the savior of American principles, John L. Lewis. His "practical politics approach" had resulted in a "reward your enemies and punish your friends" policy.

These were bitter years for John L. Lewis, "full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." Could he forget how his own union failed to support his bid to replace Gompers as president of the AFL? Or the stinging criticisms of the left wing contained in an admirable brochure entitled *Misleaders of Labor*, by William Z. Foster? Or the fact that his pride and joy, the United Mine Workers, was down to a miserable 60,000 members? And the AFL was lending it money. Nor could he dismiss the arrogance and contempt which the triumphant open shop coal operators hurled at him and the Miners Union!

### "I Live for Today"

The lessons of these cruel defeats were not entirely lost on John L. Lewis. Quite the contrary! For he grudgingly admitted as much, in a half-hearted apology for his black record in the semi-official biography written by Cecil Carnes. "I don't give a hang about what happened yesterday. I live for today and tomorrow. I will say only this: it takes every man some time to find himself in this world, to decide what he wants to do with his life. It took me longer than most." Lewis said this in 1936, when the CIO was pushing forward. Nevertheless, the past cannot be erased from the records of labor history, nor can the character and philosophy of a man trained for twenty years in a particular way be suddenly altered.

When Philip Murray talked to him about Franklin Roosevelt; Democratic candidate for President, Lewis listened, but without great enthusiasm. However, the wave of revolt which swept the nation and became channelized into the New Deal was not overlooked by Lewis. Quickly sensing the possibilities of staging a real comeback, Lewis utilized his "support" of Roosevelt to press for the adoption of a national industrial recovery program in which unionism was to be an integral part. The working class was highly stirred and flocked into labor unions. While others faltered in the AFL, Lewis put on an organizing campaign which resulted in the return of 400,000 miners to the United Mine Workers. The master

opportunist seized at every possible advantage. "The name is Lewis... John L." became a thundering voice of labor in Washington, where panicky industrialists and timid congressmen shuddered at the social crisis and the abyss caused by the 1929 economic crisis.

### The Fight for Industrial Unions

The rest of the AFL leadership remained true to the ideas of Gompers. When hundreds of thousands of steel, auto and rubber workers flooded the AFL, the executive council hesitated, backwatered and finally sold them down the river in a series of fake agreements with the industries. They sought to divide the industrial workers into craft unions! Only Lewis, in the AFL hierarchy, had learned the lesson of the post-war years. If the United Mine Workers was to survive this time, it must have national labor support, a huge industrial union movement which could meet "the Mellons and the Morgans as equals."

Would John L. Lewis, the black-hearted reactionary, support industrial unionism, the dream of the left wing? It was hardly believable. And many critical articles said so! Lewis spoke for industrial unionism in the mass production industries at the 1934 AFL convention. His resolution lost by a close vote. In 1935, Lewis crossed the Rubicon. He formed the Committee for Industrial Organization and began financing progressive movements within AFL unions in auto, steel and rubber, i.e., those which sought to establish independent international industrial unions. When the Akron rubber workers struck at Goodyear early in 1936, the CIO supported them. Industrial unionism won its first major victory!

The tide that swept the country in the form of sit-down strikes was not John L. Lewis' doing. But he had learned enough to "tolerate" sit-down strikes, even though the press cried, in the ancient Lewis refrain, "outlaw and illegal strikes." The United Mine Workers poured hundreds of thousands of dollars into the CIO organizing campaigns. Its union veterans became CIO directors, organizing everything they could lay their hands on, while the AFL craft unions shook in their boots and finally expelled the "insurgent CIO." But the CIO was irrevocably on the march.

Of course, Lewis was hailed by his allies as the Samson or Lincoln of the labor movement. He was emancipating labor. His past history was glossed over, especially by that school of journalists trained in the degenerated Communist Party. Once again the *Wall Street Journal*, *Coal Age* and the *New York Times* warned gravely of a John L. Lewis dictatorship over industry in America. It was the period of the Roosevelt-Lewis honeymoon, when Roosevelt was denouncing the "economic royalists" and Lewis blasted the "industrial tycoons seeking to stop the wave of humanity."

At last, however the ruthless fighting quality of John L. Lewis were turned in the right direction: against the powerful industrial rulers of America. The U. S. Steel Corp. signed an agreement with the Steel Workers Organizing Committee; auto was organized; the CIO went forward! To be sure, the CIO unions organized directly by Lewis henchmen leaned too heavily on maneuvers at the top. Organizing committees were set up in place of independent international unions, except in the auto and rubber sections. Lewis, the bureaucrat of the old days, had softened, but had not changed fundamentally.

American labor found a new and powerful personality in the long overlooked Lewis. Who could forget his trip to Detroit during the General Motors strike when he staked the future of the young CIO movement on a victory? "Let there



be no moaning at the bar when I put out to sea," he told the Washington press, revealing both his plans and his erudition. His histrionic abilities were used to full advantage. And the mighty voice theretofore used to heap scorn on the left wing now roared at the industrialists. Busily occupied with the sit-down strikes and unionization, the workers and their enemies alike failed to pay attention to the first signs of friction between Lewis and Roosevelt which developed in the General Motors strike. Roosevelt wanted the sit-down strikers ordered back to work before negotiations began. Lewis wanted assurances of an agreement. The sit-down strikers, tasting of their strength, demanded victory before returning to work.

### **The Friendship Begins to Cool Off**

Roosevelt's request had startled Lewis. After all, Lewis had obtained support of the auto workers for Roosevelt's reelection in 1936 by threatening to withhold organizing funds until the foundation convention of the UAW had repudiated a resolution previously passed denouncing all capitalist politicians and calling for the formation of a labor party.

In addition, Lewis had organized Labor's Non-Partisan League, which spent over \$500,000 to re-elect Roosevelt. He had supported Governor Davey in Ohio, Townsend in Indiana, Earle in Pennsylvania and other "Roosevelt men." While Lewis felt that the League was a sort of left wing in the Democratic Party, his reliance on the bankrupt politicians was very strong. When the heat was turned on during the Little Steel strike, each of these "friends of labor" double-crossed Lewis, and the Little Steel strike was turned into the first major defeat of the CIO. The climax came at Chicago in the form of the Memorial Day Massacre. Roosevelt's rejection of a plea for support from Lewis was couched in the following nonchalant declaration: "A plague on both your houses." Lewis gumbled about ingratitude; their friendship cooled.

The UMWA executive committee even passed a resolution condemning the Administration without mentioning Roosevelt by name. Relations were not improved when the President sought to prevent the miners from striking to win a genuine national agreement in 1939, one which would compel the coal operators in the South and other "feudal" regions to deal with the union. At that time, the breach between Roosevelt and Lewis was very noticeable and Lewis hinted broadly that he would support a Republican in 1940 against Roosevelt. But few CIO unionists believed that the collision would lead to an irreparable break.

In each of the issues around which the White House and Lewis clashed, Lewis stood squarely on union rights and for the protection of the best interests of the CIO. However, his Stalinist allies were so busy plying the theory and practice of the Popular Front that the issues became blurred to the CIO ranks. Lewis' previous praise for FDR placed him in an awkward position to open a struggle against him within the labor movement. Lewis, the union leader, had learned enough to stubbornly defend the union movement. Lewis, the politician, had no answer. His dilemma was painfully evident.

The transformation of the New Deal into the War Deal intensified the antagonism between Lewis, seeking to safeguard the CIO, and Roosevelt, determined to bring the union movement into the war machine. Concessions to labor became few and finally ceased. Time and again, Lewis lashed out at Roosevelt, but his attacks missed fire. His bureaucratic approach in building the CIO, his failure to educate the union ranks, his opportunism in support of Roosevelt, backfired. The question of whether Roosevelt or Lewis would

dominate the top leadership of the CIO became more acute. Lewis, remembering the post-war period, feared the foreign policies of Roosevelt, which he knew meant involvement in the Second World War. For this reason Lewis began a campaign "against the statesmen who spend nights dreaming of foreign adventures instead of solving problems at home." Lewis had in mind, for example, the problem of unemployment.

Lewis' deal with the Stalinists boomeranged. In 1939 and 1940, during the period of the Stalin-Hitler pact, the Stalinists had a line which coincided with Lewis', thereby postponing his previous plan to purge them. But the Hitler attack on Russia brought about another switch in their line. They began to wave a patriotic flag and denounced their "leader" in the American labor movement.

### **Reason for Lewis' Defeat**

The speeches of John L. Lewis during the pre-1940 election period indicated that he was considering two possibilities: formation of a third party or support of a Republican candidate. His blasts at poll-tax politicians became sharper. He addressed the Townsend Old Age Pension convention, bidding for their support and making a private deal with its leaders. And he sought the backing of the auto workers union at its St. Louis convention by a belligerent speech against conscription and the follies of war. His own waverings, his failure to make a class appeal directly and openly to the CIO, and the labyrinth of capitalist politics to which he had tied the CIO previously, worked to defeat him. He fumbled about politically at a time when a clear-cut decision and action for a labor party was vital.

Caught in this dilemma, Lewis turned a somersault and endorsed Wendell Willkie—a major blunder! For, while the CIO ranks were restless and uneasy about the Roosevelt Administration, they could never be sold on the party of Herbert Hoover. The 1940 elections clearly revealed the limits of Lewis' development during the CIO days. He was bound hand and foot to bourgeois politics. His beliefs in the social system of capitalism blinded him to the political realities and requirements of the day. The "liberalization" of John L. was a very limited one, indeed.

This tragic error cost Lewis the leadership of the CIO. He gambled for it during the 1940 elections and he accepted the loss. (In the old days he would have slugged his way into retaining his hold over the CIO organization and could have successfully done so at the 1940 CIO convention.) The reign of John L. Lewis as undisputed director of the CIO was over. Phillip Murray, the Roosevelt man and colleague of Lewis, replaced him as president of the CIO. Of course, the superficial critics of Lewis and the war-mongering elements saw this defeat as the end of the career of the founder of the CIO. Too soon, however, much too soon! They forgot that Lewis had established a powerful base in his own union, partly because the dictatorial constitution of other days gave him vast powers and partly because the United Mine Workers had obtained good contracts for its members. The union had over 600,000 members covered by nation-wide agreements, including the Harlan and Alabama areas. Wage rates were higher than ever before, no wage differentials existed between the Northern and Southern areas, safety standards and other protections were won for the coal diggers. The UMWA had the best contracts in America, embracing closed shop agreements.

The first major test for John L. Lewis after his resignation as CIO president and removal as its policy-maker was the cap-

tive coal mine strike of autumn, 1940. Here he demonstrated that he stood four-square on the program of the early militant CIO, while other CIO leaders hesitated or retreated before the anti-labor offensive which developed with the war drive. The undisguised threats of the Roosevelt Administration panicked the rest of the CIO leadership, but they were contemptuously ignored by Lewis. "You can't dig coal with bayonets," he said, taking a leaf from the left wing in the 1919 strike, who were faced with federal troops. The miners stood with their president against the White House on this issue. As long as Lewis defends the rights of the UMWA, his régime is reasonably secure.

The outbreak of the war served, among other things, to demonstrate once more the limitation of Lewis. He had successfully espoused the industrial union movement ideal of Gene Debs and Bill Haywood. But he completely lacked their political understanding, their irreconcilable hatred of the system of capitalism. Quietly and without fanfare, Lewis passed up an opportunity to earn himself an unforgettable and historic place among working class leaders. Lewis stopped at the point of "isolationist" fear and doubts about the imperialist war!

This typically opportunist action of John L. Lewis, however did not serve to earn him peace or friendship at the White House, in which, by the way, he is not greatly interested. Total war demands total support from a key labor figure like Lewis. This is extremely unlikely since Lewis has indicated both in his pre-war and since our entrance that he doubts very much the value and purpose of the present imperialist struggle, and that he is preparing for the post-war period. In his St. Louis speech, Lewis showed that he had a fair glimpse of what a post-war chaos loomed before America. And Lewis has not given up his ambitions to lead 30,000,000 organized workers and perhaps—it is a prospect—find himself in the Presidency of the United States. How Lewis obtained the "Presidency buy" is revealingly told in Mr. Carnes' book, following his lengthy interviews with the UMWA president in 1936.

His "war of nerves" in the CIO today is part of that grand strategy. Unlike other CIO leaders, Lewis has not come out for surrendering union overtime standards. He views this question, and others, with an eye to post-war reactions of the workers. His drive to organize the dairy farmers is another important tactic in this long range campaign. Opportunist and pragmatist to the core, Lewis will try to utilize every situation and event to serve his general aims. Perhaps the 1944 elections will be ripe for his type of a "third party." Or, maybe another deal will be possible! Lewis doesn't know which it might be. (Our hope is that the break from the two major parties occurs, because this would provide the most fertile field for agitation for an independent labor party.) A major consideration in Lewis' political strategy is the recovery of power and influence in the labor movement. (The growing antagonism between elementary CIO aims and the Roosevelt Administration policies, such as the "freeze wages" issue, works well with Lewis' plans.) Or perhaps another plunge into building an independent labor movement out of the rapidly growing District 50 of the UMWA. Lewis has not settled this question, since he awaits circumstances and their effects, and that is why prognostication on this score is purely journalistic speculation. But in all these maneuvers and activities, one thing stands out clearly: Lewis is building his fences everywhere, politically and organizationally.

## A Powerful Factor for 1944

Unless unforeseen circumstances intervene, John L. Lewis is going to be a powerful factor in 1944 politics, too powerful to dismiss or ignore. One of his most bitter critics, a very astute Washington labor journalist, recently remarked: "Lewis is the only smart man in Washington. He knows what he wants, and he's got them all scared." His admonitions not to believe the junk he was writing about Lewis for an anti-Lewis paper were likewise revealing and should serve to warn those people who tend to believe the headlines of today's heavily censored and biased press. Is it any wonder that Washington suffers a bad case of "Lewis jitters"? Or that the miserable mediocrities in the CIO leadership fear him? It took all of Roosevelt's prestige and power to save them when Lewis recently pulled a masterful stroke in calling for labor unity between the CIO and AFL. The only CIO leader somewhat approximating Lewis in ability is his one-time associate, Phil Murray, whose gyrations these days between the Stalinists, Roosevelt, and his old ties doom him to the rôle of a Hamlet. By the time this article appears, Murray's future will be quite clearly indicated in the results of the convention of the Steel Workers Organizing Committee.

Each time the stage of world history turns, Lewis has been cast in a different light! In the period of world revolutionary struggles, he was a black shadow. In the period of dark reaction, his insistence on industrial unionism in open shop America, together with his limited personal progress, gave him the spotlight in the progressive wing of the labor movement. Faced with a basic choice between class politics and class collaborationist policies, Lewis flopped badly. When the entire labor bureaucracy capitulated completely before the war drive, Lewis cautiously distinguished himself from the others by holding to the aims of the early CIO. His stature as a trade unionist grew. In politics, his limitations are those of the whole CIO. For "CIOism" at its best can no more solve the historic tasks of the working class than Gompersism could in its heyday. Fortunately, "CIOism" provides the working class with a much stronger base of operation. Fascism can never triumph in America while labor's millions effectively protect their industrial unions.

## Signposts of the Future

What the future holds in store for John L. Lewis depends primarily on the turn of world events. A long war, unbroken by revolutionary struggles, will tend to increase his power and influence as long as he continues on the path of defending, in his own way to be sure, the UMWA and the labor movement from strangulation. His unique abilities and his strength in the UMWA assure him of a constantly important rôle. His policies, irrespective of subjective desires, tend to keep the sparks of class struggle alive today. In his lifetime Lewis' power rested on his base in the working class. That is why, incidentally, his "isolationism" has a different content than that of capitalist politicians like Wheeler. It rests on a different class base. Theirs is the bewilderment of the petty bourgeoisie, fearful of world events, containing latent fascist tendencies. Lewis' views reflect the suspicions, distrust and fears of the workers in the present world struggle, which take on an "isolationist" character.

Tomorrow, as yesterday, Lewis must depend on the organized labor movement becoming stronger in order that he may remain a power. Anyone studying the man's history or having had personal experiences with him cannot doubt that in the

stormy times ahead, Lewis is easily capable of holding his own against his present adversaries. The man is here to stay, in influence and power, until the day when the workers themselves tackle the main job. In that epoch Lewis will be finished, for nothing in his character, ideas or career suggest that he is capable of a fundamental change.

Meanwhile, "Big Boy is on the march again," as his henchmen say. "And he gets what he goes after," they add, thereby

explaining, among other things, why Lewis keeps a powerful machine around him. (It is not solely jobs, but the feeling that Lewis is THE leader that keeps his machine largely intact.) Where the march will lead, we must repeat, depends on the roads that world developments open up. And which road Lewis will take is predetermined by the man's limited character, ideas and program, as here outlined.

JACK WILSON.

# Literature and Ideology

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What is the relationship between literature and politics? What should that relationship be? Such questions have produced major literary controversies in this country for more than a decade. About ten years ago these questions were central in the discussion of so-called proletarian literature. Today these same issues are being discussed in connection with literature and democracy and literature and the war. In current discussions the language is different from what it was ten years ago, but both those who were the apostles of proletarian literature and those who today demand that literature be politicalized in the name of democracy defend essentially the same attitude: in both instances the aim is to enforce the same attitude and the same kind of critical and political legislation upon the writer.\*

The advocates of proletarian literature, who wrote principally in *The New Masses*, used to argue that literature is a weapon in the class struggle. If the writer is not on one side, he is either an open defender of the enemy or else he is giving aid and comfort to that enemy. At times it was even claimed that literature itself was on the barricades. In essence, such claims would, if successful, make literature the handmaiden of politics and the docile servant of an ideology. The writer, accepting this conception and attempting to make it operative in the actual construction of novels, would have to see politics first and then life, and he would have to deduce life from political programs. To the theoreticians of proletarian literature the theme of a book was considered to be its most important, its most essential, element; the total pattern of a novel, its unfolding of characters and events, its insights which help to clarify for us the mysteries of man and his world, and its very style—these were all relegated to a secondary place. A true recreation of social relationships and of human beings was considered to be less important than the ideology that was im-

planted into a novel and openly affirmed in the last chapter. The ending was stressed as against the entire story and its legitimate meanings. Most of the great writers of the present and of the past were attacked, often severely, as bourgeois defeatists; and in their place novelists such as Jack Conroy, Arnold Armstrong, William Rollins and others were hailed as the inheritors, not only of the literary traditions of America, but also of those of the whole world.

In this article it is not necessary for me to go into historical detail or to discuss this point of view at length. Those who sponsored it have themselves abandoned all their claims. They have themselves forgotten most of the writers whom they lauded as proletarian writers, and they now laud the writers whom they then attacked—for instance, Thomas Mann. Most of the young writers who adopted this view of literature have themselves stopped writing. If a conception of literature produces no books, then it is obvious that that conception is defective. It remains sterile and formal. If the most rigid supporters of a conception abandon it, regardless of the reason, it is not necessary for me here to refute what they themselves have refuted in the most positive manner.

It is ironical to observe that some of the writers who defended the complete freedom of the writer from politics in the early 1930's are now included in the vanguard of the newest group of politico-critical legislators; they now demand that the creative artist adopt the same kind of an attitude which they once attacked, even heatedly. The popular writers whose work appears in the slick magazines and who earn large sums of money in Hollywood sales are also included in this vanguard.

(*Pitfalls for Readers of Fiction*, by Hazel Sample, a pamphlet publication of the National Council of Teachers of English, contains an able analysis of certain types of popular fiction and of the assumptions on which these are based. The most vulgar of those who would force literature to become official have even gone to the extent of hailing motion pictures—similar in content, basic assumptions, and in emphasis on escape values to the novels studied by Miss Sample—as greater contributions to American culture and the fight for a free world than serious works of American realism which try to describe conditions and characters truly. For instance, Mr. Strunsky, who writes the "Topics of the Times" column for the *New York Times*, has declared that serious American realists give us nothing to fight for but that the escape movies of Hollywood do give us something we can fight and die for. In other words, the simple, tragic, spiritually impoverished people described in American realistic novels are not worth fighting for; but it is proper to die for Tyrone Power and his world. Often the essential tragedy in realistic fiction is missed because of the fact that realistic writers try to maintain a tone of objectivity. They are accused of coldness. Chekhov, who was a great writer himself and a realist, remarked in one of his letters that if you want to portray suffering and sorrow it is usually necessary to be a little cold in your portrayal of it; otherwise, you fall into sentimentality. Such simple observations concerning literature are lost on many critics, journalists and others, who

\*I have stated in detail my own views on the question of proletarian literature in my book, *A Note on Literary Criticism*. Views directly counter to my own are to be found in *The Great Tradition*, by Granville Hicks. There are a number of books which relate to this question in varying ways, and I cite a few of them: Leon Trotsky, *Literature and Revolution*; Joseph Freeman, Joshua Kunitz and Louis Lozowick (eds.), *Voices of October*; Henry Hart (ed.), *American Writers' Congress*; Stephen Spender, *The Destructive Element*; Edmund Wilson, *The Triple Thinkers*; A. Zhdanov, Maxim Gorky, N. Bukharin, K. Radek and A. Stetsky, *Problems of Soviet Literature*; V. F. Calverton, *The Liberation of American Literature*; Christopher Caudwell, *Illusion and Reality*; Max Eastman, *Artists in Uniform, and Art and the Life of Action*; Bernard Smith, *Forces in American Criticism*; Jean Fréville, *La Littérature et l'Art, choisis, traduits et présentés par Karl Marx et F. Engels*; George V. Plekhanov, *Art and Society* (introduction by Granville Hicks). In Ireland during the period of national revolutionary ferment, prior to the Easter Rebellion of 1916, the same question was discussed in literary controversies, but there it was an issue concerning literature and the aspirations of the nationalist movement. One of those who defended the writer against the criticisms of those nationalists who demanded that Anglo-Irish literature serve as a direct instrument of the national movement was the late Lord Mayor of Cork, Terrence MacSwiney (cf. *Principles of Freedom*). MacSwiney said: "It is because we need the truth that we object to the propagandist playwright."

do not hesitate to speak on the subject with authority and, in order to derogate serious writers, even raise to a high level the most conventional and banal of novels and the most conventional motion pictures. It is with such ideas in mind that I recommend *Pitfalls for Readers of Fiction*.)

### Positions of MacLeish and Brooks

A leading exponent of this tendency is Archibald MacLeish. (Cf. Archibald MacLeish, *The Irresponsibles*.) During the height of the bitter polemical controversy concerning proletarian literature, Mr. MacLeish was moved to write in defense of complete freedom of the poet. In those days he believed that the poet should merely sing. The proletarian critics did not halt at describing him as irresponsible—they called him a fascist. Today Mr. MacLeish has reversed himself, and he sharply criticizes almost all modern writers as irresponsibles. His major charge is that, during a period of growing danger to the entire human race, they merely tried to see life truly and to create honest pictures of life. They did not defend ways of thinking, ideas and beliefs which should have been defended. They did not use the weapon of the word to storm the barricades of belief. In consequence they contributed to the demoralization of democratic forces, and this demoralization has left democracy in a weakened state when it must defend itself against a sinister enemy. In passing, it is interesting to observe that the one writer whom MacLeish excepts from his blanket condemnation is Thomas Mann. It is on the record that many of the writers implicitly or openly attacked by MacLeish took a stand on the question of fascism before Thomas Mann would openly condemn the Hitler régime. Further, there is a stream of pessimism in the books of Thomas Mann which renders the assertions of MacLeish somewhat ridiculous.

Another who has now adopted a position analogous to that of MacLeish is the critic Van Wyck Brooks (Cf. Van Wyck Brooks, *On Contemporary Literature* and *The Opinions of Oliver Allston*). Mr. Brooks believes that modern writers are cynics and that they write out of hatred and of a drive-toward-death. They have, he claims, lost the idea of greatness, and inasmuch as they themselves are not great men, they cannot write great books. Exceptions to this charge are Robert Frost, Lewis Mumford, Waldo Frank, Archibald MacLeish and Thomas Mann. Modern writers—and Mr. Brooks makes no distinctions between various modern literary tendencies, including that of realism and that of radical experimentalism stemming from the French symbolists—have lost their connection with the soil. They have no roots in the region, in the country, and in its soil. In passing, it is to be observed that this conception is, in essence, Spenglerian. Consequently it is somewhat amazing to observe Mr. Brooks, in his little book, *On Contemporary Literature*, charging that modern writers have been influenced by Spengler, including those—such as the author of this article—who have for years been anti-Spenglerian. Further, one of the European novelists of the soil, with roots in the soil, is Knut Hamsun, who was one of the first world-famous literary men to become a fascist.

Mr. Brooks claims that modern writers write demoralizing books because they have no attachment to the family and because they do not take an interest in public life. On both of these points he is unspecific. He does not demonstrate in a concrete manner precisely how a writer will become a better artist by transplanting himself to the country and living close to the soil, by declaring an attachment to the family (most writers are attached to their families, love them and try to support them), and by taking an open interest in public life. In addition, he is not specific concerning the manner in which

a writer should become interested in and attached to public life. Should he take a political stand on issues? Should he run for an elective office? Should he abandon literature and dedicate himself to political theory or to political polemics? Should he ghost-write speeches for political leaders? And, further, some of the writers whom Brooks accuses of lacking an interest in public life have been far more politically active on many issues than he has. In essence, Brooks is adopting the same kind of a view toward literature as did his recent forebears, the apostles of proletarian literature. Like them, he and Archibald MacLeish and others are seeking to legislate for writing, to tell the writer what to do, what to write, what ideology to inculcate through his works, what conclusions to come to in a novel, and what to think.

### Its Relation to Politics

Those who adopt such an approach toward literature do not clearly focus the problems of literature, the character of writing, the functions and purposes which literature can perform. When Karl Marx was a young man, editing a democratic newspaper in the Rhineland and working toward the point of view which he finally adopted and developed, he wrote a letter to a friend which contains some remarks which are today a pertinent and decisive answer to the claims of those who would sneak politics and ideology into literature. At that time Marx had not yet been converted to socialism. He resisted the pressure of philosophical and literary friends who took a frivolous attitude toward serious questions, and he explained why he rejected the articles of these people. I quote him:

I demanded less vague arguments, fewer fine-sounding phrases, less self-adulation and rather more concreteness, a more detailed treatment of actual conditions and a display of greater practical knowledge of the subjects dealt with. I told them that in my opinion it was not right, that it was even immoral, to smuggle communist and socialist dogmas, i.e., an entirely new way of looking at the world, into casual dramatic criticisms, etc., and that if communism were to be discussed at all then it must be done in quite a different fashion and thoroughly.

Today, as then, literary men are trying to smuggle ideology into literature. "Smuggle" is here an excellent word. They seek to consider, to discuss and to educate people in an indirect, oblique, yes, even casual, manner concerning the most serious problems which the human race faces. Instead of discussing questions such as socialism and communism, democracy and fascism, in terms of the relevant problems raised by those issues, they want to smuggle a discussion of such issues into novels, poetry, dramatic criticisms, book reviews, banquet speeches and books labeled as literary criticism. I do not hesitate to characterize such conduct as frivolous. Politics is serious. It is the arena in which the fundamental bread-and-butter struggles of men, of groups, of nations, of social classes are conducted. He who is frivolous about politics is guilty of a grave disservice to his fellow-men, especially in times of deep social crisis. The problems of politics are, basically, concerned with action and with power. Literary men have the habit of rushing into the periphery of politics, and they contribute to political struggles—not knowledge, not practical experience, not theoretical analyses, but rhetoric. Rhetoric is the one commodity in politics of which there has never been a scarcity.

My subject, however, is not the political conduct of literary men in politics. I do not criticize this *per se*. I merely suggest that the requisites of all responsible action, in any endeavor, are that one be serious and that one accept the obligations and duties which that endeavor imposes on one. My concern here is with the efforts to politicalize literature. The end result of



the politicalization of literature is an official or state literature. The extreme example of a state or official literature in our times is that of the totalitarian countries. It need not be commented upon in this article. We know what it is and what it leads to and how it destroys literature in the most brutal and ruthless fashion. It is possible to silence writers by force; a state power can put writers into jail and treat them as common criminals; it can prevent their books from being published; it can execute them. However, it cannot make them, either by open force or by prizes, praise, awards, and academic and institutional honors, write good books. Modern authoritarian rulers are not the first ones who have been taught this elementary lesson. Often literary men fail to learn it. During the period of the Second Empire, even the great critic Sainte-Beuve was ready to play along with the idea of an official literature. The attempt to create an official literature in that period failed. The two greatest French writers of the times, Flaubert and Baudelaire (both of them friends of Sainte-Beuve), were haled into court on censorship charges. The poetry of Baudelaire was suppressed. Today we read Flaubert and Baudelaire and not the official writers of Louis Bonaparte.

Napoleon Bonaparte still remains as the greatest of modern dictators. Himself a fine writer and a man who developed literary taste through the course of his lifetime, he tried to impose an official art and literature on France when he was its ruler. In the year 1805 he wrote to Fouché:

I read in a paper that a tragedy on Henry IV is to be played. The epoch is recent enough to excite political passions. The theater must dip more into antiquity. Why not commission Raynouard to write a tragedy on the transition from primitive to less primitive man? A tyrant would be followed by the savior of his country. The oratorio "Saul" is on precisely that text—a great man succeeding a degenerate king.

In the same year he wrote: "My intention is to turn Art specially in the direction of subjects that would tend to perpetuate the memory of the events of the last fifteen years." He justified expenditures on the opera on the ground that it flattered the national vanity. A year after he said this he found that his official opera only degraded literature and the art, and he demanded that something be done to halt the degradation which was caused by his own official policies and his control of the opera. Then he declared: "Literature needs encouragement." Something had to be proposed to "shake up the various branches of literature that have so long distinguished our country." But literature did not distinguish France during the period of *la gloire*. The writer was told to behave, and generally he obeyed orders. The chief of police and the ministers of the cabinet gave him instructions on what to write, and they honored him for obeying instructions. And Napoleon himself was forced—after all he was a man of taste—to show contempt for his own official litterateurs. In exile at Saint Helena, he did not read them. He did not speak of them. He remembered Racine, and he remembered Homer, but he remembered no literature that could distinguish his own period of rule. And neither do we today. Is more eloquent demonstration of the failure of this attitude toward literature needed?

### What Is Greatness in Literature?

It is a truism to state that the test of a work of literature is not to be found in its formal ideology. The most cursory examination of a few great works of literature will prove the validity of this truism.

Many of us recognize Tolstoy as a great writer, a genius,

and a thinker of the first order. Do we do this because of the formal attitudes—the ideology—in his major works? In *Anna Karenina* the character Levin develops, during the course of his novel, that conception of political non-resistance which became part of the gospel of Tolstoyism. Levin found reasons for refusing to take an interest in public affairs, and these reasons were Tolstoy's own for formulating this doctrine. Because we disagree with Tolstoy's views, represented in his characterization of Levin, will we therefore deny the greatness of *Anna Karenina*? In *War and Peace* Tolstoy presents a view of history which succeeds in atomizing history to the degree that it is impossible to distinguish between influences that are essential and of weight in the influencing of events and those which are incidental or secondary. According to this conception of history, every single human being in a period influences the history of that period. History is the result of all the actions and all the thoughts of every single human being. In a sense, this is correct. The history of man is everything that happens to man. But can we seek to explain and to understand man if we apply this conception concretely? If we do, we have no means of truly evaluating what factors are essential and important in a given historic study and what ones are non-essential. Dismissing this theory of history, which is imbedded into the very warp and woof of *War and Peace* and which is also presented in the novel in essay form, do we therefore destroy the value of this work?

Balzac was anti-democratic, and his formal attitudes were those of the restoration which followed the fall of Napoleon. The formal view of Theodore Dreiser concerning man in the universe is an undigested hodge-podge of crude materialism and misunderstood science. Are his books, consequently, to be dismissed? Examples to demonstrate this point are endless. If we literally adopt such a view of literature, we thereby exclude ourselves from an appreciation of many of the greatest works of the past. We cannot then appreciate the literature and the art which precedes democracy, because it is not democratic. If we are socialists, we cannot appreciate the great literature of the modern age. If we demand that literature in a direct, obvious and mechanical fashion reflect the major struggles of the period from which it springs or with which it deals, what are we to say of such a novel as *Wuthering Heights*? This novel—in my opinion one of the greatest of all English novels—describes characters who lived during the period when Bonaparte was at the height of his power. Withal, it has nothing to say of the danger of old "Bony" invading England. Is it therefore invalidated as a novel?

Literature is one of the arts which re-creates the consciousness and the conscience of a period. It tells us what has happened to man, what could have happened to him, what man has imagined might happen to him. It presents to us the environments, the patterns of destiny, the joys and the sorrows, the tribulations, the dreams, the fantasies, the aspirations, the cruelties, the shames, the dreams of men and women. Life is full of mysteries, and one of the major mysteries of life is man himself. Literature probes into that mystery. Just as science permits man to understand nature, literature permits man to understand himself. Just as science makes the forces of nature human in the sense that it permits the construction of instruments which can control these forces, so does literature aid in making man human to himself. Literature, by its very nature, cannot, in and of itself, solve social and political problems. Any solution to a social and/or a political problem in a work of literature is a purely mental solution. These problems are problems of action. Every problem delimits the kind



of means which can, and those which cannot, be of use in its solution. This statement applies in logic, in mathematics, in the physical sciences, in the solution of social and political problems and in the problems which any artist must face in his own work. It is as absurd to assume that you can solve political and social problems with a poem as it is to call in a painter and ask him to save from death a man stricken with appendicitis by painting a picture.

### How Much Literature Can Do

Literature generally reflects life. It limps, even crawls, behind events. This is especially so in periods of great social crisis and of historic convulsion. What is the great literary work of the Napoleonic period—one which parallels our own age? It is Stendhal's *The Red and the Black*. But Stendhal did not write this novel when he was with the French army in Moscow. He wrote it some time after the Battle of Waterloo.

Some of those who take a view of literature contrary to the one which I present here demand that the writer be a prophet. His duty is to foresee what is to come, not merely to reflect what has already come, including what man has already dreamed, imagined, constructed in his own head, as well as what has happened in the sense of actual objective events happening. Let us examine this claim concretely. Prophecy is what? It is prediction. Whether one makes a prophecy or a prediction on the basis of an inner vision or as the result of a close scientific investigation, that prophecy or prediction proves nothing. It is merely a statement of probability. It must be validated by the occurrence of the events which are predicted. Further, it is obvious that when one makes a prediction one should base that prediction on the relevant evidence. I ask, therefore, Is a lyric poem the proper manner in which to predict historic events? If so, why do we not elect lyric poets as our political leaders? It is the exercise of simple intelligence not to confuse problems. We do not ask our doctors, our dentists, our scientists, our politicians, or our mechanics to confuse problems; we ask only our poets and our novelists to do this.\*

Further, those who want to officialize literature, those who insist that the artist wear the uniform of an ideology, persist in calling writers who refuse to accept their demand skeptics and cynics. Often they use the words "skeptic" and "cynic" as if they were synonymous. These words do not necessarily have the same meaning. A skeptic doubts. A cynic is without faith. It is possible to doubt, to be critical, and still to have faith. Further, there is no necessary opposition between skepticism and faith. Without a skepticism that is sufficient to permit us to be critical of evidence, we will have a faith that is without warrant. We will then believe in something without knowing why we believe. Also, to say that a writer is skeptical or cynical does not necessarily constitute a valid ground for criticism. Was there no skepticism, no cynicism, in Shakespeare? Is there no skepticism in the Bible? Tolstoy was more than skeptical of modern capitalism and of the efficacy of po-

\*I have here discussed prophecy in literature in terms of the prediction of events. Those who demand that the poet play the rôle of prophet from a regressively cultural point of view base their contention on the traditional philosophical conception of cognition as the sole factor in the process of knowledge. They then assume that the insights and "intuitions" of the poet constitute a superior form of knowing than that embodied in scientific method. They desire to substitute the poet for the political theorist and analyst, and for the scientist. However, there is a sense in which the poet, for instance, Shelley, plays a rôle that can be considered analogous to that of the prophet. When a poet or a novelist emphasizes the need for a change in values and attitudes which are required by the demands of social evolution, his rôle is then more or less analogous to that of the prophet. However, to perform this rôle he must have more than an alleged superior form of knowing which is assumed to be poetic insight.

litical action; further, he was a pacifist. A pacifist is obviously skeptical of war. Generally speaking, it is the realistic writers who are called skeptical and cynical. Those who make this charge against realists do not, however, examine what the realistic writer has to say. They don't examine the conditions which he describes. In many instances the realist describes injustice, misery, spiritual and material poverty. The world described by modern realists is not free of the conditions which produce these results. No less a person than the President of the United States has spoken of "one third of a nation" submerged in poverty, suffering from all the physical and mental ills which are bred by poverty. But if the realistic novelist deals with the conditions which exist, if he dares to re-create a true and revealing picture of these conditions, of the patterns of destiny of the characters who are educated and live in such conditions, he is a skeptic, a cynic. The attempt to tell the truth in a precise, concrete and uncompromising manner is demoralizing. And what is proposed as an alternative to this kind of literature? The advice to write about justice, about morality, about heroism, and about greatness in general—that is, in the abstract. To state many of these arguments is sufficient. It even becomes embarrassing to be forced to answer them in detail.

### The Rôle of the Writer

He who would put literature in uniform is afraid of literature. The demand that literature conform comes from fear, not from confidence, and not from faith. Literature in the modern world cannot thrive on the basis of official control. The only result of controlling it officially will be silencing, destroying, crushing, the real talents among our writers and permitting those who are not serious, those who are not truly talented, those who have nothing to say, to come to the front. The notion that the serious literary artist is a major element in demoralizing a society is absurd on its face. No society can be demoralized by a few books. If a society is demoralized, the reasons for that condition go much deeper than the circulation of a few books. The actual spy, the actual saboteur, the actual agent of enemy governments, and so on, do not have the time—and usually they do not have the sensibility, the imagination, the intelligence, the culture, and the background—to create a work of literature. He who makes such charges against the artist makes them because he dare not look conditions in the face. And to look conditions in the face is precisely what the serious writer does. In some instances these conditions exist in society at large; in other instances these conditions are in the mind, in the emotions, in the dreams, and in the consciousness of the artist himself. In all serious art there is truth—truth of insight, of observations, truth about the social relationships of the world, and/or truth about the consciousness of men. And the truth will make men free, although it may disturb the critical legislator and the ideological smuggler.

It is inept, absurd, downright silly to argue that in a world torn by the greatest convulsions of the modern period literature can hide away in a hothouse. I make no such claims. I am not here demanding that literature exist in any ivory towers. What I do stress, however, is that literature must solve its own problems and that it cannot be turned into the handmaiden of politics and the looking-glass of ideologies. The justification of literature must be made in terms of the real functions which it performs and not by seeking to make it perform functions for which it is unfitted. When Ralph Waldo Emerson died, William James, who had known Emer-

son was a monist—James defended a conception of a pluralistic universe—Emerson did not suppress the facts in order to substantiate his monism. This statement provides us with the formula for tolerance and for understanding, both in the world of ideas and in that of art. If the writer has not suppressed the facts, we can seek to understand him; and if we find value in his work, we can justify that work despite agreement or disagreement with his formal ideas. And it is to be remembered that in art the facts are not statistical; the facts are perceptions, observations, insights, revelations of certain aspects of those mysteries of life which surround us on every side and which exist even in our own consciousness.

It is now almost three centuries to the year since John Milton wrote *Areopagitica*, one of the most eloquent defenses of freedom of inquiry and freedom for the artist that has ever

been written. And Milton wrote that it is "as good almost" to "kill a man as kill a good book: who kills a man kills a reasonable creature . . . but he who destroys a good book kills reason itself." (Because of the limitations of my typewriter, I have here taken the liberty of modernizing the typography and the spelling of Milton.) What Milton said is in the spirit of the eloquent apology of Socrates when he stood on trial for his life, charged with having demoralized the youth of Athens, and when he declared to his judges: ". . . the unexamined life is not worth living. . . ." And, to conclude, serious literature is one of the most powerful means contrived by the human spirit to examine life. This, in itself, is the basic justification of literature in any period. This is the answer which the artist can confidently hurl back at all Philistines who fear to permit the examination of life.

JAMES T. FARRELL.

# War in the Far Pacific

## An Analysis of Japanese Aims

The first task of the moment is a sober statement as to precisely what has occurred in the War of the Pacific and in the imperialist camps themselves since the violent eruption of Japanese military-imperialism on December 7, 1941.

But even before that let us remind the reader of two important facts—namely, that the United Nations powers (then known as the ABCD countries) had calculatingly brought the Japanese infection to a head by their attempted policy of economic boycott, encirclement, and strangulation, and secondly, that Japanese imperialism had been marching toward brutal conflict with its main rivals since the 1931 Manchurian invasion. The war today is the inevitable inter-imperialist clash for Pacific hegemony and Asiatic colonial possessions.

Five months have resulted in sensational and unforeseen results; five months have underscored major revolutionary insights with respect to the character of the war; five months have forced the "Colonial Question" to the forefront with an acuity it has never before possessed.

(1) Japan has smashed to pieces, for the time being, the economic chain that had been forged around her. "A few weeks after her first stabs at us in the Pacific she was already within sight of self-sufficiency in the essential resources and raw materials of war." (Edgar Snow in the *Saturday Evening Post*.) The United Nations and particularly the United States find themselves in precisely the position they had wished to place their opponent. Japan's food crop (rice) has been secured; adequate sources of chrome, wood pulp, hemp, coal, iron, rubber, tin, zinc, lead, etc., are in her grasp; the oil for her war machine is (assuming the ability to hold Java, Borneo and Sumatra) available in great quantity. We shall later deal with the highly important question of Japan's ability to exploit her conquests. The essential point is that the blockade is decisively broken.

(2) The underestimation of Japanese strength along economic and military lines (an error which revolutionary Marxists themselves committed) has been overshadowed *only* by the gross overestimation of the power of the old imperialist empires. The effect of this double jolt largely accounts for the "low morale" of the United Nations and the emergence of independent Asiatic nationalism.

(3) Three Old World empires, hoary with tradition and fat with the accumulated blood and sweat of their colonial slave populations, have been either shattered entirely or severely jolted. France has lost its vital Asiatic possession (Indo-China); Dutch imperialism has lost not only its empire, but even the "Motherland" to the Axis powers; the monumental British Empire rocks ever more shakily on its decrepit knees.

### The Allied Military Disaster

The full extent of the Allied military disaster can be realized by pointing to the following: In January, 1941, The NEW INTERNATIONAL outlined the immediate program of imperialist conquest as planned by the Japanese high command. (a) Final occupation of Shanghai—*achieved*. (b) Occupation of Hong Kong and ousting of Britain from the Pearl River valley—*achieved*. (c) Seizure of French Indo-China—*achieved*. (d) Singapore-Malaya conquest—*achieved*. (e) The Dutch East Indies—*achieved*. In addition, the Philippine Islands or the most important islands of this archipelago are in Japanese hands.

Furthermore, Thailand (Siam) has been brought within the Japanese "Co-Asiatic Prosperity Sphere"; the important parts of Burma lie occupied; the supply road to China has been cut; a host of lesser strategic islands of the Pacific and South China groups have been occupied (Wake, Solomon, Andaman, etc.); New Guinea partially occupied; telling blows dealt Allied naval and military forces. Australia and India are threatened with invasion. Clearly, the Oriental wing of the Axis has gained far more out of its five months old war than its partners have gained in 30 months!

(4) Most important of all, the complete political and social bankruptcy of the United Nations has been laid bare not merely to their own peoples at home but, above all, to the scores of millions of colonial people. Anglo-American-Dutch imperialism proved incapable of rallying to its banner a single section or segment of the colonial masses. Conducting an imperialist war, the Allies sought to win (or hold their ground) *only and solely* on a military and imperialist basis. The Atlantic Charter, already proved to be a hypocritical fraud in the Atlantic territories of the world, was not even extended in the form of a "Pacific Charter." Indeed, the very

suggestion of such a formal gesture provoked the utmost resistance!

### A Bankrupt Policy

Furthermore, the "democratic" imperialists persist in assuring us well in advance that their future policy will be as bankrupt and impotent as their past. The objective of the proposed offensive against Japan, we are informed, is to re-establish the *status quo*. That is the sole "perspective" offered the world—a return to the past, a continuation of the old system.

(5) And lastly, the Pacific War has brought the "Colonial Question" sharply to the fore. One of the prime distinctions between the First and Second World Wars is the concrete posing of this problem in the present war. Only now has the colonial world itself been *directly* dragged into the struggle between the camps. Now the war stands at the gates of the world's greatest colony, the sub-continent of India (untouched in the last war) with its 385 millions. In its dying stage, world capitalism struggles for the wealth and resources of the colonies in a direct and immediate sense, thus further testifying to its inner crisis and desperation.

So much for the results and problems uncovered by five months of Pacific warfare. Naturally, the military disasters of the United Nations have occupied the rôle of primary importance. For this reason it is necessary to ask the question, Why the defeats? The answer to this question is probably the reply to a corollary question: Can the United Nations reconquer the lost territories?

A variety of reasons, all of them with a varying element of truth, but all distinguished by the same superficiality, have been given. But the "democratic" bourgeoisie must shun the basic and real truth because it cannot reveal its lack of a social and political program for the Pacific. So, the explanations vary from "British stupidity" to "Singapore mentality" to "Japanese treachery" to "lack of airpower" to "failure of co-ordinated action" to "weakness of reserves," etc., etc.

Unfortunately, these are not explanations, *they are descriptions*. Each "explanation" leaves the question unanswered and only raises the additional question, "Why the Singapore mentality," "Why the failure of co-ordinated action," etc. All are equally pitched on the military plane, all ignore the rôle of the colonial masses in the territories involved, all assume only the existence of numerically insignificant white-imperialist troops (backed by small units of privileged native forces) and pose the entire problem around the military effectiveness or ineffectiveness of these foreign divisions.

### The One-Trip Specialists

If we had only had thirty more flying fortresses over Java, wails the newspaper *PM*. A few hundred more tanks in the Malayan jungles would have done the trick, complain the bourgeois journalists. Edgar Snow, a man who knows the Far East more thoroughly than a thousand Zugsmiths, Randaus and other one-trip specialists, riddles this absurd concept. "Even if we could mass superior naval and air power on all Japan's far-flung frontiers, would it be enough to overcome an enemy winning his battles on the land? Against us the Japanese had five to six million men trained and ready for mobilization. The indications are that they must have activated, if not already deployed in battle areas, some 3,000,000. . . . Where are we going to find 3,000,000, or even 1,000,

000, Occidental troops to keep Japan away from our last-ditch bases in the Orient—from which we must later launch a counter-offensive?"

Snow hints at the heart of the question. Whenever faced by superior military forces (and Japanese imperialism has every advantage in this respect over the "democratic" imperialisms), the United Nations are doomed to defeat unless they succeed in mobilizing (in action, in *military* action) the only force in the Pacific that can give them military superiority—the colonial peoples. It is this failure, this total and utter failure, that alone suffices to explain the past four months. For today we must recognize a decisive lesson of the Pacific War: namely, *the inner bankruptcy of the Tory-imperialist ruling class of the British, Dutch and American powers has reached such a stage of political and moral decadence that it has attained an independent and specific weight of its own*. In particular, the decline of the British Empire is no longer an abstraction—it is written in the surrender at Hong Kong; the fiasco at Singapore; the crisis in Australia; the stalemate in India.

The "democratic" bourgeoisie has recognized, after four months, that it is impossible to ignore completely the political and social problems of the Far Eastern War. To do so would only mean to deepen and extend the series of unbroken defeats. Therefore, realizing the critical nature of the situation, the United Nations, headed by the United States, have come forward with various "solutions" and "proposals" aimed at arousing the support and enthusiasm of the colonial masses. These propositions, constituting an effort to come to terms with the native bourgeoisies of the respective colonies, seek to create the illusion of a genuine transfer of power to the people, without arousing or stimulating their *independent* action. This is the objective of the Cripps, the Chiang Kai-sheks, the Johnsons, etc. All such plans, however, are either doomed in advance or—at best—will be acceptable to small and indecisive segments of the population. None offer the only acceptable proposal: *liberation and self-determination now; an ending of imperialist exploitation today*.

### Ineffectiveness of Allied Propaganda

The deterioration of United Nations prestige and of "white" influence in the Asiatic world has gone much further than the "democratic" leaders will admit. It is only necessary to cite the recent experience to prove this point. Let us take three examples, Malaya, Java and Burma, as evidence. (1) In Malaya the colonial population of Chinese, Tamil Indians and Malaysians were oblivious to Allied propaganda and its appeals. All authorities admit they maintained a cool neutrality (even the pro-Kuomintang Chinese) and lifted not a finger to help defender or invader. (2) In Java the attitude of the 45,000,000 Javanese appears to have been openly hostile to the "doughty Dutch," without becoming overtly pro-Japanese. Refusal to obey orders, open contempt for the imperialist authorities, envelopment of the United Nations troops in an atmosphere of ill-concealed hostility, etc. Such are the meager reports of the fleeing Dutch. (3) In Burma it must be recognized that anti-British feeling among the Burmese reached the stage of *positive* action, particularly among the masses of Rangoon and in the Irawaddy district, where the 1931 peasant insurrection was so cruelly crushed. A section of the Burmese people—deceived by demagogic Japanese propaganda; thirsting for revenge on their ancient tormentors, the white imperialists; and under the influence of the historically backward Burmese nationalists—have openly

sided with the invaders. The Japanese succeeded in organizing independent Burmese forces to fight by their side against the British, Indians and Chinese. Thus, the *only action* to date of the colonial masses, or a section thereof, has been favorable to Japanese imperialism! This undeniable fact should be of the deepest significance. It is the net product and result of "democratic" imperialist rule in Asia.

We are thus forced to draw our first important conclusion. *Given the present disposition and relation of military forces* (that is, the admitted superiority of the Japanese in this field), *and given the historic inability of the United Nations to rally the colonial peoples to their side through a freedom-arousing political and social program of liberation, the United Nations can only enjoy an unbroken series of defeats. Only the achievement of military equality can halt the Japanese advance; only military superiority could bring about the offensive.*

### What Is Japan's Real Strength?

The fruits of capitalism, instead of falling down through society, were concentrated in the Mitsui, the Mitsubishi and the other great family interests that controlled about half of the nation's industry and trade. (*Fortune*, February, 1942.)

We have mentioned above the serious underestimation of Japanese strength of which all analysts have been guilty. Upon what was this error based? What is the real strength and capabilities of Japanese imperialism? And, above all, can Dai Nippon, the Empire of Japan, establish *its* imperial rule in place of the empires it is tumbling into the dust? Is the estimation of Japanese capitalism given at the Founding Conference of the Fourth International correct—namely, "Insular Japan, in the era of the twilight of capitalism, proceeding from a weak economic base, is debarred historically from achieving the imperial destiny of which her ruling classes dream. Underlying the imposing façade of Japanese imperialism are fatal organic weaknesses which have already been aggravated by the military conquest of Manchuria. The resources of Japanese capitalism have been proved inadequate for the task of empire building"?

Bearing in mind that the Japanese ruling class has succeeded in concealing the true state of affairs in Japan perhaps more successfully than any other ruling class of the world, let us try to accurately re-state the nature of Japanese imperialism.

Japan is an advanced, capitalist-imperialist nation—the last to emerge on the world scene. Because of the failure of its capitalism to come to power as the result of a bourgeois-democratic revolution that would sweep away the decisive elements of Asiatic feudalism, the economy and state régime of Japan is overlapping and combined. That is, its decisive industry is modern, monopoly-finance capital (the "Two Families"), with an enormous remnant of primitive and backward handicraft, home and village industry. Its agrarian population, upon which rests the preponderant burden of the wars conducted by the generals, is not feudal, but rather a smallholding, pauperized peasantry. The Japanese political superstructure is a unique and confused one, reflecting not only the combined character of its rotten base, but also the various cliques and groups that struggle within its shadows for supremacy: the finance capitalists, the military and naval castes organized into the secret societies, the fascist (in the European sense) elements, the bourgeois democrats, etc. The superstructure is extremely unstable and its contending elements (primarily the finance capitalist-imperialists against the generals-officers caste—the *Samurai*) can only succeed in a

momentary unification around a program of external wars of colonial conquest.\* The periodic violent outbreaks reveal these deep-going inter-ruling class fights.

### Organic Weakness of Japanese Economy

The organic weaknesses inherent in Japanese capitalism have made its life span particularly violent and explosive; have driven it to a continuous series of wars since the first Sino-Japanese war in the 1890's; have driven it far along the road of economic autarchy and political totalitarianism. These weaknesses and contradictions are primarily four in nature: (a) Necessity of seeking all vital raw materials beyond its natural frontiers (Japan, up to 1941, had to import 80 per cent of the twenty-five strategic raw materials listed by *Fortune* as necessary for modern war; one-half its copper, zinc, tin and scrap iron had to be imported; one-fourth its pig iron; one-third its aluminum; three-fourths of its iron ore; 90 per cent of its lead and all its mercury and nickel). (b) A weak economic base at home, lacking heavy industries (iron and steel, chemicals, etc.) (c) A dependency on its export trade abroad out of which to accumulate profits to purchase the needed raw materials. (d) An inability to accumulate surplus capital with which to develop and exploit foreign conquests and for foreign investment.

In order for Japan to survive at all it was necessary to take certain measures, both *industrial* and *political*, to overcome the weight of these initial handicaps. It is our ignoring of the important industrial changes that largely accounts for the underestimation of Japan's power. These changes have been proceeding roughly since the last war: (1) A shift from agriculture and light, consumers' goods industry to heavy industry (iron and steel, munitions and ship building). Unfortunately, no figures are available on Japanese industry since 1937, so that it is only possible to report this trend. But, for example, Japan entered the war with a merchant marine of five to six million tons (the NYK Line alone had over one million tons of shipping) and a *modern*, fast, oil-burning fleet of freighters. It is apparently capable of producing one million tons annually at the Yokohama and Kobe shipyards for replacements of shipping losses. Japan manufactures about 400 to 600 planes a month. As an indication of the conversion to a war economy, *Fortune* cites the fact that the annual total of producers' goods (machinery, metals and chemicals) increased two and a half times between 1930 and 1939; while production of consumers' goods (textiles, gasoline for private use, etc.) fell correspondingly. (2) By a system of rationing of fuel, food (rice), textiles, leather, etc. Japan has reduced living standards to its barest essentials, for many years. Concurrent with this, stock piles of vital raw materials have been carefully built up (with the blessing and assistance of American, Dutch and English business men!) over a 10-year period. Groves formerly given over to the silk mulberry tree have been converted into grain fields while scores of thousands of workers in the Osaka textile and cotton mills have been shifted to various phases of war production. In the totalitarianization of its economy, Japan had a long start over its rivals!

### Japan's Secret Societies

*Politically*, the drive and impulsion needed by an imperialist class anxious to expand at all costs has been given by the secret societies and military castes that now fully dominate

\*The cult of the Emperor as God is, of course, the symbolic method by which the contending factions unite, for benefit of the public gaze. This cult is less than 100 years old!



the life of the country. These groups and cliques—shot through and through by narrow ambitions and intrigues; seeking to preserve the independent position and traditional privileges of the ancient feudal institutions from which they have descended—these *Samurai* societies of “God-Sent Troops,” “The Black Dragon,” “The Young Officers,” “The Blood Brotherhood League,” etc., nevertheless have a contemporary and positive rôle to play. They are not *merely* feudal hangovers!

That rôle can be accurately described as equivalent to that of the Nazi Party in Germany—comparable not in methods, but in objectives. These societies as a whole constitute a Japanese fascist *ersatz*; an Oriental-Asiatic version of European fascism. They seek to dominate and direct the life of the country (its social life and the education of its youth) along the proper totalitarian lines; they seek to compromise (by whatever means necessary—peacefully or violently) the disputes and conflicts within the ruling class for the general advantages of expansionism; they seek to give Japanese imperialism a consistent, clear and historic program, a plan of conquest; they operate as a “centralized state within the Japanese state.” Just as Japanese capital is highly concentrated, so state power and control is highly concentrated in their ruthless hands. The pitiful effort of former Premier Konoye to institute a fascist state apparatus more closely resembling that of Italy and Germany (*Shintesei*) had to be abandoned precisely because the needs that such a “new structure” might serve are already being carried out. A large share of initial Japanese success is due to the success of these reactionary groups in canalizing and concentrating the nation’s energies behind their sinister schemes.

So much for the reasons behind Japan’s ability to momentarily overcome its fatal inner weaknesses. But what of its future? Will this hold true then? In a word, can Japan achieve its dreamed-of Asiatic Empire; its Co-Prosperity Sphere; its unification of Asia under one roof?

### The Newly-Acquired Resources

Our answer is a categorical No, but not for the reasons that are most commonly advanced, namely, overwhelming military and naval defeat by the United Nations. It is not our task to engage in military prophecies concerning the war between Japan and the United Nations. But the question of Japan’s possibilities must be carefully considered. To begin with, it would appear to superficial observation that Japan has already gained more than the material prerequisites for the upbuilding of a great empire. In the conquered lands there rests 90 per cent of the world’s natural rubber supply and 75 per cent of its tin; an oversupply of rice and tin; copper, iron, manganese, timber and rope in the Philippine Islands; zinc, oil and lead in Burma; nickel mines in the Celebes; gold, aluminum, iron, quinine and more oil in Java, etc. Says a *New York Post* writer (March 11): “Fabulous quantities of other items such as coal, wool, hides and skins, chemicals and hemp are produced in the conquered lands.” All of Japan’s raw material requirements are apparently well taken care of.

But obviously the matter is not so simple. In the first place, Japan faces an inevitable counter-attack which will seek to recapture these regions. Here the Japanese have a political weapon in their hands—or, more accurately, the imperialist policy of the United Nations has placed it there. Namely, the dread and fear of the colonial populations against a return of the old, despised Dutch, French and Brit-

ish white rulers. Let no one think for a moment that demagogic Japanese imperialist policy will not seek to frustrate military counter-attack by gaining the support of a substantial section of the population. It will play on every open and hidden fear of the masses against their former masters; it will make every necessary *temporary* concession to the colonial bourgeoisie; it will utilize every demagoguery to secure a base in the population. Already, we can see this process in Malaya, where the Japanese are reported as attempting to establish the Malayan minority as the favored race over and against the Chinese and Tamils. It is clear that the road back cannot possibly be as rapidly and easily traversed by the United Nations as the road forward was traveled by the Japanese forces. The Allies, by their past reputation and their failure to propose colonial liberation in case of victory, have played into the hands of their opponents. The Japanese attack, based on the lying slogan of “Asia for the Asiatics,” will be replaced by the slogan of “Asia must remain with the Asiatics” in an effort to fend off the counter-attack.

### Can Japan Erect an Empire?

But even if Japanese militarism should succeed in beating off the counter-attack of its rivals, we would still reply *No* to the question: Can Japan erect an empire to replace the old, defeated empires?

(1) All of Japan’s needs will not have been satisfied. Such manufactured goods as machine tools, special steels, industrial and explosive chemicals, automotive and aircraft parts, iron and steel semi-finished products, completed machinery, ball bearings, transportation equipment, etc. (all needed either to prosecute the war and/or necessary for the exploitation of the conquered territories) are still not available to the victors. They do not exist in the conquered territories, which are raw material producing areas. Only in the great Nagpur-Chota plateau of India (producing one and a half million tons of finished steel and two million tons of pig iron) can Japan reach a section of the colonial world that has a substantial iron and steel output from its hearths.

(2) The conflicts and disputes within the Japanese ruling circles, momentarily submerged by the early victories, will and are emerging with renewed force. The military castes (anxious to continue the expansion, their appetites growing with the eating!) will clash with the finance-capitalists and the merchants (anxious to settle down and exploit with profit the huge territories already gained). Even within the ranks of the military circles there are already disputes between those who would continue the advance and those who would go over to “consolidation and building up the defenses.”

(3) The most important and basic reason militating against the imperialist success of Japan lies in the character of its colonial exploitation. Japanese imperialism bears a far closer resemblance to the early merchant and industrial imperialism of England and Holland (both of which sought to achieve a *primitive accumulation of capital* at the expense of the colonies in order to industrialize at home), than it does to modern finance-capital imperialism.

This fact, proven most significantly by the great failures in Korea and Manchuria (see *The New International*, January, 1941), flows from the already mentioned inner weakness of the Japanese system and especially its inability to accumulate surplus capital for development. Japanese methods in action more closely resemble those of the 18th century East India Company. “Theft, bribery, confiscation, taxation—every conceivable method of squeezing money and goods out



of the inhabitants..." Or, "the mock majesty of a bloody scepter and a little traffic of a merchant's counting-house, wielding a truncheon with one hand and picking a pocket with the other." These descriptions of the East India Company's activities in India hold equally true for the methods of the Japanese set-up economic units that have operated in China and Manchuria and now prepare for further action in the newly-occupied areas. Open plunder and robbery, stripping the land of its surplus stocks and goods—these are the primitive techniques of the Japanese merchants, exporters and bankers.

### Difficulties of Conquest

It is precisely this which explains its inability to establish a fairly stable system of imperialist rule over its colonial dominions either in China or Manchuria. The Japanese system of naked robbery only breeds economic and social chaos; destroys the existing native industry (as has already happened in China); plunges the exploited land eventually into a misery even unknown to the Oriental world and produces an atmosphere of hatred against the invaders (particularly among the despoiled peasantry) that must have its revenge. To put the matter more simply, Japanese imperialism experiences great difficulties in taking advantage of and utilizing its material and territorial conquests. It cannot develop them properly and thus can only lower the already dreadful living standards of the colonial peoples.

Furthermore, whatever is gained through the system of outright plunder, goes to the never-ending needs of the Japanese war machine. In the manner of every other ruling class today, the Japanese imperialists warn the people of a "long war," a "war that has just begun." To the masses, this means no alleviation of their present restrictions and shortages, *despite* the great successes; a continuation of the rationing system into the indefinite future. What avails the conquests if they cannot be exploited for the benefit of the Japanese masses? The people of Japan will learn that the adventures of imperialism benefit solely the ruling classes and the reactionary officers' castes. Ten years of wars in China and Manchuria brought only lowered standards; the promises of the new conquests hold out no hopes for a halt to this tendency.

This brings us to our second major conclusion. *In the period of permanent capitalist-imperialist crisis and decline, and given its inherent contradictions, Japanese imperialism cannot successfully erect an empire. Its historic rôle is purely negative (to undermine the old empires); purely reactionary (to plunder and depress more deeply the colonial world). In destroying the state-exploitive apparatus of the old imperialisms, Japanese imperialism (unable to evolve its own state apparatus) unwittingly calls into being great social forces among the colonial workers and peasantry that will ultimately defeat the objectives of all imperialisms.*

### The Rôle of the Colonial Masses

The burdens of both (Japanese) workers and peasants are being increased unbearably by the war. More than 30,000,000 Chinese in Manchuria await the opportunity to liberate themselves from the Japanese yoke. Another 21,000,000 Koreans and 5,000,000 Formosans strive for their independence from Japan. All these factors constitute the Achilles' heel of Japanese imperialism and foredoom it to destruction. Such military victories as the Japanese army is able to win... have only an episodic importance. The first serious reverses... will become the starting point of social and political explosions in Japan and in the territories of Manchuria, Korea, Formosa, etc." (Thesis of the Fourth International.)

But the colonial masses will not permit the departure of the old tyranny merely in order to welcome it back again, in

a new guise. They will not permit this any more than they will welcome back the old régimes.

Fascist imperialism may attempt to make its peace with the colonial bourgeoisie by setting it up as its "Quisling" administrative and political agency; "democratic" imperialism may attempt to bargain with the same colonial bourgeoisie and dangle an ephemeral "dominion status" before its eyes, but only real power can move the Asiatic masses. This is why the interminable negotiations and maneuvers of the Chiang Kai-Sheks, Crippses, Boses, Nehrus, etc., although significant phenomena, are symptomatic of the cross-conflicts between the imperialist powers and the weak, historically inept native bourgeois classes of Asia. One real, independent step on the part of the colonial people would wipe out with a blow the present stage of "negotiations." But such a step, unfortunately, has yet to come.

It is around this question of independent colonial action directed against all imperialism that we can discern well in advance the rôle that all the powers will play in the Pacific War. Its objective, to paraphrase Colonel Knox, is restoration of the *status quo ante*, with proper American supervision over the recaptured colonial areas.

But American imperialism will not hesitate to conduct, if need be, a *directly counter-revolutionary war against the Asiatic peoples themselves*. That is to say, American imperialism has, with respect to the colonial masses, the same unholy fear of a nationalist uprising against imperialism that Japan or any other imperialist power has. It is only necessary to recall such incidents as the Chinese Boxer Rebellion, the Indian soldiers' mutiny in Singapore in 1915, the Javanese revolution of 1926—in which events white imperialist troops fought against the colonials, side by side with the Japanese—to remind the reader of the basic fact that all imperialisms alike will temporarily bury their differences in order to crush the greater menace, the evil all fear alike: the independent colonial revolution of the people themselves. American imperialism fought the Boxers; American imperialism fought the Chinese nationalists in the 1925-27 upsurge. It is this knowledge that made the people of India as cool and skeptical toward the visit of the American Commission to its country as it was toward the visit of Cripps.

The colonial peoples represent one of the great potential source of independent "Third Camp" action against imperialist war and for the establishment of a socialist peace. Whether this action begins by the elementary movements of the people preparing to defend themselves against encroachments by an Axis power or a "democratic" imperialist power; or whether it starts with the organization of a guerrilla struggle and peasant risings against the dominant power; or whether it is a political upsurge that raises the colonial masses high in their demand for a Constituent Assembly, democratically elected and representatives of the people—it is necessary for international socialists to support these tentative but powerful beginnings of a socialist Asia.

For—and here we draw our final conclusion—*the perspective offered by either of the struggling imperialist camps is equally bankrupt. One side, politically and socially bankrupt, speaks and acts only in terms of the past; the other side, politically, economically and socially bankrupt, speaks and acts only in terms of the imposition of a new, more intense imperialist terror. Resurgent Asiatic nationalism, the march of the Asiatic colonial peoples toward national liberation and socialist revolution, has the only bright future.*

HENRY JUDD.

# Women in War Industries

## A Crucial Problem For Labor

The influx of women workers into war industries is not just a timely topic for a magazine article, after reading which the reader may yawn and go to bed. It poses problems to labor as a whole which labor must honestly face and solve. What organized labor does right now about the mass of new women workers will determine, to a great extent, the strength of the workers during the war and most certainly in the post-war period.

What is the normal women's labor force in this country? Before this war women workers in all kinds of employment numbered around eleven millions. Their fields of employment primarily included clerical, laundry, domestic, food and canning, office, restaurant and hotel, textile and clothing, i.e., light industries and light trades. Also included are auto and metal, chemical and rubber, electric, radio and firearms. But the figure that concerns us here is that, according to the latest census, there are twenty-four million employable women entirely outside the labor force of the country, a vast reservoir of labor power that is beginning to supply the production lines for World War II.

How much labor will the war program of the United States require? There is no clarity on this subject, since estimates change from day to day. When the military experts figured that the high point of the war would be reached in 1943, one set of figures were given. Now that the summer of 1942 is considered crucial, the old figures no longer hold. Yet a general idea can be gleaned. At the end of 1941 there were something over five million workers in war industries. At the end of this year it is expected that there will be fifteen to seventeen millions in those industries. Where will the additional ten to twelve million workers come from?

Many millions will be supplied from the "non-essential" industries, from the priorities, from the regular army of unemployed, from the farms. But these sources will not be able to supply the requirements. The balance of needed labor for 1942, it is estimated, will be made up of perhaps three million *new* workers who will join the labor front. By the end of 1944 some 6,500,000 such new workers will have been added to turn out the weapons for war.

### A New Source of Labor Supply

Many of these new workers will come from the youth and from the adolescents. This is evidenced by the number of working papers issued, by the reports from technical schools that students are being snatched up by industry long before they are graduated, and also by the number of youngsters in every factory.

The balance of several millions of factory rookies will have to come from the reservoir of employable women, numbering twenty-four millions. Aside from the advantages to the bosses in hiring unorganized workers at lower wages, the employment of women tends to facilitate the war labor problem for two reasons. Women are not subject to military draft. Thus they constitute a steady labor force. Again, employing local women helps alleviate the acute housing problem created by migrating workers.

To summarize this point: At the end of 1941 there were

a mere 500,000 women in war production plants. By the end of 1942 great numbers of women workers will have been transferred from "non-essential" industries to war production. But more significant, a large part of the three million new workers employed this year will be women not previously employed anywhere. By the end of 1944, an even larger part of the 6,500,000 new workers employed in the next two years will be women not previously employed anywhere. As the war continues and the manpower of the nation is increasingly fed to the dogs of war, womanpower will come even more to the fore on the production front.

It is customary these days to make comparisons with England. It can be said, then, that Washington appears to be much more serious about tapping available womanpower than London was when it entered the war. Pictures of women in overalls, spread over the pages of American newspapers, have been deceptive. Actually, while British women have replaced men in the "sissy" jobs, they have by and large stayed out of war production. Only after Singapore and the realization that the war will be a long one did the British government go to town to get out its womanpower. A program of corrective measures has been launched. It involves such steps as the establishment of nurseries and play schools, serving meals in schools and in communal feeding centers, and other services to ease women out of the home and into the factories. The perspective of the British government is that within a very short time the majority of industrial workers will have to be made up of women.

The Germans, of course, had this perspective a long time ago. The latest available figures, which are old stuff, put the women workers in Germany at 50 per cent of the entire labor force. This was before the Russian campaign.

Washington, it seems, has learned from both London and Berlin. The establishing of nurseries and the other required services to release women from the home is getting into full swing. Government agencies and women's associations are implementing plans of wide scope. Women are going places, they are going into the basic units of war production.

### Experiences of the First World War

In this country, during the First World War, one million women quit housework and school-teaching alone to take industrial jobs. At the close of that war 23 per cent of the employees in forty airplane factories were women. During the present war these figures will become completely obsolete for any purposes of comparison. An idea of the rate of increase of the female contingent in the automobile plants alone is contained in the following figures. Whereas in the past years there were, at the peak, no more than 20,000 women in the automobile industry, the Auto Workers Union, CIO, now estimates that the converted automobile plants alone will employ up to 150,000 women before the end of the year, or seven and a half times as many.

This avalanche of womanpower will definitely burst the confines of unskilled labor. Women will also swamp jobs heretofore considered men's specialties. One British writer on the subject of women entering the skilled jobs in his country,

commented: "This movement is without precedent in British industry. Nothing like it was seen in the last war." This applies with equal force to American industry. Women will do all the jobs they did during the last war and a great many new jobs that will create out of them a corps of new skilled workers.

In airplane factories today women are operating light rivet guns, turret lathes, drill presses, painting sprays. On the power assembly lines they are installing fittings and equipment in fuselages. They do electrical wiring of various kinds. They do spot and arc welding. They have moved into a field of jobs requiring training and skill. Estimates of the likely employment of women in airplane production run to 50 per cent of the total employees, and revision is being made upward. In the assembly of aircraft instruments requiring particular care and concentration, women can do 75 per cent of the work. In the field of instrument-making as such, from which women had been excluded in the past, they have been found very able. Employers in this line sing the praises of women workers for their painstaking skill with details. Already in many plants making instruments, women constitute half of the labor force.

The vocational schools all over the country are encouraging the enrollment of women. Besides training for jobs such as above enumerated, higher skills are taught. Such work as shop drafting, pattern construction, designing of beams, columns, trusses—are becoming less of a mystery to growing numbers of women.

This new female contingent of skilled and semi-skilled labor could constitute the hole in the dike of the organized labor movement through which the enemies of labor may rush in. Three significant conditions make it possible for this mass of new women workers to weaken the whole structure of labor's gains if labor does not face the problem and solve it: First, the lower standard of wages of women. Second, many of the new women workers will be without militant union experience, if not completely unorganized. Third, at least some enter industry with a decided anti-union bias.

### **Wage Differentials of Women Labor**

The extent of the gap between the wages of men and women is not well known. The conservative figures of the National Industrial Conference Board for November, 1941, placed the hourly wages in manufacturing plants at 35 per cent lower for women than for men. The American Federation of Labor declares the difference even greater. The New York State Department of Labor, for example, published the 1941 figures of average weekly wages in manufacturing plants for the state as \$35.60 for men and \$19.25 for women. The difference here is \$16.35 per week, or 45 per cent.

The differential also reflects itself in the rate of wage increases. The above figures for the state of New York represent wage increases over 1940 of 12 per cent for men and only 8 per cent for women. In other respects also women are underprivileged workers. For instance, both law enforcers and bosses—as well, unfortunately, as the women workers involved—assume that the minimum wage law does not apply to them.

A post-war survey of women's wages in this country made by the New York State Department of Labor, covering 417 factories employing 33,000 women in 1918-19, revealed some gruesome figures. Ten per cent of these women were earning less than \$6.00 per week. Fifty-three per cent were earning less than \$12 a week. A survey of 117 plants as to the relation of women's wages to wages of men showed that 60 per cent of

the women who replaced men were receiving less wages for the same work—in many instances as much as 50 per cent less—constituting an excellent reason why the bosses were employing them in the place of men.

For the purposes of this initial study, a little information on wage differentials in England is of interest. There, inequality starts with apprenticeship, a woman getting 38 shillings or the equivalent of \$7.60 a week and a man 60 shillings 6 pence or about \$12.10. One report on wages of English women workers states: "Average earnings for adult women in machine factories today (November, 1941) are almost certainly below 50 shillings per week, which is equal to 39 shillings pre-war." Thus full-fledged women workers average considerably less than the inexperienced male apprentice.

### **Dangers to Organized Labor**

At all times this double standard acts as a subtle drag on the wage structure of the entire working class. In times of widespread unemployment the lower wage levels of the women workers tend to become the norm, especially if large masses of workers are women and more especially if they constitute a considerable fraction of the skilled workers. This will undoubtedly be the case in the post-war period.

One of the most important tasks before organized labor, therefore is to cut out the wage differential between men and women workers. "Equal pay for equal work" is a vital slogan which must be made a reality.

There are today tendencies toward equalization of pay. The United Automobile Workers are supposed to have wage scales for women on war production equalling the pay of men for equal work. But is the union insisting upon this equality? When the Consolidated Aircraft Co. opened its new gigantic plant it announced it was going to pay equal wages to men and women. Whether, and to what extent, this principle is actually carried out is not yet known but, it seems to be a fact that recent contracts, including wage increases in rubber, auto and auto parts, airplanes and firearms, while also increasing the wages of women workers, did not accomplish equality.

A militant drive for equalization of wages, therefore, must be undertaken by all unions affected by the influx of women workers. On the basis of such a drive to end the underprivileged status of women workers, the organization of the millions of practically green women workers who will enter industry must forge ahead.

The Vinsons and Smiths in Congress are very wide-awake to the interests of big business in pressing so hard for legislation to "freeze" the open and closed shop. The use of the word "freeze" in this connection is inaccurate and misleading. Such anti-labor legislation will make it illegal to organize the 6,500,000 new workers who will be entering war production. It will inevitably result in the melting away of union strength in relation to the sum total of workers. It will allow the capitalists to obtain company-union domination over a large portion of these 6,500,000 new workers to be sent to the labor front. Labor must prevent the passage of such legislation and proceed with the pressing business before it, namely, an organization drive.

### **The Task of the Labor Movement**

Veteran women workers who are also veteran trade unionists have a grave responsibility on their shoulders. They can do much to educate the new women workers. The women who in automobile, steel, rubber, textile, etc., directly partici-

pated in the splendid CIO organization drives have a tradition of militancy that must be and can be preserved only by imparting it to the new workers. Those women who, as wives and daughters of strikers, joined in great CIO struggles (such as the automobile sit-downs and the New York City bus strike) and will now be on the war production lines themselves, can and must do their part in arousing inexperienced workers to an understanding of working class solidarity.

The problem posed by the influx of women workers into the skilled trades will not be solved in the way attempted by British workers and to some extent by American workers also, namely, neglecting these new members of their own class. This method will be as ineffective in this day and age as the attempt to smash the machines was in solving the problems created by their introduction during the Industrial Revolution. War conditions compel women to become industrial workers. The production of war material requires the employment of skilled workers, and women will be trained as skilled workers. Once they have acquired skills, they will be part and parcel of the labor force of the country to a much greater extent than was the case after the last war when two and a quarter million women workers were permanently added to the labor force.

The way to solve working class problems is, now as always, to build up working class strength through organization. The new workers must be gathered into the union fold.

It must be borne in mind that many women will enter industry with anti-union prejudices as a result of anti-union propaganda in the press and on the air waves. Some of the anti-union propaganda has stuck. There are housewives who believe that high wages are responsible for high prices and that unions are rackets anyway. Besides all this, the capitalist press, the radio, politicians and other speechifiers will be flattering these women workers and playing them up as "the

women behind the machines behind the men behind the guns at the front." And very carefully cultivated by the above elements will be the anti-union propaganda that "this is not the time to join unions—this is the time for national unity." All this is grist in the mill of big business.

Labor must also fully realize that new workers who join the unions, both men and women, simply as a matter of book-keeping, are sitting on the fence. If they happen to get work in a closed shop and are required to join up, they do so—for a time, anyway. But they have been through no union struggles. They have not learned the meaning of unionism as a weapon and offensive and defensive might. Furthermore, the appeasement policies followed by the union officialdoms incline new union members to the belief that there is no particular advantage in belonging to a union. These workers will easily fall off the fence—on the wrong side—unless the rank and file makes up its mind to a program of labor militancy that will grip and hold new members.

It is definitely up to the rank and file. Union leaders are yielding up labor's power and labor's standards. Demanding better ones is not a wartime fashion. Organization drives are also not in style. The rank and file must be old-fashioned—in the CIO way. The CIO, which since its inception has stood for labor militancy, must again push on to militant action.

What organized labor does right now about the mass of new women workers will determine, to a great extent, the strength of labor during the war and most certainly in the post-war period. Equalization of wages will prevent the undermining of wage standards. A unionization drive will prevent the bosses from getting their claws on the green workers and "protecting" them in company unions. Finally, a well organized labor movement will enable the workers to carry out a progressive program for employment for all in the post-war period.

SUSAN GREEN.

# The Situation in France

## Resolution of French Trotskyists

As a contribution to the discussion of the "National Question in Europe" and the problems of the coming European revolution, initiated by THE NEW INTERNATIONAL, we publish below a resolution adopted in September, 1941, at a National Conference of the POI (Workers Internationalist Party—French Trotskyists). Along with this resolution, we publish a minority amendment offered to it by the Regional Committee of the Unoccupied Zone (Vichy, France).

Although readers of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL are well aware of our complete disagreement with the defensist position relating to the Soviet Union, stated in this thesis, nevertheless it is an important contribution to clarification of the basic problem of the European revolution and is, in addition, a clear expression of the differences that exist in the French Trotskyist movement on the "National Question."

It is curious to note the manner in which the magazine, *Fourth International* has handled the entire matter, particularly its crude effort to conceal the disagreements within the French movement. In the March, 1942, issue of *Fourth International* (Cannonite) a lengthy document of the Regional Committee of the Unoccupied Zone (Vichy, France) and admittedly "not adopted as such by the Conference," is published. This document is clearly a polemic against the National Conference resolution we are publishing below. Furthermore, the National Conference resolution is printed in such an abbreviated and garbled fashion

(again with the objective of concealing the differences) that parts of its meaning are unclear.

Clarification on this burning issue for the European revolutionists cannot be attained by such methods. It is not hard to grasp the motive of "FI" in attempting to conceal that which clearly belongs out in the open, under the spotlight of Marxist discussion. Obviously this trickery is in the nature of a "concealed" and hidden polemic itself.—Editor.

(1) The imperialist war which began in September, 1939, is approaching its climax. Virtually the entire world is at war.

(2) This war is fundamentally an imperialist war for a new distribution of raw materials and markets, for the conquest of new fields for the expansion of finance capital. It is not giving birth to a new progressive society—a "new order"—as the fascists and certain naive or cynical petty bourgeois politicians claim. Nor is it a war for the victory of democracy (even Pertinax denounces the de Gaullist plan for a monarchist restoration). Still less is it a war for the defense of socialism. Anglo-American imperialism tries to make use of the Soviet Union as a mere war machine directed against Hitler.

(3) Since 1917 the imperialist powers have constantly oscillated between two policies: a clash of two blocs strug-



gling among themselves for a redivision of the world, and an imperialist coalition against the working class and the USSR. It is not only a question of a conflict between the imperialist powers, but also a sharp conflict between imperialism and the economic, military and revolutionary forces of the workers' state and, through the latter, the forces of the international proletariat. In this conflict the workers of the world support the Soviet people and cooperate with them. They participate, by class methods, in this struggle against reaction so as to make this the first of the struggles for the socialist revolution. The USSR can depend only upon them. The imperialist "allies" will attempt a compromise with their rivals, on the back of the USSR and the oppressed peoples, just as soon as events threaten to overwhelm them. Given the present crisis of capitalism such a compromise can only lay the basis for a new and more frightful conflagration of the imperialist powers.

(4) Hitler means a Europe directed, colonized and crushed by the military boot for the benefit of German finance capital. An Anglo-American "liberation" is already defined by the eight points of Roosevelt-Churchill as the open military domination of the victors for the benefit of Wall Street and *the abandonment of the pacifist and humanitarian Wilsonian formulas*. For the workers of all countries, therefore, the task is to prepare for the proletarian socialist revolution by taking advantage of the military crisis. They must stand at the head of every economic and political struggle leading toward this objective. But this struggle assumes different forms in different countries.

*In the so-called democratic camp, the revolutionary struggle has, as its lever, the demand for power by the working class so that it may take the war into its own hands and transform it into a genuine anti-fascist war.*

In the camp of Hitler, the struggle of the workers tied down by fascism is necessarily more elementary (sabotage, strikes). This struggle is linked up with economic and political demands. In the oppressed and occupied countries, every direct anti-fascist struggle (sabotage, etc.) must be oriented toward a mass economic struggle.

(5) By straining to the utmost the strength of both camps, the imperialist war increasingly threatens their internal equilibrium and dislocates their military, political and economic apparatus (Axis crisis, crisis of German economy, the Hess affair—on one side; constant vacillations of the bourgeois democracies between a policy of concession to the different classes and a bureaucratic-authoritarian policy on the other side).

(6) Social problems inevitably tend to take first place as the war unrolls. The German crisis and the Russian war brought on guerrilla warfare in the Balkans. Military operations in the Near East (Iraq, Syria, Iran) posed the problem of Arabian liberation. From India to China a gigantic uprising of the people is emerging. Finally, the stirrings of the proletariat in the "democratic" countries, the movement of great popular masses against poverty and famine, the movement of Europe's oppressed nationalities, the first sign of a reawakened proletariat in the USSR—all these are forerunners of a new world revolutionary wave.

### **The Need for the Fourth International**

(7) The imperialist war has definitely compromised the Second International. The Russo-German conflict can only end with the liquidation of the Stalinist bureaucracy and the Third International. Confronted with this new revolution-

ary wave, the time has come for the international revolutionary vanguard to end once for all the era of small discussion and propaganda circles and to set down in deeds the activity of the Fourth International.

(8) France is the crossroad of all the imperialist rivalries. The Vichy government is a miserable clique whose existence is justified only by the balance of the existing forces: a balance between the two imperialist blocs; a balance between the rival clans of French imperialism (speculative capital against industrial capital); a balance between the classes momentarily incapable of promoting their historic solutions (fascism or socialism). Born of this extremely delicate balance, lacking an economic and social base, the Vichy government is leading an existence made up of perpetual wavering and impotence.

(9) The French Empire is Vichy's only real base. Vichy tries to preserve it by every means in the face of its imperialist rivals, as well as against the demands of the native populations. But the extreme weakness of Vichy makes the dislocation of the Empire inevitable. The present period is favorable for the development of national liberation movements in the colonies. "Liberation of the colonies from the yoke of French imperialism" is one of the essential slogans of a revolutionary party in France.

(10) The needs of the German army do not permit the reconstruction of French economy. Increased unemployment, lowering of the living standards of the masses, low wages, high prices—such will be the essential characteristics of the months to come. The antagonism between the popular masses on one side and the state and the occupying power on the other can only increase. The only possible economic uplift is that offered by socialist solutions (workers' control, nationalization). Every other solution can only strengthen the stranglehold that German imperialism has upon French economy.

(11) The Vichy government cannot build itself a base among the desperate petty-bourgeoisie. It can succeed only in organizing a clerical-police caricature of the totalitarian state. Its entire bureaucratic and reactionary structure is sapped internally by the existing political and economic contradictions. Political life constantly overflows the limitations Vichy attempts to impose upon it.

### **Socialist United States of Europe**

(12) The most immediate expression of popular discontent is the movement of national resistance to oppression. This is the first spontaneous petty bourgeois expression of the rising revolutionary tide. To the extent that France's economic dependence and Germany's internal difficulties will draw Berlin and Vichy closer and closer together, popular national sentiment will turn the masses more and more violently against Vichy.

(13) The development along proletarian and anti-capitalist lines of the popular movement of hostility to Hitlerism is the necessary condition for fraternization with the workers and soldiers of Germany. The party does not forget that without the collaboration of the German workers and soldiers no revolution is possible in Europe. Thus, fraternization remains one of our essential tasks. Every act tending to widen the breach between German and European workers is directly counter-revolutionary.

(14) A united party of liberation cannot, as British propaganda claims, exist. No program for power, accepted by all Frenchmen regardless of class, can exist. Still less can the masses, fighting for their freedom, advance the program of London, namely, restoration of liberal-capitalism, guardian-



ship over the peoples of Europe. Only the United Socialist States of Europe and of the world can really raise the productive forces and solve the national and democratic problems (right to speak one's own language, develop one's own culture, self-government, free assembly, freedom of the press, of work, etc.).

(15) The formless "de Gaullism" of the masses nevertheless remains as the most important political phenomena of the moment. Actually, there are as many "de Gaullisms" as there are social classes. *The possessing class will always be ready to give up the national struggle as soon as the oppressing imperialism offers it a few crumbs of profits*, or as soon as the working class conducts a class action (sabotage of the coal miners' strike in the North by the de Gaullist leaders, for example). By contrast, the de Gaullism of the workers, peasants and petty bourgeoisie symbolizes something fundamentally healthy. It signifies the will to struggle so that the country may be freed from the Hitlerite yoke and democratic liberties and social conquests re-established. Our party is ready to struggle side by side with such a current. It supports every popular "de Gaullist" movement seeking to establish a broad front for democratic rights. It participates in the front ranks of such a movement despite its confusion and the dangers contained in it. Naturally, the revolutionary party reserves its full freedom of criticism and action so as to aid the evolution of the masses toward socialist solutions. It opposes every attempt to confine this movement to resurrected Popular Frontist summits, and struggles for mass organizations along appropriate lines in the shop, home, quarter and village.

This movement can lead to a serious political regroupment only in so far as its actions pave the way for the organic regrouping of the working class and give it political cohesion.

### The Trotskyist Program

(16) Thanks to its apparatus and its large number of militants the Communist Party remains the principal organizing center of the working class. But its policy aims to permanently turn the masses away from the correct revolutionary path. After the Popular Front and the sabotage of the 1936 strike movement; after its "defeatism" in the war in 1939; after its collaboration with the German authorities in 1940; it now seeks to launch the masses down the blind alley of terrorism to save the Stalinist bureaucracy, along with its privileges, from the bottomless pit. The revolutionary movement now arising can triumph only under the leadership of a true proletarian Marxist-Leninist party. Based upon the first step of the workers' upsurge, a preliminary organizational regrouping of the vanguard is now discernible. Decisive social and military events in Europe and the USSR will lead to the regroupment of large masses, under the leadership of the revolutionary party.

(17) The collapse, the economic crisis, the territorial division of the country, the downfall of the traditional workers' organizations broke up the ranks of the working class and destroyed its organizational and ideological cohesion. The inability of the French bourgeoisie to create a totalitarian state has allowed the working class to reawaken to its historic mission. We note, at present, among the masses, a deep movement toward politicalization, toward radical and revolutionary solutions.

The first task of revolutionaries is to give the working class an elementary cohesion, to revive its organic unity based upon a policy that is alive to its class aims. We must use every legal possibility for this regrouping (unions or corporations, in particular), organize groups of workers' action, or workers' assem-

blies (popular committees, united front groups, groups of unaffiliated workers). Above all, our goal is to reestablish working class cohesion for action and in action.

(18) To lead such action effectively it is essential to advance a program linking up the masses' immediate preoccupations with fundamental socialist demands (workers' control, councils, arming of the people, United Socialist States of Europe).

The most urgent political task is the adaptation of the transitional program of the Fourth International to the present period.

(19) When decisive breaks make their appearance in the apparatus of the imperialist powers, there will burst forth into the political arena with irresistible violence, power and the confusion of an elementary force, those popular layers long oppressed by fascism and reaction. Only under the leadership of a proletariat aware of its historic objectives can such a movement definitively triumph; it can assure victory only on an international scale.

(20) The eruption of the masses will be as sudden as it is harsh. The rôle of the party, as an instrument of clarification and organization necessary for victory, will be more decisive than ever (a) in carrying out from now on the party's activity among the masses; (b) in bringing about the re-unification of all the best elements of the vanguard into a large section of the International.

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### Amendment by the Regional Committee Of the Unoccupied Zone

(15) The formless "de Gaullism" of the masses, leading them to hope for an English victory, nevertheless remains as the most important political phenomena of the moment. Actually, this tendency has as many varying contents as there are social classes. The possessing class will always be ready to give up the national struggle as soon as the oppressing imperialism offers it a few crumbs of its profits, or as soon as the workers pass over to class action (sabotage of the coal miners strike in the North by the de Gaullist leaders, for example). By contrast, this nationalism of the workers and peasants symbolizes something fundamentally healthy. It signifies the will to struggle so that the country may be freed from the Hitlerite yoke and democratic liberties and social conquests re-established. Our party is not afraid to conclude tactical agreements of more or less lengthy duration with every popular "de Gaullist" movement. Collaboration with such organizations must have, as a counterpart, a far-reaching ideological work. It is here that the vanguard must prove its political maturity. Our activity must have as its objective the dissolution of "de Gaullism" and liquidating it as a current among the toiling masses.

We participate in the front ranks of every broad movement for democratic liberties despite its confusion and the dangers contained in it. Naturally, the revolutionary party reserves its full freedom of criticism and action so as to aid the evolution of the masses toward socialist solutions. It opposes every attempt to confine this movement to resurrected popular front summits, and struggles for mass organizations along appropriate lines in the shop, home, quarter and village. This movement can lead to a serious political regroupment only insofar as its actions pave the way for the organic regrouping of the working class and give it political cohesion. With this in mind, we counterpose to the Stalinist slogan of "National Front" the slogan of "Socialist Front for Liberation," underscoring by this the fact that the proletariat must stand at the head of the movement.

# The Social Roots of Opportunism— III

[Continued from Last Issue]

The most far-sighted of the German reactionaries knew long before the war that the official organizations of the German social democracy had become thoroughly "bourgeoisified." And they said quite openly that at the critical moment they would appeal to the leaders, to the heads of the social democratic party against the *laboring masses*. In this connection a well-known conservative politician and historian, Hans Delbreuck, the publisher of the influential *Preussische Jahrbuecher*, offers us a striking example of candor. He is one of the most cultured, one of the shrewdest politicians of the German ruling class and has been pursuing for decades, with unrelenting attentiveness, the evolution of the social democracy. And it is precisely in the greatest electoral victory of the German social democracy, that of 1912, that this most foresighted of the conservative politicians sees the most gratifying results for the bourgeois and junkers.

Delbreuck has been giving public lectures on the subject of "Spirit and Mass in History." In the course of his dissertation our honorable historian "proves" that the "mass" as such is incapable of action, and that only the organization, i.e., the spirit, makes the mass capable of action. (Hans Delbreuck, *Regierung und Volkswille*, Berlin, 1914, p. 80). Translated into simple language that means: We need not fear the victorious four million votes of the social democracy; for the "organization" and "spirit" of the German Social Democracy are drenched in bourgeois customs and habits. At the decisive moment the leaders will be with us and drag the masses behind our triumphal chariot.

Franz Mehring immediately (in a critical analysis of Delbreuck's printed speech) unmasked the real significance of this speech: Delbreuck replied: "Because I described how powerless the masses are when left to themselves, Mehring is of the opinion that I mean to convey the idea that we need not fear them, since it is possible to reach agreement with the organization; that some sort of settlement can be made with the leaders in one way or another. I did not actually draw these conclusions, nor was I acquainted at the time with Michels' book (the reference is to the *Sociology of Party Structure* by Michels, which deals with the German Social Democracy) but Mehring has, indeed, read my thoughts not half badly. (L. c., p. 81.)

"How all the patriots paled when this election outcome became known in 1912! I can truly say that I did not permit myself to be thus deceived. I refer all those that wish, to look up the *Preussische Jahrbuecher*, where I wrote even at that time that the new Reichstag is more favorable in its composition than it has ever been before." Can greater frankness be asked for? Who can deny that Delbreuck was right in regarding the official leaders of the Social Democracy as *his* people, when he evaluated the official organization of the German Social Democracy as a counter-revolutionary factor inimical to the workers?

Another example! In an article written in April, 1915, Professor Schmoller says: "Since 1890 the educated and highly cultured leaders of the Social Democracy had given up one

after the other the most important elements of the Marxist credo. Three-quarters of the total number of social democratic voters are not social democrats. The number of members of the Social Democratic Party is slightly more than one million; the free trades unions have three million members. The annual income of the Social Democratic Party amounts to about a million marks. The annual income of the free trade unions to some eighty to ninety million marks. In the political organization, an aristocracy and bureaucracy of from five to ten thousand well-paid leaders has been formed which, without wanting to and without being conscious of it, has reduced the ultra-democratic principle in the party *ad absurdum*. The normal development of the coöperatives likewise tends to make their members constantly more forgetful of the ideals of the class struggle. In short, the Marxist workers' party in Germany has become involved in a process of bourgeois transformation—no matter how insistently it may deny this fact itself." ("Der Weltkrieg und die deutsche Sozialdemokratie," *Schmollers Jahrbuch*, 39 Jahrgang, III, p. 7 ff.)

Schmoller goes on to say: "The party functionaries who joined the general mutual aid society increased from 433 in 1902 to 2,948 in 1911; among the latter are also many trade union officials, but the majority of them have not joined up. The core of the party has thus become, in a certain sense, a uniformly run functionaries' machine. Their leaders are those who, by election and by their achievements in the party, have risen to the top, drawing constantly increasing salaries of from 2,500 to 8,000 marks . . . (and) in part, become well-to-do and even wealthy people.

"Almost higher than the party leaders stand the leaders and higher ranking officials of the trade unions, as, for example, the directors of the larger federations, such as Schlicke, who heads the gigantic federation of metal workers, and Leipart, who heads that of the wood workers. They administer properties worth several dozen million marks, have some third or half million workers behind them and occupy an almost identical place, insofar as organizational talent, power and influence are concerned, as the heads of our great trusts and corporations."

This is the evaluation made by the ideologists of the *bourgeoisie*—and from their point of view they are entirely correct.

## The Tendency of Labor Bureaucratism

Naturally, the socialists long ago recognized the reactionary rôle of the labor bureaucracy, but not quite so clearly as they did after the salient lesson of August 4, 1914. One of the leaders of the German trade union movement, the chairman of the bookbinders' union, once declared quite openly and honestly before a conference of the trade union leadership, not so much as a complaint but rather as a self-evident fact, that he must say that all those present were much more interested in the establishment of a new system of society when they were still on the workbench and had to be content with low wages, than they were now. The minutes carry a notation on this point, that the speaker was interrupted with numerous heckles directed against the opinion he expressed. But one

particular heckler called out from his seat: "That is even far more true of the party functionaries.."

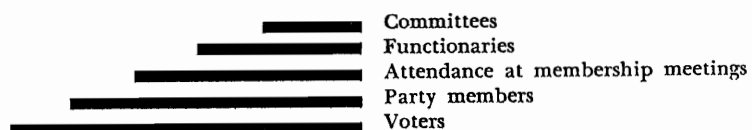
Wilhelm Liebknecht was fully conscious of the fact that the labor aristocracy predominated among the party leaders. "You who sit here," he once turned to say to the delegates at a party convention, "are also, most of you, aristocrats, to a certain extent, among the workers—I mean in so far as incomes are concerned. The laboring population in the mining regions of Saxony and the weavers in Silesia would regard such earnings as yours as the income of a veritable Croesus." (Protokoll des Berliner Parteitags 1892," p. 122.) August Bebel often underscored the change of mentality among the leaders once they have attained the living standard of the bureaucracy, of the officialdom, of the aristocrats of labor. At the Dresden convention of the party Bebel said that the majority of the party functionaries were people who considered the positions attained by them as, in some way, the culmination points of their careers.

The honest revisionists also openly pointed out the dangers threatening orthodox socialism from these quarters. None other than Wolfgang Heine wrote in connection with the case of the Reverend Goehre: "Here is revealed the inception of a danger which unfortunately relates to all public administrations, namely, that in place of genuine popular sovereignty, an *omnipotence of committees develops.*" (Wolfgang Heine "Demokratische Randbemerkungen zum Fall Göhre," *Sozialistische Monatshefte*, VIII Jahrgang 1904, Vol. I, p. 284.) Actually Germany has long known the phenomenon of a constantly greater number of functions, previously discharged by the electoral associations, i.e., by large organizational units, being turned over to much narrower committees. But for the leaders even that is too democratic. Even several of the leaders of the "radical" wing of the social democracy were of the opinion, before, that democratic procedure must not be extended too far. (See, for example, the article by Hans Block, "Überspannung der Demokratie," *Neue Zeit*, Vol. XXVI, No. 8, p. 264. On the rôle of the bureaucracy in the German workers' movement see also: Ed. Bernstein, "Die Demokratie in der Sozialdemokratie," *Sozialistische Monatshefte*, 1908, 18/19, 1909.)

### Bureaucracy and the Mass

In 1911 Robert Michels, a former member of the Social Democracy and today a "socialist" professor in Turin, published a book under the title *The Sociology of the Party Structure in Modern Democracies*. His investigation is confined mainly to facts in the life of the German Social Democracy. The author has no uniform view of his own. He vacillates back and forth between vulgar reformism and quasi-revolutionary syndicalism. Many of his generalizations are often premature and cannot stand up even against feeble criticism. Thus, for instance, the author tends to hold the absolutely false conception that the emergence of a putrified upper bureaucratic stratum is an inevitable phenomenon in every democracy. The author believes, in his fatalism, that this phenomenon is inherent in *the essence of democracy itself*. But his observations, and the material which the author has collected, are of great interest.

Michels has graphically described the rule of the upper bureaucratic stratum over the entire mass of members and followers of the German Social Democracy in the following manner:



The base of this pyramid is formed by the mass of four million social democratic voters. Then follows the still quite numerous stratum of party members, numbering close to a million. After that, those who attend the membership meetings, a considerably smaller number. Above them stands a small group of party functionaries and the top of the pyramid is constituted finally, by the narrow caste of *the most important party functionaries—the committees*. ("Die Soziologie des Parteiwesens in der modernen Demokratie. Untersuchungen über die obligatorischen Tendenzen des Gruppenlebens," by Robert Michels, Leipzig, 1911, p. 53.)

Thus the powerful apparatus that exerts such a tremendous influence on the course of affairs in the German Social Democracy lands in the hands of the committees, i.e., stands uncontrollably at the disposal of an oligarchic group of a few thousand officials.

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The well known Dutch Marxist, Anton Pannekoek, who was active for a long time in the ranks of the German Social Democracy, has characterized the present situation of the party as follows: "The German social democracy . . . is a firmly established, gigantic organization, which exists almost as a state within the state, with its own officials, with its own finances, its own press; within a certain spiritual sphere of its own, with an ideology all its own. . . . The entire character of this organization is suited to the peaceful pre-imperialist epoch; the human agents of this character are the functionaries, the secretaries, the agitators, the parliamentarians, the theoreticians, form a caste of their own, a group with separate interests which dominates the organizations both materially and ideologically. It is no accident that all of them, with Kautsky at their head, wanted to have nothing to do with a real *struggle* against imperialism. Their whole interest in life is of a nature inimical to the new tactic, a tactic which endangers their existence as functionaries. Their quiet work in the offices and in the editorial chambers, in conferences and in council or committee meetings, in the writing of erudite and not so erudite articles against the bourgeoisie and against one another—all this peacefully business-like activity is being threatened by the storms of the imperialist epoch. . . . This whole bureaucratically scholarly apparatus . . . can only be saved by being removed outside the bounds of this boiling pot, outside of the revolutionary struggle, outside of the real, the main stream of life (and consequently into the service of its own bourgeoisie—G. Z.). If the party and the leadership were to adopt the tactic of mass action, the state power would immediately swoop down upon the organizations—the basis of their entire existence and of all their activity in life—and perhaps destroy them, confiscate their treasuries, arrest the leaders, etc. Naturally, it would be an illusion to believe that the power of the proletariat can thus be broken: the organizational power of the workers resides not in the form of their corporative associations, but in the spirit of solidarity, in discipline, in unity; by these means the workers could create better forms of organization. But for the functionaries that would mean the end, for the particular organization form is their entire world, without which they could not exist or function. The urge toward self-preservation, the group interests of their craft, must of necessity force upon them the tactic of avoiding a struggle with, and of giving way to, imperial-

ism." (Anton Pannekoek, "Der Imperialismus und die Aufgaben des Proletariats," in *Verbote, Internationale Marxistische Rundschau*, January, 1916.)

Of course, all this must not be over-simplified. *Objectively* the labor bureaucracy—the so-called leaders—betrayed the cause of the workers in Germany on August 4th. And not only in Germany. But that must not be taken to mean that every one of these leaders said to himself at the decisive moment: I had better go over to the side of the bourgeoisie, else I am going to lose my bread and butter, my position in public life, etc. Not at all! *Subjectively*, many members of this caste are still convinced to this day that they have been acting exclusively in the interests of the working class, that their conduct was dictated by their better understanding of the proletarian interests. When we speak of the "treachery of the leaders" we do not mean to say by this that it was all a deep-laid plot, that it was a consciously perpetrated sell-out of the workers' interests. Far from it. But consciousness is conditioned by existence, not *vice versa*. The entire social essence of this caste of labor bureaucrats led inevitably, *through the outmoded pace set for the movement in the "peaceful" pre-war period*, to complete bourgeoisification of their "consciousness." The entire position into which this numerically strong caste of leaders had climbed over the backs of the working class made of them a social group which objectively must be regarded as an agency of the imperialist bourgeoisie.

### The Needs and Dangers of an Apparatus

In his dispute with the leader of the opportunists, von Vollmar, Bebel repeatedly pointed out that the social position of the former (von Vollmar belonged to the upper strata and was fabulously rich) prevented him from understanding the griefs of the working class and *therefore made him into an opportunist* tending toward a nationalistic, liberal policy. Although this may not always be true in the case of an individual person (an individual can raise himself above the milieu of his class, above his social group), it is absolutely true for the entire social stratum of the labor bureaucracy.

The rise of an entire, numerically strong stratum of labor bureaucrats—as well as the mass influx of electoral camp-followers—is, at one and the same time, a symptom of strength as well as of weakness in the labor movement. Of strength—because it testifies to the *numerical* growth of the movement. An organization with only a few thousand members can get along without paid functionaries. When it begins to have hundreds of thousands and millions of members it necessarily needs a big and complex organizational apparatus. But the rise of this stratum becomes a symptom of weakness in the movement when the leaders of the workers' organizations degenerate into officials in the worse sense of the word, when it begins to lack the broad proletarian impetus necessary to the given stage of development. Every people, so the saying goes, has the kind of government it deserves. This can be amplified by adding that every labor movement also has the kind of leadership it deserves.

At the time of the crisis on the eve of the war, the labor bureaucracy played the rôle of a reactionary factor. That is undoubtedly correct. But that does not mean that the labor movement will be able to get along in the future without a big organizational apparatus, without an entire stratum of people devoted especially to the service of the proletarian organization. We do not want to go back to the time when the labor movement was so weak that it could get along without its own employees and functionaries, but to go forward to the

time in which the labor movement itself will be something different, in which the stormy movement of the proletariat will subordinate the stratum of functionaries to itself, in which routine will be destroyed, bureaucratic corrosion wiped out; which will bring new men to the surface, infuse them with fighting courage, fill them with a new spirit.

The corporation of the "leaders" has dealt a heavy blow to the cause of the workers. Not only those labor leaders who hail from the bourgeoisie but also those who hail from the working class, who were elected by the workers and who owe their positions to working class democracy. That is undoubtedly true. But that does not mean that the idea of democracy has therefore collapsed—as the German conservative, Delbrueck, seeks to prove, convinced as he is that the solution for all evils lies in the Prussian monarchist principle. That does not mean that the vacillations of the semi-reformist, semi-syndicalist, Robert Michels, are justified; he also tends to ascribe the entire collapse of the German social democracy to causes which are inherent in every organization built upon a democratic basis. The poisonous weed of labor bureaucracy grew on the soil of the "peaceful" epoch, not because of, but despite, the democratic organization. Only opportunism—a form of expression corresponding to this epoch—and not the democratic organizational principle, has suffered bankruptcy. New times will come and we shall hear new songs. As soon as the masses themselves enter the historical arena they will put an end to the uncontrollable labor bureaucracy. The coming new epoch will bring forth a new generation of leaders and new forms of control on the part of the working masses over their deputies and plenipotentiaries.

### The Opportunist Caste

We do not at all wish to contend that the entire crisis can be explained by the treachery of the leaders. The treachery of the leaders in itself can only be explained by more profound causes inherent in the epoch. But not everything can be unshouldered on this epoch. The fact of the betrayal by the leaders must not be passed over in silence. Treachery has been committed. It is necessary to call things by their name. It is our task not only to explain the causes of opportunism but also to *combat* opportunism. It is our duty not only to trace down the causes of the "treachery," but also to unmask the traitors and to render them harmless. The betrayal by the official leaders of the German Social Democracy, the counter-revolutionary rôle of the party and trade union bureaucracy during the war, was so infamous that in the periodical of the people forming the Social Democratic "center," in the *Neue Zeit* of 1916, may be found such lines as the following, the pen products of Kautsky's co-thinker, the lately deceased Gustave Eckstein: "*The leaders were constrained to remain radical in words, in order to hold the masses behind them. In actuality, however, they aimed in the immediate period to obtain petty reforms which, however, could not be gotten without great struggles. Out of habit the leaders developed an 'oracular smile.' The organization became more and more of an end in itself, which ever more and more dislodged the thought of achieving the final goal from their heads and from their hearts.*"

After two years of war the honest representatives of the "center" also had to admit that the present official organization of the German Social Democracy had become a counter-revolutionary factor, that the leaders had become "oracles." That is exactly what Rosa Luxemburg had said in her polemics against Kautsky as far back as 1912.



Robespierre in his time attempted to differentiate between *representatives* of the people ("*représentants du peuple*") and *plenipotentiaries* of the people ("*mandataires du peuple*"). Representation of the people, according to his opinion, cannot be realized: "Will cannot be represented (*la volonté ne peut se représenter*"). Robespierre recognized only *plenipotentiaries* of the people. The plenipotentiaries of the people carry out the mandate given them by the people.

The caste of opportunist leaders of the labor movement still consists today, unfortunately, of formally recognized "representatives" of the working class. But in its essence this caste has become the tool of an enemy class. The members of this caste who formally possessed full power in the working class are in reality *the emissaries of bourgeois society in the camp of the proletariat*.

## OPPORTUNISM AND THE LABOR ARISTOCRACY

Until very recently the question of the labor aristocracy and its conservative rôle in the labor movement has been treated as a problem almost unique to the *British* labor movement. The epoch of the latest form of imperialism, the events in the labor movement of the entire world in connection with the World War, have posed this question on a much wider scale. It has become one of the most basic questions of the labor movement *in general*. The victory of opportunism and social chauvinism in Germany—and not in Germany alone—is intimately bound up with the victory of the narrow, corporate interests of the relatively small group of labor aristocrats over the genuine interests of the many millions strong laboring mass, which constitutes *the working class*.

For many years England was the Promised Land of bourgeois influence upon the proletariat and consequently the Promised Land of the opportunists. It has become commonplace in socialist literature to recognize this circumstance as being conditioned by the monopolistic position of England on the world market. The surplus profit which the British bourgeoisie has derived, thanks to this monopolistic position, has enabled it to bribe "its" workers and thereby to tear them loose from the socialist movement. But it would be false to believe that the magnanimity of the British capitalists was extended in equal measure to the entire working class. No, with these crumbs they bought off mainly the upper stratum of the working class—the labor aristocracy. That sufficed in order—under otherwise favorable conditions for the bourgeoisie—to demoralize the British labor movement.

Among the great masses of the *unskilled* proletariat undescrivable poverty prevails even in England. Their condition has not been much better than the condition of their brothers in other countries. Even in the heyday of British capitalism there were in England considerable strata of unskilled workers who lived in circumstances not much better than those described by Frederick Engels in his *Condition of the Working Class in England*.

In one of his well-known works, published in 1902 (*Die soziale Revolution und Am Tage nach der sozialen Revolution*), Kautsky deals with the economic conditions of the working class in England in the second half of the nineteenth century. He distinguishes clearly between the minority of the skilled, and the majority of the unskilled, workers. Kautsky analyzes the tables compiled by the bourgeois economist, E. L. Bowley, who contends that in the 30 years between 1860 and 1891 the wages of the British workers rose by 40 per cent

(the reference is to *nominal wages*) and he comes to the conclusion that this 40 per cent rise in wages in the period from 1860 to 1891, which Bowley assumes to hold true for the entire working class of England, does not even hold true for all the strata of the labor aristocracy. Kautsky contends that the author simply *assumes* that the average general condition of the working class improved to the same extent as the condition of the workers organized in the trade unions; the latter, however, do not constitute more than a fifth of all the workers. Kautsky proves that Bowley's figures are greatly exaggerated, that even the wages of the excellently organized workers in the British iron industry rose only by 25 per cent in the period of time mentioned.

That is undoubtedly what really happened. The great mass of the unskilled workers led a lamentable existence. But the minority of the aristocrats of labor were bribed with small crumbs. Thus the bourgeoisie beheaded the movement of the British proletariat, so to speak. In England *organized* workers and skilled workers for a long time were synonymous. In the epoch of the old trade unionism the better situated skilled workers constituted the main mass of the trade union membership. But even in the epoch of the new trade unionism this state of affairs has remained the same by and large. The British trade unions still do not embrace more than a fifth of all the workers today. Many millions of women workers and of the most poorly paid unskilled workers are still unorganized, still outside the trade unions.

In 1902 Kautsky wrote, in characterizing the "upper strata of the British working class" (i.e., the labor aristocracy), that these workers are today hardly anything else but little bourgeois who differ from the others only by a somewhat greater lack of culture, and whose most exalted ideal consists in aping their masters, in imitating their hypocritical respectability, in admiring wealth no matter how attained, in their lifeless manner of killing time. The emancipation of their class is only a foolhardy dream in so far as they are concerned. On the other hand, football, boxing, horse racing, wagering of all sorts are matters which stir them profoundly and occupy all their free time, all their mental powers, all their materials means (Kautsky: *Die soziale Revolution*, Berlin, 1907, p. 63).

### The Many Forms of Bribery

These "little bourgeois"—the labor aristocracy—served the big bourgeoisie as the best means of introducing bourgeois ideas into the laboring mass. By throwing down to these "little bourgeois" a few crumbs from their richly decked imperialist table, the big bourgeoisie made of them faithful watchdogs of the capitalist system. With the aid of a thin golden thread it bound them firmly to the bandwagon of imperialism, made them into *agents of the bourgeoisie*, destined to demoralize systematically the labor movement and to inculcate it with the virus of opportunism. The "little bourgeois" became the most reliable advance guards of the imperialist bourgeoisie in the camp of the working class.

When Kautsky speaks of the bourgeois "respectability" of these "little bourgeois," he is only continuing in the tradition of Marx and Engels. Both of the founders of scientific socialism, who lived in England for a long time and therefore had the opportunity of acquainting themselves at first hand with the reactionary rôle of the labor aristocrats, advised their disciples continually to make just such an evaluation of the "little bourgeois" as we have found in Kautsky's passage above. "What is most repulsive here (in England) is that bourgeois



'respectability' which has grown deep into the skin of the workers. Socially, the dissection of society into innumerable, indisputably recognized gradations, of which each has its own pride but also its own innate respect before its 'betters' and 'superiors,' is so time-honored and firmly established that the bourgeois still make use of all this as easy bait. I am by no means certain that John Burns, for instance, is not much prouder of his popularity with Cardinal Manning, the Lord Mayor, and the bourgeoisie in general, than of his popularity with his own class. Champion—an ex-lieutenant—years ago rubbed shoulders with the conservative element, preached socialism at a parish church congress, etc. And even Tom Mann, whom I regard as the best of them, likes to tell people that he is going to lunch with the Lord Mayor." This is what Fredrick Engels wrote as far back as 1889. ("Briefe und uszüge aus Briefen" von J. P. Becher, Jos. Dietzgen, Friedrich Engels, Karl Marx, u.a. an F. A. Sorge, etc., p. 324.)

Even earlier, in 1883, Engels wrote in a letter to Kautsky, which is devoted especially to the question of the attitude of the British workers toward colonial policy, as follows: "You asked me what the British worker thinks of colonial policy? Well, just about what he thinks of politics in general. There is no workers' party here. There are only conservatives and liberal radicals, and the workers partake light-heartedly of their share in England's monopoly on the world market and in the colonies." Here we see a direct indication of the fact that the bourgeoisie *bribes* the workers by leaving them little tidbits from among the multitude of benefits which the British monopoly on the world market and in the colonies nets them. (K. Kautsky: "Sozialismus und Kolonialpolitik," 1907, p. 79.) In 1877 Marx speaks of the "shameful trade union congress at Leicester... where the bourgeois played the patron saints, among them a certain Mr. Th. Brassey, a multi-millionaire... and the son of the notorious Brassey of the railroads, whose 'enterprise' is Europe and Asia." ("Briefe an Sorge," p. 156.)

In 1893 Engels upbraids the "socialist" Fabians in the following words: "The Fabians here in London are a brand of careerists, who have sufficient sense to be able to foresee the inevitability of the social upheaval, but who nevertheless find it impossible to entrust this gigantic work to the raw proletariat, and are therefore disposed to place themselves at its head. Fear of the revolution is their fundamental principle... their tactic: not to combat the liberals resolutely as opponents, but to impel them forward to socialist conclusions; ergo, to maneuver with them, to permeate liberalism with socialism... These people naturally have a large bourgeois following and therefore, money... It is a critical period for the movement here... For a moment it was close to landing... under Champion's wings... the latter works, consciously or unconsciously, just as much for the Tories, as the Fabians do for the Liberals. But... socialism has penetrated the masses in the industrial regions enormously of late, and I count upon the masses holding their leaders in check."

These were the views of Marx and Engels on the "little bourgeois," the labor aristocracy. They stigmatized the anti-revolutionary position of these strata unsparingly, whether it expressed itself in the policies of trade unionism or in the socialist organization of the Fabians. From every word uttered by Marx and Engels on this question, it is clearly evident how fatal for the cause of the workers, how disastrous for the socialist struggle of the proletariat, they considered the specific point of view of the labor aristocracy.

## Bureaucracy as a World Phenomenon

Marx and Engels derived their generalizations regarding the rôle of the labor bureaucracy mainly from their observations of the process of development of the working class in England. It was in England, moreover, that Marx made his studies of capitalism in general. In his *Capital*, also, Marx cites above all else, from the experiences of British capitalism. But a great deal of water has passed under the bridge since then. The conservative rôle of the labor aristocracy may be observed today, not only in England, but in a large number of other countries. Let us take Holland, for example. Here is a small country that does not dream today of dominating the world market. But in this country there is a bourgeoisie bursting with wealth, whose few remnants of past colonial grandeur still bring it annually a golden shower of irrationally big profits. Of these unheard-of profits of the Dutch imperialist bourgeoisie, only the "upper" strata of the workers enjoy a crumb or two, but that suffices to constitute them into a labor aristocracy, which becomes, in turn, a conservative, counter-revolutionary element.

And in America? Do we not witness the spectacle there of a tiny group of labor aristocrats rising on the backs of a millions-strong mass of oppressed workers—particularly of immigrants and Negroes—and bought out and nurtured by the financial oligarchy? Are not Gompers and Co. agents of the bourgeoisie in the circles of the "aristocrats of labor," and are not the latter, in turn, agents of Gompers in the camp of the working class? On the one hand, workers are shot down in the course of purely economic strikes; on the other, Gompers and the other "stainless knights of labor" are decorated with ever greater honors, almost with titular decorations.

Or in Australia. The social-liberals treasure Australia as the Promised Land, in which a coal miner can become a minister. But what has actually happened? Here too, a small parasitic band of labor leaders—the Messrs. Fisher, Hughes and Co.—rise upon the shoulders of the oppressed mass of unskilled workers and brought to the surface by a little group of labor aristocrats, are betraying the interests of the working class with a cynicism unprecedented in history. The crisis created by the outbreak of the World War has thrown a particularly strong light upon this despicable treachery of the "labor leaders."

This self-same sort of bribery took place among the "upper strata" of the workers in Germany as well. Under different conditions, in a somewhat different form, it ran its course in the land of the "classic Social Democracy." But the historic sense of the transformation undergone by the heads of the German working class, in the persons of the leaders of their trade unions and of their so-called social democratic party, is the same. There is no serious difference between Legien, Gompers, Fisher and Henderson. Legien is not a Minister as yet, but for reasons entirely independent of his own person. In the period immediately ahead of us he may not get any further than the ministerial antechamber. The Prussian Junkers will continue to extend only one finger at a time to him. But he is, nevertheless, only a "labor lieutenant of the capitalist class." And not only Legien, but naturally also Scheidemann and Suedekum, as well as all their carbon copies, whose manner of speech, alone, differs from the former's...

\* \* \*

The process of the transition of the German labor aristocracy to the side of the bourgeoisie naturally did not begin yesterday. The corruption of the labor aristocracy began with

the entrance of German imperialism into the world arena. The more far-sighted of the ideologists of the German bourgeoisie have given (and still give) an excellent account of this social phenomenon, so all-important for the bourgeoisie. Professor Schmoller tells us that the German bourgeoisie had made peaceful overtures to the "fatherlandish labor movement" as far back as the beginning of the nineties. The Social Democracy, he says, did not, however, take the extended hand at once. "Only a wise politician like Herr von Vollmar was ready at that time to make the turn and thus to lend an impulse to revisionism." (*Schmollers Jahrbuch*, 1915, Vol. 3: "Der Weltkrieg und die deutsche Sozialdemokratie," by G. Schmoller.)

It was not the social democrats alone who did not want to make peace, however. The extremists among the ruling classes, the Junkers, the bitterest reactionaries, also resisted. They saw in the German Social Democracy a revolutionary danger and relied more and more on exterminating it by means of reprisals. The voices of the more sensible bourgeois were drowned out by the howls of the reactionaries. "The voices of the non-partisans, who . . . denied . . . the alleged danger of revolution . . . were not given a hearing." Professor Schmoller today complains against the irreconcilables.

In any case, the conflict inside of the ruling classes has now been settled. There isn't a single Purishkevitch (notorious reactionary deputy in the Russian Duma—trans.) in Germany today who doesn't understand that it is necessary to make certain "concessions" to well-meaning workers. The danger of revolution has proved to be an "alleged" danger. The system of "bribery" has withstood the test brilliantly.

Speaking in retrospect, the well known bourgeois professor, Dr. Herkner, the author of *Labor Problems*, writes: "Only in the course of the last ten to fifteen years, views have gradually come forward, in the columns of the revisionist *Sozialistische Monatshefte*, to be precise, which herald a distinct return to more forceful nationalistic political ideas. . . . Considerable strata of labor have achieved such a remarkable improvement in their social conditions and have found the advantages accruing also to them, due to the powerful boom in German economic life, of such immediate promise, that they themselves have displayed a most intense interest in this boom. The old slogans of internationalism, such as that the workers had no fatherland or that they had nothing to lose but their chains, are no longer taken seriously by even the most rabid of the comrades." (Dr. Heinrich Herkner, "Sozialdemokratie und Auslandspolitik," *Preussische Jahrbücher*, September, 1915, p. 397.)

However, this question has been dealt with in similar fashion by the most influential representatives of German imperialism, not only at the present time, after 1914, but long before the war. In the very scholarly work of the prominent German conservative, Freiherr von Walterhausen, devoted to the question of capital exports, a number of pages deal especially with the problem of the extent to which workers are "interested" in the imperialism of their country. "Both capital and labor are equally concerned about territorial and maritime defenses," writes this erudite Freiherr, ". . . the laboring population is, moreover, participating directly in the dividends derived. In so far as that serves for the consumption of those benefiting therefrom, it brings about a substantial demand for goods and services on the internal market and thus helps raise the wages of workers and servants. If the dividends accrue to the domestic enterprises in the form of a greater accumulation of capital, then the latter also experi-

ence the need to employ more labor power." (A. Sartorius: *Freiherr v. Walterhausen*, "Das volkwirtschaftliche System der Kapitalanlage in Auslande," p. 439.) These few words—although the expressions used are rather unusual—contain the entire theory of social chauvinism.

Regarding the situation in England, Sartorius Von Walterhausen writes as follows: "The immense national wealth accumulated in England in the course of the last century has become—although industry itself has retrogressed—a protection for the class of skilled workers." And he quotes Schulze-Gaevernitz approvingly: "The skilled and well-paid force of British heavy industry has realized today that the high standard of living it has achieved with such difficulty, stands and falls with England's political power."

This is plain talk. The British imperialists bribe a part of their labor aristocracy. We, the German imperialists, must also learn to buy out "our" labor aristocracy. The learned representative of German Junkerdom sees very clearly the connection between "labor" opportunism and "labor" imperialism, between imperialist victories and the transition of the labor aristocracy to the side of the bourgeoisie. Regarding England, he maintains that no social democracy could arise there as long as the British imperialists had the means of bribing their workers. The example of Germany proves, however, that this is not entirely correct: a social democracy *can* exist also under such conditions; not a revolutionary, but rather a counter-revolutionary social democracy a la Suedekum. There is one more thing that Mr. Sartorius von Walterhausen has forgotten; namely, that a genuine social democracy aims to be, not the party of the labor aristocracy, but rather the party of the *working class* as a whole. He has overlooked the fact that the skilled and better-paid workers form only a minority of the working class—a minority which, when it goes over to the side of the imperialists at the critical moment, can deal the socialist movement quite a blow, to be sure, but never uproot it.

GREGORY ZINOVIEV.

Hartenstein, Switzerland, August 4, 1916.

[To Be Continued]

## BOOKS IN REVIEW

### Tarlé's Invasion of History

NAPOLEON'S INVASION OF RUSSIA, 1812, by Eugene Tarlé. Oxford Press, New York. \$3.50.

Eugene Tarlé, considered to be the outstanding authority on the history of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic era, has recently added a new work to his several volumes. His latest book, which deals wholly with Napoleon's invasion of Russia, has been hailed in many quarters as a great and original contribution to the history of the war of 1812.

However, anything more than a superficial reading of the book reveals that it was written not so much as objective history as to fill the need of the Stalinist régime to rewrite all of Russian history with a new nationalist bias. If Tarlé had wished to write the history of Napoleon's campaign of 1812, he had merely to turn to the two chapters on this episode contained in his biographical work, *Bonaparte*, which has all the information found in the new book. The biography is not just another story of the life of Napoleon, but

a social and political history of the Napoleonic era. In it Tarlé analyzes the Russian campaign, its causes and effects, and the specific place it occupies in the general historical period. The Russian case as well as the French is presented, for Tarlé is not interested in taking sides in a war which occurred one hundred and thirty years ago—he is interested in writing a historical study.

In that book he cites interesting and irrefutable material to show that the cause of Napoleon's defeat was primarily political, that his fear of emancipating the serfs deprived him of his best weapon against the Russian army, which, after all, was defending the interests of Russia's ruling class. Napoleon himself recognized this mistake later when he was on St. Helena. He explained it by stating that he did not wish to let loose the elements of national revolt and thereby create a situation where there "would be no one with whom" to conclude peace.

#### THE FRENCH AND RUSSIAN ALLIANCE

After Napoleon defeated Prussia and compelled her to sign the humiliating peace of Tilsit, a secret defensive and offensive alliance was concluded between Napoleon and Czar Alexander which obligated Russia to enforce Napoleon's continental blockade aimed at the destruction of British power. In spite of the "gifts" granted to her in the form of Prussian Bialystok and some Austrian territory, Russia was reduced to the status of a vassal state. The nobility, however, felt itself threatened and its opposition to the Czar grew. When Napoleon failed to keep his promises to Alexander (he had promised him Turkey and also that he would remove his troops from Prussia) the latter allowed the anti-French sentiments in his court free rein. In the years that followed, English goods landed in Russia and from there made their way into Germany, Austria and Poland, practically nullifying the continental blockade decrees. In 1811 a new tariff increased the duties on imports of wines, silks and other luxury articles coming from France. Thus Napoleon was given an immediate excuse for preparing war against Russia.

This material is treated clearly and adequately in both books. The military problems and battles are also dealt with in parallel fashion. In the new book, however, "something new has been added," for running through it like a red thread is a "national war" on the part of the Russian peasants, a phenomenon conjured up by Tarlé for the purpose of proving the historical roots of Russian patriotism and for making a thinly veiled analogy between the position of Russia of 1812 and contemporary Russia.

It is significant to note that in the biography all source and reference material is carefully listed, while this is just as carefully avoided in the new book on the invasion. The reader is referred for these to the original Russian!

For proof that the "national war" is of Tarlé's own making, one need only refer back to the biography. That his latest contentions are in direct opposition to what he wrote before does not in the least disturb him. He produces no new evidence to back up his contentions; he does not even bother to remember what he wrote previously on the so-called national war.

In both books Tarlé shows that Russian military strategy consisted of drawing the invader as far inland as possible, with the aim of stretching thin his line of communications. The scorched earth policy was also part of the strategy, *but this was a policy carried out by the Russian army as a military measure*. Yet by some peculiar twisting of facts, Tarlé tries to prove that the scorched earth policy was carried out by the

peasant population as a defensive measure. Moreover, in the new book Tarlé endeavors to prove that the Russian people went over to offensive action against Napoleon, *while this is categorically denied in the earlier book*.

#### THE THESIS OF THE NEW BOOK

A few examples will suffice to show this:

In the first place, Tarlé states that in 1812 Russia was fighting to preserve her economic and political independence. It was a "struggle for survival in the full sense of the word." "This is what gave the war its peculiarly national character and impelled the Russian people to wage it with such heroic fortitude" (page 4).

And further: "'The National War' is not a mere chapter in the history of the year 1812. The entire war against the invader was from start to finish a national war. Napoleon's strategy had counted on his own troops and Alexander's troops, but he had to fight the Russian people, whom he had not counted. It was the hand of the Russian people that inflicted the irreparable, mortal blow" (page 269).

And now the "national war" is the guerrilla movement. "The guerrilla movement, which began immediately after Borodino, achieved its tremendous success only through the active, voluntary and zealous assistance of the Russian peasantry. But this unquenchable hatred of the despoilers, destroyers, murderers and ravishers manifested itself, above all, in the enthusiasm with which the peasants joined the army and fought. The national character of this war was at once revealed in organized forms—in the army. In Spain, the national war assumed quite other forms, because in that country much time passed before military units could be organized. But in their indomitable hatred of the foreign ravishers and pillagers, in their thirst to give their lives for the destruction of a cruel and predatory foe, in their firm consciousness of their inner right, the Russian people was not a whit behind the Spanish people" (page 267).

And later on:

"As I have had occasion to note, the Russian national war was different from the Spanish. It was waged chiefly by peasants in army or militia uniforms. But this made it no less national" (page 346).

One might add that any war waged by the masses in army uniforms (and which modern war isn't?) can, by this token, be considered "national."

When news reached Moscow that the enemy was breaking all resistance and was heading straight for that city, Tarlé describes the resolution of the nobility to put up a stiff resistance, by pledging to send up to 80,000 peasant serfs into the militia. "A national militia began to form. The morale of the people gained enormously. Not fear but anger was the dominant sentiment. Witnesses testify that in this terrible moment all classes merged in one common emotion. Better death than submission to the invading 'ravisher!' Peasants, lower bourgeoisie, merchants, nobility—all vied with one another in their eagerness to fight Napoleon to the death" (page 160).

Of course this does not prevent Tarlé from later saying the following about the militia: "The militiamen demanded to be sworn in. Among the myriads of rumors going around in 1812, there was one to the effect that sworn militiamen would be emancipated from serfdom at the end of the war. More than likely this rumor was responsible for the demand to be sworn in" (page 264).

"Not the burning of Moscow and not the frosts—there was no frost until Smolensk—but the Russian peasants inflicted the most terrible blow on the Grand Army" (page 353).

And in summary, Tarlé writes: "The popular character of the Russian war was manifested in the heroic conduct of the Russian soldiers on the battlefield, in the armed peasant attacks on the conqueror, in their successful efforts to starve him out; in Spain, the popular character of the war was manifested in independent fighting enterprises on the part of the irregular peasant masses. This required a great deal of heroism, but the results could not be as quick and considerable as they would have been if Spain had preserved a regular fighting organization. Such an organization was created in Spain only at a later stage of the struggle; in Russia it existed from the beginning to the end and could usefully exploit the surge of the national spirit" (page 409).

#### WHAT THE AUTHOR WROTE BEFORE

So much for Tarlé's proof of the "national war." Yet, when Tarlé was writing freely, without the threat of a return to Siberia should he not bend with the political winds in Stalinist Russia, he could write as the true Marxist historian and scholar that he was:

It would not be amiss here to say something of the so-called Russian "national war" of 1812.

Never did Napoleon, or his marshals, or their companions in arms, speak of the War of 1812 as a "national" war, in the same sense that they spoke of the Spanish guerrilla war as a "national" war. Nor could they compare the two phenomena. The war in Russia lasted six months. Of these six months, the first three saw Napoleon constantly victorious as he advanced along a direct line from Kovno to Vilna to Smolensk to Moscow, interrupted by battles and petty skirmishes with the regular Russian army. There was, however, not a single mass revolt against the French—neither then nor after Napoleon's entry into Moscow. Indeed there were occurrences of quite a contrary nature, as when the peasants of Smolensk complained to the French authorities that their master, the landowner Engelhardt, had been guilty of betraying the French. Incidentally, Engelhardt was shot by the French after this.

Following the battle of Malo-Yaroslavetz, when the frosts intensified the profound disorganization of the retreating French army, there came into being that phenomenon which contemporaries accurately described as "actions of the militia detachments" but which later came to be known as a "national war." The heads of the militia—Figner, Davidov, Seslavin, Kudashev, Vadbofsky—were officers of the regular Russian army who had been authorized to organize detachments of volunteers (from among the soldiers of the regular army and willing newcomers). These militia detachments had instructions to harass the French army by sudden forays on its transport, on its lagging detachments and generally on those points where small "parties" (never consisting of more than several hundred men) might attack with some prospect of success. In these militia corps were to be found soldiers, Cossacks and reserves. The peasants as a group took no part in these activities. Their duties were to give topographical directions and generally to answer questions put to them by the militia chiefs. On occasion they were ordered to act as guides in localities unfamiliar to the militiamen, or to make assaults on single French soldiers lagging behind the main army.

All this transpired in the course of approximately five weeks, in October and November. Later, when the French army left the Smolensk province and entered White Russia, the peasantry, with little personal risk, captured many of the hungry, half-frozen French laggards. Most of them were immediately put to death.

*This disorganized stalking by the peasantry bore little resemblance to that ruthless and indefatigable war which the Spanish people, on their own initiative, waged for five years. This struggle had begun when Napoleon's desire to conquer Spain was scarcely revealed, and it ended only when Napoleon finally renounced his ambition and ordered the last French soldiers to leave the Peninsula. In this conflict the Spanish peasants abandoned their villages for years at a time, organizing special detachments which attacked the French in irregular fashion and once forced an entire French army corps to surrender. They fought with such savagery that Napoleon's men considered them demented. Saragossa had shown how cities defended themselves, and the French who had fought*

in Spain afterwards asserted that every village proved a miniature Saragossa.

*It is clear that if the Spanish guerrilla warfare might justifiably be called a national war, it would be impossible to apply this term to any Russian movement in the War of 1812.*

People began to regard even the burning of Smolensk and Moscow and the firing of villages as manifestations of "national war," overlooking the fact that these were systematic acts of the Russian army in its retreat to Moscow. (From *Bonaparte*, by Tarlé, pages 302-3.—Emphasis mine—R. C.)

#### WHY FALSIFICATION IS NECESSARY

How can one tally these two views of the War of 1812? It is simply that Tarlé, once in exile as an opponent of Stalinism, has made his peace with Stalin and has joined the school of falsifiers who have been consistently rewriting Russian history, both Czarist and revolutionary, with the aim of stressing the new nationalism and chauvinism. This fits in with the surrender of the socialist internationalist outlook on the part of the Soviet rulers and their complete reversion to the most vulgar "socialist" nationalism.

Tarlé ends his latest book with a warning that any contemporary invader will be met with the greatest resistance on the part of the Russian people (the book is reputed to have been written prior to the Russian involvement in the present war). Characteristically enough, in the present stage of Stalinism he finds the basis for this resistance in nothing but the old Czarist spirit of nationalism. To find historical precedent for this, Tarlé makes his own invasion of history and brings forth his "national war" of 1812.

In this way, we are given another chapter of Stalinist degeneration, for what else can the glorification of Peter the Great, the resurrection of the fighting spirit of the ancient Russian knights, the sanctification of the strong man (the dictator) and the bureaucracy which acts in behalf of the people (!) signify, but the total denigration of the October Revolution at the hands of Stalinism?

At the present time, Tarlé's book is being utilized for the purpose of once more assuring the bourgeois allies of the Soviet Union that Stalin's war with Hitler is similar in method and purpose to that waged by Czar Alexander against Napoleon, a war raised to "national" heights—a country fighting for national existence. But of the struggle for socialism, for the emancipation of all humanity from the yoke of imperialist and bourgeois oppression—well, the less said the better.

R. CRAINE.

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