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**The Fight in the
American Labor Party**

By The Editor

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By Harry Young

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THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

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FEBRUARY, 1944

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NOTES OF THE MONTH

The ALP Fight

The fight now raging for control of the American Labor Party in the State of New York is of more than passing or local importance. Its outcome will not only decide the fate of the ALP but will significantly affect the development of independent political action by the American working class.

Origins of the ALP

The ALP was formed originally by the reformist labor leadership of New York, not in order to promote independent labor politics, but to short-circuit the movement for it. Many workers were becoming increasingly conscious of the reactionary class character of the two traditional parties. In the State of New York alone, these numbered in the tens and even hundreds of thousands. For all the attraction held for the workers by Roosevelt in the days when he thundered against the money-changers in the temple and proclaimed the cause of the common man and the underprivileged third of the nation, tens of thousands of workers were reluctant to vote for him under the banner of Tammany and its up-state associates. With New York State the main key to the national victory, and with every vote in New York urgently needed, the more-or-less radical labor vote in the state, especially in the city, became a rich prize.

The Socialist Party of the time, traditionally the party of labor, and reinvigorated by its separation from the fossilizing influence of the old right wing, threatened to win from Roosevelt sufficient numbers of the "labor vote" and the "protest vote" to imperil his chances in the state. The right-wing labor leaders, particularly in the needle trades unions, precipitately formed the ALP and helped win the day for Roosevelt. In the process, the Socialist Party, hesitating between an advance to a revolutionary position and a retreat to the reformist quagmire from which it had recently lifted itself, had its substitute for a backbone broken. The paralytic has yet to recover from the blow.

Roosevelt's New York labor lieutenants executed a most successful maneuver. But they did not count upon the development of forces they involuntarily set in motion but which were not so easily controlled, and of other forces which they could not control at all. They calculated on keeping the ALP as an electoral adjunct of a New-Dealized Democratic Party and—not too boldly or hastily—on advancing thereby their own political fortunes as favorites of The Boss. As for keeping control of the machinery of the ALP, their confident cal-

culations were based upon the exclusion of the trade unions from membership and its limitation to individuals sharing their own political views, and upon the widespread discreditment of their only possible serious rival, the Stalinists. If worst came to worst, they could be disposed of by administrative methods plus the authority of the party's patron in the White House.

Upset Calculations

These calculations are being rudely upset.

In the first place, the reactionary Democrats did not reconcile themselves to the New Deal. In New York, as the last gubernatorial campaign showed, they took firm hold of the party machinery and used it to suit their own book, cavalierly ignoring not only the ALP, but also the President, who had employed it as an ineffectual tool against his own party colleagues. Roosevelt of course reconciled himself to the reactionary Democrats, following his national pattern, and supported their candidate for Governor.

The President's pirouette could not be performed so easily by the ALP leaders. Having maneuvered themselves, or been maneuvered, into open and "intransigent" hostility to the candidate of the reactionaries, Bennett, they found it far more difficult to back their followers into Bennett's wagon-shafts than Roosevelt would ever find in switching harnesses on his New Deal wheelhorses. With evident reluctance and pessimism, relieved only by a little encouragement from the White House kitchen door, they put into the field their first important independent nominee for office. To their own astonishment—considering Roosevelt's official endorsement of Bennett, a similar endorsement from the AFL State Federation, a similar endorsement by Hillman, a similar endorsement from the Stalinists, the handicap of obscurity of their own candidate and the additional handicap of a platform which was nothing but a collection of whining noises—the ALP polled the imposing total of 410,000 votes for Alfange.

As the campaign served to heal the rift between the New Deal and anti-New Deal factions of the Democratic Party, so it served to widen the crevice between the Democrats, Roosevelt included, and the ALP. Not surprising: it was at bottom a reflection of the widening rift in the "economic" field between the organized labor movement and the President.

In the second place, the Stalinists have not proved to be such a pushover as the ALP leaders first thought. They restored themselves to some degree of respectability in the public eye and in the official labor movement following the German attack upon Russia by their switch to fervid patriotism and allegiance to the Commander-in-Chief. Then they set to work in earnest to capture the machinery of the ALP. Given their superior forces, their totalitarian apparatus, their command of virtually limitless funds, and their "win-the-war" program, to which the Dubinsky-Rose-Counts faction has nothing radically different to counterpose (except perhaps that while the Stalinists are primarily for Russian imperialism, they are for American imperialism!), the Stalinists were

able to capture control of the majority of the organizations of the ALP in the only locality where it is well organized, the city of New York.

The approach of the presidential election of 1944 has not improved the prospects of the right wing. Their situation was bad enough yesterday; today it is worse. Now they are faced with a united bloc between Sidney Hillman, who is rightly known as Roosevelt's political agent in the labor movement, and the Stalinists. The bloc simply proposes to take from the right wing the remnants of its control of the ALP, now confined pretty much to Bronx County and the State Committee. The arguments on both sides are significant.

The Hillman Plan

Hillman has put forward the idea of union affiliation to the ALP and proportional representation in the ruling bodies of the party on the basis of such affiliation. Ostensibly, this means a radical reorganization of the structure of the ALP, basing it, mainly, much like the British Labour Party, upon bloc trade union affiliation and representation in its leadership in accordance with membership figures and dues payments. Granted such a reorganization, Hillman further proposes minority representation for the "left wing" (this is the preposterous misnomer still applied to the reactionary Stalinists) union leaders in the ALP State Committee, which would make possible agreement on a united slate in the coming primaries instead of a repetition of the past contests between the CP and Dubinsky factions.

The Stalinists are enthusiastic supporters of the plan. In the hope of facilitating its acceptance, they have even gone so far as to agree not to press the candidacies of the more notorious Stalinist union leaders, like Quill, Curran and their ilk, for membership on the State Committee. Their readiness to make this compromise is not hard to understand. If unions are permitted to affiliate to the ALP, they expect to flood the party with every union under their control or influence. Whether the delegates from such unions bear the name Quill or Curran or Smith or Jones is infinitely less important than the fact that both Quill and Smith, Curran and Jones follow Stalinist Party instructions and help establish party control (Pardon: Not "party" but "political education association"). In a bloc with Hillman and the unions he controls—the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, the Textile Workers Union and a few others—they count confidently on dominating the ALP machinery and its policies.

Which is precisely why the Dubinsky-Rose-Counts faction is flatly opposed to the "Hillman plan" and is fighting it with that special kind of bitterness that comes from the feeling of impending defeat. The arguments put forward by its spokesman are, except for the understandable assertion that they do not want to yield control of the party to the Stalinists, absurd and even reactionary. Let us note a few of them, although they are all only variations on a single theme.

1) "It [the Hillman plan for trade union control] would deny a voice in party affairs to those numerous middle class liberals who have voted the party ticket and who have worked with devoted enthusiasm for our candidates and our program." (George S. Counts, *New Leader*, February 5.)

Genuine trade union bloc affiliation—which we shall distinguish below from the Hillman plan which seems to provide for just that—would do nothing of the kind. It would deny neither voice nor vote to "those numerous middle class liberals," provided such liberals were regular members of the party, participating freely in the determination of its policy

and subject to proper party discipline once policy has been democratically determined. What it would deny these "middle class liberals" (Dr. Counts is, presumably, referring to himself, Dean Alfange, Sidney Hook and the like) is their present *special privilege* by means of which they, a tiny minority of the people the ALP claims to represent, decide policies for the big majority. If the ALP is to be a labor party in fact and not merely in name, and if democratic representation and procedure are to prevail, then an affiliated trade union with three thousand members should have three thousand times as much "voice in party affairs," and votes as well, as one person has, even if this one person is as important in world history as a "middle class liberal." This is a simple and normal democratic principle, as Dr. Counts can find out from any textbook on the subject. The same textbook will show the doctor that it is anything but democratic for a small group to legislate for a far larger group which has not elected it and which is not consulted by it or allowed to vote on the decisions adopted in its name by the small group.

Rose's "Political Closed Shop"

2) "We are opposed to a political closed shop."

With this statement, Alex Rose refers venomously to the idea that affiliation of a trade union to the ALP, decided by a majority of less than one hundred per cent, force the minority to support the "political closed shop" against its will. Mr. Rose is not the coiner of this winged phrase, but a shameless plagiarist. The word "shameless" is used quite scientifically here, because a labor leader must be devoid of any sense of shame to employ against the idea of a Labor Party the very same argument used against it by reaction in this country and in Great Britain.

It was used in Great Britain by the Tories—by the most reactionary Tories—to push the adoption of the bill prohibiting trade unions from making financial contributions to the Labour Party with which they are affiliated on the grounds that such contributions constitute a "political closed shop." It seems that there are a few Tory workers in the British trade unions, and to permit the latter to give financial aid to the Labour Party would be to deprive these poor devils of their most sacred democratic rights (to say nothing of depriving a few absentee mine-owning Tory cut-throats of these same Tory workers of their still more sacred seats in Parliament).

The law to strangle British working class political action, put over by Mr. Rose's British predecessors, makes everything fair and square and equal all around. Neither the Federation of British Industries nor the Miners' Federation of South Wales may contribute funds, as organizations, to any British political party. The lowliest, most poverty-stricken Welsh miner now stands, thank God, on exactly the same legal footing as the Duke of Northumberland. As individuals, and mind you, only as individuals, each can contribute freely from his savings to the party of his choice. And what is most important, democracy is preserved without a fleck. The Duke of Northumberland has helped free the British worker from the outrageous tyranny of the "political closed shop," Mr. Rose will be happy to note. The only detail that remains to be taken care of is freedom from the political and economic tyranny of the Duke of Northumberland.

In making his desperate and stupid argument, Mr. Rose must have forgotten that at the same moment the notorious Congressman Smith of Virginia had just obliged the Department of Justice to get after Philip Murray, Sidney Hillman and the CIO for alleged violation of the law recently adopted

by our own Tory Congress on the grounds of Rose's argument—"no political closed shop"—namely, the law which forbids both corporations and labor unions from making political contributions, a law identical with the majestic one Anatole France reminded us of: it prohibits both rich and poor from sleeping under a bridge.

Who Is to Be Whose Ally?

3) Let us hold our noses tightly while reading Mr. Rose's remaining argument: "In these days, more than ever before, labor needs allies, and we must unite with all liberal-thinking people, no matter to what economic group they belong." For this statesmanlike observation, Mr. Rose should be appointed promptly to the third clerkship in the American Embassy to the newly-created Most Autonomous Socialist Soviet Republic of Tadjikistan, whose natives are reputed to be good-naturedly tolerant of muddleheads. Let us see if we can cut a vein of meat or two out of this piece of sowbelly.

"Labor needs allies." Granted. But does saying this imply that labor is the primary factor in the ALP, and that in its own interests as well as in the interests of all other little people in society, it must seek supporters, allies, even from among the middle class? If this is the case, then labor must first constitute itself politically, in order that it may be in a position to seek and gain allies. To constitute itself politically means to have a party of its own, a party where its voice is decisive, if only for the good democratic reason that it is; and only it can be, the most numerous contingent in such a party. To have a party of its own, one in which its voice is decisive, means, concretely, today, in the United States, a party organized by and based upon the only democratic, representative, mass organizations of labor existing in the land, the unions. Then and only then would labor be in a position to acquire political allies. But they would have to be allies—and not masters! Concretely, this means that any "liberal-thinking people," by which Rose and Counts mean middle class elements, who might be admitted to individual-membership branches of a labor party, or with whom a labor party might make a political bloc, would coöperate with labor on an equal and democratic basis: not one liberal having one vote and one trade union of three thousand members having one vote, but one vote for the one man and three thousand votes for the three thousand men. It is precisely this democratic principle, which reflects in practice the different social weight of the proletariat and the middle class in modern society, that Rose does not want to see applied.

Or does Rose mean not that labor needs allies from among the middle classes, but rather that the middle class elements he represents need followers from among the working class? Exactly. And that is also exactly why Rose balks at the idea of the trade unions entering and controlling, as is only fitting, the ALP. Rose is obdurate not on an "organizational" question but on a political question. His objection to labor composing and controlling a labor party is motivated by the very notion he claims to be horrified at: class considerations. He does not want labor to pursue labor politics, but middle class politics.

As all experience, in all countries, has shown, where labor does not lead the middle classes, but follows them, it inevitably follows the leadership of the "upper" class, the monopoly capitalists. Labor and the middle classes are not peas in a pod. They are distinct and separate classes. They do not occupy the same position in the economic life of society or in society as a whole. One is a propertyless class; the others are

small-property classes, or related to them, or dependent upon them. One is exploited by another class; the other either exploits or is "self-employed," which usually means living off a small share of the exploitation of labor. They have one important thing in common, which creates the basis for an *alliance*, but not a fusion, between them: they are both the victims, but in different degrees and forms, of the economic and political rule of monopoly capital. The middle class simply cannot lead other classes by itself, except in the sense that if labor follows it, it inescapably ends up a vassal in the camp of big capital.

The middle classes can only follow. If they resist the leadership of labor (or if labor fails to provide that leadership), they end up cut to ribbons by monopoly. The history of German fascism is the most extreme, and therefore the clearest, example of this profoundly important truth; the experience of New Dealism is a less extreme and less clear but nevertheless equally valid example. If, however, they follow labor, and labor puts forward and fights for a radical social program, the middle classes are freed from the oppressive rule of capitalist monopolism and from the terrible uncertainty and convulsions of its present social existence. The fact is that Rose is a true spokesman neither for the interests of the working class nor the interests of the little people of the middle classes. For the primary requisite for such a rôle is to tell both groups the significant truth: the middle classes must ally themselves with the working class, but under working class leadership.

Middle Class Party or Labor Party?

Or, finally, perhaps Rose means that the ALP should not be a class party? He does, for that is what he has said on another occasion. Yet, that is not really what he means, as has already been indicated. He wants the ALP to be a *middle class* party. When he opposes a "class party," he means he opposes a working-class party. But in that case, the original sin was committed by Rose and Dubinsky. Why did they call their organization a *Labor Party*, however American, in the first place? The Republicans and Democrats at least can make Rose's argument with a better face; they do not call their organizations the American Capitalist Democratic and the American Capitalist Republican parties. Rose calls his the Labor Party. If that name was not intended to give a clear class character to the party and a clear class appeal, why was it used at all? Why wasn't it called the All-Class Party? Or the Liberal-Thinkers' Party? Or the United Former and Ambitious Officeholders' Party? Or the Scared Rabbits' Party? Was the name used solely for the purpose of catching a labor vote or two? One of two things, and perhaps both: it was either a fraudulent name to begin with, or Rose's argument today is fraudulent.

• • •

Is the struggle for control of the ALP of interest and concern to the revolutionary socialist and the militant trade unionist?

The ALP is not our party, certainly not in the sense that the American trade unions, for all their policies and their leadership, are our unions, our class organizations. As it is constituted today, and has been since its formation, it cannot be given political support by a socialist or the working class. Except for its name, it is not a labor party; it is not the political expression of the organized working class. It is far more removed from being that than it is from being a mere "third

party." It is much closer in type to the LaFollette-Wheeler "party" of the 1924 elections than it is to, say, the British Labour Party. Like the LaFollette-Wheeler machine of 1924, it is a middle class party with labor pretensions. The 1924 organization at least had many organized trade unions represented at the convention which nominated the two presidential candidates. The ALP's connections with the trade unions is confined to keeping them at arm's length in the capacity of an "advisory committee" composed of union officials without direct power, accompanied by a flat refusal to allow the trade unions to affiliate with the party and to exercise their legitimate rôle within it.

Revolutionary socialist or communist parties, when they could not yet properly speak of themselves as the representatives of the working class, have rightly given political support to big reformist labor parties before, and will probably give such support again in the future. The circumstances under which Lenin and Lenin's International advised the small Communist Party of England to support the candidates of the British Labour Party, and to summon the whole working class to support them, are fairly well known. Similar circumstances and similar considerations would dictate a similar course in this country. But Lenin favored support of the British Labour Party not because of the reformist program which it has more or less in common with the ALP, but in spite of that program. Not because of the leadership at the head of it, which was pretty nearly as miserable as the leadership of the ALP, but despite it. Not because it was patriotic and social-imperialistic, as the ALP is, but despite that fact. He urged his policy because the British Labour Party was the organized political expression of the organized labor movement, it was the organized working class, the trade unions, acting as a class in the political field, even if with a middle class program. This feature, the ALP *does not* have in common with the British Labour Party, not even when it put up its "independent" candidate for Governor of New York. Lacking this feature, the revolutionary socialist lacks any ground for supporting it in the elections, any more than he had ground for supporting LaFollette in 1924. The SWP, which supported the ALP in the last elections, would do well to ponder this point.

Why the ALP Fight Concerns Labor

The Democratic and Republican Parties are not our parties, either. Their internal struggles are of no concern to us or to the labor movement as a whole; we do not participate in them; we do not support one side or the other. Once this is said, it becomes evident that we cannot merely say of the ALP that it is not our party, and stop there. The struggle for control in its ranks *is* of concern to the labor movement. It is posed in the unions. They are called upon to take a position. It is the conservative-minded workers in the unions that take no interest in the matter and want their unions to take no interest in it; similarly, with the politically backward and the politically inert workers. The more politically-advanced and conscious workers think and want to act otherwise. They are right. The fight in the ALP is of direct concern to the labor movement and the working class.

Should the organized workers support one faction or the other? The Socialist Workers Party, with its characteristic helplessness and inability to orient itself in any new political situation that was not analyzed for it before Trotsky died, has dismissed the whole situation with a superficial phrase: Two unprincipled cliques, with no real programmatic differences—they both support Roosevelt and the war—are fighting for

bureaucratic power and control of the machine. A plague on both their houses.

If this were the sum and substance of the situation, we would have here one of those rare but not impossible cases of pure political gangsterism—a fight for power in which no political differences are involved. But it would then be necessary to extend this "analysis" and conclusion further. The fight in the ALP is only one version of the first going on throughout the labor movement between the Stalinists, on one side, and the old-line labor officialdom on the other. Muffled or out in the open, it has been seen in the United Auto Workers Union, in the United Radio and Electrical Workers Union, in the Newspaper Guild, in a score of other unions, and right up to the very highest councils of the CIO. The whole labor movement, according to this interpretation, is therefore being torn now by an unprincipled fight between two sets of political gangsters, and we, whom this fight does not concern, must say: A plague on both your houses. The analysis is superficial, the conclusion absurd. That was adequately demonstrated in the fight inside the UAW. It is being shown again, in different form, on a different field, in the fight inside the ALP.

The fight can be judged by a clearer statement of the aims of the contending forces.

Hillman is Roosevelt's direct political wardheeler in the labor movement. Roosevelt wants neither a "third party" nor an independent labor party, it goes without saying. He wants the Democratic Party to control the Administration, and himself to control the Democratic Party. Without that, even victory in a bid for a fourth term as President would leave him with the unpleasantness and annoyance of a recalcitrant Congress. To win the presidency again, as well as to hold control of the Democratic Party, Roosevelt needs labor. He needs it as a tool, a whip, a bludgeon with which to keep his party in line, and to sweep it into office. The reactionaries in his party are on the rampage. Their self-confidence is restored, and so is their arrogance and imperiousness. No more concessions to labor! they say. To Roosevelt, this means that his labor tool must be a docile tool, one willing to go along with him even if it is told and knows that the era of small concessions that marked the early days of the New Deal is decidedly gone. Time was when Roosevelt would come from a meeting with the labor leaders and tell his own party reactionaries: I must give them something, or God knows what they will do. Now Roosevelt comes from a meeting with his own party reactionaries and tells the labor leaders: I must dig a knife into you, or God knows what *they* will do. Hillman is still dreaming of the day when he may become Secretary of Labor, as what big shot labor leader has not dreamed in his time—Lewis, Hutchinson, Tobin, Green. He has been assigned the job of getting labor to go to the polls for Roosevelt with Roosevelt's knife still sticking into its body.

The Aim of the Stalinists

The Stalinists are therefore indicated as Hillman's first allies. Their *fundamental*, and *long-term*, interests are not the same. But that no more prevents them from working together smoothly at the given political juncture than the opposite movement of two gears prevents them from meshing. The "opposite movement" is represented by the fact that one serves Stalinist imperialism and the other American imperialism. They mesh at the point where it is necessary to grind the labor movement of this country into helpless fragments.

The policy of the Stalinists in the labor movement may

be summed up as follows: In the interests of the Kremlin, support Roosevelt and the war one hundred per cent—but under our control. The Stalinists are fiercely opposed to any development toward independence by the ALP; they are opposed even to the ALP acting as a consistent “third party”; they are opposed to the ALP or any third party or labor party movement being extended to other states. Especially now, since the open adoption of their new course, they are the most resolute and conscious opponents of independent political action by labor. They are determined to repress the growth of any such tendency, to drive it back into capitalist politics wherever it emerges from it. Where such a tendency has already taken shape, if only to the extent of the ALP, they want to capture it not out of some unprincipled struggle for gang-power, but for the distinctly principled purpose (it is a reactionary principle, to be sure, but a principle nevertheless) of turning the movement back into the field of outright capitalist politics.

The two-party system is the American tradition, said Browder, and he means to keep labor within that tradition. Why? The best defense of Stalin’s imperialist expansion requires the greatest possible support that can be gained for it in the ranks of the ruling parties or the big parties among his Allies. In England the indicated party is the Labour Party. In the United States it is the democratic Party nationally, and in some localities the Republican Party. The Stalinists want to strengthen or build a “pro-Russian” section of the Democratic Party. For that they need voting troops. These are to be constituted out of the organized labor movement. Under the control of the Stalinists they are to throw their support, inside the old parties, in the primaries of the old parties, and in the elections, behind those candidates who measure up best to the simple but essential criterion of the CP. Right now their candidates are Roosevelt and Roosevelt’s choices.

If the CP wants to control the ALP, it is in order to insure itself in advance against any slip-up in New York, against any possible deviation from this course by ALP leaders who are not committed to it blindly and unwaveringly. For the ALP, “this course” means concretely that the party shall confine itself, at the very most, to acting as a tool, a lever, for Roosevelt in the Democratic Party, as when he sought to use it for the purpose of advancing his nominee, Senator Mead, as the Democratic gubernatorial candidate instead of Bennett. When Bennett won, Roosevelt fell in line; the Stalinists fell in line; the ALP leaders did not, and nominated their own candidate. Hillman-Browder control is aimed to guarantee against such presumptuousness—and worse. They want no trifling with anything that even remotely resembles independent labor political action.

The “Right Wing”

Now as to the Dubinsky-Rose-Counts group. We hesitate to call it the right wing, not because it represents any kind of left wing, but because in the concrete circumstances the name may be misleading. It is indeed a right wing, but the *extreme right wing of the American labor movement today is constituted by the Stalinists*, and whoever ignores this important distinction is doomed to disorientation.

Formally, it has much the same program as the Stalinists on the main political questions of the day: for the war, for Roosevelt, for the New Deal, for amity with our Great Russian Ally. This failure to develop an independent working class program has played right into the hands of the Stalinists, who seem to have the same position on all questions but have the

added virtue of being more aggressive about it.

This is, however, only the formal side of the relationship. Actually, there is a profound clash of interests between the two. The Stalinist bureaucracy is content with having the labor movement, and the ALP, operate merely as a political instrument of Roosevelt, provided the instrument is held in its hands, provided it is operated for Roosevelt *by the Stalinists*. The labor bureaucracy is content with no such rôle for their organizations.

In the first place, their strength, their very existence, derives not from the Russian state and its fortunes, as is the case with Browder, Foster, Minor & Co., but from the trade unions they control and, in New York, from the ALP. In the second place, they cannot reconcile themselves to reducing the ALP to a mere instrument for advancing Roosevelt’s fortunes in the Democratic Party; they therefore seek to play capitalist politics inside a “labor party” of their own. They are wedded to Roosevelt and protest their fealty to him; but they are reluctant to be mere servants of Roosevelt under conditions which would nullify or even destroy the very organizations whose existence made their services useful to Roosevelt. Roosevelt has power behind him when he deals with them; the Stalinists have a power behind them in any of their dealings; the right-wing bureaucrats do not want to come into any bargaining room without a single trump. They want some organized power behind them; they want to keep what they have and even to extend it.

To be sure, they are not very audacious. They whimper more than they fight. They are more fearful of doing anything that might launch a genuinely independent labor political party against the parties of capitalism than they are of having their ersatz labor party taken from them or liquidated altogether. They are even timid and mealy-mouthed in their attacks on the Stalinists, for fear of offending the tender feelings of the Great Ally of their own imperialist government. Yet, due to the basic difference between their interests and those of the Stalinists, they have even been impelled to make halting, tentative, but unmistakable moves in the direction of extending the ALP to other states, notably Michigan, Pennsylvania, Ohio and New Jersey, thereby coming into still sharper collision with the Stalinists. It is precious little, in face of the urgent requirements of the time. But it helps to show that they are subject to the pressures of working class interests, whereas the Stalinists are subject only to the interests of the Russian autocracy.

Does it follow from this that labor militants should support the right wing against the Stalinists, particularly when the question of the fight in the ALP rises in the New York unions, as it has arisen? It may well be that under conditions where the *only* alternatives are support of one of the factions or the other for *organizational* control of the ALP machine, the militants may find it necessary to give independent and purely organizational support to the right wing in order to prevent the Stalinists from establishing their totalitarian rule over the ALP and speeding its complete dissolution. But that is not the problem now, and certainly not the most important problem. By the only worthwhile criterion—independent labor political action—the right wing deserves no support, and must not be given any.

The Position of the Workers Party

The position of the Workers Party recommends itself to all militants. Those unions that stand for an independent labor party, or that can be committed to such a stand, must

become the basis of the ALP and the democratically controlling force in it. This position cuts right across the dispute between the two factions. Hillman's "plan" seems to be similar to it; in reality, it negates it completely. Hillman proposes that the ALP be taken over by unions which are committed against any independent labor politics, against an independent party. The Stalinists want to take control through their unions which have repeatedly taken a stand against the formation of a labor party or any kind of third party. A more impudent, not to say fantastic, proposal is hard to imagine than that of putting the ALP in the hands of people sworn to fight a labor party! How long before we hear from the Stalinists a proposal that the trade unions be run by people who favor company unionism?

Our position is: the ALP, or any labor party to be formed elsewhere, must be based upon and controlled by the trade unions that stand for a labor party. That is the simple test for admission. Voting rights in the party should be democratically apportioned. Such a procedure would automatically assure the labor party of a healthy growth, and assure it also against domination by the anti-labor party Stalinists.

This clearly-indicated course strikes the right wing with dread. They do not want to embark upon a policy of labor independence because it means a clean break with the capitalist parties and the capitalist politicians, including the politician in the White House who treats them like political plantation coolies. They are afraid to incorporate the mass organizations of the rank and file workers into the ALP and to be directly subject to their decisions and control. They are anything but sure that they would be able to keep these organizations under thumb. "The Communists support the Hillman plan because it would enable them, with Hillman's support, to capture the party." Dr. Counts has revealed more than he meant to, namely, his bankruptcy. He is saying, in effect, that while the Stalinists have influence in unions which, together with Hillman's, would give them control of the ALP, Dubinsky-Counts-Rose do not have enough following in the unions to outweigh the Stalino-Hillman combination. How, in face of this involuntary admission, Counts and his associates can continue to speak in the name of organized labor remains a first-class mystery.

The right wing fears the Stalinists, fears the Hillman proposal. But it fears even more to mobilize the labor unions

openly and honestly against them. It is afraid of what it would have to tell them and of what it would have to do in order to mobilize them. A straightforward campaign for a genuinely independent labor party, with a militant program, would win enough support in the New York unions almost overnight to put the Stalino-Hillman bloc to rout. But the right wing is about as capable and willing to conduct such a campaign as middle class liberals have ever been in similar circumstances. Rather than arouse the giant of labor they prefer to rely on as sorry and motley a collection of "liberal thinkers" as ever was seen. The last election fight was a veritable spectacle. The serious and determined Stalinists mobilized a real, fighting, organized mass movement of everyone they could reach. The right wing mobilized only some of the union officials—not the unions—and some free-lance liberals, including warriors like Dorothy Backer, John Chamberlain and Sidney Hook. These Horatios standing almost single-handed at the bridge, warding off the Stalinist hordes, were a sight for the gods, who have seen a lot in their time. The wonder is that the Stalinists carried only most of the New York counties, instead of all of them. It is no wonder at all that a pall of gloom settled over the right wing after the elections; it has not yet lifted.

The Time to Act Is Now

The job of organizing the American working class for independent political action has yet to be done. It has to be done in struggle against the Stalinist reactionaries and liquidators, and against the old conservative labor officialdom. It has to be done by the militants in the labor movement, and *there is no time to lose.*

The Stalinists are out to crush or liquidate every movement for a labor party in the country. To expect people like Rose and Counts to do the job of forming and building a labor party is to expect a reed to stand up like a pillar. It is noteworthy that what was left of the Farmer-Labor Party in Minnesota voted the other day to dissolve and to join the Democratic Party. It is the fate that awaits the ALP—as a result of deliberate policy by the Stalinists, as an objective result of the policy of the right wing. *Unless*—unless the militants in the labor movement organize their own forces to act now, instead of "waiting till 1945," to draw up the declaration of political independence of the American working class.

Toward a New Versailles Treaty

The Unification of Europe or Its Ruin

The inner principle of the Moscow Agreement is exceedingly simple. It is that Britain, Russia, China and the United States can maintain the peace because they will be, when our enemies are defeated and disarmed, the only powers capable of waging great war.—Walter Lippmann in the *New York Herald Tribune*, November 4, 1943.

The war camp of Nazi imperialism has given the world, through the system it has imposed upon enslaved Europe, ample evidence of the type of "peace" and post-war world its victory would engender. It is unnecessary to add details to this picture, particularly since ultimate Nazi defeat in Europe, regardless of the length of time it may take, is clear. But what we must consider, and intend to discuss in

detail, is the meaning of an Allied military victory as it would affect the German nation and Europe as a whole. For, assuming that the European proletariat and its revolutionary vanguard prove to be too weak and badly-battered in the next period to wrest the entire course of the war out of the hands of its imperialist masters, this is the kind of "peace," dictated by Allied military supremacy, that Europe will have. Every indication we have—and there are many—points bluntly to the fact that such an end to the war will leave a Europe with its basic problems still unresolved and, particularly, with the masses of Germany facing the blackest imaginable future.

The Failure of Versailles

For victorious Allied imperialism, the aftermath of the last war was a distinct failure and the peace they drew up at the Versailles Conference unworkable. The people of Europe agree with this estimation, but their agreement has a different meaning. The bourgeoisie understands that Versailles failed either to destroy the Russian Revolution or halt its tumultuous spread to other parts of the world; the proletariat understands that the revolution was finally crushed in all but one country. The bourgeoisie understands that Versailles failed to crush for all time its rival, German imperialism; that the Versailles system, from the League of Nations to reparations payment, proved to be a dismal flop. The revolutionary movement understands that Versailles was merely the start of an illusory interlude of peace during which the imperialists prepared for the most destructive war yet to be fought.

Versailles and its system did not work, say the Allied imperialists. This time we shall work out a method, in conjunction with the new ruling class of expansionist Russia, to prevent new proletarian seizures of power and the spread of revolutionary sentiment throughout Europe. We intend also to put an end to German imperialism, once and for all. As to the future peace, agreement among the three great powers of Russia, England and America will see to that problem. The best elements in the workers' movement have profited by their experiences since the last war; it would be foolish not to recognize that the bourgeoisie has learned a good deal and can realistically appraise the situation and attempt to rectify the previous errors of strategy and judgment.

Here, for reasons we hope to make clear, our main concern is with the attempt of the Allies to answer the question: "What to do with Germany?" when that country has been overthrown and military victory has come. This, needless to say, is *the* basic question that the Allies will have to answer (not with phrases, but with figures, facts and actions) before long. Nor will the European proletariat and its accompanying democratic movements be able to avoid a clear stand on this issue. This, together with the high productive and cultural development of the German nation as a whole and the power of its enormous industrial proletariat, is undoubtedly what is meant when we speak once again of Germany being the key to the international situation. If the victorious Allies cannot unitedly answer this problem to the satisfaction of their imperialist designs and needs, they will have won only a hollow military victory at great cost. If the European people, in conjunction with the German workers, should give their *independent* answer to this key problem they will have toppled imperialism and brought a socialist peace to Europe. That is its importance.

For various reasons it is worth summarizing the terms of the Versailles Treaty as they directly affected the future of Germany in 1919. This will make it possible for us to contrast various proposals put forward now; to see in precise terms what an *imperialist* peace means and, incidentally, to see what truth there is in the declarations of the English imperialist, Vansittart, that the trouble with the treaty was its "softness."

German imperialism had lost the war against its rivals; therefore, it had to pay the price. The fact that the German masses, who had been forced into the war by their imperialist masters, and betrayed into it by the German Social-Democracy, would bear the overwhelming burden was, of course, not considered. The terms imposed were of a territorial, repara-

tions and productive nature. Territorially, in addition to losing militarily-conquered foreign territories, Germany lost Alsace-Lorraine, the Saar Basin, Upper Silesia, Eupen-Malmedy (near Belgium), Sudetenland, Memel and the territory that came to be known as the Polish Corridor. Austria was forbidden to join the Republican Second Reich.

German war economy was demobilized and a fifteen per cent reduction in net productive capacity resulted from the disruption of the relationship that had been created between those essentials of modern heavy industry—iron ore, coal and metallurgical plants. Basic coal fields (Saar) went to France, the coal production of the Ruhr-Essen area was to go to France for ten years. In addition, various amounts of chemical production, timber, livestock, railroad rolling stock, etc., were distributed among the victors. Many a German factory was stripped of its machinery and, wherever possible, more than had been looted by the German imperialists was taken back. All ships and freighters over 1,600 tons were confiscated. In addition to destroying the German merchant marine, the African and Asiatic colonies were taken over and redistributed (not to the people who *lived* in them, to be sure), a general disarmament was ordered and a small, limited army was to be permitted. There was to be no navy.

Monetary reparations, of course, figured largely in the treaty. Their original scope (payment for "all damage done to the civilian population" of Europe, compensation for dependents of all dead Allied soldiers, pensions for Allied wounded and their dependents, repayment of all Allied allotments to the families of soldiers, etc.) called forth the famous remark of Lloyd George that "you cannot have both milk and beefsteak!" Yet even with modifications, an American commission estimated that Germany had paid six billion dollars in reparation by 1922 and later two billion dollars under the Dawes Plan. The Allies also demanded all Allied imports into Germany receive most-favored-nation tariff treatment.

Germany was definitely conquered, reduced, partly occupied and bled by the victorious powers. Speaking in 1920 at the Second World Congress of the Communist International, Lenin characterized the Versailles Treaty as follows: "The war, which led to the complete defeat of these countries through the Versailles Treaty, imposed on them such conditions that these civilized peoples have become dependent, like the colonials, and like the latter are ruined, starving and without rights... You know that the Versailles Treaty forced Germany and a whole series of conquered states into conditions of absolute impossibility of economic existence, into conditions of complete absence of rights, of utter humiliation."

Such was Lenin's *internationalist* estimation of the Versailles pact. He looked upon it as the consistent conclusion to a reactionary imperialist war. It is worth remembering that this unilateral condemnation came from the leader of the very same newly-founded workers' state which itself had been subjected to and humiliated by the notorious *German-imposed* Brest-Litovsk Treaty! But the stand of the Bolsheviks was an internationalist one. Soviet Russia opposed the Versailles system; the German Spartacists and, later, the German Communists fought it; the Comintern of Lenin and Trotsky tirelessly exposed it to Europe and the rest of the world.

The Meaning of a New Versailles

It is apparent that the Allied imperialists today are drawing up plans of a similar nature to apply to a defeated Ger-

many. Whatever may be the variations in detail and degree, imperialist oppression of one people by other nations must necessarily follow the same broad outlines. If the Allies should succeed in fastening a new Versailles upon Germany, it will be of substantially the same nature as the old treaty, with this important exception: *Not only because the Allies understand the weaknesses and shortcomings of the former treaty, but also because imperialism in general has reached such a stage of utter corruption* (as witness the behavior of the Nazi imperialists in their sacking of Europe) *that it must attempt to destroy mercilessly the very basis of its rival's national and economic existence, we must expect a much harsher and more brutal arrangement this time.*

It is true that the Allies have said little on the subject—virtually nothing of an official nature, beyond some general remarks. What does this indicate? In our opinion, it means that the problem of what to do with Germany has not been entirely settled, in all its concrete details. The Big Three are still divided on this question by mutual distrust and are jockeying with one another in independent efforts to build up post-war European influence spheres. But it means just this and no more! On the basic issues they are agreed—above all, on the basic issue of crushing the German nation. Six months ago the Moscow-sponsored “Free Germany Committee” and its program were pointed to as proof of a sharp division in method between Russia and the other Allies. Like so many other Stalinist creations it proved to be a hypocritical farce, a fraudulent creation useful in Stalin’s diplomatic maneuvers to win Allied territorial concessions by threatening a separate peace with Hitler. There are substantial indications that Stalin has drawn much closer to the Allies in his “German” program. The pact with Czechoslovakia (a typical *cordon sanitaire* step and specifically directed against a post-war German revival); the Kharkov trial of Nazi soldiers, during the course of which *Pravda* deliberately pointed out that the age of the defendants ranged from twenty to fifty-five years (a crude inference that the vast majority of Germans are Nazis at heart); the remarks of Russia’s leading journalist, Ilya Ehrenbourg (*New York Times*, December 27), who expressed the hope that “. . . the millions of soldiers who have reduced Europe to a ‘desert zone’ will be made to work ten years crushing stones and hewing wood”—all these are indications of basic agreement on methods between Russia and its allies.

Now, assuming that we are correct and the Allies actually have reached such an accord, what form and shape would it take? How would it differ from the first Versailles? Enough facts, information and opinions are available even now for us to venture a general outline of such a “peace.” We have had much, too much, experience with imperialism and its methods not to be able to deduce, in general, such schemes. A war, conducted on a global scale and starkly imperialistic in nature, can only end on similar terms if it comes to a halt solely through superior military power. Such a peace, as it affects Germany, will be organized along the following lines: (1) occupation, (2) territory, (3) reparations, (4) “education.” Let us examine each category separately.

Under the Versailles Treaty, American, British and French troops occupied only the Rhineland area of Germany. This was in the nature of a “token” occupation. Today the intention of the Allies is clearly to occupy the greater part, if not all, of Germany. The major cities that remain, the key industrial centers, etc., will be stringently taken over to guarantee enforcement of the additional terms imposed on the nation. We do not know if actual details have been worked

out (army of occupation set-up, division of areas between Russia, England and America, etc.), but we do know that technical and administrative occupation forces are now being trained in all Allied countries. Nobody can foresee how extensive and harsh the actual physical occupation will be (obviously, the resistance of the German masses will be the determining factor in this), nor can anyone predict its duration. Perhaps the scheme of Walter Lippmann, the gentleman political philosopher, will prevail, namely, that after a brief but “dynamic” occupation, the Allied forces withdraw to Germany’s new borders and permit those who remain within the scorched ring to “stew in their own juice.” Occupation there will be, no doubt, but we must understand it only as a necessary stage for the fulfillment of the more fundamental territorial and economic measures to be taken against Germany. These will determine the extent, depth and duration of the actual operation.

Territorially, many plans and proposals have already been put forward. Naturally, loss of all conquered and/or annexed territory is assumed. We shall not take up the matter of what happens to such illegally-seized territories. It is likewise safe to assume that, as in the First World War, the great powers and their small imperialistically-minded satellites will fight over the spoils like maddened dogs. What concerns us here is territory of Germany proper; lands long occupied and built up by the German peoples.

The overall picture we have before us now seems to have two ideas in mind: (1) to strip away natural boundaries and strong border or transitional areas; (2) to weaken and reduce the German heartland or central core. Thus, the Allies have already indicated publicly that Austria shall not be a part of post-war Germany (a simple reiteration of the policy used after World War I); the German Sudetenland will go back to Czechoslovakia, and the Saar Basin will be removed from German control (but by no means will it necessarily go back to France!). In addition, Poland has already laid claim to all of rich, industrial Silesia (this time, Upper Silesia will not suffice) and has hinted that all of East Prussia (a somewhat exaggerated expansion of the old Polish Corridor!) will do nicely as partial compensation for the anticipated loss of a third of former Poland to Ally Stalin. Loss of other smaller sections of Germany to Holland, Belgium and Denmark has likewise been hinted at. All in all, such losses would strike heavily at Germany’s raw material sources (coal, iron ore and potash), her heavy industrial development and her sources of foodstuffs (East Prussia).

It has been suggested that what remains after these operations should then be reestablished along the lines of the old Imperial German Empire. That is, the old provinces, states and backward units (Saxony, Hesse, Bavaria, Friesland, etc.) should be resurrected. The idea behind this is apparent. It is to reduce Germany (politically and administratively) to a status similar to that prevailing after the defeat of Napoleon (1815). This task, accomplished by the reactionary Congress of Vienna, left a backward Germany, divided into numerous petty states and principalities mutually antagonistic to one another. If fundamental German national unity were to be destroyed today by a neo-Congress of Vienna, it would thrust the entire nation back to a similar catastrophic period in its history, and the long, bitter struggle for national unification would resume all over again. Yet these are the terms in which the Allies consider the problem.

Finally we come to economic reparations. Here, of course, the punishment of the defeated by the victors will be simplest,

clearest and harshest. The dreary failure of reparations after World War I has taught the Allies a lesson. This time they do not intend to exact such reparations primarily in the form of money. First, undoubtedly, Germany will be forced to give up whatever remains of movable wealth, machinery and equipment that has been looted from the occupied lands. A certain portion of German machinery (amount not yet determined) will be transferred directly to the governments of newly established countries. But the two major methods talked of, and which constitute an "advancement" over the methods of the First Versailles, are: (1) products of German industry (such as remains of it) to be distributed in set proportions among the Allied and liberated nations. A beginning of such reparations technique was made in the First World War, as we have pointed out in our summary of Versailles. But that was insignificant as contrasted with what is proposed today. Estimates ranging as high as fifty years of production for the Allies have been made. (2) The transportation and use of German labor power to be used directly in foreign reconstruction work. Russia, to be sure, has been most concrete in this sinister enslavement idea. Russian spokesmen have mentioned three million workers to work for ten years in the Ukraine as an example of what they mean by this new method. Naturally, one hears less talk about this particular point. It is not exactly an Allied talking point for victory! Yet the conception is there and under serious consideration.

As for "educational" and "cultural" reconstruction of Germany, the liberals and bourgeois professors are still too strongly divided among themselves (are Germans "schizophrenic" and therefore incurable, or will proper instruction by "democratic" professors work a cure?) to have advanced any specific ideas. The Allied generals, administrators and imperialists are not overly concerned with this matter.

European Unity or Ruin

Now, in summary, what precisely would such a peace (or one based on similar principles) mean for the future of the German people and Europe? First of all, let us note that even in bourgeois liberal terms, such a conclusion to the war would write *finis* forever to bourgeois-liberal proposals aiming at creating a European economic and political federation. To be sure, campaigns for such a federated Europe have already been quietly squelched, and little or nothing is heard of such ideas. The categorical attitude of the Stalin régime against any type of federation—all-European or confined to limited areas—put an end to the utopian dream of the middle class liberals. The subjugation of Germany would definitely extinguish this possibility. Everyone understands that it is impossible to take a step toward such goals without the support of eighty million people lying in the heart of the continent.

Not only would such a peace testify to the unwillingness and inability of the bourgeoisie to create a Federated Europe, even in a bourgeois-capitalist image, but it would also impugn (to put it mildly) the liberal and idealistic motives which, according to the liberals, give this war its idealistic and worthwhile character. Have they not told us that only economic collaboration and an end to destructive political and nationalistic rivalries can set Europe back upon its feet and save its civilization from self-destruction? Is that not *the* basic reason advanced in justification for the years of sacrifice—that this time the war will end in a just peace and a new European political and social order? What explanation can they offer to justify the "peace" we have described; the peace

we have good reason to believe will be forced upon a conquered Germany?

We reiterate certain basic characteristics of imperialism which we have stated many times before and which will be proved many times again in the near future. Imperialism cannot create a harmonious, people's European federation—it can only add to the already fatal nationalistic passions that are destroying the peoples of Europe; it cannot bring democracy to the nations of Europe—not even the limited democracy of liberalism. Sicily and Italy already indicate this; Germany will be a blunter proof. Imperialism cannot solve the economic problems of Europe because it cannot take first steps in that direction—namely, destruction of tariff and customs boundaries permitting the free flow of vitally needed raw materials and producers' and consumers' goods between the nations. As for the problem of political and national liberation, Allied imperialism commences its "reconstruction" of Europe by a military occupation and domination over Italy and intends to proceed as shortly as possible to the denial of Germany's right to exist. In 1918, at any rate, Wilson made what proved to be a hypocritical assertion that the "fourteen points" would apply equally to a democratic Germany. Today there is not even an effort to make such a promise.

The recent conferences of the great powers that have taken place, and particularly the behavior of Russia toward Poland and its pact with Czechoslovakia, indicate that the Allied powers will base their reconstructed Europe purely on power politics, power line-ups and power alliances. Essentially, such a Europe will not differ much from the Europe that emerged from Versailles. If these leaders have their way, all the same disintegrating rivalries and forces that led with such irresistibility to the present global catastrophe will again begin their tragic work. Energetic and freedom-demanding nationalities will again be compressed within artificial boundaries (Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, etc.); national boundaries and tariff barriers that throw nation against nation in destructive economic warfare will be set up once more and, above all, the imperialist crime of a second "oppression and humiliation" of the German masses will ensue.

But "Shall not the German people be punished for this war?" We hear this question put to us on all sides, even from those who understand what the subjugation of Germany would mean.

Such a question puts the problem within the same sphere as it is placed by the imperialists. It links the German masses (workers and peasants) together with the German ruling class and its Nazi Party. It ignores the fact that Hitler marched to power over the broken bones of the German labor movement; that he retained and continues to retain power only by an *endless Gestapo terror against his own people*. The class struggle (that is, concretely, the hatred between the German workers and their capitalist-Nazi rulers) is a powerful factor in Germany today. These workers know who has brought this disaster and nightmare upon their heads. But it is only a *greater* fear—the fear of loss of national independence—that keeps this class feeling suppressed. Fear of Allied occupation, fear of dismemberment, fear of reparations—it is upon these fears that Hitler feeds and continues to live. (See his New Year's message to the German people.) The German nation, above all, is highly conscious of the problems of national unification. It struggled slowly and painfully for a long period to achieve this necessary goal. It fought kings and kaisers, princes and democratic capitulators, foreign reactionaries and invaders, to accomplish this progressive task.

The misfortune was that in the end the unified nation fell into the hands of imperialists and would-be world beaters, rather than into the hands of the German workers.

And here again we see another reactionary aspect to any contemplated German dismemberment. Its net effect would be to throw together the German proletariat and its bourgeoisie (seeking to recreate national unification), rather than lay the groundwork for the revolutionary seizure of a unified Germany by a socialist proletariat.

The American labor movement, before long, will be faced by this problem concretely. Shall it go along with capitalism and imperialism by giving its support to a peace of oppression? Or shall it stand with the revolutionists of Germany's working population, aid them in their struggle against their Nazi rulers by reaffirming Germany's unequivocal right to national self-determination under a democratic, working class régime, in collaboration with the liberated peoples of Europe?

HARRY YOUNG.

The Psychology of Jim Crowism

Effects of the War on Reactionary Tradition

A series of race riots as ugly as any pogrom which Hitler could concoct swept over America last year. It is becoming painfully clear to even the most superficial observer that America, so cocksure in its adolescent boasting about its rôle as the democratic missionary, is now rent with social poisons and prejudices of the most extreme character.

The race question in America—more accurately, the color question—sums up in itself the internal contradictions and external barbarisms of our capitalist society. Properly understood, it can serve as the clearest, if ugliest, portrait of the sickness of that society.

In this article it is not our purpose to attempt an exhaustive analysis of the anatomy of Jim Crowism. We shall, for the most part, leave aside the economic motivations of racial tensions, even though it is they which lie at the root of the problem. No one who has read the story of the riots in the Mobile shipyards, where the employers deliberately withheld information of even the feeble government plan to restore some kind of peace between the white and Negro workers, can fail to see that many of the racial outbreaks are the specific result of employer attempts to incite color against color as a means of destroying class solidarity. And no one who has studied the rôle of Negro workers during the last part of the nineteenth and the early part of the twentieth centuries as strikebreakers deliberately degraded to that position by the exigencies of capitalist society; no one who has seen how the pattern of Jim Crowism in the South has its social origin in the attempt to preserve the cheap labor basis of its economy by creating color fissures within the ranks of the Southern workers; no one who has, on the contrary, seen how the policy of equal and fair treatment on the part of such unions as the United Mine Workers has resulted in the creation of class solidarity between white and colored workers; no one who has seen these developments can deny that Jim Crowism is an integral part of the social pattern of American capitalism.

Without succumbing to any theory of "internal imperialism," we believe that it is illuminating to say that American capitalism depends for its very existence on Jim Crowism as much as British imperialism depends for its existence on the exploitation of the masses of India. American capitalism cannot and will never attempt any serious blows at Jim Crowism, because such an attempt would be suicidal to its own existence. It may perhaps attempt here and there to subtilize the Jim Crow pattern, as is done in certain sections of the North (where, of course, Jim Crowism is as deeply embedded as in

the South, though it takes a less open form) but it can nowhere abolish it. As a matter of fact, as the crisis of American capitalism becomes sharper, Jim Crowism becomes more widespread and virulent; it has multiplied enormously since the outbreak of the war. It is no exaggeration to say that the ultimate destruction of Jim Crowism is impossible without the establishment of socialism; and in many parts of the country it would be one of the major tasks to continue the struggle against vestigial Jim Crow psychologies even after the economic system that bred them was long removed.

The Jim Crow Tradition

Yet, despite the fact that Jim Crowism had its origin in the mechanics of capitalist society and is nurtured and protected by that society, it is unfortunately true that a large part of the American population, perhaps a majority, is imbued with these prejudices despite the fact that, for instance in the case of white workers, these prejudices may be directly contrary to their own economic interests. And therein lies one of the most gruesome crimes of American capitalism: *By imbedding deeply within the consciousness of great masses the myths of racial superiority, it has created a social weed which, by its own autonomous growth, poisons our national life and provides fertile psychological and emotional grounds for the rise of American fascism.* Jim Crowism, while it has its roots in a calculated policy of American capitalism and is maintained by it, has assumed the status of an autonomous tradition in this country; it has, alas, become part of our folkways.

There are two main ingredients in the Jim Crow pattern: *the myth of racial superiority and the tradition of mob violence.* Both have their roots deep in our national history. Side by side with the so-called democratic Jeffersonian tradition, the heritage to which our liberals pay such uncritical homage, there has developed in this country a tradition rather less attractive—mob violence quite uniquely American. A summary knowledge of our historical background must lead to the conclusion that in reality the tradition of Jeffersonian democracy and the tradition of violence are not by any means dichotomous but rather find a joint origin and show a congruent development in the American Revolutionary War. Violence in social life cannot (unfortunately, as yet) be judged by absolutist standards; its social and ethical character depends, in the last analysis, upon who uses violence against whom. Thus, it would be absurd and retrospectively reactionary to attribute the tradition of mob violence to the

violence of the American revolution, which sprang from deep and valid social needs. But the equalitarian violence of the American revolution, when it became embodied in a national tradition, degenerated over the course of decades into a vicious kind of mob action, one reason for which may perhaps be that the "American Dream," upon which the original equalitarian violence was based, has been so largely unfulfilled.

It was along the Western frontier, that elastic chimera of unrealized hopes, that this violence came to a head. Often enough, it is true, the violence of the frontier was the direct result of specific economic conflicts between the small farmer and the large ranchers and railroaders (see Frank Norris's *Octopus*). But what is distinctive in the violence of the West is that so often it is the comparatively uninhibited expression of a *mass social frustration*, of undefined and inchoate rebellion against the drabness and dullness of the realities of our civilization. Just as some of the finer aspects of the American Dream found their freest expression on the Western frontier, so did the vigilante tradition also flourish there. (The recent Hollywood film, *The Ox-Bow Incident*, is an excellent illustration.)

When we examine the other main source of the mob tradition, the Southern lynchings, we find a similar phenomenon. Here, too, the basic economic explanation is essential to an understanding of lynchings. But why does the white worker indulge in the savagery of lynching? The poor white lynchers and Jim-Crows because: (1) his entire upbringing has been steeped in the ignorance of racial prejudice. From the cradle on, Southern society sees to it that he adopts the Jim Crow *mores*; otherwise, he faces the dread appellation of "Nigger lover." This is a classic instance of how the educational apparatus serves the basic purposes of the ruling strata of society; (2) the poor white lynchers and Jim-Crows *because he gains a vicarious pleasure out of pushing someone else around after having been pushed around himself. He finds in the passion and soothing irrationality of the lynch mob a temporary alleviation from the unspeakable dullness and constant poverty of his textile mill existence.* For once, he can be "on top" (and that in a highly exciting way!); as a worker or sharecropper he is the lowest of the low; and as a White Man he *belongs*—and to the "superior" race at that.

It is this tradition of mob violence, plus the fact that it is after all *only* some eighty years since chattel slavery was abolished in this country, which is a constant factor in producing these riots which shame the nation. This tradition has, of course, not acted as an independent or arbitrary factor. It has arisen when social tensions have been most strained; it has arisen, both spontaneously and when prompted, during those crises in our history when the gulf between the reality and the promise was most apparent.

A Harbinger of Fascism

Today, in America, one can see this tradition of mob racial violence arising in new and virulent form. For now it is not merely the result of democratic exuberance or democratic frustration; now it arises coincident with, and as a product of, the greatest social crisis since the Middle Ages. In fascism, the methods of absolute irrationality coupled with unrestrained violence are utilized for the quite rational, if reactionary, purpose of maintaining capitalism. That is why the tradition of mob violence finds such fertile ground in America today; it is one of the harbingers of fascism. The mob violence of recent months is the psychological counter-

part of the increasing totalitarianization of America's capitalist economy and a symptom of the intolerable social strain which is thereby being produced.

Let us take three typical incidents as illustrative of the thesis we have put forward: the "zoot suit" riots in Los Angeles, the large-scale race riot in Detroit, and the riot between white and Negro boys in Newark.

The Los Angeles "zoot suit" riot is a remarkable illustration of the pattern of social frustration which leads to mob violence, since it is operative for both sides. Neither the sailors nor the zoot suiters have any *direct* economic motivation in fighting each other. Yet an examination of the causes of the riot provides a remarkable illustration of how the psychological poisons bred by capitalism develop and intertwine to the point where a monstrous social explosion results. The sailors, first of all, are victims of a situation largely not of their own making. Trained to think and act in terms of organized violence, tense with the eventual or momentary expectation of battle action, they are easy prey to mob moods. The unspeakable boredom of the military routine itself leads them to wild actions some would never indulge in otherwise. They are resentful of civilians as a group, mainly because they are so envious of them. And they find in the Mexican and Negro youth who wear the zoot suits "legitimate" prey for the outlet of these suppressed emotions; their hooliganism even wins the applause of the local bourgeois press which is anxious, for perfectly solid reasons of its own, to keep the Negroes and Mexicans "in place."

On the other hand, the Mexican and Negro youths are also victims of social and psychological patterns which they scarcely understand. The war has offered them a half-opportunity: the scarcity of labor forces large war industries to give a few of them jobs which they could never get in peacetime. This slight reed of opportunity merely produces an intense desire for more, and a new spirit of aggressiveness arises. Most of the Mexican youths are of the second generation of their people in this country; they are more acquainted with the myths of American democracy than are their resigned elders and they are anxious to have them applied to themselves. They find security neither in their old-fashioned family life, which is still largely organized along Mexican patterns, nor in the American community which refuses to accept them. They naturally form gangs and wear the zoot suit as a badge of defiance. It is their way of being different, of flashing their birthright. And can anyone wonder that criminal tendencies find root at the peripheries of the zoot-suit gangs (which would be no different from any other boys' gangs were it not for the discrimination problem), especially when one considers the poverty in which the Mexican population of Los Angeles is forced to live?

When one remembers the deliberate way in which the Los Angeles Hearst press fanned the fires of prejudice, the attitude of the local police, which consisted of tolerating the aggression against the Mexican youth and in some cases even helping it, and the peculiar laxity of the naval command in failing to prevent its members from engaging in the riots; it is then possible to see why this tragic outburst of violent irrationality, or apparently motiveless struggle arose. Both sides were victims of a social tragedy neither had made nor understood; and it is a queer commentary on historical development that such a complex social explosion should be set off by as ridiculous a matter as a zoot suit!

In Detroit, the racial riots assumed the aspects of a minor civil war. This situation deserves analysis far more detailed

than we can here offer. There are numerous specific local factors which helped produce the riot. A town with a housing problem so severe as to be able to provoke race riots by itself; the center of the activities of numerous native fascist groups, such as the Ku Klux Klan, Gerald K. Smith's America First Party and the remnants of the Black Legion; a large influx of white Southerners, bringing with them their racial prejudices; a large Negro community with considerable internal organization; the center of mass war production and home of the most reactionary segment of American capitalism, the Ford dynasty; the home of America's most dynamic union, the UAW, and most economically militant, but not equally socially developed working class. Add up these factors and you immediately have an explosive situation.

Here again we wish to emphasize our belief that it is the functioning of capitalist society which is the prime spur to such catastrophes. We do not doubt that if thoroughly investigated it would be found that behind the fascist groups there is the hand of the auto dynasts, trying to sow dissension in the ranks of the workers and destroy their union by creating racial conflicts. Nor can one ignore the tidal economic pressures which crush the Negro workers.

Yet how explain the tragic fact that in this, the heart of American industrial unionism, such horrible race riots are possible?

Effects of the War

It is only, I think, by a consideration of the general factors of the social psychology of a nation at war which I have heretofore referred to, that an explanation is possible. Mass hysteria, mass social frustration, mass violence can only be explained by tracing their roots in the tortuous historical caverns of the American past. The Detroit worker, only a few years ago a resident of the deep South, is incensed at the comparative freedom the Negroes are afforded in Detroit. He sees some of them as leaders of his union, as shop stewards. Another worker joins in the riot because of his boredom, his sense of general and vague dissatisfaction which he can neither specify nor explain. Still another worker joins the rioters for the excitement or the "fun." And still another worker joins the rioters because of a craving for violence; the movies have pumped him full of chauvinistic war propaganda which puts a premium on violence and which contrasts sharply with his own harried, spiritless life. Can any of these unfortunate victims of a twisted heritage of social rotteness and primitivism—many of whom undoubtedly feel a sense of shame after their participation in the riots—resist the malicious gossip and rumors which the native fascist vermin make it their business to spread around? And who is there to counteract this terrible situation when the leaders of their unions are too busy emasculating the militancy of the workers and smearing John L. Lewis to pay attention to this social blockbuster in their own backyard?

Finally, when we turn to the Newark riots, in which only children participated, we can see most clearly how the racial antagonism has grown like an irresistible weed, which even those who planted it could not uproot if they would. No more complete condemnation of the savagery to which capitalism has brought us can be made than by merely describing this scene in Newark where children in their teens form phalanxes of color to destroy each other with baseball bats, where white slum urchins organize to uphold the precepts of white supremacy. Henceforth, let us understand that the race problem is not a local excrescence due to Southern peculiarities. When

children riot in Newark or when a giant housing project in New York plans to bar Negroes, and the "liberal" Mayor approves that step, we are witnessing the same pattern as that which culminates in lynching in the South.

These children in Newark have absorbed the anti-Negro prejudices which are part of the American heritage simultaneously with their lessons in spelling. The war produces mass psychoses which irritate and disturb them; what is easier than going down to the Negro section of the town and beating up some of the Negro kids? With their lessons teaching them that "All men are created free and equal" they also learn that "Niggers must be kept in their place"; and society applauds their hooliganism with a slap on the wrist and a secret pat on the back.

* * *

If, then, the racial conflict goes deeply into the national heritage, if it has seeped into the national psychology, if it is the product of social psychoses and frustrations as pervading as the economic system from which they spring; are we not then entitled to a pessimistic outlook for the future of race relations? If we project our discussion upon the premise of a continuation of capitalism in this country, the answer must be: yes. The forces that make for Jim Crow under capitalism grow stronger as that system declines, rather than weaker. Each pantywaist, milksop measure of the pussyfooting liberals is as nothing compared to the social drives of a declining society. Does this, however, mean that we are to resign ourselves to the barbarism of Jim Crow? By no means.

The Task of the Working Class

The working class cannot build a new society in the womb of the old; it cannot even construct positive new ethics while struggling against the old, but it can develop an ethics of struggle, a revolutionary ethics which will make no compromise with racial prejudice. The elementary forms of such an ethics are already visible. In the deep South, it has been possible for agricultural workers to organize on a harmonious, bi-racial basis. In such unions as the UMW and the UAW, it has been possible to do likewise. The Negro problem becomes more and more a union problem. We are convinced that the orthodox Negro organizations are doomed to increasing futility; they can only lead to a new kind of Uncle Tom resignation, or into the blind alley of racial exclusivism. Most concretely, in Detroit: the very future of the United Automobile Workers is at stake in these race riots. If the UAW leadership does not at once begin an intensive educational campaign designed to cement inter-race relations within the union, if it does not at once begin a merciless campaign designed to expose and root out the fascist agents within the union, its very existence is at stake. Either the Negro will be a loyal union brother, or you will force him to become a strike-breaker—that is the alternative that must be posed and elaborated to the Detroit worker. In a sense the very future of the American labor movement depends upon whether or not the UAW will be able to solve this problem.

Yet racial prejudices are a conservative social factor. Precisely because of their irrationality it is unlikely that even the establishment of a workers' government would result in their immediate destruction. That is even more true of immediate reforms designed to alleviate the plight of the Negro. An important cause of the riots in Newark was the absence of proper recreational facilities for both white and Negro youth; it is important and proper to fight for those facilities

as a means of alleviating those conditions. But it would be utopian to believe that to remove an immediate cause of riots—the absence of playgrounds—would result in an eradication of the racial antagonisms.

In America we are blessed with a magnificent industrial apparatus with which the construction of socialism should be a comparatively easy and rapid matter. But we are also cursed

with a tradition of racial violence which may well leave its traces in the mind when the society which produced them is being buried. That is why the struggle to eradicate every last vestige of racial prejudice is one of the major and most imperative tasks of the socialist movement now and the socialist society of tomorrow.

ALFRED FREEMAN.

China: Colossus of the East-I

The National Revolution and the Imperialists

For the last seven years, substantial sections of the American bourgeoisie have taken upon themselves the job of spokesmen for "heroic China." By so doing they have created among the American people an unprecedented interest in the future of China.

After the First World War the American bourgeoisie took the lead in furthering imperialist exploitation of China. They will do so again after World War II unless the American workers are alert to the aims of American capital and assert their class solidarity with the Chinese masses.

Part I—Background of Revolution

Modern China has never known a state of normalcy. For over half a century the constant miseries of her close to half a billion people have been punctuated and deepened by foreign wars, civil wars, revolutions and counter-revolutions. These political upheavals have occurred against a background of changing economic conditions, bringing into play new popular forces and ideas.

Ancient China was invaded innumerable times, but the invaders never brought with them a revolutionizing culture. For two thousand years before the British bombardment of Chinese ports in the early nineteenth century, the old static economy was constantly reproduced. Dynastic heads were cut off, but the peasants invariably found the new dynasty but another surname for the old social order. Warlords, landlords and emperors joined hands to exploit the peasant masses or, in rivalry among themselves, rode to and fell from power on the strength of the peasant revolts. In the middle of the seventeenth century the peasant rebels achieved such strength that the foreign enemy had to be invited in from Manchuria by the bankrupt Mings to suppress them. For the next two hundred and fifty years the Manchus ruled the country as foreign conquerors, unable to alter the pattern of Chinese culture or stabilize the conflicts between the Chinese masses and their exploiters.

The Bankruptcy of the Manchus

The entry of Western imperialism in the nineteenth century disrupted the old economic structure, introducing new classes, new chaos, new struggles. In the West, the invaders themselves were undergoing revolutionary economic and political changes, forcing them into conflict with one another. As the decades passed, China more and more became the battlefield for these conflicts which were put aside only when the Chinese masses became a serious threat to all imperialism.

China's handicraft industry declined almost to zero as she became a market for the cheaper machine-made goods of the

West. Merchants and officials in the coastal areas became compradores for foreign trade and capital and with their accumulated profits bought up more land and expropriated the peasants. The unemployed artisans and uprooted peasants formed the mass base for the Taiping or Great Peace Rebellion of 1850-65. Wherever this rebellion succeeded (and at one time the rebels held sixteen of China's eighteen provinces), there were instituted not only agrarian reforms, such as destruction of land titles, but also bourgeois and national reforms, such as stimulation of the internal market, abolition of slavery, and suppression of the British-sponsored opium trade. The ultimate failure of this embryonic bourgeois and national revolution was dictated by British and American imperialism, acting directly through their soldiers and indirectly through their compradors. The Manchus who had, in the first place, been called in to suppress the peasant masses, now found themselves forced to call upon more powerful foreign forces to protect their rule. The strength of the revolutionary masses had reached new heights. But just as the primitive agriculture and handicraft of China had been unable to compete against Western manufactures and industry, the Chinese peasants and artisans were unable to win out against foreign guns and steel bullets. Kept "peaceful" by two hundred years of Manchu occupation, they had only their religious fanaticism and occult practices to arm them against modern weapons.

Nevertheless, for several decades, the Chinese masses kept China in turmoil, battering down the Manchu dynasty, already spent from its efforts to limit the inroads of Western capitalism. Every sign of weakness on the part of the Manchus was a signal for an uprising against the privileged classes. Every sign of strength among the masses was a signal for the Western powers to come to the defense of the decadent Manchus. This triangular pattern will be reproduced in every great crisis of modern China.

Birth of the Chinese Bourgeoisie

In the first few decades of Western imperialism, the Chinese ruling class had played a comprador rôle for the imperialist merchants and exploiters of China's natural resources. As imperialism took on the character of capital export after the Sino-Japanese war, industry began to develop in the treaty ports. The defeat of the Manchus by the rising Japanese bourgeoisie exposed once and for all the weakness of the old ruling class. It thus both stimulated more wanton aggression by the imperialists and called forth a Chinese bourgeoisie to take over the reins of the nation. In the inviting security of foreign-controlled coastal China, the Chinese landlords and commercial capitalists became industrial capitalists, building

cotton and weaving mills, match factories and silk filatures. Banks were established and a Chinese bourgeoisie with its fingers in commerce, industry and finance was born. This new class required progressive political reforms for its new economic rôle, but it was too weak to exact these from the old feudal régime. The imprisonment in 1898 of the young emperor, enlightened by bourgeois pressure, demonstrated the futility of the bourgeois intellectuals as the political instrument of China's industrial revolution.

China's need for an agrarian and industrial revolution, however, did not rest in the bourgeois intellectuals. The increasingly pauperized masses in the countryside had begun to recuperate from their exhaustion after the unsuccessful Taiping rebellion. Famine, the incessant plague of a country without modern transport, added to the unrest. At the turn of the century, the masses rose again. This time their accumulated grievances against the Manchus could be deflected against a new enemy—the foreign invaders whose railways and missionaries had penetrated beyond the coast. These revolts, known as the Boxer Rebellion, were again doomed to failure. Perverted by the decadent Manchu bureaucracy, again organized only with primitive and esoteric practices against modern weapons in the hands of strong imperialist forces, with no key position in the new Chinese economy, the rebellious masses went down to defeat by the Powers. These carried out the counter-revolution with a brutality and a ruthlessness not exceeded by Hitler's crimes in Europe today. The Allied forces occupied Peking, where Britain and Germany, supported by the United States, became the dominant powers.

Nevertheless, the masses had tasted some fruits of their growing power. It was the unwillingness of the Manchu soldiers to fire upon the peasants which had forced the Empress Dowager to turn the revolt into a struggle for national liberation. Moreover, the Boxer soldiers had joined in battle with the combined armies of European, Russian, American and Japanese imperialism, and acquitted themselves creditably. Foreigners in the interior had been compelled to flee to the ports or leave the country entirely. What the ruling class had been too weak to achieve had been accomplished by the peasant masses. Only the revolutionary activity of the Chinese masses had saved China from being divided up, like Africa, among the Powers.

The Republican Revolution

During the next ten years hardly a year passed without riots and insurrections. The Empress Dowager was compelled to make all sorts of promises of popular government and reform. The scene of the popular movement had begun to shift from the countryside to the coast, and even beyond that, to the overseas areas where Cantonese emigrants had become workers and shopkeepers, and Chinese students had come to learn about the West. The 1905 revolution in Russia is the contribution of this decade to the history of mass struggle. From this time on, the sections of the Chinese population most intimate with the modern world will play the decisive rôle. Modern forms of struggle, the boycott, mass demonstrations, strikes and coöperation between the civilians and soldiery will replace simple violence reinforced by charms and other occult weapons.

By 1911 these methods, utilized by petty capitalists, merchants, intellectuals and workers, had enabled the petty bourgeoisie to overthrow the Manchu dynasty, which had become a complete slave to foreign imperialism. Again, famine is the scourge which drives the masses to action, while the stimulus

for the Chinese capitalists is a Manchu railway sell-out to German, British, French and American bankers.

Sun Yat-sen, the leader of the republican movement, stood half way between the old China and the new. In his early youth he had close association with the Taipings. In his later years he fraternized with Western missionaries, bankers and overseas Chinese. Sun Yat-sen was a petty bourgeois humanitarian with the limitations of his class and of his time. His methods for achieving the "Three People's Principles" (San Min Chu I) of nationalism, democracy and livelihood, reflected his lack of contact with the developing mass movement, his confidence in the Western imperialists and his semi-conspiratorial leanings. Instead of calling upon the masses to oust the imperialist exploiters, he bowed before the Powers and asked them for benevolent coöperation. Instead of calling upon the masses to achieve self-government through exercise of political liberties, he asked them to accept preliminary periods of military rule and political tutelage by the enlightened intelligentsia. Instead of agrarian revolution and widespread economic reorganization, he advocated gradual equalization of rights in the land and restriction of capital. With no economic base in Chinese society, Sun Yat-sen and his followers utilized the method of playing one military clique against another. Thus, a few months after his election to the presidency of the young republic, Sun Yat-sen voluntarily resigned in favor of Yuan Shih-kai, a warlord notorious for his betrayal of the enlightened emperor in 1898 and for his support of the foreigners against the Boxer revolutionists in 1900. With the aid of the Powers, Yuan then proceeded to suppress all efforts to introduce reform into China. With the aid of American capital, he attempted in 1915 to restore the monarchy, only to be frustrated by the pressure of Great Britain, Japan, Russia and France.

Division of China Among the Powers

The Powers, which were as one when social revolution threatened in China, were at loggerheads as soon as this threat was removed. The death of Yuan Shih-kai in 1915 and the inter-imperialist war in Europe threw China into a civil war between the feudal warlords, each backed by a rival imperialist but united in their determination to maintain the feudal system of exploitation. The Powers were more generous overlords of the Chinese ruling class than the Manchus had been. They did not require civil service examinations for the right to exploit the masses, and they provided comfortable and safe foreign settlements where the landlords could escape from the rebellious peasants.

Up to and during the First World War, regional armies, made up of the ever-increasing floating population, were to aggravate the misery of the Chinese masses by banditry, battles and military requisitions. Lacking modern communications and divided by dialects, the mass movement was forced into local channels and dominated by local warlords. Throughout, the rival imperialist powers continued the economic invasion which drove the peasants to banditry, and the political and financial maneuvers which kept the provincial armies at each other's throats. Every progressive Chinese movement was refused recognition by the Powers. Every sign of reaction was encouraged. British assistance to the warlords in 1922 enabled them to oust Sun Yat-sen from Canton, where he had set up a relatively democratic government. The American government took the initiative in refusing to permit China to recognize the Soviet government. The Washington Conference in 1921 marked America's assertion of domi-

nance in the Far East. At this conference, Japan's rape of China in the "Twenty-one Demands" was confirmed by America as a blow to Germany, Britain and Russia. At this conference, also, the Americans provided the formula whereby maintenance of foreign troops in China was legalized.

The Proletariat Asserts Itself

China's participation in the First World War had merely provided the front behind which the rival imperialists could work out their schemes for repartitioning the country. Nevertheless, the war gave Chinese industry a chance to expand, comparatively unhandicapped by competition with foreign production and the world market. Out of this development of the productive forces grew a bolder Chinese bourgeoisie intent on ousting the foreign imperialists. The development of the bourgeoisie as a class, however, was inevitably accompanied by the development of an industrial proletariat, locked in conflict with both foreign and Chinese employers within the process of production. The concentration and organization of the mass struggle accompanied the concentration and growth of industry. For the first time in modern history, China had given birth to a class strong and united enough to oust the imperialists. Leading the agrarian movement which was organized rapidly into peasant leagues, the workers in the major industrial areas of China carried out a revolution from 1926 to 1927. The success of this revolution depended on the masses pursuing a clear-cut policy of class struggle against their native exploiters at the same time that they raised the slogan of national liberation. Even the sketchiest acquaintance with China's previous history demonstrated without a doubt that "only the deepening of the revolution could save it" from the Allied forces. These, as always, stood ready to intervene the moment the Chinese ruling class needed their aid against the Chinese masses. This time it was the weakness in policy rather than the weakness in arms which doomed the rebellious masses to failure. The misleadership of the Third International, deluding the masses into a reliance on the Chinese bourgeoisie and landlords, brought about the betrayal of the revolution. The native exploiting elements, an inseparable amalgam of landlords, industrialists and bankers, led the Kuomintang. Confronted with a proletarian revolution, these elements now compromised with the foreign imperialists, who had learned to exploit class differences in the nationalist movement as they had exploited regional differences a decade before.

True to its traditions, the Chinese ruling class bowed to the foreign enemy to save itself from the native proletariat and peasantry. With the aid of foreign gunboats and money, Chiang Kai-shek beheaded the mass movement and brought the Chinese bourgeoisie to power. In the main industrial areas of China, there was instituted a naked anti-labor dictatorship. Now the bourgeoisie came to power on the wave of mass revolt as once the feudal dynasties had triumphed. From the petty bourgeois radicalism of Sun Yat-sen, the Kuomintang had developed into a full-fledged bourgeois party with many of the political instruments of a fascist government. Blue Shirts, C. C. Corps and other terroristic agencies were organized to stamp out every sign of struggle among the masses.

The power and position of the new régime is symbolized by the appellation "Soong Dynasty." Chiang Kai-shek derives political prestige as the successor to Sun Yat-sen. His wife is Mei-Ling Soong, the sister of Madame Sun Yat-sen. The Minister of Finance is T. V. Soong, Mei-Ling's brother.

And still another Soong is married to H. H. Kung, the Minister of Industry, Labor and Commerce. Three of the four members of the Joint Bank Board are members of the Soong Dynasty; the Generalissimo is chairman. China's traditional nepotism has taken on modern bourgeois dress.

After the success of the counter-revolution, the remnants of the mass movement retreated to the interior where, under the leadership of Chinese Communists, local peasant uprisings and wars against the Kuomintang armies brought scattered successes and failures. For a period, the agrarian movement, less subject to the "direct operations of the hangmen of the counter-revolution," rode high. Poorly armed and fed, these peasant forces fought innumerable heroic battles with the armies of Chiang Kai-shek, whom the imperialists supplied with the most modern weapons. After a defeat in 1934, they were finally forced to withdraw to the Northwest. Even then, despite the series of disasters which they had undergone, the desperate peasants within the Communist-led armies showed their courage and discipline under the rigors of the "Long March," one of the most remarkable mass expeditions in all history.

America and the Counter-Revolution

Since the defeat of the 1927 revolution, Chiang Kai-shek's claim to hegemony over China has rested entirely upon his support by the imperialist powers, jointly or severally. As one who could be trusted to preserve the treaty privileges of the powers in China, the Generalissimo has never ceased to be the recipient of political support, money and arms. The Powers have encouraged by every possible means every expedition of Chiang's which would keep alive the flame of internecine war and prevent national defense of China from imperialist aggression. Without their support the devastation of the country and the massacres of millions of Chinese by Chiang's armies could never have occurred. Whenever any opponent of the Generalissimo's has shown signs of strength, the Powers have not hesitated to intervene with troops to wipe him out, as at Shantung in 1928 against Chang Tso-lin, or at Shanghai in 1932 against the Nineteenth Route Army under Tsai Ting-kai. In both cases, Japanese troops played the hand, but the Powers, especially the United States, dealt the cards. American officers built up the Chiang Kai-shek air forces during the 'Thirties for bombing expeditions against Communist and other opponents of the Generalissimo, including hundreds of thousands of civilians. Only the mutiny of some of Chiang's troops in 1936 and their flight to join the rebel forces of the South prevented another bloody massacre by American-sent airplanes. Long before Pearl Harbor, American silver purchases in China made the Chiang Kai-shek government at Nanking a financial dependency of the United States.

Throughout, the Powers have drawn the line at aiding the Chiang Kai-shek government when it has been a question of resistance to imperialist aggression.

National Liberation for the Chinese Masses

It is for this reason that the mass movement in China during the last ten years has tended to assume nationalistic form, i.e., of resistance to Japan as the most overt aggressor. Not only for underlying class reasons, but also because of Chiang's patent subservience to American imperialism, the mass movement was also bound to be anti-Chiang Kai-shek. The national and class struggles in China have hence been inextricably intertwined. The nation could be defended only by com-

binning the struggle against Chiang Kai-shek with the struggle against imperialism. The policy of the Chinese Communists before 1935, which called for struggle against Japan and against Chiang Kai-shek, aroused popular support throughout China. The heroic defense of Shanghai against the Japanese by the Nineteenth Route Army in 1932, over the active opposition of Chiang, symbolized to the Chinese masses their potential power and the treachery of Chiang. The kidnapping of the Generalissimo at Sian in 1936 by the troops of the Young Marshall was further evidence that the peasants in the North were willing to carry on a combined struggle against Japan and against Chiang Kai-shek. Again, it was the disastrous policy of the Kremlin and the treachery of the warlord leaders in the North which misled the masses into a popular front with Chiang Kai-shek. Even Agnes Smedley, notorious as a Stalinist fellow-traveler, reports that a "wave of cynical resentment against the Soviet Union swept through Sian" when the Kremlin instructed the Chinese Communists to see to the Generalissimo's release (*Battle Hymn of China*, New York, 1943).

Not only China's whole past but all subsequent events have demonstrated that the Chinese ruling class is unable to conduct the national defense. In their own interests and in the interests of their imperialist sponsors, the Chinese exploiters have never abandoned the struggle against the Chinese masses nor hesitated to accede to imperialist demands for dividing up China in return for support against mass rebellion. Only the revolutionary activity of the masses has prevented the partitioning of China among the Powers.

Up to the Lukouchiao incident of July 7, 1937, and even

after it, Chiang was unable to decide whether his main enemy was at home or in Tokyo. The revival of industry in China after the world depression had strengthened the Chinese bourgeoisie and emboldened it against the Japanese aggressor. But with more than the usual hesitation of the bourgeoisie to institute a national war for liberation, it continued to hope that Japan could be deflected by threats and appeals to the other Powers.

The war against Japan has been going on for more than six and a half years. During these years, however, it has not been one China but several Chinas that have been fighting. Roughly, these China's may be classified as Chiang Kai-shek's China in the Southwest, the China controlled by the Communists in the North, and the China of the East under Japanese domination.* In the first, the bourgeoisie is linked inextricably with Anglo-American imperialism; in the second, the leadership has ties with Russia. In the third, the proletariat is locked in class as well as national opposition to the Japanese and is beyond the direct control of the Chinese bourgeoisie. Analysis of these three Chinas will repay the revolutionist well. For as Japanese imperialism crumbles in the Far East, the conflicts between these Chinas will sooner or later break out in civil war and social revolution. (*To be continued.*)

*Approximately eighty per cent of China's territory is "free" and about sixty per cent of her population. The exact size and population of the different areas are impossible to determine. Military retreats and victories and mass migrations shift the picture constantly. Natural disasters, like famines, droughts and floods, and man-made disasters, like war and expropriation, have made millions of Chinese a migratory population.

—RIA STONE.

Machiavellian Political Theory - III

Problems of Power and Leadership

Burnham, like his Machiavellian predecessors, has more than general scientific considerations in mind when he puts forward his theories.* As much as if he were proposing a formal program, he is concerned with political problems—not the specific immediate problems of our society (he has little to say about war or unemployment or fascism), but rather about the more general political problems of modern society. He is most concerned with the "problem of power." While in our first two articles we showed the psychological premise which underlies the Machiavellian assumptions, in this article we shall discuss the dual argument which Burnham puts forward: the argument from organization, which can be made without psychological premises. It is this argument—the theory that the complexity of modern society makes impossible the achievement of a truly democratic action—which has been seized upon most eagerly by many of the ex-radicals.

It is on Michels that Burnham leans most heavily in this connection. Of all the Machiavellians, Michels is the most interesting writer. His study of political parties contains a vast amount of fascinating material even if its theoretical conclusions are insupportable.

The socialists may triumph but socialism never will, said Michels. In this phrase is concentrated the theory of Machia-

vellianism with regard to power, and it has received powerful support—in the minds of many—from the experiences of the Bolshevik Revolution. Men may start with noble ideological motives; their quest for power may have had its origin in profound humanitarian goals; but the very struggle for power, with its inevitable mechanisms and corruptions, engenders a desire for power as an end in itself; it supplants the professed goal and is transformed from a means to an end. The party, from being an instrument for the achievement of goals, is transformed into a sacred object, incapable of wrong-doing, and beyond question. It is in this manner that all idealistic movements end in tyranny.

A General Problem of Power

Clearly enough, this political theory presumes the existence of a general problem of power extending through all societies and criss-crossing all conditions. Even if, however, we remove its inevitability quotient—its claim to universality—by destroying the psychological premise which must necessarily underlie such a claim, we have still not disposed of the entire problem. For certainly it cannot be denied that the power complex has been a potent historical factor and that it will present a major problem for a future socialist society, certainly a far more difficult one than that of technological organization. Nor can it be denied that there have been many points

*The Machiavellians, by James Burnham.

of similarity, even congruent patterns between different social movements for power. So that even if on the theoretical plain we force Machiavellianism out of its "inevitability" bastion and prove that it cannot even claim to speak in more than terms of probabilities, we must still face the problem of power.

Yet we can make no progress at all toward its solution if we do not insist on its rigorous integration into specific historical contexts. No problem of power can be considered as an abstract syllogism; Lord Acton's famous maxim that "power corrupts" may be a fairly valid, though by no means conclusive, summary description of previous historical experience, it may even serve as a valuable warning for the future; but it cannot serve as a social law. For that purpose we must always give a contextual setting: the Stalinist bureaucracy developed as a result of certain very specific historical circumstances and many members of the old Bolshevik vanguard fell prey to the degenerative process, but what was basic to the split in the ranks of the Bolshevik Party was a class issue and the personalities of the participants determined at most the class allegiance of a particular individual, though often enough that allegiance too was "predetermined" by a whole set of antecedent political and psychological conditions. In a word, we must insist that all problems of power are *specific*, that they are engendered not by any alleged super-social laws of political functioning applicable to all societies, but rather by a given historical situation. Once this is granted, it becomes impossible for anyone to assert *a priori* the necessary transformation of a socialist revolution into a quest for power by a bureaucratic minority.*

Nonetheless, if all problems of power are specific, there are certain crucial points of similarity between them which makes it necessary to consider them as an independent series. It is unquestionably true, as Michels has said, that each newly-triumphant revolutionary movement tends to attempt a consolidation of its power, a sort of closing of the floodgates to the very social waves which have swept it into power—or that at least, it has been so in most cases. But how are we to explain this fact? We have already shown the invalid character of the attempt to explain it by psychological theories. A glance at recent history will demonstrate, we believe, that seemingly parallel formal patterns have their origin in similar social conditions. Thus, for instance, one might say that both Robespierre, in his suppression of the Hébertists, and Cromwell, in his suppression of the Levellers, were demonstrating the validity of Michel's Iron Law of Oligarchy. But is it not rather more fruitful to see that as bourgeois revolutionists both Robespierre and Cromwell faced the necessity of not merely destroying the old order but also the extraordinarily difficult task of simultaneously propelling the masses into revolutionary action on behalf of the bourgeoisie and cutting off any attempt to extend the revolution beyond the stage desirable to the bourgeoisie? The simplistic Machiavellian approach is shown as further inutile when it is remembered that it is even questionable, despite our sympathies, whether in the circumstances it was not to the deeper interests of the French revolutionary masses to support Robespierre—in view of the social

*The Polish theoretician, Makhajski, and his followers have attempted to prove an analogous proposition on economic grounds, namely, that the socialist revolution is a seizure of power by the intellectuals in order to exploit the workers. The methodology of this approach is, in contrast to the Machiavellians, quite permissible since it deals in concrete social categories, though Marxists cannot accept the content of its theories. When, however, Makhajski and his American disciple, Max Nomad, extend their ideas into a general category to assert that all revolutions must end with the revolting class supplanted in power by an intellectual minority or élite, they are adopting the Machiavellian approach, even if—for some strange sort of romantic reasons of their own—they urge that the workers make these foredoomed revolutions nonetheless.

immaturity of the then incipient French proletariat—rather than the more radical Hébertists.*

Formal Similarities in the Power Quest

Thus we may reach the conclusion that what appears to be a series of formal similarities with regard to the quest for power in itself and the suppression of dissident revolutionary minorities is often rather a mere surface outline of a deeper series of class struggles of parallel types. Under those conditions, there is no cause for surprise if there is a prevalent pattern of political development. In fact, one could easily demonstrate that all bourgeois revolutions have had such an overall pattern precisely because they have had to meet the same social problem (*viz.*, Marx's writings on France and Germany).

But there are still further social considerations which shape the formal pattern of the power problem. With the exception of the Bolshevik revolution, all previously successful revolutions have had as their perspective the substitution of one form of class rule for another, even if they have hidden this claim under the veil of grandiose programs for universal equality. Under the historical circumstance, this was quite inevitable and it is worse than useless to berate Robespierre for not understanding the French Revolution in the terms which we do today. But this same limitation meant that even the greatest of revolutionists were subject to the limitations of the classes they represented: their morality and ethics. Is it any wonder then that none of the bourgeois revolutionists was immune from the degenerative power process which Michels describes? How, under the circumstances, could they be?

But, often enough, what the Machiavellians could see only as the beginning of another substitution of power as an end in place of the professed political goal was really an insidious and subtle commencement of counter-revolution. Of course, the indiscriminate blur which their theory of the élite produced on their political vision prevented them from seeing that what they thought was merely a shift within a bureaucracy based on the rearrangement of power relationships, was really the incipient form of class struggles that rock nations. That is why the Machiavellian interpretation of the rise of Stalinism is so banal, with its reduction of the most complex of all historical events to a mere struggle between the ins and the outs of a bureaucracy consolidating its power. For if, according to the popular fable, "Bolshevism produced Stalinism" (we leave aside the incredible semantic imprecision of this and similar formulations) the Machiavellians and their friends have never yet explained why it was necessary for Stalinism to exterminate the whole Bolshevik generation and why no compromise could be reached. Or why for that matter, the Thermidorians had to exterminate the Jacobins.

The Rôle of the Individual Leader

But what about the individual leaders of revolutions? Can they not, do they not, become drunk with power? Unquestionably, such things occur. But it is only within certain situations that such thirsts can be satisfied. Stalin may have had the same thirst for power in 1920 as he was to demonstrate later; but the individual qualities which later enabled him to personify a social movement would have meted him only scorn and ridicule had he dared act upon them in the early years of the revolution.

Even more illuminating in this connection is the history of Nazism. One can hardly think of a movement in recent history so openly power-crazed as the Nazi Party, nor of a

*For a fascinating discussion of this point, see Mathiez's history of the French Revolution.

leadership so frank in its quest for power. Nonetheless, this very Nazi bureaucracy, despite the apparently limitless extent of its internal power, has never dared or even desired to abolish bourgeois property within Germany, thereby showing a profounder understanding of its own historical rôle and limitations than many anti-Nazi theoreticians.

For the personal characteristics of leaders of power-hungry movements are also subject to social conditions, though indirectly. What was once thought of as the unqualified lust for power, a psychological phenomenon unexplained and viewed as an end-result, is now looked upon by more perspicacious thinkers as a more ambivalent complex. The power craze is now seen as symbiotic, that is, a compound of masochistic and sadistic elements, a result of desire for strength to overcome keenly-felt weakness, on the part of frustrated elements of the petty bourgeoisie. This type of analysis has been fruitfully conducted by Erich Fromm, a psychoanalyst who has borrowed from both Freud and Marx, in his book, *Escape from Freedom*, which applies this approach to the Nazi movement. As the bounds of human knowledge gradually broaden, it is discovered that even what was once thought as being such a seemingly irreducible psychological element as the power complex is increasingly explicable in terms of human, social experience. And if we are to grant the possibility of removing certain of the social causes which generate these presumably inescapable human attitudes, we must accordingly grant at least the possibility of removing the attitudes themselves.

All past history has been the history of class struggles; it is therefore readily seen why power relationships have had many analogous patterns, why it has been possible for Machiavellian theoreticians to abstract these patterns and develop therefrom the "Iron Law of Oligarchy." But never yet has humanity faced a situation in which it was possible to build a society of plenty; until a relatively few years ago, such a society was an economic impossibility. What, then, is the possibility of this law exerting itself with regard to the socialist revolution? Is that too doomed to degeneration? Here, after all, is the decisive question; the Machiavellians may write about the past but they are most concerned with the future.

Although the Russian Revolution is thus far the richest source of experience which the revolutionary movement has, it can by no means be considered conclusive in any respect. If we can imagine the future socialist scholar investigating this very same problem, he would no doubt look upon the Russian Revolution as an aberration; that is, one which faced a situation untypical of the problems faced by the workers of the major capitalist countries of the world. Even if the socialist revolution in Europe were, a few years hence, to have its inception in as wracked and economically tortured lands as France and Germany, it would still be tremendously ahead of the Bolsheviks. We have no intention here to polemicize with those who see in the history of Bolshevism a series of mistakes culminating in the biggest mistake of all: Stalin. They are people who find historical analysis easy because they view it from the perch of elevated, if delayed, moral judgments, rather than in terms of reconstructing actual historical situations and weighing the real possibilities of action within them.

Socialism and Bureaucratism

In a country such as America, a socialist society could so rapidly and successfully establish a society of plenty that the peculiar economic basis of each previous society for a ruling class would not be able to appear. Bureaucracy is not nourished on thin air; it requires the more material sustenance of

economic inequality and insufficiency. The tremendous surge of activity, self-assertion, self-confidence, and social awareness which a socialist revolution would generate in masses of a Western power—see how much it generated in the Russia of Czarism!—would also serve as the subjective check toward any usurping tendency to derail the democratic engine of the revolution. It is sometimes difficult for us—so used to oppression and manipulation, falsehood and terror as conventional means of political control—to envisage the possibilities which a genuine mass democratic movement toward socialism possesses.

If capitalist society is overripe economically for a transition to socialism, it is that very fact which will, however, place certain difficulties in the path of socialism. Who can doubt that the possibilities of bureaucratic degeneration in, say, a German socialist revolution are greater today than they would have been twenty years ago? The horrible scars which fascism has left on the European people, the difficulty of fully erasing the effects of the present nightmare from their minds, will be a problem of consequence for the socialist revolution long after its economic problems are solved, just as the problem of race relations in this country will occupy a similar position. As capitalist society degenerates, and the advent of socialism is frustrated, the transition will become more difficult: the debasement of humanity under capitalism will exert its penalty on socialism. So that even in connection with the seemingly general problem of power attitudes under socialism, we must again return to the historical conjuncture. The problem in general need hold no terrors for us. When he was still a Marxist, Sidney Hook wrote very sensibly on the question:

That personal abuse of power will always be possible is undeniable. But what Michels overlooks is the social and economic presuppositions of the oligarchical tendencies of leadership in the past. Political leadership in past societies meant economic power. Education and tradition fostered the tendencies to predatory self-assertion in some classes and at the same time sought to deaden the interest in politics on the part of the masses. In a socialist society in which political leadership is an administrative function and, therefore, carries with it no economic power, in which the processes of education strive to direct the psychic tendencies to self-assertion into 'moral and social equivalents' of oligarchical ambition, in which monopoly of education for one class has been abolished, and the division of labor between manual and mental worker is progressively eliminated—the danger that Michel's Iron Law of Oligarchy will express itself in traditional form, becomes quite remote. (*Toward the Understanding of Karl Marx.*)

The economic foundations of the oligarchical tendency which Michels observes will be removed under socialism; the psychological characteristics by which the Machiavellians explain these tendencies are largely fictitious; and the supposed incompetence and inertia of the masses which allow these tendencies to continue interminably and only occasionally checked, are themselves merely manifestations of class societies and they too can be replaced by the qualities of assertiveness and awareness.

A Conscious Process of Social Experimentation

What the Machiavellian critique does do, however, is to impel us to reassert once more what should never have been submerged: the fact that *the transition to socialism is a conscious process of social EXPERIMENTATION*: there is nothing inherent in the economic mechanisms of either the socialist state or the transition to it which guarantees a democratic structure. (In general, people who seek guarantees should be more at home in the insurance business than in politics.) The Stalinists and those whom they have influenced (the most theoretically disastrous result of that influence is the theory that Stalinist Russia, while counter-revolutionary remains—in its

Platonic essence, so to speak—a workers' state) have emphasized precisely the opposite.

If there are no guarantees, there are, however, likelihoods. They are the factors previously listed which make a successful transition to socialism likely: the growth of the productive forces and the flourishing of genuine mass education. What is new in this problem is the fact that the second of these factors, mass education, will become increasingly more difficult as capitalism is allowed to continue its degenerative course. That is where the major difficulty in the transition comes in: the old habits, the old traditions, the old psychology, the old morality—what sociologists call “cultural lag.” Admitting this problem, and admitting further that there is no necessary guarantee for success, can anyone say that there have yet been placed in our path any insurmountable theoretical barriers to the socialist position?

We have thus far not discussed what many anti-socialists see as a possible source of tyranny under socialism: the centralization of administrative functions and the unification of the means of production into gigantic apparatuses. Certainly enough, this is an interesting problem; the proposals that have been made for possible checks on administrative mechanisms and decentralization of political and economic functions merit discussion. But here we shall confine ourselves to another aspect of this theory, which is a favorite of the Machiavellians: the “balance-of-forces” theory.

Says Burnham: democratic rights are largely preserved as a result of the struggle between more or less evenly balanced social forces, or classes. So long as there is struggle, so long as there is disagreement, then there will also be a certain free arena for the expression of those disagreements and struggles. Remove the struggle of contending social forces and the field is free for the tyranny of the victor. There is more than a little devilry in this theory. First of all, it ignores the little fact that at present one can hardly speak of a balance of social forces but rather of the domination of one class by another, and that whatever freedom exists has not been granted by the bourgeoisie but wrested by the proletariat; and that, furthermore, as soon as crises multiply and become intolerable, the bourgeoisie has as its main aim the destruction of even the precarious “balance” that exists today. Certainly as realistic a thinker as Burnham cannot believe that the struggle within the democratic arena can continue indefinitely; he knows full well that the issue must reach a climax of relation sooner or later.

But there is still another aspect to this problem. Why should one assume that socialism would abolish conflict in human life? All that socialism claims is that it will abolish the economic competition of capitalism and its disastrous results; if, of course, one should equate *that* with a “balance of social forces” then the above assumption is true. But is it not more likely that under socialism, the conflicts of life could be lifted to a higher, more constructive plane than that of the capitalist market and the capitalist political arena? One can readily imagine serious and organized disputes over vital issues in a socialist society, disputes over important problems. Of course, the problems which would be important to a socialist society would hardly appear so to theoreticians of capitalism today whose main concern is painting all past and future history with the colors of their own pallet. In reality, the exposition of the balances-of-forces theory proves more about its supporters than about socialist society: they are so utterly confined to the thought and morality of the society of capitalism that they cannot even conceive of any other.

The Problem of Organization

Machiavellianism is left with one major prop: the argument from organization. That takes two forms: (1) the impossibility of democratic government because of the complexity and size of the societal unit; (2) the tendency of parties toward bureaucratic usurpation. The first argument need not long detain us. As Burnham uses it, all that he proves is that the old Town Hall form of direct local self-government is no longer possible (an observation which two and perhaps even three writers have previously made . . .). By a rather childish sleight of hand he “proves” the impossibility of democracy in complex society because of the necessity of deputation of administration; once the voter deputizes the representative to act in his behalf he surrenders his sovereignty. Very well, then, in the confined sense in which Burnham uses it, “democracy” is impossible. But surely Burnham is driving at something else. He is really repeating the old petty bourgeois, anarchistic prejudice against centralization, though he is sufficiently perspicacious to realize that it is by now an inevitable tendency in modern society—at least until there appears a society capable of conscious planning in behalf of the common good. But, although centralization obviously does have certain inherent dangers, it is the prerequisite for planning and construction.

As Sidney Hook, in his *Reason, Social Myths and Democracy*, describes the approach of Michels:

Political power in behalf of any ideal, no matter how exalted, can be won only by organization. All organization, no matter how democratically conceived, inevitably involves the emergence of a leadership which in the last analysis controls the organization. If it is defeated, it is replaced, not by a functioning democracy, but by a new leadership. All democratic movements are therefore self-defeating. They are doomed by the iron law of oligarchy. According to this law, the majority of human beings, in a condition of eternal tutelage, are predestined by tragic necessity to submit to the domination of a small minority, and must be content to constitute the pedestal of an oligarchy.

In so far as this repeats in another form the Machiavellian conception of power, there is no need for additional comment. But there certainly is a special problem of the party and bureaucracy apart from general considerations of power relationships in society. It is a fact that, in a certain sense, parties and leaderships are necessary evils. (At the present moment, incidentally, the emphasis should be applied most heavily on the “*necessary*”—it was the absence of the necessary evil of a revolutionary party in Europe which led to the present catastrophe.) For to organize under capitalism means that, to a large measure, one must organize according to the morality of capitalism. Even revolutionary morality, diametrically opposed to capitalism, is based on it; it is not a morality of an entirely different social order as feudal morality was or as socialist morality will be.

Concretely, socialists abhor the use of force; their ultimate perspective is unquestionably pacifist. Nonetheless, they realize that the very fact that we live under capitalism means that a socialist party strong enough to challenge the *status quo* would have the entire force of the ruling apparatus hurled at it; it must, therefore, be prepared for such an eventuality. But though this is certainly correct politics, it is also unfortunately a necessary adoption of attitudes which we wish to abolish. Resultantly, it becomes clear that a socialist party becomes prone to adopt such attitudes, not merely as passing necessities, but as generally valid categories. Not only is this true of the comparatively conscious process which has been described above, but also of far less conscious processes where-

by the revolutionists have adopted as their own precisely the *mores* they struggle against, often against their own wishes and often to their own amazement and horror when the fact is made clear to them.

Unquestionably one can foresee a situation where a workers' state which is gradually emerging into a socialist society would face the possible need of challenging the revolutionary—and therefore class-conscious and, at that stage of the game, reactionary—heritage and methodology of the "Old Bolsheviks." (The jest that has often been made by revolutionists about there being no place for them under socialism contains a profound, if rather sad, kernel of truth.) More immediately, it is clearly obvious how the heritage of capitalist methodology and, more generally, the heritage of a world history of oppressive class societies could mar the transition from capitalism to socialism. In his *Historical Materialism*, Bukharin writes of "the period of proletarian dictatorship [as being] far more difficult. The working class achieves victory, although it is not and cannot be a unified mass. . . . There will inevitably result a tendency to 'degeneration,' i.e., the excretion of a leading stratum in the form of a class-germ. This tendency will be retarded by two opposing tendencies: first, by the growth of the productive forces; second, by the abolition of the educational monopoly." And it must be opposed by still a third force: conscious, wary, most advanced socialist elements on guard against the usurpation of power.

We have said before that the socialist revolution is a conscious process of social experimentation. The rôle of the party is the most vital variable in that process. While the general setting is undoubtedly determined by antecedent conditions, the revolutionary consciousness of the vanguard, together with the increasing awareness of the mass, must serve as the conscience of the revolution. No supra-human force—whether they range from Paretian residues to pseudo-Marxian belief in the "inevitability" of socialism—can serve as a substitute.

All that the Machiavellian protestations and whining about the party can do is to make us more conscious of the fact that once humanity is to enter the period of conscious and deliberate history when it will have its own destiny in its hands, it will have to guard, too, against any debasement or degeneration of that destiny. Who, however, except a conscious or misguided defender of the *status quo*, would urge that fact as an argument against the attempt of humanity to take its destiny into its own hands?

In our articles against Machiavellianism we have attempted to reply to its anti-socialist arguments in a spirit of scientific detachment and without any emotional or sectarian overtones. The degree of our success is for the reader to judge. We cannot end, however, without a word about the rôle of James Burnham in this matter. He, who once loftily deigned to correct Marxism from the pinnacle of modern science, has now entered the lists as the champion of every outmoded, shopworn prejudice against the struggle for human freedom. What he has paraded as the last word in scientific realism is nothing more than a pretentious elaboration of the backward, primitive prejudice and notions of the small-town, cracker-barrel philosopher who spits his jawful of tobacco juice into the stove of the village general store as he utters sage profundities about human nature. Burnham certainly is not a fascist, if only because he is too jealous of his right to write books like *The Machiavellians*. But it cannot be gainsaid that his latest contribution to political thought adds its bit to the degenerative and demoralized atmosphere of the period of capitalist decay which smooths the road for fascism. This is certainly not Burnham's *intention*. But then, as Eliot has noted, "Between the idea and the reality . . . between the conception and the creation . . . falls the shadow."

R. FAHAN.

In Stalin's Prisons - II

The First Big Frame-Up Trials

[Continued from last issue]

It was the rule among the prisoners that each new arrival write a detailed report on what he had seen while at liberty that might be of interest to his prison comrades. We Yugoslavs did like all the others; we too were therefore able to get the latest information from new arrivals.

Fate of the Peasants

The news of the fate of the deported peasants was a revelation to us of a world of horror and of death. I had heard speak, when I was at liberty, of peasant revolts, of deportations, but I had never been able to imagine the vastness and ferocity of the repression. A comrade who came from the Narym region told us that 100,000 peasants had been seen arriving their in the fall [of 1939]. Every building was filled with them, the churches included; the women and young girls gave themselves to the first comer for a piece of bread. Then they were distributed for the winter in the most remote and deserted districts. It was certain death for them. I was now able to complete the picture I had drawn for myself of the collectiv-

ization . . . 100,000 deported in the Narym region alone in a single season! How many must there have been in the whole of the USSR during the four years of the "de-kulakization"?

Other prisoners told of the misery of the peasants during their voyage into exile. The peasants from the Ukraine were deported to Siberia in trainloads. The trip lasted some forty days; they were jammed into the cars like cattle, prohibited from getting off during train stops. They were given no food, they even lacked water at time. The provisions they were able to bring away with them did not suffice for such a long trip. People died in masses, suffering horribly; the living and the dead, the food and the excrement, were all piled together. Desperate fathers were seen seizing their famished children and smashing their heads against telegraph poles as they rushed past them.

There were also many evidences of the excesses of the authorities in the villages. I will cite one from Siberia. A group of peasants is being shot. The GPU delegate forces them to dig their own grave. They do as ordered, bid each other farewell, the shots are fired and they are covered with

earth. Suddenly, to the superstitious horror of the attendants, a hand rises and waves above the earth: in the haste of the execution, one of these unfortunates had not been killed. . .

But as we learned later on, all these horrors did not yet reach the point of those to come in 1932.

* * *

It was during the first months of my detention at Verkhne-Uralsk that two famous political trials were held in Moscow, one against the "industrial party" of the engineers (beginning of December, 1930) and the other against the Bureau of the Menshevik Socialists (beginning of March, 1931). The two trials had their echo in our prison and what is more those convicted in the second trial were not long in coming to us.

Today almost the entire world has been convinced of the fraudulent character of the accusations. But the real meaning of these two trials has remained a mystery. Moreover, it is not understood abroad how it is possible to stage such shows as those of the 1930-31 and the 1936-37 trials, bloody and humiliating outrages to human dignity.

Foreigners who try to resolve the enigma by means of personal psychology get nowhere. Those who resort to collective psychology in general, or to collective psychology of European or American society, get no further. The explanation can be found only in the very singular conditions of Soviet society. It is not my task to give a complete analysis of these trials in this book. I will confine myself to narrating what I heard on the subject in the milieu where I found myself.

The "Industrial Party" Trial

The first trial indicted a group of eminent Soviet specialists, headed by Professor Ramzin. They were accused of having organized a vast network of sabotage and espionage for the benefit of the French general staff, which was preparing the military intervention of France against the USSR. The accused confessed everything, down to the smallest detail. According to Ramzin, they calculated on replacing the Soviet government with a "government of engineers."

The accused were sentenced to death. But the government, "taking into account the candor of their confessions and testimony," commuted the capital punishment to various terms of incarceration. Thousands of people were shot in Russia for infinitely minor crimes; and their unexpected clemency did not fail to create a feeling of suspicion.

Our Trotskyist prison comrades seemed greatly disoriented by this trial of the "Industrial Party." Most of them preferred to remain silent. A good deal was written in prison, yet, unless I am mistaken, not a single article was devoted to the trial. The boldest comrades, who did speak of it, expressed utterly disparate opinions. Some said that the trial confirmed all the revelations made in the past by the Opposition on the growing influence of the bourgeois technicians: Stalin's clemency proved once more his attachment to them. Others said, on the contrary, that this war of Stalin against the specialists was only a new manifestation of the "extreme left Stalinist adventure," that, as in the case of the collectivization, it was necessary to urge a retreat. Rakovsky, in a letter from exile, adhered to this view. As to Trotsky, who was abroad, he rather inclined to the first view, but we in prison were still unaware of his attitude.

There was, finally, a third group, to which I belonged, which believed that the recent trials in no wise represented the struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeois specialists, but only the competition between two bureaucratic groups. What was true in the affair was the discontentment

of the specialists, their secret wish to see the communists break their necks by failing in the Five-Year Plan, which would have opened the road to the engineers, who would then quite naturally be summoned to power. All the rest of the indictment was only a fraud and a show put on by the GPU. Stalin, or rather the communist bureaucracy, needs a scapegoat toward whom to direct the anger of the famished masses; it wants to discredit its competitors, the technicians, and to frighten the masses: "If you do not support us, the Stalinists, it will be still worse for you; it will be war all over again, the private proprietors, the Cossack detachments in punitive expeditions." One of the accused, Ramzin himself if I am not mistaken, "confessed" in effect that the "engineers" had decided to massacre the Russian proletariat, if need be.

Members of the Opposition from Moscow, arrested after the Ramzin trial, furnished us with additional information. Ramzin had not even been put in prison after the trial. Action against him had been limited to placing him "under house arrest," a pretty fictitious arrest. After an interruption of six months, necessitated by the examination, or rather by the staging of the trial, Ramzin, the minute the trial was over, had resumed his courses at the Institute of Thermodynamics, pronouncing the ritualistic professorial phrase: "We left off at . . ."

The Workers and the Trial

What was much more interesting was the attitude of the Moscow workers during the trial. The Stalinist government had succeeded in provoking among the masses, who were unnerved from hunger, the harshest indignation against the "engineers." The demonstrations of workers in Moscow that the government was able to organize on a grand scale were not lacking in a certain sincerity: the demonstrators demanded the death of the "traitors," of the "saboteurs" and the "spies." But after the "confounded" guilty had gotten off with relatively light sentences, the masses, according to the observations of our informants, did not conceal their bitterness: "They're making a joke out of us, they are playing a comedy with us," was the sentiment of the people.

Little by little, the whole prison began to feel the conviction that the trial was essentially cooked up. A significant passage in the evidence of Ramzin strengthens the feeling that it was simply a matter of the struggle between two competing groups. Ramzin had said that his group did not intend to abolish nationalized industry and restore private industry, but that it would have permitted private capitalists—foreigners or Russians, including the former proprietors—to participate in state industry to a certain extent. One year earlier, one of the main defendants in the trial of the Ukrainian nationalists (the "League for Ukrainian Emancipation") had made analogous declarations without hiding his sympathy toward the fascist régime. It seemed to me perfectly logical, from the standpoint of the technicians, to want to preserve the state character of industry: their social importance in such a system would have been much more considerable than in the system of private economy. It followed that the struggle between communists and technicians was not due either to a class antagonism or the antagonism between two different economic conceptions; it was nothing but a dispute over one and the same pie. That one part of the "engineers" sympathized with the fascist system, said a good deal about the true character of the struggle that sets present-day communists and fascists against each other.

But it was easy to understand the rôle that the workers'

demonstrations played. The communist bureaucracy required them, in order to frighten the technicians, to prove to them that in spite of all their knowledge they were impotent, inasmuch as the masses could be unleashed against them at any moment. Wasn't it wiser to submit to the communist bureaucracy and receive in exchange the privileges that it accorded technicians at the expense of the masses?

The subsequent fate of Ramzin is significant. According to the general opinion in Russia, Ramzin had deliberately played the rôle of provocateur during the trial. So, at the end of a few years, he was reinstated into all his rights and decorated with the Order of Lenin, on the pretext of scientific merits. The Stalinist power "takes no vengeance against the guilty, it reëduces them!"

I want to refer here to a much less known trial that took place in Tashkent; it enables you to get an idea of the way in which this sort of trial is "prepared." Two Soviet engineers who worked in Central Asia had fled to Persia. At the end of some time they returned to the USSR of their own accord. They were tried. They recounted the history of their flight, due to their cowardice in the face of the "difficulties that must be overcome during the building of socialism." Refugees in the capitalist world, they were able to record its mortal stagnation and its horrors. They understood that Soviet life came out of the joy of creation, of triumphing over obstacles. So they had come back to the USSR of their own free will to make up for their mistake by working honestly.

This whole touching story was told in public sessions, then printed in the press. But several political exiles who were in the same prison in Tashkent knew the other side of the coin. As soon as the engineers fled to Persia, the GPU arrested their families, including their very young children. The escaped were given to learn that if they did not return to the USSR, the most pitiless reprisals would be taken against their families. The families were immediately placed under the "special régime"; one of their members died, another was driven mad. It was then the escaped decided to return "of their own free will" to the USSR and to confess "sincerely" anything that was wanted.

The Frame-up Against the Mensheviks

Three months after the trial of the "Industrial Party" the trial of the "Bureau of the Menshevik Socialists" took place. The accused were known politicians, former Mensheviks who had become reconciled to the Soviet régime in the days of the NEP and had obtained important posts in the economy and the scientific institutes. It was hard to believe that these men would behave as humiliatingly, as dishonestly, as the technicians who at least had the excuse of having no political past to renounce. But that meant not knowing the profound decomposition of Soviet society. The Mensheviks admitted having adopted, along with the "Industrial Party," a whole program of sabotage and armed intervention against the USSR. Even more: they admitted that this was also the program of the Russian social democracy as a whole and even of all the other socialist parties of the Second International.

The lie was flagrant. Today, when there are Popular Fronts formed by the parties of the Second and the Third Internationals, such confessions, such trials, appear absurd. But at the time, Stalin was still working with anti-socialist slogans: "The Social Democracy is the main enemy," "Social Democracy and Fascism are twins." Stalin needed to demonstrate that the objections of the Mensheviks to the Five-Year Plan had degenerated into common crimes, into acts of trea-

son against the country. The trial had no other purpose than to furnish this demonstration.

The staging and the success of these trials are the characteristic feature of the Stalinist era. Characteristic of the society and characteristic of the governors. These trials are possible only because the reign of an immoral government coincides with a phase of profound indifference of society, tired of disinterested inspirations, tired of the revolution, having eyes only for the vast economic development of the country. "The revolution has become materialistic," wrote Michelet to characterize a similar stage of the French Revolution.

Contrary to what happened during the trial of the "Industrial Party," that of the Mensheviks was judged unanimously in our prison: we held it to be a GPU frame-up. We knew also that the GPU had not dared to bring to trial two men who were nevertheless implicated in the affair: the social democrat, Braunstein, and the Old Bolshevik, Bazarov, the Russian translator of *Kapital*, who had not belonged to any party since 1917. The GPU did not dare do it for the single reason that the two men had refused categorically to play the comedy. So their account was settled administratively, without any trial. No group in our prison shared the view of Trotsky, who, falling into the snare, had taken the confessions of the so-called guilty seriously.

A few months later, the main defendants in the Menshevik trial—Groman, Sukhanov, Rubin, Ikov, Scher, Ginzburg, etc.—arrived in Verkhne-Uralsk. The GPU carefully isolated them, forbidding the members of this group any contact among themselves as well as with the other inmates. What could the GPU fear if not the revealing of the methods employed in staging the trial? But that was just the point that interested us most of all and in spite of all the vigilance of the GPU we succeeded in establishing contact with the sorry heroes of the trial. Once I asked them how they were able to give such monstrous testimony. The reply was eloquent: "We ourselves don't understand what happened; it was like a frightful nightmare."

Several years later, Sukhanov (he was, parenthetically, the well known historian of the revolution) circulated in the prison a copy of his appeal to the Soviet government, wherein he demanded that the promise be kept "to set free those who agree to make fraudulent confessions." Following this incident, the GPU removed Sukhanov; but of course he was not set free. Nobody knows what has happened to him since.

Syrtsov and Lominadze in Opposition

In the interval between the two trials there was a scandal inside the party: the opposition of Syrtsov and Lominadze was unmasked. Syrtsov was chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR (Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic). Lominadze was one of the outstanding young leaders of the Communist Party. This opposition was noteworthy for two undisclosed features. It cultivated "hypocrisy" systematically, defending Stalin in public and conducting a campaign against him in the corridors; it realized for the first time a bloc between the Left and Right Oppositions. In fact, Syrtsov, while not a member of the Right Wing Opposition, shared its views; as to Lominadze, he was one of the left-Stalinists who dreamed of a Stalin-Trotsky-Zinoviev bloc. The Syrtsov-Lominadze alliance was born out of the economic crisis which kept growing and which was due to the frenzied pace of the Five-Year Plan and the increasing distress of the workers. Syrtsov expressed himself in measured terms: "The country has entered thoughtlessly into a dangerous economic

zone; everybody talks about it with uneasiness. The initiative of the workers has been stifled. The wage problem is becoming increasingly acute." Lominadze dotted the I's: "The party administration treats the interests of the workers and peasants like the ancient feudal *barons*."

But Stalin lost no time. Summoned to explain themselves, the leaders of the Right-Left bloc capitulated and were demoted to an inferior post in the hierarchy. Stalin used the incident to strengthen his position. Rykov was removed from the chairmanship of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR and replaced by Molotov, while the management of industry was confided to Ordjonikidze, intimate friend of Stalin. As to the close collaborators of Syrtsov and Lominadze, they were sent to prison or exile. One of them, Riutin, former secretary of the Communist Party committee in Krasnaya-Presnya [a district of Moscow] and one of the pillars of the Right Wing faction, arrived in our Isolator.

Riutin in prison The same Riutin who in 1925-27, at the time of the Stalin-Bukharin bloc against Zinoviev and Trotsky, was the fiercest executioner of Trotskyism, was now in prison, alone among his victims, delivered to their mercy. It was a great temptation. But since 1927, much water had flown under the bridge, there was no longer a question of extending the NEP but rather of "discussing the ultra-left adventure" of Stalin. So the prison gave Riutin a cold but calm reception. This could mean that the tension between the Right Wing and the Trotskyists was diminishing. You could even speak of a coming-together on certain points. However, Riutin was soon transferred elsewhere.

In this period I fell ill with rheumatism and was thus able to make the acquaintance of a very important institution in the life of the inmates: the prison infirmary. This infirmary, as well as the doctor's office, were situated in a former church. The inmates were often sick. The communists generally had behind them years of civil war and privation, the anarchists and the socialists ten years of prison, concentration camp and exile. Moreover, the GPU had developed to an art the breaking down of the nervous systems of its victims. It is not hard to imagine the state of nervous malady in which the inmates found themselves.

The infirmary was not the only refuge of the worn inmates. They rested also by turning to literature when they had had enough of politics. The most popular book of the time was the memoirs of an Old Bolshevik conspirator—a Trotskyist since the NEP—A. K. Voronsky, entitled *Fresh Waters and Swamps*. He described artistically and with melancholy the epic of the Bolshevik conspirators in the days of the revolutionary movement from 1903 to 1917. "Never shall we see again our beloved band, united and audacious." It was a whole generation that lamented the Paradise Lost in these memoirs.

Questions of Literature

Upon the arrival of Gorlov, who had defended Mayakovsky against Trotsky in 1923, I took up interest again in the discussions on the poet and in literature in general. These discussions went beyond the limits of literature. I dug up Mayakovsky's review, *The Left Front*, as well as the minutes of the literary discussions that the Central Committee of the party used to hold in the days of the NEP, and finally the works of Trotsky and Lenin.

The Left Front breathed the ardor of the struggle in the deleterious atmosphere of the NEP. The manifesto of literary opposition that Mayakovsky published in it was part of the

history of the Russian Revolution, in the same way that the manifesto of political opposition of Trotsky in 1923, or the social declarations of the workers' opposition in 1920-22. *The Left Front* fought literary conservatism and the smugness of the communists who had "arrived"; it recalled that literature is not only a mirror but also a fighting weapon—all this at a time when compromise was the style.

It would seem that Trotsky should have seen in this literary opposition an ally of his political opposition. He might have been able to transform the criticism of Mayakovsky into something solidier. But Trotsky, unfortunately, discerned nothing in it and combatted Mayakovsky. As far as I was able to convince myself in prison, from the printed documents and the discussions, Trotsky was the most brilliant representative of the right-center bloc of Bukharin and Stalin in affairs of literature, in spite of the fierce political struggle he conducted against this bloc. He defended in literature the conciliation of the classes which he denied in politics; in this field he was only an intellectual tainted with liberalism. Ryazanov, in the sessions of the Central Committee devoted to communist literature, did not hesitate to deride Trotsky and Bukharin and to accuse them of forgetting historical materialism in favor of a "reactionary idealism."

The Five-Year Plan bewildered Mayakovsky. His extreme-left slogans seemed to triumph in literature as well as in politics. But at the same time he felt he was being paid off in words, that the development remained reactionary, as in the past. He sought salvation in death.

The tragic destiny of the great writers of old Russia was repeated in the fate of Mayakovsky. Our prison companion, Pushas, explained this analogy in an article dedicated to the poet. But the sacrilegious comparison stirred a tempest in the penitentiary. "How can you forget the essential difference between the USSR and the Russia of the Czars?" exclaimed the Red professors of the Opposition with one voice. Poor Pushas, perfectly ignorant in the field of theory, good-naturedly recognized the "essential difference" and withdrew his article from circulation. So the members of the Opposition no longer ran the risk of having to meditate on "the tragic fate of Russian poets, from Pushkin to Mayakovsky."

Opposition Attitude to Party

I cite the episode because it is typical. The oppositional milieu in our prison, in spite of the violence of the language that could be heard directed against Stalin, was fundamentally conservative. As soon as it was a question of criticizing the régime, the people were struck by, to say the least, an unexpected timidity. They preferred to cling to words devoid of meaning and to the crudest fables rather than to have to seek for the new. It was decidedly difficult to discern a psychological difference between the Russian Communist Party and its opposition. . . .

"What, you claim that we are no longer members of the party? But you are arguing like Stalin!" exclaimed the congenial oldster, Gorlov.

"Look here," I replied, "how can we think of ourselves as members of a party which expels us and has us put into prison by the GPU!"

But Gorlov continued to claim that the All-Russian Communist Party remained no less "our party," and that Stalin was only a usurper, a common swindler! . . .

This attitude included a less inoffensive aspect. One day when I was rejoicing over a decline in the extraction of coal in the Donbas, announced in *Pravda*, two Georgian members

of the Opposition, Tsvitsivadze and Kiknadze, attacked me violently: "It is our duty to be alarmed at every sign of weakness of the Soviet power. We must of course convince the party that Stalin's policy is harmful, but not carry on the work of defeatists toward our own Soviet government!"

I tried to calm them by explaining that there was no question of defeatism, that I was joyful only at the resistance that the Donbas workers were at last offering to bureaucratic despotism. But this argument did not reach them. Every attack upon the power, even if made by the workers, seemed to them an advance of the counter-revolution.

In addition, I recorded uneasily that there was a hiatus in the letters and other writings of Trotsky that reached us in prison: Trotsky never spoke of organizing strikes, of inciting the workers to the struggle against the bureaucracy, of mobilizing the working class in favor of the Trotskyist economic program. His criticism, his argumentation, his advice seemed to be addressed to the Central Committee, to the party apparatus. Referring to the vertical drop in the living standards of the workers, Trotsky concluded like a good employer who gives advice to his administration: "What are you doing? You are wasting the most precious capital-labor power." The active subject always remained for Trotsky the "party," with its Politbureau or its Central Committee; the proletariat was only the "object."

It is worth noting in this connection that Trotsky's memoirs—*My Life*—flatly displeased the Opposition workers of Moscow. They complained—according to our prison comrades who had recently arrived from the capital—that Trotsky passed over in silence the rôle of the working class, especially in the struggle conducted by the Opposition. One of the outstanding worker-leaders in the ranks of the Opposition, former member of the Moscow Soviet, is even supposed to have been disgusted to the point of breaking off the reading of the book right in the middle. I can recall only one favorable estimation expressed—at liberty—by a Trotskyist from Kiev. As for the inmates who came from exile, they had not read *My Life*, which was a prohibited work.

Let us note in passing that all of Trotsky's works, as well as those of the socialists and anarchists that appeared legally in the USSR before the prohibition of the corresponding groups, were not subjected to any interdiction and the GPU did not confiscate them from the inmates. We were able legally to read in prison the old works of Trotsky, Plekhanov, Martov, Kropotkin, Bakunin. But beginning with 1934, they began to confiscate even all those works which had appeared in complete legality. The works of Bakunin, which appeared at that time under the editorship of Steklov, were not published for sale, but only for a restricted circle of the initiated.

Trotsky's Letters

The letters of Trotsky and Rakovsky, devoted to questions of the day, succeeded in filtering into prison and provided the subject of ample commentary. You could not help being struck by the spirit of hierarchy, of submission to the leader, with which the Russian Opposition was imbued. A quotation from Trotsky had the value of proof. Moreover, the right wing Trotskyists, like those of the left wing, endowed these quotations, each in his own manner, with an obviously tendentious meaning. The complete submission to Lenin and Stalin that prevailed in the party was repeated in the Opposition, but in favor of Lenin and Trotsky: everything else was inspired by the Evil One.

I recall very well the letter of March, 1930, in which Trotsky considered the "dizziness of success" and the retreat ordered by Stalin, and expounded his own, Trotsky's, plan of retreat. In his letter of August, 1930, he considered the Sixteenth Party Congress which had just closed. One of his phrases: "the preparation of Bonapartism inside the party has been completed," became the basis of all the arguments and the theses of the left. As to the right wingers, they attributed only a rhetorical value to it, without importance for the attitude adopted by Trotsky on the whole. The left wingers would hear of nothing but the negative judgment expressed by Trotsky on the political superstructure of the régime; the right wingers, nothing but his positive judgment on the social basis: dictatorship of the proletariat and socialist character of the economy.

The real incoherence of Trotsky's attitude gave birth in the Isolator to two antagonistic groups, each of which clung to one of the two aspects of the contradictory attitude of the leader. In February, 1931, Trotsky mentioned rapidly the economic successes of the Five-Year Plan, then there was an interruption of almost a year, during which we were deprived of Trotsky's writings.

I have already spoken of Rakovsky's writings. He did not play an independent rôle in the Opposition, which recognized only Trotsky as its chief. Rakovsky was listened to only in the capacity of representative of Trotsky. (*To be continued.*)

A. CILIGA.

The Costs of the War

Some time ago an article appeared in *The New Internationalist* giving a tentative estimate, based upon war expenditures and budget outlays, of the cost of the Second World War. This strictly monetary estimate, in the neighborhood of three hundred billion dollars, has naturally been greatly exceeded by the subsequent speed-up of the war and its indefinite prolongation.

The fact remains, nevertheless, that the *real* costs of the war—measured in legitimate social and economic terms—are but faintly suggested in such a financial approach. While it reveals clearly that all imperialist powers involved spend the overwhelming portion of their governmental incomes (from sixty to ninety per cent) on direct war items, it gives no real idea of what the war means from a broad social point of view. In the international struggle for world mastery the bourgeoisie uses up (destroys) among other things, the following sources of human wealth and production:

(1) The potential labor power and production in all fields of those men and women who are killed during the war because of fighting, bombing of civilians, starvation, famine, disease, etc. Considering that this has already added up to between fifteen and twenty million, we can see how here alone a great source of human progress has been annihilated.

(2) The potential labor power and production in all fields of those men and women removed from industry and agriculture and placed in the non-producing, but heavily-consuming, armed services. This amounts to between sixty and seventy million individuals, in the prime of their creative and productive life. Their entire energy, naturally, becomes devoted solely to the destruction of life and property.

(3) The wasted labor power and production of those engaged in war industries producing non-reproductive weapons,

tools and machines, incapable in themselves of constructing a single useful item. A battleship cannot even reproduce itself, let alone create anything! Its sole function leads to further destruction of property values.

(4) The actual money represented by the war budgets of the various nations, representing sums removed from productive circulation and poured down the bottomless pit. Even this sum is not accurately known, concealed as it is in many ways.

(5) The value of the raw materials used in the war machines (flowing from every known material resource that lies in the earth), cannot be estimated. These raw materials, fash-

ioned ultimately into means of destruction, produce further destruction. Thus, they have no utility value in the economic sense of the word.

(6) And, finally, there is the physical destruction during the war, of:

(a) Means of production (factories);

(b) Fixed valuables and properties (land, houses, cities, etc.);

(c) General deterioration of machinery and plants under the strain of war production, when all equipment is whipped up to its utmost capacity.

Socialist United States of Europe

Another Viewpoint in the Discussion

On November 1, 1914, at the beginning of the last imperialist war, Lenin wrote: "Imperialism has placed the fate of European culture at stake. After this war, if a series of successful revolutions do not occur, more wars will follow—the fairy tale of 'war to end all wars' is a hollow and pernicious fairy tale."

We call this prediction to mind! The present World War—the second imperialist war—is not accidental. It does not stem from the will of this dictator or that "democrat." It was predicted long ago. Its origin is rooted in the contradictions and antagonisms of the interests of international capitalism. Contrary to all stories circulated to fool the people, the chief cause of the war as of all other social evils—unemployment, the high cost of living, fascism, colonial oppression—is the private ownership of the means of production together with the *bourgeois state which rests on this foundation*.

In this fundamental sense the Second World War is a continuation of the First World War. The second imperialist war has lasted more than four years already and is only now entering into its decisive stage.

The reactionary forces in the camp of "democratic" imperialism which stand behind the war have attempted to exploit the masses' legitimate hatred of fascism in order to mobilize them behind the imperialist war. If this appeal did not meet with too great success at the beginning of the war, the violation, pillaging and oppression which the masses of Europe are experiencing under the German iron heel, has had the effect of recreating in them, as an elementary reaction, the national hatreds and chauvinism that are expressed in their determination to kill and oust the Germans from their soil. Despite the heroism and sacrifices of the members of the undergrounds, it must never be forgotten that this is the main aspect of the national movements today.

The masses' response to nationalism has been prepared by years of continued disorientation by the reformists and Stalinists, during which, alternating between the national unity of the popular front and the adventurism of the third period, they suffered one defeat after another. The Second World War was possible only because of this. The absence of a clear class line then and now of the the leading organizations among the working class has made possible the fact that, by and large the masses of workers and the petty bourgeoisie,

The following contribution contains excerpts from a resolution submitted by a group of members of the Workers Party in California for the discussion that has been carried on in that organization on the situation in Europe and the tasks of the revolutionary vanguard. The point of view represented by the authors of the resolution has been rejected by the membership of the Workers Party, which endorsed the position of its National Committee as expressed in a resolution on the subject printed in these pages early last year. The present document will be concluded in the next issue of the magazine and will be followed by a critical reply.—The Editor.

as yet unorganized in a military sense, look to the armies of the "democratic" imperialists as their chief "liberators" from the tyranny of the German conqueror. It would be sheer blindness on our part to overlook this.

The presence of the German overlord in Europe as well as of the native bourgeoisie gives rise not only to nationalism but to the unceasing class struggle. The German conqueror, to the extent that he has replaced the native bourgeois economically and politically, occupies the place of class antagonist of the worker. The class struggle against both the German and native capitalist in the occupied countries rages more each day. The breakdown of European society prepared by years of capitalist decay is speeded up enormously by the titanic clash of the rival giant imperialisms, which is tumbling to the ground the structure of European society. Objectively, the class struggle is advancing to the highest stages and is culminating in revolution. If "defense of the fatherland" rises in the breast of the European masses, so also does the will to turn the imperialist war into a war for socialism. These are the two contradictory tendencies which compete for the heart of the worker. The victory of the one would mean the perpetuation of capitalist slavery; the victory of the other would mean his final emancipation. The task of the internationalists of today is just the same as the task which Lenin set himself: to free the masses from their nationalism in order to lead them in the final class attack against the whole bourgeois social order.

At no time in over seven decades have Marxists called for "national liberation" of the great states, war or peace. During an imperialist war they were usually against the struggle for national independence even in the small or backward states, because this struggle usually ended up in one or another of the rival imperialist camps.

Only today, *during an imperialist war*, is the attempt being made to include in the program of a Marxist party the struggle for "national liberation" of the great states of Europe. (National Committee resolution and Johnson resolution.)

Only *one* thing can justify such a major change in the Marxist program—the definitive victory of one of the imperialist camps leading to a long enslavement of the European peoples of the large, small and backward states.

If such a condition existed, we would be forced to rewrite the Marxist program and include in it the support of their national wars, national uprisings, national rebellions, national independence, or ousting of the oppressor—whatever might happen to be the forms and stages of the national struggle, since there is no important difference in their content.

After the formation of the great bourgeois states which ended with 1871, this *single* possibility was posed by Lenin in 1916 and by Trotsky as late as 1938 as a theoretical possibility the realization of which they considered highly improbable.

Let us see how Trotsky in 1938 posed the problem as a theoretical possibility but extremely unlikely of realization:

"Naturally, *if* a new war ends in the military victory of this or that imperialist camp; *if* a war calls forth neither a revolutionary uprising nor a victory of the proletariat; *if* a new imperialist peace more terrible than the Versailles Treaty places new chains for decades upon the people; *if* unfortunate humanity bears this in silence and submission—not only Czechoslovakia or Belgium but also France, can be hurled back into the position of an oppressed nation (the same supposition can be made in regard to Germany). In this eventuality the further frightful decomposition will cast all humanity back for several decades... Even then, we, or rather our sons, will have to determine the policy in regard to future wars on the basis of the *new* situation." (Social Defense of Czechoslovakia's "National Independence," The NEW INTERNATIONAL, November, 1938.)

Were the imperialist war to end in a decisive military victory of one of the imperialist camps leading, because of the future impotence of the world proletariat over a long period of time, to the enslavement of the peoples, then... "our sons will have to determine the policy in regard to future wars on the basis of the *new* situation."

In this hypothetical case, which would give rise to a "long process of national movements," the *real social content* of the national war would in all probability be the oppressed peoples struggling against the imperialist enslaver of Europe, without at the same time being in the service of a rival imperialist enslaver. That is our criterion in judging a progressive movement. In the present imperialist war the *real social content* of the forces that stand behind the various "national movements," despite the masses in them, is the bourgeoisie of Europe, behind which stand one or the other of the reactionary imperialist coalitions.

That is why it was possible for Trotsky to say in 1940 at a moment when, after overwhelming Holland and Belgium and crushing the initial resistance of the Allied troops, the German armies were rolling like a tide of fire toward Paris and the Channel, that:

"...we do not forget for a moment that this war is not our war. In contradistinction to the Second and Third Internationals, the Fourth International builds its policy not on the military fortunes of the capitalist states but on the transformation of the imperialist war into a war of the workers against the capitalists, on the overthrow of the ruling classes of all countries, on the world socialist revolution. The shifts in the battle lines at the front, the destruction of national capitals, the *occupation of territories, the downfall of individual states* represent from this standpoint only tragic *episodes* on the road to the reconstruction of modern

society" and "In recent years and even months, the world has observed with astonishment how easily states vanish from the map of Europe: Austria, Czechoslovakia, Albania, Poland, Denmark, Norway, Holland, Belgium... The political map has been reshaped with equal speed in no other epoch save that of the Napoleonic wars. At that time it was a question of outlived feudal states which had to give way before the bourgeois national state. *Today* it is a question of *outlived* bourgeois states which must give way before the *socialist federation of peoples*." (Manifesto of the Fourth International on the Imperialist War and the Proletarian Revolution, May, 1940. Our emphasis throughout.)

At the time that this was written, France was already defeated militarily, and besides her, only two other states, Greece and Yugoslavia, were yet to be included in the roll of the nations conquered by Hitler, and yet for Trotsky "the occupation of territories, the downfall of individual states" represented "only tragic episodes on the road to the reconstruction of modern society."

We hold that the addition since then of two or three more states in the roster of Hitler's victims can create no decisive change in our attitude toward the national states while the imperialist war still rages. Politically we view this addition as a mere extension of the battle lines upon which it would be fatal for us to base our policy. And together with Trotsky we say:

We do not link the question of the fate of the Czechs, Belgians, French and Germans as nations with conjunctural shifts of military fronts during a new brawl of the imperialists, but with the uprising of the proletariat and its victory over all the imperialists. ("Social-Patriotic Sophistry, the Question of the Defense of Czechoslovakia's 'National Independence,'" The NEW INTERNATIONAL, November, 1938.)

That is our point of departure. The existence of the national movements affects our principled line on the national states during an imperialist war just as little as the chauvinistic moods of the masses alters our opposition to the imperialist war. We put principle above the transient moods of the masses.

Unless there is some new Marxist contribution to our understanding of war and "national liberation," we must assume the traditional internationalist stand on these questions!—not dogmatically, not with shut eyes to all the developments which unfold before us, nor to the new ideas that are brought forward. But woe to us if we allow secondary developments to stand above our principled program or if we accept "new" ideas that turn out to be a rehash of that which Marxism has long rejected.

Imperialism and Its Political Masks

Between the First and Second World Wars, the contending imperialists have not undergone a qualitative change. In November, 1938, the group of Palestinian Bolshevik-Leninists, concerned as they were with the fear that "Hitler's invasion would signify the slaughter of the workers" and that "fascism might be victorious, argued that:

Monarchist reaction in the last war was not an aggressive historical character, it was rather a survival; whereas fascism nowadays represents a direct and immediate threat to the civilized world. ("A Step Toward Social-Patriotism," The NEW INTERNATIONAL, July, 1939.)

To this argument the Fourth International replied:

It is only natural if we become suspiciously wary: such a narrowing down of the revolutionary tasks—replacing imperialism by one of its political masks, that of fascism—is a patent concession to the Comintern, a patent indulgence of the social patriots of the "democratic" countries. ("A Step Toward Social-Patriotism, Editorial Board, Bulletin of the Russian Left Opposition," The NEW INTERNATIONAL, July, 1939.)

To say that "fascism represents a hurling back of society"

and that "it finds itself compelled to reduce to a most barbarous colonial slavery tens of millions of advanced and civilized peoples!" or to speak of the "capitalist degradation of European civilization by German monopoly capitalism," is this not "replacing imperialism by one of its political masks—that of fascism"?

And is it also not "a patent concession to the Comintern, a patent indulgence of the social-patriots of the 'democratic' countries" to exempt from the "hurling back of society" and the "degradation of European civilization" the violation by "democratic" and Russian imperialism of the "national independence" of Italy, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland, and their violation tomorrow of the "national independence" of Germany and of all the subject peoples in accordance with the war map of their victory?

Under imperialism it is the technological development and industrial capacity, and not the political state form, which determines the relative power of the robber nations. In order to see this, one would only have to compare German fascist imperialism to Italian fascist imperialism. Finance capital at the base of Italian economy and militarism was too weak to give to Mussolini's imperialist adventures in Africa more than a bloody opera bouffe character, which ended in bankrupting the nation and contributing in no small way to the later overthrow of the fascist régime. On the other hand, the tremendous technology and industry at the base of German economy enabled German militarism to sweep over Europe like a mechanical reaper over a field of grain. German fascist imperialism fights off the whole world today but it should not be forgotten that German imperialism of the Kaiser fought off the world for four long years.

Also it is American technology and wealth that is making possible the reverse march of both Germany and Japan. It is the United States, on the same basis, which is playing the most reactionary rôle in the world today. The revolution will have to defend itself above all from the counter-revolutionary efforts of American imperialism, and not only in Europe, but in the whole wide world. Should we then say that American imperialism is hurling society backward? This would be just as un-Marxian as the other contentions.

None of the areas conquered by fascist, "democratic" or Russian totalitarian imperialism can, from a *political* standpoint, be regarded as colonies, semi-colonies, or oppressed nations while the imperialist war still rages, while the opposing imperialist coalitions are not yet exhausted, and while the proletariat has not yet had its chance to upset the skull-cart of imperialism. At present, the military conquests, no matter how ruthless in character, must be considered by Marxists as shifts in the war fronts, as tragic episodes on the road to the reconstruction of modern society. The fate of these nations, their "independence . . . belongs to the program of the fight of the international proletariat against imperialism," which means the proletarian fight against the imperialist war and for socialism. This is the stand of the Fourth International and its founder, Trotsky.

Fascism and "Democracy"

Objectively, fascism and imperialist war have brought the social antagonisms to a razor's sharpness. In this *objective* sense, fascism never did, and does even less now, "remove from the *top* of the order of the day, the struggle for proletarian power."

Only in a limited sense is it correct to speak of the reactionary historic rôle of fascism. In the period of fascist con-

solidation, before the war, the proletariat, while objectively more than ever the social antagonist of the bourgeoisie, is thrown back to a former stage through the loss of its organizations and its rights and in its consciousness, inasmuch as democratic illusions are nourished.

Before the war, the reactionary historic rôle of fascism meant no more than the need to include democratic slogans as a first chapter in the revolutionary awakening of the masses as part of the tactics of our unchanged strategy: the struggle for proletarian power. This is perfectly clear from the following:

Fascism will not eradicate the past political experience; it is even less capable of changing the social structure of the nation. . . . Even if the further progress of the struggle should in general not permit, *even for a single day*, the regeneration of a democratic state—and *this is very possible*—the struggle itself cannot develop by the circumvention of democratic slogans! (Trotsky: "Fascism and Democratic Slogans," July, 1933; *The New International*, July, 1943. Our emphasis.)

The difference between the fascist and the "democratic" political régimes when fascism is first consolidating its power, and those régimes when fascism gambles all by plunging into an imperialist war is most graphically described together with our present tasks as follows:

Naturally there exists a difference between the political régimes in bourgeois society, just as there is a difference in the comfort between various cars in a railway train. But when the whole train is plunging into an abyss, the distinction between decaying democracy and murderous fascism disappears in the face of the collapse of the entire capitalist system.

By his victories and bestialities, Hitler provokes naturally the sharp hatred of the workers the world over. But between the legitimate hatred of the workers and the helping of his weaker but not less reactionary enemies, is an unbridgeable gulf. The victory of the imperialists of Great Britain and France would not be less frightful for the ultimate fate of mankind than for that of Hitler and Mussolini. Bourgeois democracy cannot be saved. By helping their bourgeoisie against foreign fascism, the workers would only accelerate the victory of fascism in their own country. The task which is posed by history is not to support one part of the imperialist system against another, but to make an end of the system as a whole. (Manifesto of the Fourth International on the Imperialist War and the Proletarian Revolution, May, 1940.)

The task which is posed by history is not the fight for bourgeois democracy and national independence, that is, recreating the "democratic" part of the imperialist system, "but to make an end of the system as a whole."

We don't have to have the national question to understand that workers' power is not an immediate action slogan for Europe. But the national question as it appears today cannot eliminate workers' power as the first point on our historical agenda. If it is true of the United States it is certainly true of Europe, or are there people who wish to maintain that there is a historical top of the agenda within a historical top of the agenda, that is a sort of "sub-historical" agenda? In that case one would have to abandon the idea of the reactionary rôle of fascism in the sense of hurling back society and of its having made colonial slaves of the masses of the European countries. The reactionary rôle of fascism would then have to be given a more limited interpretation in the sense of temporarily throwing back revolutionary consciousness as a result of an ignominious capitulation to fascism, and the resulting blotting out of the organizations and democratic rights of the workers during the period of fascism's consolidation. But even this situation would not eliminate workers' power from the top of the historical agenda but only from the top of the "sub-historical" agenda, whose first point would be the struggle for "democracy" as a first stage only, as a means of *awak-*

ening the workers from the passivity of their defeat. However, even this is valid only when there is no imperialist war which rocks the fascist structure to its very foundation, and not only awakens the worker but prepares him to rush directly to soviets at the very first crash of fascism.

The Italian Experience

The most important event of the war thus far is the revolution in Italy. It is also the most instructive experience. Italy is today the best laboratory for all programs. The fall of Mussolini and the rise of soviets in Milan and Turin took our party completely by surprise because we did not understand that when the "whole train is plunging into" the abyss of war, "the distinction between decaying capitalism and murderous fascism disappears in the face of the collapse of the entire capitalist system." In other words, fascism, far from hurling back society, was itself hurled back by the war.

The workers of Milan and Turin did not have to be awakened with tactical democratic slogans, particularly those which are dictated by the strategy of the fight for formal or bourgeois democracy. At the first crash of the fascist structure, the workers proceeded through soviets on the road toward the "establishment of an 'authoritarian' socialist, proletarian government."

German fascism in northern Italy did not colonize this area any more than it colonized the other conquered areas of Europe. They did not eliminate Italian fascist industry nor the Italian fascist bourgeoisie. On the contrary, they made common cause with the native fascist bourgeoisie against the revolutionary workers. The appearance of at least six organizations competing for the support of the Italian masses demonstrates how untrue is the assertion that "From end to end of Western Europe, at the war's close, there will be no European social force with any claim to state power except the proletariat."

German fascism in the north Italian areas oppresses the Italian workers but with the Allied armies hammering at the German lines in Italy it is easy to see that this oppression is of too transitory a nature to make it, *politically* speaking, assume the character of national oppression. It is easy for us to see that the German occupation of Northern Italy is only a shift in the war front, but essentially there is no difference between this and the other German occupations. Just because the war has not ended, the German occupation of Europe will, with every passing month, appear in its true character: as tragic episodes in the war, as shifts in the battle lines. No one in the party apparently advocates the slogan of "national liberation" for Northern Italy, nor does anyone seem to think that there is a hurling back of society by the fascists there. Equally invalid, because the situation is qualitatively the same, is the slogan of "national liberation" for the rest of occupied Europe.

At the same time no one in the party advocates the slogan "national liberation" for the Italian area under Allied control. Apparently the Allies are not the national oppressors of Italy, though they very definitely aid the Italian bourgeoisie in its class oppression.

At the time of Mussolini's fall, the workers thought of soviets and a way out of the capitalist impasse. This was the revolutionary situation, and in it was an Italian Trotskyist Party standing for the Socialist Republic. The bourgeoisie was confused and disoriented. It was bolstered by the entrance upon the scene of both German and Allied imperialism. German imperialism uses its armed might to quell the workers

of the North, and in this they are aided by the air arm of the Allied imperialism. Badoglio is set up by the Allies. He is given every aid in organizing a new army which will stand for order and "national liberation" and which will replace the disorganized old Italian army. Badoglio is put at the head of the Italian crusade for "national liberation" against the German fascist oppressor. The Allied imperialists insist that he should be given this opportunity to help reclaim the tarnished reputations of the Italian monopoly capitalists and their politicians and generals. The parties uncompromised by fascism, bourgeois and working class, form a front with them for "national liberation." We hope the exception is the Italian Trotskyist Party, which came forth boldly for a socialist Italy.

Within German occupied Italy the monopolists see the handwriting on the wall and shift to the Allied imperialist camp. At the same time the anti-fascist front becomes converted into a "national liberation" front which includes this time the monopolists who were behind Mussolini for years. "National liberation" becomes the touchstone for friend, obscuring the class antagonisms and even the crimes of the past. The "national liberation" front within the German occupied territory is linked to the "national liberation" front in the territory under Allied control. The extreme left of the "national liberation" front lends its prestige to the party just to the right of it, and this party in turn helps to absolve the next, until the extreme right—the party of monopoly capital—benefits from the general abluion.

The revolutionary actions of the masses against the native monopoly capitalists has become transformed under "national liberation" into a struggle of all the classes to oust the German oppressor. The great specific weight of the proletariat—its hegemony in the struggle—is replaced by the hegemony of the monopolists and the imperialists in the "national liberation" struggle. The military organization of the workers, which can become a serious force only by undermining the armies of imperialism with a revolutionary program, becomes under "national liberation," an auxiliary guerrilla force preparing the way for the main forces of the Badoglios and the Allied imperialists. Thus the bourgeoisie, using all its resources and backing the struggle for the right to exploit its masses independently of the German foreigner, inexorably puts its hegemony upon the "national liberation" struggle.

The burning class issues, even the questions of democracy, are hypocritically "postponed" in the name of the main and first task: the ousting of the German conqueror. "National liberation" permits the staggering and punch-drunk bourgeoisie to recover from its helplessness, to rebuild its army of order, its state forces, to regain its lost reputations, in short to put itself once more into a position where it can best deal with the burning class issues, and where it can also best afford to put forward its more liberal representatives.

This pattern is being repeated in all of Europe. The antidote to it is the struggle for socialism and the class fight against the imperialist war, and not the very thing which is promoting this pattern—"national liberation" and the struggle for formal or bourgeois "democracy."

The appearance of soviets in Italy is the most important fact that has emerged from the war so far. Any attempt to play this down and to force it into the framework of bourgeois democracy reveals a complete misreading of the events.

Soviets can arise only at the time when the mass movement enters into an openly revolutionary stage. From the first moment of their appearance, the soviets, acting as a pivot around which millions of toilers are united in their struggle against the exploiters, became competitors

and opponents of local authorities and then of the central government. (Program and Resolutions of the Founding Conference of the Fourth International, 1938.)

The appearance of soviets in Italy confirms dramatically our strategic struggle for socialism and puts the stamp on what we propose as the tactical democratic and transitional slogans for the Italian workers which come under this strategy. To counterpose democratic slogans to spontaneous soviets and almost to regret their appearance because tested parties do not exist at the time or because as yet "the masses do not have an authentic revolutionary party of their own," is to urge just the kind of patience on the masses of which we accuse the bourgeoisie when they want to "postpone" democratic rights for the masses.

Where, if not in the soviets, are the parties—including the one that is not yet the authentic revolutionary one—to be tested as *revolutionary* parties? What other period, if not the soviet period, is most conducive for the *speedy* growth of the revolutionary forces so that they can become the "authentic revolutionary party of the masses"?

Of course, the soviets in Italy have been momentarily crushed and the promising revolution of the workers aborted. But their appearance heralds the character of the struggle and the next revolutionary offensive of the workers will bring soviets inevitably to the fore. When this happens it will be the duty of the Italian Trotskyist Party to enter actively into the soviets in order boldly to direct their revolutionary development. This does not mean that it does not at the same time put forth democratic slogans nor even reject the parliamentary struggle should such exist at the same time.

But if at such a time the party shifts its emphasis to the parliamentary struggle and overlooks the soviets, instead of exploiting the parliamentary struggle for the purpose of increasing the specific weight of the soviets and itself in it, then it will unfailingly become bankrupt.

At the present time, when the bourgeoisie is momentarily reinstated and backed by the superior forces of imperialism, we do not call for soviets, nor is there any "danger" of their arising spontaneously. In the present Italian situation, democratic demands and their parliamentary refraction should be our concern, and in view of the imperialist and bourgeois effort to either deny democracy to the masses or to limit its character, we should give them the most resolute and audacious character; but everything would hang in the air if we did not at the same time press the boldest economic demands or participate and lead the extra-parliamentary struggle. The emphasis on only democratic demands sounds like the following passage from Trotsky's *History of the Russian Revolution*:

And since the bourgeoisie is driven into alliance with the reaction not by heated phrases from orators and journalists, but by independent activity of the toiling classes, the Mensheviks tried with all their power to oppose this activity—to oppose the economic struggle of the workers and peasants. "For the working class," they taught, "social questions are not now of the first importance. Its present task is to achieve political freedom."

The struggle for political freedom in indissoluble connection with the economic and extra-parliamentary activity dictates, at present, such demands as universal suffrage for men, women and the youth which has reached the age of eighteen. The bourgeoisie and the imperialists are on record for a Constituent Assembly, at least verbally, but they say they want to postpone its election until after military victory has been achieved. This dictates a bold struggle on our part for elec-

tions now, and not only for the Constituent Assembly, but also for elections to all the municipal electoral bodies, etc.

The slogans for political freedom, the slogan of the Constituent Assembly, were raised by the Mensheviks, Cadets, etc., as well as by the Bolsheviks during the February revolution. The difference between the way the Bolsheviks raised these slogans and the way the others did flowed from their respective strategies—socialist revolution or the bourgeois "democratic" revolution. The strategy of socialist revolution dictated to the Bolsheviks an increasing aggressiveness of their slogans in all spheres, political, economic and extra-parliamentary, and resulted in shifting the specific weight of the struggle onto the soviets, from which they emerged as the authentic revolutionary party of the masses, leading them to the victorious proletarian revolution. On the other hand, the attempt by the Mensheviks to limit the struggle to the bourgeois "democratic" revolution gave their democratic slogans a hollowness and impotency for which they tried to compensate with a desperate dependence on the Constituent Assembly, which in turn they dared not even convoke and which ended in their bankruptcy and dispersal from the scene of the revolution.

In Italy today, democratic demands are surely important, but the socialist perspective requires not only a sharpening of these demands and those in the economic sphere, but also so important a slogan as the demand that Italy get out of the imperialist war of both robber coalitions. At the same time the vanguard promotes revolutionary propaganda to undermine the imperialists who are making Italy a bloody shambles and an arena for counter-revolutionary schemes against the workers and peasants. This slogan will grip the heart of the long-suffering and war-weary Italian masses, and expose at the same time the Stalinist, reformist, bourgeois and liberal supporters of the war. This is the kind of a tactic flowing from a socialist perspective that can most profit the Italian Trotskyist Party and develop it into the authentic revolutionary party of the masses.

Despite the temporary smothering of the Italian revolution, the rise of soviets symptomizes the objectively socialist and not "democratic" period in Europe today. It is true also for the countries of "classic" fascism. Among other things, military decisions of great importance brought about the fall of Mussolini and the rise of the revolution. With the coming of great military decisions in the near future, we must look forward to the rise of soviets in a number of European countries and, most important, the rise of soviets in Berlin!

[Continued in next issue]

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