

The New _____ **INTERNATIONAL**

JANUARY • 1946

THE STRIKE WAVE

ITS ROOTS IN THE ECONOMICS OF RECONVERSION

An Editorial

HENRY JUDD:

AMERICA'S ROLE IN EUROPE

The National Question Today

FELIX MORROW:

To the Secretariat of the Fourth International

**The Post-Liberation Struggle in the
Philippines *Saul Berg***

**The Stalinist Bureaucracy from the
Inside *George Stanley***

**Historical Retrogression or Socialist
Revolution *J. R. Johnson***

Lessons of the Detroit Elections *Martin Harvey*

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THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

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Editor: MAX SHACHTMAN

Managing Editor: ERNEST ERBER

Business Manager: PAUL BERN

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Business Manager's

MEMO TO OUR READERS

New Year's greeting from THE NEW INTERNATIONAL staff. We look forward to the year ahead with the confident expectation that our magazine will find an ever-widening circle of readers. On our part we will continue to emphasize the type of article found in the December issue—analytical and lively treatment of important issues, particularly those on the American scene. We hope that NI readers who have sold *Labor Action* subscriptions to their shopmates will follow them up with subscriptions to the magazine.

The subscription drive started in November ends on February 1. If you hurry you can still take advantage of our special offer. This special offer gives you:

One year at only \$1.50

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We believe the following preview of the contents of future issues will convince you that neither you nor your friends can afford to be without the NI in 1946.

W. H. Emmett, well-known Australian Marxist economist and author of *The Handbook of Marxism*, contributes an article on economics.

Miriam Gould, in an article entitled "Women, Biology and Socialism," discusses Helene Deutsch's latest book, *The Psychology of Women*.

The GM strike will be the subject of a detailed analysis and review by Jack Wilson, who reappears as a contributor to the NI upon his release from the Army. Old readers will recall his articles on the rubber industry at the time of the CIO organizing drive, the rôle of John L. Lewis, etc.

Max Shachtman continues his series on the balance sheet of the differences between the WP and the SWP during the war.

I. J. Enright is preparing an article which analyzes the efforts of Gerald L. K. Smith to revive the old Ham 'n' Eggs movement in California.

The series by Henry Judd which starts this month will continue with articles on England and France in the February and March issues.

Other interesting articles will cover the developments in Argentina, report on Congress, reviews of timely books, etc.

The polemical material on how to fight fascism aroused considerable interest and we invite the comments of our readers on this subject.

The delay in bringing out last month's issue was due to unavoidable technical difficulties. However, with this issue we are starting the new year right and we hope to continue to meet our publication date in the following months.

PAUL BERN.

THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

A Monthly Organ of Revolutionary Marxism

VOLUME XII

JANUARY, 1946

NUMBER 1

EDITORIAL COMMENT—

THE STRIKE WAVE

The Meaning of "Ability to Pay"

The Roots of Labor's New Approach

January 1, 1946, ushered in a year that may prove to be the most momentous to date in the history of American labor. It was not solely the fact that the "battle of titans"—the United Automobile Workers versus General Motors Corporation—remained deadlocked at year's end with little prospect for a speedy termination. Nor was it solely the fact that hundreds of other strikes dotted the country from coast to coast, some large, some small, some important, some of little consequence. Nor was it solely the fact that strikes loomed in such strategic nerve centers as telephone and telegraph systems. Nor was it solely the overwhelmingly important fact that strike dates had either been set or were in prospect for industries totaling several million workers, including such basic industries as steel, radio and electric, meat packing, rubber and others, and that the total contemporaneously on strike would add up to general strike proportions.

The combination of all of these factors would, to be sure, suffice to make of 1946 a most momentous year for labor. But this year will find its place in history, above all, because of the new level upon which the battle was joined. Regardless of the union or the industry involved, the issues at stake were nowhere merely a continuation of where the struggle had been left off in 1941.

The issues in the General Motors strike (December *NEW INTERNATIONAL*, "UAW vs. GM") were not merely some clever ideas concocted by Walter Reuther. Aspects of Reuther's line of argument were implicit to one degree or another in almost every one of the current struggles. It is therefore not the "deviltry" of Reuther, as the conservative press sees it, but the stubborn and obvious facts of labor's situation today that weaves a logic of its own and forces it upon labor as the only line of argument with which to support its demands. Compared to the rest of the top labor leadership, Reuther is less bound by conservative traditions and is, therefore, more conscious of his role, more daring and skillful in presenting labor's new arguments. But the arguments themselves are rooted in the objective situation and arise logically from it. If the argument of labor today appear abnormal in the light of past trade union practice, it is only because the objective situation itself is abnormal and requires an abnormal solution. Abnormal situations have never yet been solved by normal measures.

Even Reuther is not aware of the complete implications of his demands, while the other leaders of the CIO (not to speak of the fossilized AFL officialdom) do not even begin to

comprehend what is at stake. The revolutionary significance of the whole question of "ability to pay," "fact-finding" and "opening the books" remains only as an *implicit* factor in their position while they *explicitly* deny that there is anything involved which unions have not always demanded. Their denial, including the honest indignation which usually accompanies it, is an evidence of their own blundering and confusion, born out of the clash between their own level of social consciousness and the pressing needs of the objective situation.

Industry Knows What Is at Stake

However, the same is not the case with industry. Both because of the greater degree of consciousness of their interests and because the whole issue is more plainly seen from capital's side of the controversy, the spokesmen of Big Business are quite well aware of what is at stake. The intransigence of General Motors in refusing to make profits and prices an issue of collective bargaining and their raising it to the high level of an inviolable principle is neither simply demogogy nor tactical maneuvering. When they proclaim in full page ads placed in practically every daily newspaper from coast to coast that the principle of wages based upon the "ability to pay" would eventually ruin the "free enterprise" system they argue from solid economic fact. It is the great pity of the situation that the working class is not equally aware of this and takes conscious steps to rid itself of this "free enterprise" system in which the capitalist is "free" to exploit labor for private profit while the worker is "free" to stay home and starve if he does not like it.

In its ad of December 30 General Motors declares:

General Motors has faced what it believes is a highly critical issue. It has made its decision. It is important that the public understand the issue. The issue at stake transcends the interests of General Motors. There is involved something far more consequential—a most vital principle.

America is at the crossroads! It must preserve the freedom of each unit of American business to determine its own destinies. Or it must transfer to some governmental bureaucracy or agency, or to a union, the responsibility of management that has been the very keystone of American business. Shall this responsibility be surrendered? That is the decision the American people face. America must choose!

The idea of ability to pay, whatever its validity may be, is not applicable to an individual business within an industry as a basis for raising its wages beyond the going rate.

Consider the implications of such a principle. Who would risk money to develop or expand a business under such circum-

stances? Where would be the incentive to do a more efficient job? Would it be intelligent to destroy the incentive for efficiency? Would it not be more intelligent to subscribe to the principle that no one should be *forced* to pay more than the going rate? Should General Motors, assuming it is more efficient, be required to pay more for materials, for transportation, for services or for wages than its competition? And how much *more* determined by a political governmental agency?

Do you subscribe to the belief that you should pay for what you buy or the services you use on the basis of your financial resources? It is clear that this is the principle involved.

Labor's Place Under Capitalism

Considering that it is a piece of special pleading written for propaganda, it still remains a fair description of the relations which govern capitalist production. Because implicit in what they say in the above is the secret of capitalist economy, i.e., the exploitation of labor to produce profits, interest and rents. By drawing out to its full implications the "holy" principle upon which General Motors takes its stand, we lay bare their real concept of the place of labor in the economy.

General Motors complains that if they are forced to pay wages on the basis of "ability to pay" they will also have to pay for *materials* on the same basis. This statement only makes sense on the basis of a Marxian understanding of capitalism and its economic laws. What General Motors is saying is what Karl Marx established a century ago, that under capitalism both materials and labor power are commodities which the capitalist purchases on the market at the market price.

"We must have the right to buy materials and labor power for as little as we can get it" is what the argument boils down to. "If we must raise wages because we have increased our profits, free enterprise (i.e., capitalism) is impossible," is the conclusion which follows.

We agree with General Motors when they state that in the long run the principle of "ability to pay" is incompatible with the operation of capitalist production relations. This is precisely why Marxists must support labor's fight to "open the books" and increase wages on the basis of "ability to pay." We see in this struggle a transition from the economic relations of capitalism to the economic relations of socialism. The latter cannot, of course, be attained without a workers government and the nationalization of industry. But today the important transition which this struggle helps achieve is the transition in the thinking of the American working class from the acceptance of the status quo to new economic relations.

The American labor movement did not embark upon this struggle with any notions of undermining capitalism. Its understanding of its own role still lags far behind the implications inherent in the demands which it makes.

Reconversion and A "New Slate"

The present strike struggles take place against an economic pattern unlike that which prevailed in the past, either in time of economic upswing or in time of economic decline. The prime role of the trade unions, the constant struggle to defend the workers' standard of living, was all but suspended for the period of the war by government controls and the iniquitous "no strike pledge." The gap between rising prices and frozen wages was filled by the lengthened work week with overtime rates. With the return of the forty hour week the "take home" pay drops to almost peacetime levels. However, prices continue to rise. The worker insists that he must have an increase in hourly rates to safeguard his "standard of living." But what

standard of living? That of 1939? That of the war years? That possible today on the basis of his present earnings? The "standard of living" was not handed down at Mount Sinai nor written into the Constitution. It is a fluid thing. It is the result of the historical struggle of the working class upon a given economic level. What the government or the industrialists conceive of as labor's standard of living, will hardly agree with what the workers themselves conceive of. The worker argues that he needs the same take-home pay now that he earned during the war on the basis of 46, 48, 50 or more hours per week. The capitalist class sees this as an outrageous demand. What has "standard of living" got to do with it, argues the employer, when he is supposed to pay 52 hours wages for 40 hours of work?

As a result of the war-time abnormality, the struggle between capital and labor in the reconversion period begins, so to speak, with a clean slate. It is not, as in the past, a matter of affecting the standard of living by pushing wages a few cents this way or that. It is actually a struggle to *establish* a norm, a standard of living. This means that traditional criteria cannot play the role they formerly did, above all not the criteria of the cost of living. It means re-establishing a new relationship between wages, prices and profits. *As a result everything is raised anew.* Old concepts that served the trade unions for decades and are written into its textbooks are discarded as inadequate. Labor is compelled to take a new approach, a broader *social* approach to its place in the economy. It is not that labor has never at one time or another in the past, gone into bargaining conferences to raise the question of profits, or the increased productivity of labor, or the prices the employer gets for his products, or the need to "open the books," etc. But these were usually incidental to the main bone of contention, viz; sufficient wages to cover the cost of living. Today, labor is forced to rest its case upon the *total* economic situation.

Why the Broad Approach Is Needed

Without such an approach labor's arsenal of arguments is quickly depleted and capital's supplied with strong reserves. Were labor to confine itself to the traditional single strong point of the past, the cost of living, it would have little basis for demanding a 30 per cent increase. Not that the cost of living has not gone up that much compared with the increase in hourly wage rates. But this would be a meaningless argument because it rests upon the aim of re-establishing wage-price relationships of five years ago in the midst of a vastly changed economic situation. Capital simply states that it must operate its business at a profit in the year 1946. This it cannot do, it claims, if it must increase wages by 30 per cent. Or, as in the case of General Motors, it states that it considers it exorbitant even if it could afford it. In the present negotiations, it is capital which tries to utilize cost of living statistics to bolster its case that labor does not deserve a 30 per cent increase.

The broad social approach which labor is forced to take likewise affects the old class collaborationist concept that the interests of capital and labor are mutually beneficial ones. The National Association of Manufacturers has consistently argued against wage increases during the reconversion period from this basis. The NAM states that it is necessary for labor to wait until industry has reconverted and is producing at a profit before wage increases can be safely granted, since whatever is good for industry will rebound to the benefit of labor. Implicit in the position that the books should be opened and wages based upon ability to pay is the position that wages

must be increased at the expense of profits and that, therefore, the interests of capital and labor are antagonistic.

The results of labor's new approach to wages is to make fact finding increasingly emphasize the company's books and decreasingly emphasize the Department of Labor's cost of living index. In theory this means that labor shifts the basis of its argument from the value of labor power as a commodity to the social role of the proletariat in production.

The nature of the present struggles of American labor are unique in the international experiences of the working class movement. A working class so backward politically as to remain tied to the bourgeois parties is confronted on the economic field with fundamental problems that are born in the objective situation of a highly developed capitalist economy and which pose as the only "common sense" solution steps which involve a break with capitalist economic relations. This situation again permits us to appreciate the remarkable genius of Leon Trotsky, who in 1938 posed for the American Marxists this glaring contradiction between the advanced objective situation and the retarded subjective factor, the political backwardness of American labor, and outlined the program of transitional demands as the means of bridging the gap. Trotsky's contribution remains the basis upon which advanced

ideas of revolutionary Marxism can find contact with a politically backward working class which faces an objective situation which permits only of revolutionary solutions.

The very questions posed by the "ability to pay" approach require that labor find its answers in the transitional bridge to socialist solutions. In the first place in this connection is the question, "What if the books reveal that a wage increase is impossible?" Reuther has thus far tried to evade facing this question. Murray, in his negotiations with United States Steel, has avoided giving a forthright answer to the corporation's claim that the wage increase is only possible after a rise in the price ceiling on steel products. We can rest assured that the workers will not be content with an auditor's report that states that capital cannot pay what the workers consider a living wage. Labor's answer must proceed along the lines of our transitional program and demand that the bankrupt owners of industry be relieved of their liability by government nationalization and relieved of the burden of management by workers control of production. Once this demand has been fixed in the minds of labor, the steps toward an independent labor party and the struggle for a workers government become inevitable.

America's Role In Europe

The National Question in the Post-War Era

[The article printed below is the first in a series of four articles dealing with the Europe of today. Succeeding articles will be concerned with England and its Labor Government; France in 1946 and "The Germanies." In this related series, the author is not primarily concerned with descriptions of Europe's major countries, but rather with questions of American imperialist penetration into Europe, the status and perspective of the labor movement in the Europe of 1946, and new aspects of the "national question" since the end of the war. Henry Judd has recently returned from a year and a half in Europe.—EDITORS]

PART I

It is almost impossible to imagine the low and sunken state of Europe as it enters the dreaded winter of 1945-46. Early snows are covering the ruined cities, concealing the rubble and dirt, but every European and every soldier who has passed through the broken Continent knows what is beneath. Soon a full year will have gone by since Europe emerged from history's most terrible war into what *TIME* has called "history's most terrifying peace." The revolutionary truism that the war has ended in name only is so apparent as to need no stressing. In terms of restrictions upon liberties and democratic rights; persecutions of minorities and national groups; the violent wrenching of masses of people from one area and their dispersion to another; the widespread employment of slave laborers—in a word, in terms of everything that made the war ultra-reactionary and hated by the simplest individual, the war continues as though the "cease-fire" order had not been heard. The cannonading and the bombing have halted, the general staffs are receding to their traditional hidden recesses, but the Continent—divided against itself as never before—rocks and heaves. The totalitarian, Bonapartist and reactionary political régimes have simply replaced the general staffs.

Chaos and disintegration are the two words that apply to

Europe, and these tendencies are apparent in every aspect of Europe's post-war life. Not merely did capitalism and imperialism devastate Europe during five and a half years of war, shattering its entire economic structure, but—and here is the main point that concerns us—it is plunging Europe as a whole toward even lower levels and has proven itself incapable of any serious recovery efforts or steps toward reconstruction. The living standards of Europe's masses have reached an incredible low, particularly when we realize that we are dealing with the historic continental-center of social, cultural and moral progress. Country after country reveals the same pattern. The average working class, middle class or peasant family living at the subsistence edge of real hunger, with its entire energy consumed in the struggle for food, warmth, housing and clothing; a major decline in general health standards, accompanied by sharp rises in death and infant mortality rates (with the fear of mass epidemics hovering everywhere); a breaking-up of all transportation systems, means of transport and methods of communication; an overall collapse of normal forms of trading and commerce, and a throw back to primitive individual, regional and even intra-national barter methods, with the ultra-reactionary system of Black Marketing replacing the normal exchange market of traditional capitalism.

Declining Standards

With economic debasement and widespread misery there marches a corresponding decline in moral and ideologic standards. Each family, each individual within the family, every member of European society is thrown into the wild struggle for a share, substantial enough to survive on, of Europe's meagre commodities and the thin trickle coming from America. Petty thievery, robbery and wholesale banditry are commonplace. Women from the most bourgeois of backgrounds, paragons of middle class prudery, step out on the road of prosti-

tution. Only the uniform and the language of their purchasers vary. Children, maturing in an atmosphere of uncertainty, insecurity and general social paralysis, develop the skills of grubbing, pimping, stealing and flattering. Nimble fingers and sly minds are their educational heritage. The number of venereal victims and the national syphilis rates reach such heights that it is "safe to assume" that a young Polish, or Italian, or German girl is infected. As for European art and culture, its practice and expression as a living tradition is confined to London and Paris, cities that survived the worst offered by the war. In general, even the survival of bourgeois culture is threatened by the atrophy of bourgeois Europe. The importance of such a type as Louis Aragon, the rather despicable French Stalinist, in Parisian intellectual life is sufficient illustration.

Ideologically, as we shall explain in this series, the same processes of "falling-apart" and degeneration must be recognized. The Nazi method aroused and lifted to new heights all the ancient, sleeping chauvinisms and national hatreds. The Allied-Russian methods completed the break-up of European life to fantastic and fractional degrees (4-Power occupation of minute Austria; 4-Power occupation of Berlin and Vienna). Just as, in general, each individual unit of the European-national family was forced into the mad scramble for a share of his town's, or region's, or city's production, so whole sections of nations (southern France, Sicily, Bavaria, etc.), and whole nations are thrown into violent antagonism with one another in the scramble for Europe's surviving wealth and production. The various national bourgeoisies, military governments of occupation and totalitarian creations of Moscow have given freedom and full play to all centrifugal forces within the battered Continent. Now Europe is dog tired, with its factories, mines and transport wrecked by war and occupation; no raw materials to begin production again; not enough coal to build up steam; its best laborers scattered and torn away from their machines. And on both flanks, the weight of two great powers whose future and whose intentions with respect to Europe, are either unknown or, when known, are only too clear.

Europe: 1946

France and Belgium: lacking materials, railroad systems shattered, black markets absorbing their remaining strength and meagre production, bomb destroyed ports. France, with its devastated Normandy; Belgium with its devastated Ardennes. *Spain:* still under Franco, still living in the aftermath of its Civil War. *Portugal:* under its traditional military despot. *Italy:* ripped open from end to end, systematically shot up, with hungry Sicily at its toe. *The Balkans:* its mysteriously expanding totalitarian dictatorships, swallowing up Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Roumania. *Greece:* under a White Terror, reduced to hunger and cave-dwelling. *Norway:* salt herring as the main food and the aftermath of five years of occupation to overcome. *Holland:* half-drowned and dieting on American "C" rations. *Central Europe:* war-destroyed Poland and Hungary and 800,000 Russian soldiers camping on a minute portion of minute Austria. *Czechoslovakia* without supplies and gripped by its minority questions. And finally, rapidly outstripping all other nations in the depths to which it has sunk. *Germany:* cut up, dispersed, as a reality non-existent. Such is, in summary, the state of Europe, 1946.

Do we mean, then, that the situation in Europe is one of complete hopelessness, with only the blackest of perspectives? No, this is not at all our contention. On the contrary, despite these most unfavorable circumstances, the European masses

have already made several important efforts to lift themselves up (the overthrow of Italian fascism, the French movement of resistance, ending in the Paris insurrection, the Belgian strike struggles), and have shown repeatedly the general direction in which their social and ideologic thought is moving (British elections, French elections, etc.). *Still more important is the definite, steady and growing revival of the Fourth International movement, and its European sections.* There could be no greater error than to cross off Europe as a source of revolutionary action and thought. Bleeding and groggy as it may be, the old continent is still alive, still has great natural resources and its cultural tradition to lean upon and, above all, it can look forward to the re-building of its proletarian classes, along with the labor movement. Our concern, in describing the real conditions of Europe, is with what is, not with what we would like to see. Failure to grasp these harsh realities could only result in false perspectives, with inevitable disillusion; false slogans, with inevitable failure to stir up the tendencies toward revolutionary revival; and false action. Many Marxist comrades, both in Europe and America, have already gone astray by attempting to impose upon this greatly changed Europe either their outworn formulas, or wishful fantasies of their own creation. There is a revolutionary perspective in Europe, but the real problem still is one of finding the correct road toward it and the correct method of mobilizing people to march on that road.

Role of U. S. in Europe

Now, where does America and its imperialist bourgeoisie fit into this chaos of modern Europe? The illusion that America is on the verge of leaving Europe to its fate and washing its hands of the continent, fostered by the rapid withdrawal of our military forces from Europe, seems fairly widespread. Of course this idea is nonsense. Certain die-hard remnants of "isolationism" may still urge total withdrawal, but the reality is otherwise. To begin with, even the completion of redeployment by our armed forces will leave 600,000 soldiers (300,000 of them in the American zone of occupied Germany alone). This considerable force, highly armed, well trained and built around fast moving armored units, is more than sufficient to fulfill any task that American imperialism may call upon it for.

But America's main weapons in Europe are economic in character. As the great victor power in the war, with its industrial capacity and its raw material wealth not only unharmed but greatly expanded, America is far ahead of other victor powers with respect to its bargaining strength. Our weapons are those of commerce and trade, supply of raw materials and purchase of European products, extension of loans and credits, etc. We can, in effect, determine not only the tempo of recovery and reconstruction within each nation of Europe, but we can actually determine whether that nation shall recover at all! There is not a single capitalist country of Europe today capable of lifting itself to its feet without considerable imports of coal, fuel, machinery, raw materials for its factories and extensive credits for the financing of its recapitalization needs. To whom can these nations turn for their needs? England? Stalin's Russia, which completes the plundering and looting of capital goods begun by the Nazis? America, in this sense, wields an unprecedented whip-hand.

Although, as we shall describe later, there are contradictions in this position that prevent its attaining perfection, the general awareness of our superiority is the determining factor in American policy, behavior and attitude toward Europe. Even the common attitudes and the daily actions of the Ameri-

can GI toward the people of Europe can be traced back to this knowledge of imperialist superiority and domination. The American soldier (as we are beginning to realize more and more) is generally intensely disliked in Europe. What could be more startling than the fact, clearly admitted by bourgeois journalists, that the American soldier is liked by (and, in turn, likes) the German people—the “enemy,” conquered nation—and is heartily disliked by (and, in turn, dislikes) the English, French, Belgian, etc., peoples—the “allied,” liberated nations! The politically backward and ignorant GI, particularly in France, displays that typical imperialistic arrogance associated with conqueror nations. He practices, even in small ways, that typical economic callousness associated with petty exploiters. He is a bulwark of the Black Market, one of Europe's most sinister institutions. (Carton of cigarettes, \$10.00—cost to him, \$.50; “K” ration, \$1.00—cost to him, zero; and cast-off clothing sells for fantastic prices).

Even Leon Trotsky's well known warning that America aimed at destroying the European market and then placing the continent on rations, even this may be described as an understatement of the facts. Even Trotsky's perception could not foresee the literal correctness of his prediction — great masses of Europeans living on the tasteless “C” and “K” rations of American mechanized production; a large percentage of Europeans dressed in the worn, cast-off clothing of American GIs and American charity donors (black marketed to them at fancy prices). In placing Europe upon material, financial and political rations American imperialism believes it has so cornered the continent that the ultimate objectives of its policy are within range of fulfillment. In addition to this rationing scheme, America—as we shall illustrate in this series —pursues virtually any method that will further weaken, divide and disintegrate Europe. America will not hesitate to let loose any force that will add to the sum total of centrifugal forces which are now whirling Europe about and causing its further break-up, *provided*, of course, such measures fit in with our general imperialist objectives.

The Objectives

What are these objectives? To the thinking European individual they were most *concretely* expressed in the “plan” of Bernard Baruch, published some time last year. They may be summarized as follows:

- (1) To keep Europe in a weakened and internally divided state, thus making the continent much easier to “handle.”
- (2) To prevent the reorganization, reconstruction and growth of such industries and exports as have, in the past, seriously interfered with American economic life; to limit and control (whenever possible) the recovery of other industries and agricultural life.
- (3) To halt, or block, the growth of any popular democratic, revolutionary, unifying or competing tendencies within Europe.
- (4) To consolidate and maintain control over the European division of the world market, as an essential step on the road to conquest of the latter.
- (5) To organize (through diplomatic maneuvers, *blocs*, power politics, etc.) Europe, in its preliminary phases, for its future participation, under American leadership, in the Third World War.

It is understood that every world power having sufficient strength left after the exhausting years of war is likewise intriguing and maneuvering in Europe. Imperialist America and Stalinist Russia are merely the leaders in this victimization

of Europe's masses, with England and France—their concrete action shaped by their particular designs and interests—following close behind. Nor do the ruling cliques of the satellites of these great powers hesitate to fall in with the game. Conspiracies, plots and intrigues; *blocs* and counter-*blocs*; bribery and treachery, power politics and counter-politics are so rampant in the Europe of 1946 that the entire continent resembles the court life, with its atmosphere of stink and decadence, generally associated with any of the pre-war Balkan monarchies. The territorial “Balkanization” of Europe by the victors is accompanied by a “Balkanization” of its political and social life, with the proletariat and small petty bourgeois, including the farmers and peasantry, as its victims.

Threat of a New War

Yet, as any European will promptly reply to his questioner, the basic trend in this maze is already clear, too clear. A Swiss newspaper recently summarized this general view by stating that every maneuver and each effort on the part of the powers tends toward the erection of a “line of steel” down the heart of Europe. Above and “beyond” the many national boundaries that divide the masses of each nation from one another there stands the armed line that separates yesterday's Allies from one another. Splitting Europe and its former leading nation, Germany, almost in twain, this line has a greater significance today that the most traditional, fought-over national or geographic boundary. For the peoples of Europe it symbolizes the most frightening of their new fears—the dreaded possibility of a new, Third World War. How ironic they find it that this artificial, bristling “line of steel”—the most closely watched boundary on the continent—should be precisely the same line where, scarcely a year ago, the enlightened Allies joyously met, supposedly to end the agonized war and begin the task of a reconstructed Europe at peace! On the western side of this fateful line stand the Anglo-American imperialists with their satellites; on the eastern side stand the neo-Russian imperialists with their satellites. All Europe knows this and while it knows that war will not come “tomorrow,” it has nothing but a weary hope that “tomorrow” will never come.

It is against this dark background that we must list and measure the general aspect of present European problems. During the period of the war itself, the Workers Party and virtually every section of the Fourth International concerned itself at great length with the so-called “national question” in Europe. That question is still very much alive today, and it would be a mistake of a high order to think that the formal end of the war has abolished the question, or its prominence. Those comrades and those European sections of the International who refused to recognize any “national question,” who clung to orthodox *formulae*, proved to be catastrophically wrong. They deceived themselves cruelly about a coming “German revolution,” or a lasting dual power in northern Italy; their central political slogan for a unity of Europe proved to be an abstraction of abstractions; the scope and power of the French and other resistance movements caught them open-mouthed and unprepared; and, most telling proof of a false analysis and perspective, in a period of growth and upsurge they remained virtually stagnant. It seems to us that only the German refugee Marxists, of the IKD, had a consistent, thorough and understanding grasp of Europe and its needs. The “national problem of Europe” received its clearest exposition (and still does) from comrades originating in the most nationally-oppressed country of Europe today—Germany.

Let those who consider the “national question” non-existent

ent, or resolved by the war's end, consider the following propositions:

1. A whole new series of nations and vast territories have been hurled back into a state of national oppression, foreign occupation and lack of independence. Germany stands at the head of a list that includes every nation beaten down in the Russian zones of occupation and influence (the Baltic states, Poland, etc.). In these areas the problem of national independence has been re-posed in an acute and immediate sense.

2. A whole new series of small nations and weakened nations feel the presence, weight and pressure of the foreign, victor imperialisms in a manner that *directly* relates to their social and historic future, right down to the elementary problems of recovery and reconstruction. These nations, at whose head stands France, lie in the shadow area of national oppression. The Central European states (Austria, Czechoslovakia, etc.) and the Balkan states feel the Russian weight, while those of Western Europe (Belgium, Holland, etc.) feel that of combined Anglo-American imperialism. To deny the "national question" in these areas is to deny the possibility of correctly posing their future.*

4. Standing in the background, but conspicuously in evidence, is the general, all-European aspect of the "national question." That is, in what manner and by what means shall the peoples of Europe, taken as an entity, free themselves from the burdensome weight of the great powers? How shall they

* We note the reported threat, by American imperialism, to place a coal embargo upon Switzerland. Even the most stubborn, traditional and aloof "independent" nation of Europe finds itself threatened, and thereby drawn into the general struggle, in a manner that even the Nazis did not attempt to apply to it!

prevent the Anglo-American *bloc* and the Russian *bloc* from further disintegrating the continent, robbing and oppressing its peoples, blocking their hopes for recovery and peace? Has not the problem long ago posed by Trotsky become, now, Europe versus America and Russia?

It goes without saying that without a definite *economic* revival, a setting in motion of the factory wheels, a rise in agricultural produce, a reorganization of a labor force and an organized working class, a renewal of trade and commerce, etc., it would be impossible to hope for a reconstitution of the general European labor movement, and a lifting of Europe out of its present dependency and misery. But since all these questions are in turn dependent upon Europe's relations with the rest of the world, particularly with the victor powers, it is obvious that their solution is an organic part of the European "national question." Naturally, individual countries may benefit from time to time due to conflicts and deliberate competition provided by the Big Three in the unfolding of their intrigues against one another. But, since the Big Three are in accord on the basic issue of a weak Europe that shall not be permitted to stand squarely upon its feet again, these episodic economic stimulations can be of only secondary importance. The economic resurrection of Europe, and therefore the solution of its "national question" can only come from the masses of Europe themselves, and the manner in which they pose and attempt to solve this same national problem.

HENRY JUDD

(Part II—England—The Labor Government—will appear in the next issue of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL.)

De Gaulle As Military Theoretician

How False Reputations Are Built

For Glory gives herself only to those who have always dreamed of her.—General Charles de Gaulle.

Nothing illustrates the depth of the profound crisis in France today and the utter bankruptcy of its present leadership quite as well as the fact that a one-time obscure army brass hat has been elevated to the position of "strong man and savior of France." Only a few years ago a miserable politician, Daladier, was similarly projected to the world. Who recalls Daladier today? Tomorrow one will be able to ask the same question about Gen. Charles de Gaulle.

Unless one were accustomed, as we should be, to the volumes of lies palmed off as truth in wartime, one would truly be surprised at the impudence of the bourgeois journalists in presenting events and individuals like Charles de Gaulle to the people.

Let us take, for example, General Charles de Gaulle as presented by one of his ardent admirers, the American writer, Walter Millis. In his foreword to de Gaulle's highly touted book, *The Army of the Future*,* Millis writes: "This is the now famous little book by a French officer on the principles on which the French did not act—while the Germans did. . . . The book brilliantly etches the quality of mind which he brings to the task. His record sufficiently demonstrates his capacity as a

man of action. The book shows that he combines with them intellectual powers to which we are, perhaps, too little accustomed in our own military men."

As a matter of fact, a simple reading of de Gaulle's work reveals that there is nothing original in his military ideas; he lacks social vision of any sort; and at best he can be described merely as a brass hat who is able to write lucidly, if not accurately.

The political wisdom of de Gaulle, to those who have not followed his opportunistic career in the last four years, is displayed clearly in his major theoretical work. Here is how de Gaulle sees the future of France—this is his social vision:

Gaping wide open, exposing her defenseless body to blows, deprived of all respite and all refuge, where then can our country find her latent protection except in arms? The sword is not only the last argument in her quarrels, it is also the only thing that makes up for her weakness. Everything that is ill-adapted in her territory, absurd in her political system, infirm in her character, has, in the last resort, nothing to offset it but the war-like arts, the school of her troops, the sufferings of her soldiers.

When one recalls that this book was written in the year 1934, it is quite obvious that de Gaulle was nothing but a flag-waving, war-mongering brass hat.

De Gaulle had a classic solution to the problems of France in 1934. He wanted a professional army; plus, to be sure, "our mass of reserves and recruits (the principal element of national defense)." It is not disclosing a military secret to point out that

*"The Army of the Future," by Charles de Gaulle, foreword by Walter Millis. Lippincott, 1941, Philadelphia.

de Gaulle's views were simply a copy of the military views that had been adopted in Germany and Russia ten years before de Gaulle wrote this book. (Incidentally, one of de Gaulle's "potent" arguments in this "now famous" book was to demand a three-year period of conscription instead of one year.)

To be sure, de Gaulle understood the impact of a technological age on warfare better than the dullards of the French general staff. His chapter outlining a panzer division and the effect of a mechanized army is quite lucid. He also understood the tactical use of air power. But every idea he expresses in this book of 1934 was ABC to the Red Army and the Wehrmacht; besides which, de Gaulle lacked the courage of a Douhet or a Gen. "Billy" Mitchell to fight for his views. Like every other brass hat, he failed completely to understand the only decisive new development of warfare since the first World War, namely, strategic air power. That de Gaulle was a "brilliant" man in the French army simply indicates that it was still the backward, corrupt, and reactionary army of the Dreyfus case, the blunders of the First World War, and its hero, Marshal Pétain.

De Gaulle's Professional Soldiers

In this allegedly brilliant work, there is no major criticism of the views symbolized in the so-called Maginot Line mentality. How could de Gaulle attack the rotten core of the French army? He was a protege of Pétain's. As a matter of fact, his argument for a professional army and a specialized army in a mechanical age was dictated not so much by the strictly military needs of the day as by the political requirements of the reactionary French regime. His military system is concerned with other things.

France would be imprudent to rely entirely on native troops to protect the Empire in Algiers, which reverberates to all the rumblings of Islam, and in Indo-China, which reacts to every disturbance in Asia. From the day upon which a force shall be created of men from our own country who are professional soldiers and in consequence more prepared to go on distant campaigns quite unconnected with politics, and from the day upon which from time to time we can parade some of our well-trained troops in carefully selected regions, from that day we shall be sufficiently guarded against danger to render it immediately less probable.

De Gaulle's future policy today is crystal clear from a reading of that notation written in 1934. De Gaulle is concerned primarily with the question of how to preserve the French imperialist plunder of bygone days.

It is easy to understand why de Gaulle refused to play Charlie McCarthy to Churchill and then to Roosevelt when one reads his major work. It is not so much because de Gaulle is interested in a democratic France or a solution of its burning problems. Quite the contrary, it is primarily because he has a MacArthur complex, but, alas, lives in a poor country. Listen to this gem of profound wisdom:

Actually, everything shows that she (France) is predestined to shine in the realm of quality. Our country, with her tinted skies, her varied contours, her fertile soil, our fields full of fine corn and vines and livestock, our industry of artistic objects, finished products and luxury articles, our gifts of initiative, adaptation, and self-respect, make us, above all others, a race created for brilliant deeds, and a picked body of specialists. Independence of tasks, cooperation of ingenuity, that competition of skill in the use of adaptable machines which will in the future require fighting by professionals, are naturally suited to aptitudes of our best brains. The same causes that give us many specialists in our delicate work will also favor us in the series of technical exploits which tomorrow will give the victory to specialized troops. It would appear that Destiny, in opening out the fresh path, desires once more to serve the fortunes of France.

If we were to change the word France to Germany in this quotation and credit it to Hitler instead of de Gaulle, it would be accepted everywhere as a typical example of the false racial superiority theory propagated by the Nazis.

Is it any wonder that de Gaulle concludes his book with this stirring call to arms: "In the hard task of restoring France's youth, the new army will serve, remedy, and leaven, for the sword is the axis of the world and greatness cannot be shared." Sieg Heill

As for de Gaulle and his glory complex, perhaps a fitting epitaph can be found in Thomas Grey's *Elegy*:

"The voice of heraldry, the pomp of power,

"And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,

"Await alike the inevitable hour,

"The paths of glory lead but to the grave."

WALTER JASON.

Politics in Occupied Germany

Two Letters by An Observer

The effects of total defeat are wearing off. But, of course, it is not the purpose of the occupation to let the effects wear off entirely. That is not why the Second World War was fought, nor the reason why 400,000 men are to take turns staying over here—for a generation. Even though military government is being withdrawn from *Kreis* and *Bezirk* level and local administration returned to the hands of the German authorities, even though city police have been armed with World War I vintage rifles and are wearing uniforms again instead of arm-bands, and even though local elections

are to be held, Germany will not be free, politically or economically.

One is not politically free unless one is economically free. So few people realize that, but a lot of Germans soon will, even if they don't put it into those words. "What good are elections to us," they will say, "if all we do is elect the persons who are to carry out American orders?" "The right to choose our burgomasters is too expensive at 1,200 calories a day. Democracy is no substitute for security any more than the 'free' labor unions you are granting us are a substitute for jobs. And de-nazified schools don't bring

prosperity to de-industrialized cities. You Americans talk about the wonders of democracy like a salesman praises the tonic he is trying to sell, but both are likely to turn out to be impotent concoctions."

I am afraid they will be right. For in a sense all capitalist democracy is impotent. Our "way of life" can provide us with elections, but not with jobs; atom bombs, but not security; freedom, but not from want or from fear of another war.

Democracy is to be our gift to the German people, whom we don't like.

That shows its relative place in the scale of the things we value. From the Germans we shall exact in reparations, coal, machinery, chemical and steel plants, labor, financial assets. But we will *give* them democracy, the only thing, apparently, which it is better to give than to receive. We Americans put first things first.

Put Physical Needs First

The German people are also putting first things first. They are using their earliest public opportunities to do so. For instance, on October 13, 1945, the Bavarian city of Furth staged its first mass political rally in twelve years. Ten thousand people attended, and they were addressed by representatives of the four new political parties in Bavaria. "The speakers," reports an American observer, "dealt with the physical needs of Germany as well as political aims of their respective parties. Housing and fuel shortages topped the list of emergencies. 'First comes the fulfillment of the physical needs of Germany, then the re-education along political lines,' one speaker was quoted as telling the crowd."

Thus the post-war thoughts of the German people, until now a general smoldering more confused and impotent than the feelings of the Italian people, for instance, are rapidly flowing together into the channels of deepest necessity and developing direction and pressure.

It is still not clear to many Germans what takes place when one loses a war. Goebbels told them that they would be slaughtered, enslaved and dispossessed (he was haunted, no doubt, by visions of the millions to whom the Nazis had meted out that fate). But nothing like that happened, except to some party members and the obvious criminal element (Gestapo, SS, SD, etc.), and the Germans breathed with relief.

They found Americans to be human beings very much like themselves, too. After discounting the topheavy percentage of American soldiers, who carried on quite boorishly and were offensively obsessed with a conqueror complex, the rest were quite decent when known personally. Many girls who were being whistled at for the first time in their lives very quickly caught on to the idea that it was not a sign of disrespect, but of enthusiasm. They found American soldiers and their chocolate and cigarettes much to their liking.

Resent Americans' Wealth

But here is where the first expression

of resentment — from German males — made its appearance. German youths — Wehrmacht dischargees and teen-agers — passed the word around that German girls seen in the company of American soldiers could expect to have their hair cropped and would be "blacklisted." Leaflets and chalk scrawls carried the message. It sprang up in so many places in Germany at once as to indicate spontaneity. This was not entirely a positive case of "wolves" versus "wolves," nor an affair of German honor. Nor was it a case of German men versus American men. It was the resentment of poor men, without chocolate or tobacco even for themselves, against rich men, whose advantage lay in the candy bars, cigarettes, K-rations, chewing gum, soap and sometimes coffee and sugar and canned goods, which they carried with them. It was a "class" struggle, and it reached such proportions that it was brought out into the open before the 10,000 persons who held their first political assembly in Furth not so long ago.

With the withdrawal of the majority of Yanks from Europe, this particular issue will vanish and German youth will find far more serious things confronting it. But the pattern will not change: poor land v. rich land.

There is the problem of jobs, for instance—a problem not unfamiliar to the United States either. Unemployment in Germany is acute. Hundreds of thousands of former workers in war industries have been "laid off" with finality. "No more war—no more work." The re-discovery of that fact is world-wide today, but there is this difference here in addition: reconversion, which would mean jobs, is barely taking place.

If ever a country could logically expect a building boom, ruined Germany should. But what to build with? Virtually every item necessary for the construction of a house is listed as a scarce commodity: tiles, tarpaper, cement, lime, plaster, lumber, nails, wire, plumbing, glass, porcelain insulation. Not even the plants that produce these things can be rebuilt without imports from abroad to help start them rolling. Meanwhile, the railroads are overtaxed transporting American troops out of Germany. Freight cars are scarce; unobstructed rail lines are scarce; engines are scarce; coal is scarcest of all. Germans will use wood this winter because there isn't enough coal to run the factories with if they were standing. All these things put together make it no wonder that, as an

American newspaper states, "Large-scale rebuilding has not started yet in German cities." It is doubtful whether "large-scale" rebuilding will start even in the coming year.

New Soil for Fascism

There is another aspect to the problem of jobs, if we are to believe a news heading in the *Stars and Stripes*. "Germans Found Reluctant to Work, Await U. S. Aid," it states, and continues: "Germans in the American zone still are reluctant in many cases to accept jobs, even though facing food shortage and cold this winter, an official survey revealed today..." "As released prisoners of war return to civilian life, some reluctance has been evident with respect to accepting jobs other than those of pre-service days. Office workers particularly have shown little interest in physical labor or agricultural work."

You can't blame a man who was drafted into the Wehrmacht when half way through his law studies for not wanting to swing a scythe or a pick for the rest of his life (yes, they still cut the hay and the wheat in the old-fashioned way in Germany). And a girl who had her heart set on clothes designing won't willingly turn to clothes washing now. Yet if Germany is to be de-industrialized and agriculturalized that is what tens of thousands of Germans will have to do, and they will bear an eternal grudge against those who they feel robbed them of a fuller life. Long after they have forgotten that, they, or else their parents who used to cry "Heil Hitler!" will be resentful, and if you try to remind them of their Nazi days they will remind you that it was just such resentment that started Hitler on his way to power after the last war—resentment of the underprivileged against the privileged, of those at the bottom against those at the top, of the vanquished against the victors.

The meeting of ten thousand persons in Furth two weeks ago was a meeting of the vanquished. The emphasis there presented to them by the man who said "Houses first — democracy afterward" is the emphasis of the bottom, and it is diametrically at variance with the emphasis of the top (i.e., the American conquerors). It will not change. It cannot change as long as the under-privileged-versus-privileged relationship exists.

How MG Uses CP

Here is some comment the meeting drew. It is a further quotation from the Furth item: "High MG official here, who attended the rally, observed that the Germans were not ready for free elections. He advanced two main reasons for this opinion. First there is a fear and a distrust of the power of a single outstanding party, and secondly, there is still a reluctance to express political views, a hangover from the days of Nazi domination."

The second reason is easily enough accounted for. Political views are at the crystallizing stage now and will be expressed soon. In the first reason we are left to guess what "single outstanding party" is disturbing a "high MG official's" mind. I advance, therefore, another, more candid, news item which may shed some light where it is needed:

"Eisenhower Charges Red Bloc Hampers Democracy in Berlin."

"Berlin, Oct. 17 (AP)—Gen. Eisenhower reported today that the Communist Party had indicated a political bloc in Berlin, and fumed that such a device would find no welcome in the American Zone. This bloc, Gen. Eisenhower said in his second monthly report on occupation policies, is "counter to the traditional American concept of political activity and vigorous political life in a democratic sense."

General Eisenhower is putting first things first, as seen from on top. What follows, now that we know that communist political blocs will find no welcome in the American Zone?

Soon you will be reading editorials in your local paper in the following vein: "The German people have been so perverted by nazism that it will take many years to purge them of it. They have not proved capable of adapting themselves to democratic methods, and as evidence of this we cite the fact that they have allowed one party to dominate them." The idea will be that democratic elections are being monopolized (sabotaged) by the communists. Therefore no elections should be permitted until the monopoly has been broken. It will be proposed in polite language that to get rid of the communists we should get rid of democracy. This is not a new idea. But you carry on the prediction from there.

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Can you imagine an audience of Germans—defeated Germans—

applauding a speaker who proclaims: "We hail the victorious Red Armies!" That's what most of the thousand men and women in the Nürnberg opera house did this morning at the local Communist Party's coming-out convention.

Except for the unusual time—eight a.m. on a Sunday morning—it was a typical communist meeting. It could have been taking place in the States. The stage was backdropped by a huge red hammer-and-sickle. A banner proclaimed "Brüder, in einem zusammen die Hand!" The opera house was full by the time I got there. With very few exceptions those assembled were older people—pre-Hitler communists, and perhaps 25 per cent were women. One of the main speakers, however, was thirty years old and vigorous in speech and physique.

After an orchestral rendition of the William Tell Overture, the master of ceremonies gave the keynote speech: Germany had been at war for six years; the communists have been at war since 1933, and even before that they were fighting Hitlerism and pointing out its dangers to the people. Many have fallen (here a standing tribute to "those present with us in spirit"). But right has prevailed in the end. Yet the struggle against capitalism is not over, nor are the insidious roots of Nazism killed off.

For Party Unity

We admit our mistakes. Had we stood united against Hitlerism in 1932 the Nazi system could not have come to power. But we must not hang our heads nor despair at the ruins we see about us. Though we Germans stand low in the esteem of the nations of the world, it is up to us communists to prove that Hitler did not act in our name.

The program: First and most important: unity of parties—specifically of the social democrats and communists. Chief argument: "Had we been united in 1932 . . . etc." Whether a united front or an actual integration is intended was not made clear.

Second: Strong upbuilding of and support to the new labor unions.

Third: Rooting out of every trace of nazism in every shop and office in the land—in whatever guise it tries to cling to its outlawed domain. This touched a tender spot in the audience, which gave howls of assent to some impromptu speakers who rose in their seats to shout

the names of specific agencies which they considered insufficiently purged: *Reichsbank*, *Wohnungsamt* (Housing Bureau) and some other city departments.

Yet the Communist Party's speaker went on to point out that just as many persons who never were Party members are worse Nazis at heart, many members of the party were forced to join or else were swayed in the early days by false promises and unable to extricate themselves later. "The time has come for all persons who were members of the NSDAP (Nazis) to show their good intentions by redeeming themselves with deeds," he said.

Fourth: A program for youth—mentioned but not dwelt upon.

Fifth: We all agree there is a hard winter ahead of us.

Cheers for Russia

Somewhere in the process of apologizing to the world for Germany's misdeeds the main speaker mentioned that Russia had suffered more than any other country from the war, and right after that he made his allusion to the victorious Russians—and then I knew that I was listening to the classic party line.

Applause and cries of "Bravo!" "Sehr richtig!" (That's right!) had been spotted right along through two main addresses, wherever a rising inflection, ending in a climactic pause called for it, and here again an accolade was obviously anticipated by the speaker. He got it; the convention was well under control. But there was just a brief moment of hesitation before it came, and perhaps it came a little reluctantly. I might be mistaken. Anyhow, the same well-regulated applause and a little less hesitation will be forthcoming next time, and on the third and fourth occasion the audience will have learned that whenever the Russians are mentioned enthusiasm is in order.

The victorious American, British and French armies went unnoticed.

The meeting lasted a little over two hours and ended with the singing of a party hymn (not the "International") which I had never heard before, though everybody knew the words.

A. JEFFERS

Nürnberg, Germany
November, 1945

THE INTERNATIONAL WORKING CLASS

La Lutte des Trotskyistes Sous la Terreur Nazie. Parti Communiste Internationaliste, Paris, 1945; 30 pp.

Even for the returned soldier, who has seen that silent wasteland which capitalism has made of so much of Europe, it is difficult to comprehend the extent of the destruction which has been wrought. What centuries of work and heartbreak created, six years of capitalist war have reduced to piles of rubble among which old men and women poke and try to make a home.

Along with the material destruction and the human slaughter went a political and moral abasement unparalleled in modern times. Systematically brutalized by capitalist nationalist propaganda, whipped on by chauvinist socialist and communist parties, abandoned by Russia, which has long since cynically trampled under foot socialist internationalism, whole populations have reached new lows of political passivity and contempt for the human personality.

Only the most politically advanced and resolute representatives of the working class, the parties of the Fourth International, in spite of everything, struggled for the cause of socialist brotherhood in a world riven by nationalist hatred. *The Trotskyist Struggle under the Nazi Terror*, published by the International Communist Party, the French section of the Fourth International, is the proud record of the struggle for socialism by our French comrades during and after the occupation by the nazis.

The First Organ of the Resistance

Truth (La Vérité) which began to appear clandestinely in August, 1940, was the first newspaper of the resistance movement to be published. Up until June, 1941, when Russia was attacked by Germany, *Humanité*, the organ of the French CP, said almost nothing regarding the activities of the nazis in France. In fact, during this period the French CP was negotiating with Otto Abetz for the legal appearance of their paper. All in all, seventy-three issues of *Truth* were published during the occupation. In addition, several issues of *Our Word (Unser Wort)* and *Worker and Soldier (Arbeiter und Soldat)* were published in

German and distributed in the barracks in editions of from 5,000-10,000.

In 1940, in action and through its press, the ICP, well before the other organizations of the resistance, began the initial task of aiding in the regroupment of the scattered forces of the working class. Self-defense groups were formed which drove out the fascists from the Youth Hostels, the last remaining free youth organization. The struggle against Hitler and Pétain was begun under the slogan of the workers and peasants movement.

In 1941 and 1942 the French working class began to raise its head. Great strikes broke out in the North. The ICP

... supported and increased the militancy of the strikes; fought for a better rationing program; it was the first to call upon women workers to form housewives' committees and to demonstrate and take into their own hands the rationing program in a fight against the black market and the Vichy officials who were the agents for German imperialism's requisitioning program; it organized the struggle of the city workers in close alliance with the poor peasants.

But especially, alone among all the organizations of the resistance, alone among all the workers' parties, the ICP did not separate the struggle against German fascism from the struggle against world capitalism.

Against the Stream

At the same time, the ICP conducted a struggle against low wages, the reactionary Charter of Labor, increased hours, and night work. It conducted agitation against racism and anti-semitism. It fought the conscription of laborers for work in Germany. It organized a service for the manufacture of false identity papers, which saved thousands of young workers from deportation and jail sentences. It organized support for the maquis, and individual members fought in its ranks. It called for and engaged in fraternization with German soldiers. In August, 1944, it launched the slogan of occupation of the factories and led several such movements.

Such was, in brief, the activity of the ICP during the occupation. That serious political errors were committed is incontestable, especially in the organization's failure to appreciate the progressive rôle of the resistance movement and to par-

ticipate in it as an organization. The negative aspects of their work we shall examine at some future time. What is important to note at the moment is that in spite of the chauvinist tide which engulfed France and in spite of the brutal repression by the Vichy and German police, our comrades remained constant to the great principles of Marxist internationalism.

Needless to say, once France was liberated, the bourgeoisie, assisted in its thought processes by the "suggestions" of the Russian embassy, rewarded the heroic struggle of the ICP with semi-legality: though the party is technically legal, public meetings of the organization have been broken up, the legal appearance of *Truth* is forbidden, and members of the ICP are subjected to recurrent arrests.

"The Barbarians Wished to Kill Them. They Have Rendered Them Immortal"

Our French comrades paid the full price for their struggle against the barbarians of German and French capital. They were among the first to fall under the nazi bullets, two of them having been shot in 1941 in the infamous Chateaubriand executions. Nearly thirty—no small number considering the size of the organization—were executed by the gestapo, died at Auschwitz, Dora, and other concentration camps, died during the insurrection of Paris in August, 1944, or were killed by the Vichy militia. Scores of others were imprisoned in nazi jails or were deported to Germany as forced laborers.

To these brave men and women who came from all walks of life to serve the cause of the proletariat may be applied the eulogy paid Marcel Hic, an outstanding founder and leader of the French organization, who died in a German concentration camp in 1944:

For all who knew him, Marcel Hic will always remain the most admirable example of the revolutionary leader and the most magnificent proof that our revolutionary struggle is not only the sole solution for a humanity victimized by the misery of the capitalist agony, but is, also, a school for superior men.

JAMES M. FENWICK.

To the Secretariat of the 4th International

(The following letter first appeared in the *Internal Bulletin* of the Socialist Workers Party of the United States. It is published here for purposes of information and discussion—EDITOR.)

I urge upon you the necessity of undertaking a new approach to the situation, quite different from that embodied in your February 1944 Theses and the January 1945 resolution.

To plunge immediately to the heart of the question, what was wrong with the theses and the resolution was that their authors were bewitched by the "objectively revolutionary" situation. True, one can find a paragraph or two in which they recognize well enough that a revolutionary party is needed. But even these paragraphs are revealing of the falsity of the approach. The whole weight of the documents is given over to portraying the revolutionary nature of the situation, and then, almost buried amid the glowing picture of the coming (and already begun) revolution comes: "The only thing lacking in the principal countries of Europe is true revolutionary parties."

The inevitable result of such an approach is that your conception of the perspectives is dictated by your preoccupation with the "objectively revolutionary" situation, and is not even modified by your recognition of the need for a real revolutionary party.

Some Examples

To demonstrate this, let me cite a few examples from the February 1944 theses:

1. "With an inexorable necessity, the imperialist war is developing toward its inevitable transformation into civil war." Here Lenin's exhortation to turn the imperialist war into civil war becomes, instead, an objective function of the social process independently of the intervention of the revolutionary party (which in actual fact does not exist yet).

2. Extending this objectively revolutionary situation to the Soviet Union, you conclude that "the rapid development of revolutionary events and the situation in the USSR will create all the conditions for a break between the masses and the Stalinist leaders." But can this break inside the Soviet Union come without the leadership of a revolutionary party? And is there such a revolutionary party? Here you don't even men-

tion the problem of a revolutionary party in the Soviet Union. Making revolution an objective function of the social process you end up with such fantastic ideas as that "the large scale use of the Red Army as a counter-revolutionary force is excluded," and that the Soviet bureaucracy will be unable "to control the revolutionary movements which the occupation and even the approach of the Red Army will unfurl in the countries of Central and Western Europe."

3. "The German revolution remains the backbone of the European revolution." "These masses will not stop with a few fake conquests . . . The German proletariat, stronger than ever in numbers, more concentrated than ever, will from the first play a decisive role. Soldiers' committees in the army and workers' and peasants' councils in the rear will rise to oppose to the bourgeois power the power of the proletariat . . . The most favorable conditions will exist for a victorious revolutionary movement." You wrote all this without a single reference to the fact that the German proletariat would begin its life after Nazi defeat under military occupation and without a revolutionary party; and without the slightest attempt at appraising the state of class-consciousness of the German proletariat after eleven years of Nazism. Is this not a clear example of assuming a revolutionary development purely on the basis of objective factors without any regard for the subjective factors? (And even then you did so by leaving out the objective factor of military occupation.)

I was very much dismayed when I first saw this false approach in the theses, but consoled myself with the thought that they were written under the conditions of Nazi occupation, when so much information was lacking and the need imperious to hold out great hope for the future. But the January 1945 resolution, written under quite different conditions, begins by confirming the February 1944 perspectives, repeats the formula about the "inexorable necessity" which transforms the imperialist war into civil war, etc.

The Greek Lessons

You were writing after the terrible defeat in Greece, yet you wrote: "The recent Belgian and Greek events consti-

tute the first phase of the revolution which has effectively commenced in these countries." The defeat becomes proof of "the first wave of the revolution which has begun." This would be true enough if revolutions were an objective function of the social process. But since instead they are made by workers of flesh and blood, the Greek defeat has proved to be a very strong deterrent on the workers of all Europe, weighing them down with the thought that their struggles might meet the same fate; especially weighing them down because there is no revolutionary party (one, that is, big enough to reach them and get them to listen) to explain to them why the Greek proletariat was defeated unnecessarily thanks to Stalinism.

I hope I have proved my point that the theses and resolution were based on a false conception. I should add that the next resolution of the European Secretariat should in all honesty not pass over the mistakes of the earlier documents but should note them and explain how they came to be made.

What is urgently necessary today is to draw all the necessary consequences from the fact that our cadres everywhere are tiny and that the great masses, insofar as they are politically active, are following the Communist and Socialist parties. This approach, if systematically carried out, does not ignore the objective situation but does subordinate it to its proper place.

Not 1917-23

One of the first conclusions to be drawn from this approach—and we must say it openly—is that the present situation is not to be compared with the aftermath of the last war. We are not repeating 1917-1923. We are in a far more backward situation. At that time the October revolution made all the difference. It was the inspiration for the German revolution. It meant that under the inspiration of the example of the Russian Bolshevik Party, there could be established very quickly although starting from very little, mass revolutionary parties in Germany, France, etc.

Now, however, we cannot expect such a process. Instead of mass revolutionary parties confronting reformist parties of relatively equal size, our tiny cadres confront two mass reformist parties. In

France, our few hundreds confront a Stalinist party of nearly a million!

Under these conditions, can we proceed directly to the building of a revolutionary party? Or must we enter one of the reformist parties, constitute a faction in it and work in the direction of a split out of which we will come with sufficient forces to begin seriously building the revolutionary party?

It is, unfortunately, rather late to pose this question. It should have been posed two years ago, certainly a year ago. At the October 1943 plenum it was already clear to me that the Italian events demonstrated that throughout Europe the Communists and Socialist parties would emerge as the parties of the masses, but I failed to draw then the necessary conclusions from this fact concerning the question: party or faction?

The question, of course, cannot be answered for all countries uniformly on the basis of the general situation. But I am positive that in Italy, where the Socialist party disposes of considerable masses, our comrades should never have formed a party but should have gone into (in the case of most of them it would have simply meant, I believe, to remain in) the Socialist party. I am also positive that it would be a terrible error if our German comrades attempted immediately to form a party of their own in Germany; their place is in the Socialist party.

In Belgium the Labor Party is still the party of the masses. I am sure that in the rosy hue of the days of liberation, our Belgian comrades could have gotten in and established themselves as a faction, with their own paper, etc. Today no doubt it would be far more difficult, but I suspect that it could still be done. In any event, I propose that the question be investigated without prejudice and with a cold-blooded realism.

French Problem

I don't claim a priori that entry is imperative and can be achieved in every single country I have named. Investigation by you and those in each country will have to determine the facts. But what I demand is a real recognition of the problem, and a serious investigation without reservations in advance.

If the cost of entry in some cases is the temporary loss of a public faction organ and/or no guarantee of the right of constituting a faction, that is no argument against entry. Remind the comrades that in the U. S. we entered the SP with neither an organ nor an admitted fac-

tion. For a time we were in one caucus with the miserable so-called Militants who allowed us about one innocuous article per month in their weekly and monthly organs. Two or three good pamphlets can serve as a substitute for a public faction organ for a while. It might be very advantageous to live for a while in one of the "left" factions instead of openly having one of your own.

As loyal members of the Socialist party you will be able to contact Communist party workers in a direct and political way which is scarcely open to you today.

I could go on at length on this question, but I leave further comment until I can grapple concretely with your objections, if any.

Whether in the Socialist party or outside, the primary approach to Communist and Socialist party members must be geared, not to *our* estimate of the situation but to *their* consciousness. This generalization will be readily agreed to by every comrade, but perhaps not some of the examples I offer.

Question of Monarchy

The question of the monarchy in Italy and Belgium is an example.

I would like to know why the Belgian party's program of action was silent on the monarchy. If I recall correctly, the demand for a democratic republic was in the 1934-36 program of action. Why isn't it in the present program? The problem of problems is to tear the masses away from the SP and CP. The way to do this is on the vital political questions which actually arise and appear vital to the masses, and not on the questions *we* think vital. Ever since the expulsion of the Nazis, and with Leopold out of the country, the question of his return was brewing. It seems clear the masses felt very strongly on the question. When he did attempt to return, what was our task? To condemn the SP and CP ministers for saying they would resign if he returned, and to demand instead that they remain the government, expel the bourgeois-royalist ministers, arrest the royal family and proclaim the democratic republic. In other words, transform the dispute on Leopold into a question of abolition of the monarchy. This would be in consonance with the feelings of the masses and would appear to them as a reasonable and possible demand upon their leaders.

The European Secretariat's theses went on at great length about Italy but neither there nor in the resolution is there any reference to the demand for a

democratic republic in Italy. Yet there the question is even more sharply posed than in Belgium, so sharply that the CP and SP have to give lip-service to it. Fortunately, our Italian party understands this question; it has the demand for the republic in its program of action. But I fear that it is too isolated from the masses to drive home the point (and perhaps the fact that they are not encouraged by the rest of the International causes the Italian comrades to hesitate to concentrate on this demand). If we have a faction in the Socialist party, it could make great capital contrasting the actual behavior toward the monarchy of the Socialist ministers with their lip-service to the struggle against the monarchy; demand that the SP and CP press concentrate on the demand for ending the monarchy; demand demonstrations to force Umberto to abdicate, etc., etc.

The mechanical question would enable us to say to the SP and CP members: Your leaders promise to lead you eventually to socialism and meanwhile point to the difficulties which prevent going now to socialism; but those difficulties do not prevent us from finishing now with the monarchy; can leaders and a program which cannot even get rid of the monarchy, can they be trusted to lead us to socialism?

I give the example of the monarchical question only because it is glaringly absent from your documents. But even the democratic demands which you do mention, you do so in such a way that I cannot help but consider perfunctory. For example, you mention the demand for the constituent assembly but hasten to add: "On the other hand, to launch such demands in the midst of a revolutionary crisis, when there are actually in existence elements of dual power, would be the most unpardonable of errors." Here again you are bewitched by your idea of an "objectively revolutionary" situation and without considering the effect on that situation of the fact that the revolutionary party is still only a tiny cadre. In another paragraph you say "that in the present period the economic and democratic 'minimum' program is very rapidly out-distanced by the very logic of the mass struggle itself."

The Fight for Legality

I will venture a prediction, dear comrades: that the "minimum" program will not be outdistanced in France until you have won the status of a legal party and *Verite* is a legal newspaper.

Everything should be subordinated to

the fight for legality today in France. One or two issues of *Vérité* were very good in this connection, particularly that devoted to the letter, *Liberté de la Presse*. But neither from *Vérité* or other sources do I get an impression that the French party is making a really systematic fight for legality.

Such a fight requires among other things a perfectly legal defense committee in whose name it is to be made. I think I have some understanding of the difficulties in Paris today, but I am sure that some literary people like Gide, some politico-literaries like Malraux, etc., can be gotten to sign their names as members of a defense committee or to a petition asking the legalization of *Vérité*. With this legal cover, party members can be mobilized to go from door to door collecting names. *Vérité* or its successor should be filled with letters endorsing your campaign, not only from big names but also from simple workers. You should ask the British and American parties to circulate petitions getting well-known people to petition DeGaulle for the legalization of *Vérité*, and publish this material in France. In a word, the usual techniques of defense work.

Before you can hope to succeed in such a defense campaign, however, you have to believe in it and convince the party membership that it is important and can succeed. For my part, I am certain it can succeed. There is no irremovable political obstacle to it. If you carry out the campaign wholeheartedly,

you can make life sufficiently miserable for the SFIO and CGT leaders to have them bestir themselves—and they have good reasons of their own to want to see the Trotskyists legal—to ask somebody in the DeGaulle entourage to have it done. France is entering a period of parliamentarism, however short it may prove to be, and in such a period, you should be able, if only you do what is necessary, to win legality.

During the fight for legality, do not be afraid of making *Vérité* appear entirely as an organ fighting for nothing more than real democracy. That is fighting for a great deal today! It should be a period in which, instead of negative criticisms of the SFIC and the CP and CGT, you should appear instead as urging them to certain positive actions. Don't be afraid that if you don't end each article saying the leaderships won't do what you're proposing, that you will be sowing illusions. The illusions are already there and you will not be adding to them. On the contrary, if you convince a worker that something positive should be done, and then his party doesn't do it, you will be teaching him to be critical of his party.

Two examples: Call upon the workers' organizations to inspire the workers to rally to the polls in the elections, by an agreement among the workers' organizations that they will elect a workers' representative as Provisional President of France. Take up the resistance's perfunctory demand for democratization

of the army, and really explain its profound necessity, the lesson in this connection of Petainism, gather together all the horror tales about Petainists still leading the army, royalists, etc., etc. Explain the urgent need for political meetings of the soldiers, their need to protect themselves by having delegates. Take nothing for granted but argue the question as if the workers had never heard of it before. Give it a legal handle, by urging that the workers' delegates in the coming Assembly include it in the new constitution.

Instead of continuing, let me refer you to the Program of Action of 1934 for France, particularly all of which is apropos today. But before you can apply it, you must rid yourself of all traces of a conception of the "objectively revolutionary" situation today. The absence of the revolutionary party—and it is absent—changes the whole situation. Instead of saying, "Only the revolutionary party is lacking," we must instead say, at least to ourselves, "The absence of the revolutionary party transforms the conditions which otherwise would be revolutionary into conditions in which one must fight, so far as agitation is concerned, for the most elementary demands."

I must close now. But I hope to continue very soon.

With warmest greetings,

FELIX MORROW

July 10, 1945

The Post-Liberation Struggle in the Philippines

Political Trends in the "Model" Colony

The war has left the Philippines in a state of complete economic dislocation. In the colony which American imperialists have always held up as a model of "enlightened colonial policy" the masses are today the victims of the policies imposed by the United States and its political agents, the Nacionalistas.

For forty years the Nacionalistas have been in office—for the last thirty without even major opposition. During this time the party built up an all-embracing political machine. Among its leaders were the most prominent capitalists and landowners in the country. In many sections the agricultural workers and sharecroppers were herded to the polls by the estate owners to vote the straight Nacio-

nalista ticket. On matters of social and economic policy there were never any serious differences between the party leaders, but rival factions would struggle to gain dominance in order to get a larger share of the political spoils. Usually such struggles are accompanied by "differences" designed to appeal to different elements among the voters, but so brazen were the Nacionalistas that even the historians of the Philippines, in analyzing the struggles between the Osmena and Quezon factions of the Nacionalistas over a thirty-year period, remark that there was no discernible difference in political program.

The labor and socialist movements throughout this period were very weak. There is very little industry outside of

Manila, and the industry of Manila is all light in type. A National Federation of Workers existed, but worked closely with the employers and the government. Strikes were extremely rare.

The one exception to the general lack of organization of the masses was the radical agrarian movement of central Luzon. Here the National Peasants Union carried on agitation against the oppressive conditions of existence of the sharecroppers and tenant farmers. In a single province of central Luzon, Pampanga, a strong Socialist Party existed, with an astounding record of agrarian struggles to its credit, considering its isolation in a single small part of the Philippines. This party had, however, no influence or link with the workers

of nearby Manila. In 1939 it fused with the tiny Communist Party to form the Socialist - Communist Party, and it emerged from the war with the Socialist part of its name deleted. Its actions since have proven that it is thoroughly Stalinized in leadership.

Several small bourgeois opposition parties exist. The Democrats, strong up to thirty years ago, but weak ever since, are the traditional party opposed to independence. The Frente Popular (founded in 1912 and not related to the Peoples Fronts of Europe), Young Philippines and the Philippine Youth Party are all small parties that snipe at the Nacionalistas, but have no substantial differences in program or outlook. Lastly, the Sakdalistas, the most militant and anti-American nationalists, were a well-organized minority before the war, but they degenerated into a pro-Japan movement and are non-existent today. In any case, the Nacionalista Party consistently obtained more votes than all these parties put together.

Ruling Class Collaborationist

With the conquest of the Philippines by Japan, the bourgeoisie and the landowners, together with their political machine, plumped whole-heartedly for collaboration. Of the 300 leading Nacionalista politicians, 270 held office under the puppet "Republic of the Philippines." The difference between these and the remaining thirty seems to have been merely one of political and military judgment as to the future of the war, because these thirty, far from representing any radical tendency among the Nacionalistas, included big capitalists. One of these was Andres Soriano, Manila millionaire and vociferous Falangist sympathizer, who went through the war as "Colonel Marking," a guerrilla leader in the Luzon mountains. Such men as Alfredo Montelibano and Vicente Singson-Encarnacion, guerrilla leaders now holding leading posts in Osmena's cabinet, and both big business men, are other examples.

During the period of Japanese rule, the radical agrarian movement made rapid strides. The Hukbalahap (anti-Japanese people's army) was built up by the Communist Party, starting in Pampanga, and achieved a strength of 15,000 men under discipline, plus countless thousands of peasants who could be mobilized in an emergency, if only with knives for arms. The stubborn resistance of this movement, in the face of the col-

laboration of ninety per cent of the Nacionalista leaders, resulted in their mass support spreading from Pampanga to all the neighboring provinces of central Luzon—Bulacan, Nueva Ecija, Tarlac, Pangasinan—comprising the richest agricultural section of the country. In this area, with a population of about 3,000,000, they are today a powerful political force.

The rôle played by the American Army in Luzon was the same as elsewhere in the world. The Counter-Intelligence Corps saw as its main enemy not Japanese Intelligence but the Hukbalahap. Throughout central Luzon the American landing at Lingayen was the occasion for the Huks to drive out the Japanese garrisons. Huk municipal governments were set up, which welcomed their American "liberators" with red flags flying from the municipal buildings. Result—the Huk commanders, Luis Taruc and Castro Alejandrino, were thrown into prison without charge, the local governments disbanded, and Osmena appointees installed. But the official governments here remain without real power. To this day the appointed mayors find it necessary to consult local Huk leaders if they want any national government decrees enforced.

Huk Leaders Imprisoned

The Counter-Intelligence Corps was much tougher on the imprisoned Huk leaders than on collaborators. Half the Congressmen and Senators who sat in the puppet government were cleared of any charge of collaboration, on the ground that they did not actively aid the Japanese in the prosecution of the war. Of course, any real definition of collaborators would have meant imprisoning almost all the politicians of the ruling class. To make it perfectly clear who was considered most dangerous, those politicians who were imprisoned were released on bail, while the Huk leaders were still kept in prison. Recently they were released, after a demonstration in Manila of peasant delegations numbering several thousand, who marched to Malacan, the presidential palace.

With the "liberation," the old politicians have come to life, but with them a new party, the Democratic Alliance. This party has a mild program of social and agrarian reform and is a federated organization, roughly comparable to a federated farmer-labor party. Its affiliates at present are: Communist Party, Hukbalahap, National Peasants Union, Com-

mittee on Labor Organization and Blue Eagle Guerrillas. The National Peasants Union has some roots in Rizal, Laguna, Cavite, Tayabas and Batangas provinces, all in southern Luzon, where the Communist Party is weak, but its stronghold is central Luzon, and here Stalinist influence is dominant. The Committee on Labor Organization is the first genuine labor union in the Philippines and has already carried on successful strikes. The Blue Eagle Guerrillas are the guerrillas of the Chinese, who form a large part of the Manila population and who bitterly resent the anti-alien blasts that daily issue from most of the Senators and Congressmen and from the pro-collaborationist dailies.

Movement Limited

Aside from the fatal strategy of the lesser evil that the Alliance has adopted, and which we will examine below, it should be borne in mind that the movement is limited—strong in central Luzon, fairly well rooted in Manila and southern Luzon, but almost completely non-existent in northern Luzon and all the outside islands, that is to say in two-thirds of the Philippines. There are many thousands of armed guerrillas in these other sections, but they were exclusively under the leadership of the anti-collaboration minority of Nacionalistas.

A number of large guerrilla organizations whose leaders were Nationalist in political complexion helped to found the Democratic Alliance, but these outfits soon found themselves uncomfortable in the same bed with the agrarian radicals and left. They form today the main base of Osmena's political machine.

Osmena and his "guerrilla" faction of the Nacionalistas are threatened with possible defeat in the coming elections at the hands of Roxas, the darling of the collaborators. Roxas' corkscrew career is typical of Filipino politics. Leaving his office of Senate president, he became a brigadier general in the Usaffe (U. S. Army Forces in the Far East) at the beginning of the war. Taken prisoner by the Japanese, he soon was busy working for the puppet government, whose constitution he wrote. However, Roxas kept contact with the more "respectable" guerrillas, and was at one time in a Japanese prison camp for six months as a result of his activities. Nevertheless he rejoined the puppet government later and was a member of the cabinet when the Americans landed. Escaping from the

puppet capital at Baguio, he reached the American lines and was given a clean political bill of health by MacArthur. All the out-and-out unvarnished collaborators are hiding beneath the skirts of this fence-sitter. The *Manila Daily News* and the *Star-Reporter*, who praise puppet President Jose Laurel as the savior of the Philippines, acclaim Manuel Roxas as their presidential candidate. He is the hero of the collaborationist Congressmen and Senators, the man who will kick the guerrillas out of office and put government back into the hands of the "experienced, responsible people."

True to Stalinist class-collaborationist policy everywhere, the Democratic Alliance is now busy attempting to defend from criticism the present "guerrilla" cabinet of Osmena, concentrating their fire on the ultra-reactionary Congress. Since the cabinet members have already been exposed as guilty of the most rotten acts of corruption, the attempt of the Democratic Alliance to defend them has had the result of discrediting the Alliance itself.

Recently the biggest black eye of all was administered, when Osmena signed a bill providing three years back pay to Congress — the same Congress whose members had collected pay from the Japanese! At the same time, forty days' back pay was voted for the government employees—a measly forty days' pay to employees whose fixed wages had already been made almost worthless by inflation.

The peso in the Philippines today buys twelve per cent of what it bought in 1941. The majority of the workers of Manila, however, who today work as laborers for the U. S. Army and the Commonwealth government, are paid two pesos a day, as against the pre-war wage of one peso. Rise in prices—800 per cent. Rise in wages—100 per cent. And around them these workers see the fortunes built by black market trading. They read in the papers about the \$50,000 made by Secretary of National Defense Montelibano in black market sugar and of the thousands of yards of textiles from government stocks sold to big dealers for resale to the public at fabulous prices.

The ferment among the peasants grows continually. Demonstrations in central Luzon have called forth as many as 50,000 peasants at a single time. These demonstrations center around pressing economic issues. The peasants who tilled the land under the heel of the Japs want the expropriation of their landlords who sat out the war comfortably in Manila. They refuse to pay the owners fifty per cent of the crop for all the years of the occupation (nothing modest about what the landowners want!). They want the full restoration of free local government for the municipalities of Pampanga. Tens of thousands of peasants throughout Luzon have shown their seriousness by their steadfast refusal to disarm. They remain today ready for action.

What they need is a clear call to independent struggle for their own class aims, through their own political and economic organizations, against American imperialism, against the native bourgeoisie and land owners, against their political agents, the Nacionalista Party.

SAUL BERG.

Lessons of the Detroit Elections

The Class Forces Involved

The Detroit municipal election, in which a United Auto Workers Union vice-president, Richard T. Frankensteen, ran for mayor against Mayor Edward Jeffries, Jr., attracted nation-wide attention and interest. Workers throughout the country and the capitalist press gave careful scrutiny to the progress of the campaign and the election results. The interest aroused by the Detroit election was entirely warranted by the importance of the event and the issues involved.

A full understanding of the Frankensteen campaign will help materially to arm and train the politically advanced workers in the political struggles of the working class. To reach this full understanding we must examine first the general background and context of the election and the class forces in operation. Otherwise the contradictory operation in the situation will result in a fog of confusion instead of providing the key to understanding.

The Frankensteen campaign is part of the total picture of the working class and can only be understood in its relation to

the whole. In Detroit the organized labor movement, despite the minor defection of the AFL officialdom, rallied to the support of the PAC-endorsed slate in the election of the campaign. The backbone of the campaign was the powerful and militant UAW, which dominates the city. It took place during the major strike wave that swept Detroit and the nation almost immediately upon the conclusion of the war. It was part of the general offensive of labor and was itself an indication of the depth and power of that offensive. But it was not merely a part of the specific union offensive during which it took place. It was integrally connected with the striving of the working class in this whole period to break out from the restrictions placed upon it by the conditions of capitalist decay and disintegration.

The workers of Detroit supported Frankensteen and the PAC candidates. In this they demonstrated their readiness to strike out along independent class lines. This was only the latest expression of what Leon Trotsky called "the instinctive striving of the American work-

ers to raise themselves to the level of the tasks imposed on them by history." This striving is indicated in the formation of the American Labor Party in New York State, in the formation of the CIO Political Action Committee and in a dozen and one other direct political manifestations during the last decade. Not merely Republican and Democratic Parties, but Franklin Roosevelt himself became increasingly unable to arouse the direct support of the working class. The workers were looking for new roads, new paths. To say that the ALP and PAC were organized to block those paths, to lead the workers into the camp of Roosevelt, is to say at the same time that the working class is traveling in a new direction and that thus far progress in that direction has been hindered by the perfidy of the labor leadership.

Reflects Basic Problems

This striving is only a reflection of and a result of the problems which the decline and crisis of capitalism forces upon the working class. What are these problems, these conditions? Essentially

they revolve around the questions of security, decent living standards and imperialist war—jobs, wages, peace. Capitalism cannot provide the minimum needs of the people. Regardless of its political forms, whether Roosevelt New Dealism or Hoover conservatism, American capitalism presents to the working class and the people as a whole only the prospect of continual crises, permanent unemployment, insecurity, degraded living standards, fascism and imperialist war.

The workers, increasingly conscious of the depths of the crisis, strive instinctively for a way out. They have demonstrated, time and time again, their willingness to struggle, their desire for independent class action, only to find themselves blocked and thwarted by the official labor leadership. The Detroit election demonstrated both forces in operation. To the extent that it indicated the willingness of the working class to embark on independent political struggle, it indicated the perfidy of the labor leadership in confusing, distorting, and thwarting that struggle.

From the very start of the campaign, the PAC leaders in Detroit tried to prevent any indication of a "labor" campaign. They rushed about frantically looking for a respectable candidate to support against Jeffries (who, although at one time endorsed by the UAW, had made an outstanding record for himself in labor-baiting and Negro-baiting.) They canvassed a whole list of hack Democratic politicians but none was available. PAC was just about reconciled to being neutral in the election or to endorsing the conservative Friel when the startling word came that Frankenstein's name had been entered in the primary at his request. Put on the spot, the PAC leaders had no alternative but to endorse him. But they, with the active cooperation of Frankenstein, continued in their efforts to keep the "stigma" of labor from being attached to the campaign. Constant repetition of "Frankenstein is the candidate of *all* the people," attacks on "wildcat" strikes, and the failure to present any kind of program beyond a few insignificant municipal reforms such as cleaning out the alleys and improving bus transportation characterized the campaign. An indication of the lengths to which Frankenstein went was his charge that Jeffries was to propose an increased fare for the city-owned transportation system and his contention that only through an increased fare could

service be improved. A labor candidate for higher bus and street car fares,

Dodges Race Issue

On one of the major issues of the campaign, the Negro question, Frankenstein spent his efforts decrying the introduction of the issue by Jeffries. The problem of discrimination and segregation, of racial tension is more acute in Detroit than in any other northern city. It was made the core of Jeffries' campaign with the most vicious campaign of slander and vituperation against the Negro people and appeal to the lowest and basest prejudices of backward whites. Instead of taking the offensive and proposing a program to end discrimination in the city, Frankenstein opposed the introduction of the issue and through his refusal to take a stand helped to confirm the existing prejudices of the whites. This was clearest on the all-important housing question. The terrible overcrowding in the Negro sections of Detroit is recognized by everyone. Even Jeffries' own Housing Commission has openly admitted that new housing for Negroes can only be built in areas that are not segregated to Negroes. There is just no room in the Negro neighborhoods. Jeffries took a clear-cut stand that he was opposed to changing the racial characteristics of any neighborhood and therefore refused even to attempt a solution of the Negro housing crisis. What did Frankenstein say? When asked directly where he stood on the questions of bi-racial housing and changing neighborhood racial characteristics he replied, "I think the main problem is inadequacy. We need modern housing for everyone in Detroit, and in the Negro sections particularly." In the Negro sections where no new housing can be erected!

Democrats Endorse Frankenstein

There is no need to go into greater detail on the campaign itself. It is clear that the labor leadership rejected independent working class politics. This rejection served to disorient the workers. An incident reported in *Labor Action* of October 15, 1945, indicates the extent of this discrimination. *Labor Action* reported that "several CIO members wearing Frankenstein sweaters were discussing the Detroit election. Frankenstein's election, they held, would greatly benefit labor. 'Why if Dick becomes Mayor of Detroit, the next step would be to run him in the Democratic primaries for Senator or Governor.'" This disorientation was the necessary result

of the Detroit election campaign. To insure it was the conscious policy of the labor leadership and the capitalist politicians. A report from the Washington correspondent of the *Detroit News* noted that Democratic National Chairman Robert E. Hannegan was concerned with the shift of labor away from the Democratic Party. He therefore instructed the Michigan Democratic organization (of which Frankenstein is a leading member) to give full support to Frankenstein in the campaign. This was subsequently done.

On this basis it was impossible for a revolutionary socialist to extend any support to Frankenstein and the PAC slate in the Detroit elections. While we must not lose sight of the basic movement of the working class in Detroit and in the nation, we must recognize that the Frankenstein campaign was a brake on that movement. If we understand that Detroit workers are moving toward independent labor political action, we can aid and intensify that movement only by exposing as a fraud the campaign of the labor leadership and the Democratic Party for Frankenstein. Frankenstein was not an independent labor candidate. But we can say with equal certainty that the working class will brush aside these phonies and misleaders and move with irresistible force to great independent class actions. The decay of the capitalist system assures it.

MARTIN HARVEY.

NOTICE

The publication of *The Fight for Socialism* by Max Shachtman has been delayed by reasons beyond our control.

We regret this inconvenience to the readers of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL who have ordered the book. Upon publication we shall immediately forward copies of the book.

The Stalinist Bureaucracy From the Inside

Some Comments on Barmine's Book

The Russian Revolution collectivized the property of one-sixth of the earth's surface; it also transformed a horde of columnists and speechmakers into overnight 'experts' on the Russian question. The famous "Russian enigma" became a trade, like writing mysteries. A "name," with a reputation resting sturdily on two or three reportorial pot-boilers, could lecture-tour the country, plow through the Russian enigma in city after city and rake in a small fortune. The book stores are loaded with "exposés," "inside stories," "I was there," "The Russians are like this, the Russians are like that" reports. As book publishers' commodities, these items serve their purpose well. As information and truth about Russia, they are little more than selected facts on which the authors hang their particular prejudices.

The nimble acolytes of the Stalinist Church return with accounts of the modern nurseries for children and glowing, rhapsodic descriptions of red-cheeked, ample-breasted young maidens; the Rick-enbackers, the would-be wardens over the American working class, evince unrestrained enthusiasm for the prison-like system of labor control of the Russian workers; the salesmen of free enterprise (e.g., W. L. White) deplore the dirt and disorganization in the Leningrad factories and conclude with the objectivity of a prosecuting attorney that it is all due to the fact that the Russian people destroyed the capitalist system in 1917. For the simple minded, life is simple: with an axe to grind it is even simpler than that.

One Who Survived,* by Alexander Barmine, is of an entirely different stamp. Not that Barmine escapes the modern fallacy that the degeneration of the Russian Revolution has refuted the "basic assumption" of socialism—that would be too much out of vogue and out of character, nor that he offers any sound analysis of this degeneration. In this respect Barmine differs from Eastman, who wrote the introduction, only in his lack of snarl and lesser sophistication. What distinguishes Barmine's book is that it contains the memoirs of a "typical Communist functionary," one who fought in the Civil War, studied in the Red Army College, served in Persia,

France and Greece on diplomatic and trade missions and worked intermittently in Moscow as a functionary of the government régime.

Was a Party "Regular"

He was an active member of the Bolshevik Party, participated in the fight against the Trotskyist opposition, and retrospectively explains that he "was one of those who invariably backed up the findings of the Central Committee," "a naive supporter of the official Party Line." The special value of these memoirs—aside from their being a fascinating story of one man's eventful life—lies in that Barmine's experiences and party activity were substantially representative of a whole layer of the party. The story of how he, despite his boundless admiration for Trotsky and his expectation that Trotsky would be the inevitable successor of Lenin, finally voted to expel Trotsky from the party under the barrage of Stalin's campaign of slander is in capsule form the story of how Stalin confused and captured a large section of the party. Also, the full horror and ruthlessness of the purges emerge from Barmine's account. A whole section of the party which could not atone for the sin of having fought for the Revolution under Lenin and Trotsky by even the most slavish and abject loyalty to the Stalin régime was thoroughly exterminated. Soldiers and officers of the Red Army college, from Tukachevsky down, prominent members of the party apparatus, were wiped out. In the course of the narrative, you no sooner become acquainted with some leaders, some outstanding party personage, than a footnote tells you that he was a victim of the purges. The cumulative effect of these footnote obituaries is one of such a relentless, merciless snuffing out of human life that no statistic can possibly convey. There was a literal erasure of a generation. After reading the book, the temptation is to change the title to *THE One Who Survived*, and even he by a hair's breadth.

The thread of Barmine's experiences leads one into the internal party life and behind the closed doors of the Russian officialdom. That is its special fascination. Well-known, cold, sharp facts of history are rounded out and receive the warmth and fullness of a human dimension. It becomes possible, for example, to

appreciate the truly monumental achievement of Trotsky in organizing the Red Army as it is recounted by Barmine, who was trained in one of his colleges. "In the midst of the civil war, Trotsky found time to establish more than sixty of these Red military schools all over Russia—five times as many as had existed under the Czar." Barmine tells the story of one of Trotsky's visits to the front, the speech he delivered to the soldiers, its inspiring effect. He describes life in the war colleges, the courses given, the epic achievement of transmitting raw illiterate peasants into disciplined, political soldiers who knew the mysteries of geometry as well as the political theories of revolution.

Democracy in Early Period

Those people who are so busily engaged these days in explaining that Lenin's methods of party organization planted the seeds of Stalinism would do well—if they do not mind disturbing their 'theory'—to read some of Barmine's accounts of party democracy in the first years of the revolution and during the civil war. "Intra-party democracy was, during those years 1925 and 1926, still alive though approaching its end. Discussion among Communists went on without censorship. Questions were freely raised and 'Bolshevik self-criticism' still meant something besides a purge of the lower ranks by those on top." That in 1926. But even during the critical year of the civil war, 1919, the following took place:

I was sent to Simferopol with a Red Army mission to contact the staff of Dybenko, who was in command there. One of our mission, Maxim Stern, was a member of the Central Committee of the Menshevik Party of the Ukraine. Although Simferopol was then under siege, and the White armies of Lenikin, holding the eastern Crimea, were only fifty miles away, Stern requested the use of the Simferopol city theater for the purpose of a political meeting. The theater was turned over to him gratis, and he held a mass meeting composed of citizens and Red Army soldiers, to whom he expounded with eloquence the Menshevik point of view and his basic opposition to the principle of the one-party dictatorship. In the manner of a town hall meeting, and with the same good feeling, I myself and two other Bolsheviks replied to him. The discussion was hot, but never passed beyond the bounds of courtesy. Although he had all the time he wanted and said everything he had to say

**One Who Survived*, by Alexander Barmine. G. P. Putnam's Sons, \$3.75.

without mincing words, the audience voted by a large majority for our resolution.

I recount this incident because there is a tendency now among critics of Stalin's murderously repressive regime to imagine that something similar dates back to Lenin and the first years of the Revolution.

Examples of discussion in the Red Army college on the trade union question and other issues are cited by Barmine. He correctly describes and evaluates Kronstadt—that fortress in the theories of super-democrats—as the focal point of counter-revolution. It is a tribute to his honesty that Barmine has not suffered the convenient lapses of his "Introducer" Eastman and other members of the Circle of Historical Amnesiacs.

Hitler once uttered the pregnant observation that "democracy was a luxury of wealthy nations." Stripped of their wealth, Germany and Italy dispensed with their 'luxurious,' parliamentary democracy, and resorted to naked force. Totalitarianism became a condition of life for capitalism. Where a broken-down productive system could not feed the mouths of its working class to keep it quiet, it accomplished the same end by use of the gag. Whether scarcity and poverty are due to the muscular dystrophy of production that comes from private ownership of the means of production or to the native backwardness and belated development of the country itself, they give birth to the gendarme, the Gestapo in the one case, the NKVD in the other. This truth is the keystone of any analysis of Russia. The backward, industrially weak Russia, left to fall back on its own meagre resources by the failure of the German revolution, was forced to resort with increasing intensity and frequency to totalitarian rule from above. The indispensable condition for a socialist development—an advanced, developed technology—was absent. The internal stresses and strains caused by the lack of the minimal needs of life were prevented from rending the whole country asunder by the repressive vise of totalitarianism. The impoverished country could not 'afford' democracy. The objective consequence of 'socialism in one country' was Totalitarianism in Russia.

Decline of Workers' State

The beginnings of the encroachments on democracy after the revolution, necessitated by its defense against counter-revolution, its intensification in the fight against the opposition and their expulsion from the party in 1927, the elimination of the right wing, and its final culmination with the purges in 1934-37, are

the measure of decline of the workers' state. But if poverty, backwardness and isolation were causes of the determination of workers' democracy, this very decline of democracy in turn made it more difficult to emerge from the state of backwardness and poverty. Russian development was ensnared in a vicious circle. The lack of democracy, as Trotsky pointed out as far back as 1923, was an obstacle in the path of *economic* development. Democracy was not a mere whim or utopian ideal to be turned on or off depending on the personality on top; it was a rigorous economic necessity. A workers' state without democracy was an economic impossibility as well as a contradiction in theory.

Barmine, in recounting his experiences in various administrative duties and trade bureaus, provides examples that illustrate this inexorable truth. Fantastic schedules were often decreed from above. Protests from below, constructive criticism from engineers, economists or workers were denounced as "opportunism of the Right." The critic was publicly vilified. He either recanted or was condemned.

Initiative on the part of subordinate bureaucrats is stifled. Everyone seeks to avoid responsibility. Everyone looks to the top for a covering order. And since thousands of relatively unimportant as well as all-important problems must pass through Stalin's hands for final decision, the top is always jammed. Weeks are spent in waiting; commissars wait in Stalin's office; presidents of companies wait in the offices of the commissars and so on down the line.

Barmine cites many instances of the extravagant waste and costliness of the entrenched bureaucratic system. False face-saving inventories, bureaucratic pig-headedness and blindness, the purging of all criticism, the cupidity of the top bureaucrats that took precedence over planning for the country, in a word, all the diseases that stem from the germ of totalitarian rule in Russia prevented the economic growth that was inherent in a collectivized economy. Where critics, Barmine included, conclude from Russia's relatively stunted growth that a collectivized economy cannot match a capitalist economy for productivity, they overlook the fact that they are taking the pulse of an economy whose socialist heart has been cut out.

On the Defeat of Trotsky

Although rich in personal detail and information on the interior workings of the Party, the army, the purge and the windings of red tape, the book is ludicrously weak in political analysis. Bar-

mine was the "naive follower of the party line." If he understood little of what was going on during the fight against the opposition—during which he supported the majority throughout—he has learned little of the nature of the fight since. Time and perspective have added only to his naiveté. For example, he reduces to its absurd the theory popular with people who are fond of the tales of St. George and the Dragon. One bold stroke of the sword and the monster is destroyed. The trouble with Trotsky was that he did not make the bold stroke. He rarely deigned to descend from the Olympian heights of pure principle and dip his fingers into practical politics to fight Stalin. He was "Quixotic," idealistic, etc. And alas! He could have won easily. Was he not Lenin's inevitable successor? Was not the refrain "long live Lenin and Trotsky" on everybody's lips for years? Then why did he fail? In Barmine's opinion, Trotsky was asleep. "Had Trotsky made the slightest sign that he was ready to fight, the majority of the Party would have followed him. . . . When Trotsky decided that the time had come to fight, it was too late. Whereas a little while before (this is 1927—G. S.) a simple speech (!) delivered by him at a Moscow Party conference would have turned the tide, Trotsky now found that Stalin was in effective control of the party." If only Trotsky had made a 'simple speech' only a 'little while before' all would have been different. Thus Trotsky missed the boat (how easy a theory to formulate!) by neglecting to deliver a simple speech and history was changed! The defeat of the German revolution and its depressing effect on the morale of the Russian workers, the paralyzing fatigue of the Russian masses, the demagogic attractiveness of 'socialism in one country' to the millions who had been through the wracking years of world war, civil war and war communism, the hold Stalin had on the major bureaus of the party already in 1923, the widespread unemployment and its consequent dilution of the ardor of oppositionists who would lose their jobs, the "Lenin Levy" of 1924 which weighted the path with workers who joined the party of power and not the party of revolution, the barrage of lies and slander on the peasant question that was heaped on Trotsky, and finally the fight that Trotsky DID put up, the extent of the support he DID get; all of these crucial factors are either neglected or slightly touched on in Barmine's "analysis." The clumsy politician—lofty idealist Trotsky in one cor-

ner versus crafty politician—base cynic in the other—is too simple a theory. If history is more complicated, so much the worse for it thinks Barmine.

Barmine's Political Views

This example of political understanding is of a piece with other political comments that crop up to mar an illuminating personal document. But it is unfair to take these political lapses seriously and challenge them for Barmine is no politician nor pretends to be. The "naive follower of the party line," the unswerving supporter of the Central Committee, the man who admittedly was taken in by every ruse, falsification and obfuscation of the majority and, finally, voted to expel Trotsky, with "a heavy heart" to be sure, and finally the current devotee of free enterprise can not be expected to have achieved political wisdom overnight.

Today Barmine believes in capitalism. The functionary who escaped from the GPU in 1937 and found asylum in the capitalist world seeks to refute the "basic assumptions" of socialism. "Abolishing private property in the means of production does not abolish exploitation of man by man." He decries the "all pervading hypocrisy of the 'workers' state' theory." His own credo? "A real betterment of life conditions for the masses can be best achieved under a democratic system, with private enterprise and competition, held within reasonable bounds, by a progressive social administration, but neither owned as in Russia, nor

strangled as in Germany, by the state." Barmine has transferred not only his body but his soul as well from Russia to America.

The defeat of the Russian Revolution has not only not refuted the "assumptions of socialism," it has confirmed them with terrible force. The leaders of the Revolution, its theorists, themselves *predicted* its defeat unless it were aided by the European Revolution. ALL of their efforts up to 1923 were to advance the German Revolution, even to the temporary disadvantage of the Russian position. The Brest-Litovsk negotiations are one example among many. Is a confirmation in the minds of those who have rejected socialism first and cast about anywhere for plausible-looking reasons. To ignore the essence of socialism, workers' democracy, and then to accuse it of being undemocratic, reveals no more than that the wish to reject socialism is the father to its misunderstanding and distortion. The monstrous, historical growth of bureaucracy in Russia, insistently underscores *one* of the 'basic assumptions' of socialism, workers' democracy.

Barmine's Alternative

And is not this a strange passion, this passion for democracy and justice that tears people out of the arms of the shabbily dressed prostitute of the East into the fur-lined, rouged-up prostitute of the West? "Abolishing private property in the means of production does not abolish the exploitation of man by man."

Tragically true! But neither does the maintenance of private property abolish the exploitation of man by man. To embrace the capitalist system today when it has not quite finished with the most destructive war in history in which its victims outnumber even the enslaved and murdered millions of Stalin's Russia, the capitalism which leads remorselessly to fascism, to further wars and to the intensified brutalization of man, the capitalism which has drawn the picture of its very soul in the landscape of Europe today . . . to embrace *that* in the name of justice and humanity is a very high price indeed to pay for disillusionment with Stalin's Russia.

The overwhelming fact is that Socialism or Barbarism are no longer the vague alternatives of an epoch seen in long perspective, but the immediate, burning choice of the moment. The war, capitalism's most fitting monument, has given content and detail to the concept of Barbarism. It is as real as Europe today. It is less relevant now that Socialism is the only way towards the just society than that it is the very condition of life itself. The flare thrown up by the atomic explosion should have made that apparent to the qualified, the myopic seers, the 'people accused to sitting between two stools.' But where blindness can lead one to mistake the wrinkled hag of capitalism for a vestal beauty, even an atomic explosion can not restore normal vision.

GEORGE STANLEY

On WP-SWP Unity Negotiations

Documents of the WP and SWP Minority

James P. Cannon, National Secretary
Socialist Workers Party,
New York, N. Y.

Dear Comrade:

Our Political Committee has discussed the resolution adopted by the Plenum of the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party on the question of unity. Before making a definitive reply to this resolution, we wish to afford the SWP the opportunity to make clear to us its position on a number of points. They relate to matters on which the resolution is either ambiguous or erroneously motivated, or which it does not deal with at all.

Your resolution states that "Both parties acknowledge that the programmatic differences which led to the 1940 split have not been moderated but that, on the contrary, some of them have been deepened and new important points of divergence have de-

veloped in the interim." So far as any acknowledgement on the part of our delegation to the preliminary discussions is concerned, this statement is erroneous, at least in part. The "programmatic differences which led to the 1940 split" were confined to the question of the "unconditional defense of the Soviet Union" in the war. Our delegation did not and could not acknowledge that the difference on this question has not moderated but deepened. On the contrary, the first resolution on unity adopted by our National Committee took "note of the fact that the SWP itself has officially taken the view that the slogan of 'unconditional defense of the Soviet Union' does not, at the present time, occupy the prominent position it was given at the beginning of the war, that it has receded into the background." The only political difference involved in the 1940 split was the

one over unconditional defense of Russia. If there were other, and programmatic, differences, they have not yet been brought to our attention. It is true that since the split other differences have developed between the two organizations. It is also true that on many questions these differences have deepened. We have not sought to conceal this fact or its importance. We emphasize at all times our attachment to our point of view. What we find it necessary to insist upon, however, is that these differences, deep as they are, are compatible with membership in a revolutionary Marxist party, as contrasted with a party based on the concept of monolithism.

Your resolution refers also to "This proposed unity without programmatic agreement." If this refers, as it seems to do, to our proposal for unity, the statement is erroneous. We have indeed mentioned in

other documents our "important differences with the SWP on a number of political and theoretical questions." If, nevertheless, we declared that unity is both desirable and possible, it was, as stated in our letter to you on September 15, because of the "fact that on this plane, the plane of basic program and principle, the two parties are close enough in their positions to require and justify immediate unification, on grounds similar to those which made their membership in one party possible and desirable in the period prior to the split." If it is your view now that there is no programmatic agreement between the two parties, or no programmatic agreement worthy of significant consideration, an explicit statement would contribute to the necessary clarification.

Any Number of Precedents

Your resolution states further that "This proposed unity without programmatic agreement, in fact with acknowledged disagreements between the two tendencies, has no precedent, so far as we know, in the history of the International Marxist movement." This statement is also erroneous. Our delegation stated that it was hard to recall an example of a similar unification between divergent tendencies in the International Trotskyist movement. This is so, largely because the Trotskyist movement was for so long a *faction*, formally or in fact, of what it considered the International Marxist movement. However, this faction (tendency) repeatedly proposed unity with the then International Marxist movement (Comintern), which meant its unification with the Stalinist faction, that is, a tendency with which it had far less in common in any field than exists in common between the SWP and the WP today. Furthermore, the International Marxist movement is much older than the modern Trotskyist movement. If the SWP is concerned with precedent, the more than a hundred-year-old history of the International Marxist movement groups and tendencies with greater divergencies than exist between ours.

Your resolution concludes with the decision "To reject any united front for propaganda." This statement is erroneous, because it is misleading. It gives the impression that such united fronts have been proposed by the Workers Party. You must be aware of the fact that this is not the case. As we recall them, not one of our proposals for united action between the two parties could be placed in the category of united fronts for propaganda. All of them dealt with proposals for united action in different fields of the class struggle. We proposed, for example, united action in the Minneapolis defense case; in the fight against fascism (anti-Smith campaign); in the trade unions, on such questions as all progressive unionists, let alone revolutionary Marxists, can and do unite on; in the New York election campaign. We reiterate our point of view on such practical agreements whether or not unity between the two organizations is achieved.

A more important question is the question of unity itself. In our letter to you,

dated October 4, we made several specific requests of your Plenum. Except perhaps for the last point, that dealing with practical collaboration, we do not find in your resolution a specific and precise reply.

We asked the Plenum to take steps to terminate the situation where your delegation "cannot and does not make any proposals of its own on the question of unity, where it cannot express itself definitely on proposals made by us, and where it is even unable to declare that the SWP has decided in favor or in opposition to unity itself."

Your resolution replies with a vigorous attack upon our party. That is of course its right. The attack can and will be answered in due course and in such a way as to promote clarity and understanding of the differences between the two tendencies.

But the resolution does not in any way inform us, or any other reader, of the position of the SWP on the most important questions relating to unity, or even inform us as to whether or not such a position has been taken.

Resolution Evades Answer

Is the SWP now in favor of unity, or opposed to it? In the preliminary discussions we were informed by the SWP delegation that the Plenum of its National Committee was convoked for the purpose of giving an answer to precisely this question; in fact, that the late of your Plenum had been advanced to give the earliest consideration to this question. We do not find the answer in the resolution. At least, it is nowhere stated explicitly. We are therefore obliged to conclude that the SWP has rejected the proposal for unity, either as put forth by ourselves, by the minority group in the SWP or by anyone else, and to act on this conclusion unless you indicate to us that we are in error.

Is the SWP now in a position to act on the concrete proposals made by us on the question of unity? In the preliminary discussions, your delegation pointed out that it was not authorized to do so until its National Committee met and arrived at decisions. We find no answer in the Plenum resolution to our proposals.

Our delegation stated our point of view as to the basis for the unification. Summed up in one sentence, it is this: Sufficient programmatic agreement actually exists between the two given organizations to warrant and make possible unity, and the differences that actually exist are compatible with membership in a single revolutionary party. On this basic question, your resolution takes no position except to say that it "cannot be determined by any abstract rule, it can only be answered *concretely*." We remind you that the question was not put by us abstractly, but quite concretely. The nature and views of the two organizations are well known to both, and could not be more concrete. Their range of agreement is as well known and as concrete as their range of differences. Our proposals as to the steps to be taken for effecting the unity are not general, but specific—concrete. There seems to us to be no sound reason for failing to take a concrete position.

Our delegation states, as your resolution

puts it quite exactly, "That they would insist on the right to publish their own discussion bulletin under their own control." We asked that your Plenum take a position on this proposal. Your delegation indicated that this is what its Plenum would do. Your resolution, however, merely records our statement, but does not say if the SWP accepts or rejects our proposal.

Your delegation at the preliminary discussions was not in a position to make counter-proposals, or proposals of any kind, until the meeting of its Plenum. In the resolution adopted by the Plenum, we find only the proposal "to authorize the Political Committee to prepare and carry through a thorough discussion and clarification of the theoretical, political and organizational issues in dispute, and fix the position of the party precisely on every point in preparation for the consideration and action of the next party convention." The resolution also states that "all the differences between the two parties (should be) probed to the depth so that not the slightest ambiguity remains."

We for our part welcome any discussion of the differences between the two tendencies and are prepared to participate in it to the best of our ability so that the positions are precisely fixed and all ambiguity eliminated. But ambiguity on the question of the unification itself must also be eliminated.

However, your resolution does not give any indication of how the discussion is to be carried on, or what its purpose is with reference to the unification of the two groups.

Demand Definitive Reply

It is possible that not all the members of the two parties are acquainted with the full nature and the full scope of the differences. A discussion will help acquaint them. But the leadership of the two parties is quite well aware of the nature, scope and depth of these differences. It has expressed itself on them repeatedly and in public. This was also established "formally," so to speak in the preliminary discussions. The head of the SWP delegation observed, and rightly, in our view, that for the present period the differences are not only known but "frozen." The question we raised then, and now, was simply this: Knowing the nature and scope of the differences as it does, and knowing also that for the present period these differences are "frozen," does the leadership of the SWP consider that unity is possible and desirable? Does it consider that the differences are compatible within one revolutionary party? Your resolution, which was adopted, we note, by the leadership of the Party, fails to give an answer to these questions. The same holds true, we note also, of the question asked with regard to the position of the SWP on the *right* of a minority in a revolutionary Marxist party to issue a bulletin of its own tendency inside the party.

We agreed with what you wrote in your letter of August 28, that "the question of unification must be discussed with complete frankness and seriousness." You will understand from what we have written above that we find your resolution erroneously

motivated, in part, and in other parts ambiguous or silent on what we consider the most important questions. We have before us the statement issued at your Plenum by the minority group in the SWP on the resolution adopted by the Plenum. It declares: "The resolution is designed to prevent unity." We do not wish to agree with this conclusion. That is why, before we arrive at a definitive conclusion of our own, we wish to have from you a reply to the questions we have raised in this letter, and elsewhere, and which your resolution either deals with unclearly or fails to deal with at all.

Upon receipt and discussion of your reply, our Committee will be better able to express its opinion in detail and to make any further proposals it may have. In this connection, we ask you to consider now the matter which has thus far not been dealt with in our discussion, namely, the matter of informing all the other groups of the Fourth International about the developments in the unity question in the United States, and of the contribution to solving this question that they are called upon to make.

Fraternally yours,
MAX SHACHTMAN,
National Secy. Workers Party
October 29, 1945

Max Shachtman, National Secretary
Workers Party
New York City, N. Y.
Dear Comrade:

The SWP plenum resolution on unity, negating the proposal of a tendency bulletin in the united party, merely states the following: the WP "would insist on the right to publish their own discussion bulletin under their own control." Ostensibly, therefore, the SWP majority does not take a position on this question. However, in the actual life of the party it has become clear that the majority advances the tendency bulletin proposal as a great stumbling block to unity.

For our part, we do not believe that this is the real stumbling block to unity. Nevertheless we believe that it should be removed. The plenum refused to take note in its resolution of our distinction between the right to a tendency bulletin and the exercise of that right. We believe that the WP should make that distinction and pledge itself not to exercise the right in the united party under the following conditions:

1. That the SWP cooperate closely with the WP for the purpose of preparing the membership of both parties for unity, and that after unity there will be real cooperation of the SWP and the WP;

2. That the SWP recognize the *right* of a minority to issue its own bulletin for the purpose of convincing the membership of the correctness of its views.

Needless to say, nobody could demand nor could the WP comrades agree, to refrain forever from exercising the right of a minority to issue its own bulletin. No responsible minority would exercise that right without great justification, but no responsible majority would ever prohibit it from

exercising it. If the right is used unjustifiably, a majority should easily be able to discredit a minority for doing so. But a united Trotskyist party is so all-important today that for the sake of it, we appeal to the comrades of the WP to pledge themselves not to exercise this right, subject to the conditions indicated above.

Fraternally yours,
FELIX MORROW,
For the SWP Minority
November 15, 1945

Felix Morrow
SWP Minority Group
New York, N. Y.

Dear Comrade Morrow:

Our Political Committee has agreed to the proposals on the question of the tendency bulletin made by the Minority Group of the Socialist Workers Party in your letter of November 15. Your proposals afford us still another occasion for reiterating and amplifying our position. It has been stated with sufficient clarity in our written communications to the Socialist Workers Party and at the two oral discussions that took place between the delegations of the two Parties prior to the recent Plenum of the SWP.

What was involved from the very beginning of the discussion on the unity of the two organizations was not a determination of the Workers Party comrades to issue a tendency bulletin of their own on the very first day of the existence of the projected unity Party, regardless of circumstances. For example, so far as our Political Committee was concerned, this was made clear in the first report made by its representative to a general membership meeting of the New York Local of our Party, a report substantially repeated to most of the other Locals of our organization several months ago.

Involves Right to Publish

As you know, the question involved in reality was the right of the minority in the united Party to issue such a tendency bulletin. The SWP Plenum Resolution is literally correct in stating our position as an insistence "on the right to publish their own discussion bulletin under their own control." In the oral discussions between the delegations of the two Parties, it was not we but the principal representative of the SWP who called attention to the fact that, for example, the leadership of the American Trotskyist movement, himself included, had freely permitted the Oehler group to publish an internal bulletin of its own inside the organization in 1934-1935. Therefore, he added, it was not a question of the "right" to such a bulletin "in the abstract," a right which could presumably be granted; but rather a question of our "attitude." We could not then and cannot today construe this otherwise than as a reference to our *opinions* about the present majority faction of the SWP. These opinions we expressed candidly to the SWP delegation. We pointed to what is generally known, namely, the fact that our comrades do not have sufficient confidence in the present leadership of the SWP, particularly with reference to its record toward inner-party opponents

and critics, and are therefore concerned with assuring their democratic rights in the united party by having the minority's right to its own bulletin jointly acknowledged by both sides. We are perfectly ready to admit that abstractly considered this lack of confidence may prove to be exaggerated, or even groundless. In like manner, we admit that common work and common experiences in the united Party may cause the comrades of the Workers Party to abandon their opinions on this score. They are not ready, however, to abandon them merely on demand. What they are prepared to abandon in the interests of unity, has already been made amply clear and precise. We consider it enough.

On Concepts of Party

We can go further and say that even the question of the right to issue a tendency bulletin is, in a sense, only the formal side of the matter. Ordinarily, it would not occupy the place of importance it has been given in the discussion on unity. As you so rightly put it, "we do not believe that this is the real stumbling block to unity." The "stumbling block" is the conception of the SWP Majority Group of the kind of Party revolutionary Marxists should have and build. Our Party shares with the Minority Group of the SWP the conception of the Bolsheviks which was fought for with such emphasis and clarity, especially since 1923-1924, by Trotsky and his supporters. The SWP Majority, in practice, and often in words as well, holds the conception of a "monolithic" Party, which flies in the face of our whole tradition. We are compelled to say now that unity of the two organizations is possible only if this conception is abandoned. It is primarily in this sense that the question of the tendency bulletin is so important. It serves as the concrete test, at the present juncture, of the conceptions held on the kind of Party we must build—a sterile "monolithic" faction, or a united democratically-centralized party of action in which there is freedom of opinion and grouping, and the assurance of democratic rights for all views compatible with the fundamental program of revolutionary Marxism.

This is how the real issue stands. To it, the other considerations can well be subordinated, including the matter of whether a minority would issue a tendency bulletin the morning after the unification, a year afterward, or at all. It is in this sense that we are prepared to accept the proposals of the SWP Minority.

Fraternally yours,
MAX SHACHTMAN,
National Secy., Workers Party

November 27, 1945

Copy to:
J. P. Cannon, National Secretary
Socialist Workers Party
116 University Pl.
New York, N. Y.

Book Reviews . . .

THE FARMERS' LAST FRONTIERS, by Fred A. Shannon. Farrar & Rinehart, \$5.

This book is the fifth volume of a nine volume series entitled *The Economic History of the United States*. It covers the Homestead period of 1860-1897.

This is not the type of book one takes to bed (unless you want to encourage nightmares) or reads at one's leisure. In the preface of the book Shannon states: "I have not written a history of the technical advances in agriculture. . . ." This is a direct sign of guilt, for what Shannon denies doing he accomplishes with eloquence. He goes into an elaborate description of soil types and characteristics and other natural forces in his section on "Nature and the Farmer." This section, as all the others, is embellished with charts and graphs, and statistical data galore.

Shannon runs the gauntlet with a section on "Land and Labor in the New South," discussing the Civil War and its effects, changes in land ownership, rise of sharecropping, crop lien system, white and Negro farm labor, and Southern class structure. He devotes another section to "Southern Crops and Special Problems," discussing primarily the staples, cotton and tobacco.

The "Progress of Farm Mechanization" is also included in Shannon's study and everything from the new seed planter and cultivator to the economic and social effects of mechanization is discussed.

The section on "The Expansion of Prairie Agriculture" deals with bonanza (large) farms, the movement of cereal-crop production, corn-hog cycle, and care of the soil. Other sections dealt with in great detail are "Special Problems of Prairie Farmers," "The Livestock Frontier and the Great Plains Farmer," "Finance and Marketing Problems of the Range Country," "Specialized Agriculture and Eastern Adjustments," "Government Activity in Agriculture," "The Agrarian Uprising" and the "Farmers' Cooperative Movements."

The Author's Theory

The above listing of topics offers sufficient reason why it is essential that the main thesis of the book be dealt with rather than just a segmented analysis of

each section. In the section entitled "Agriculture Settlement in New Areas," Shannon states his thesis. It is as follows: "The movement of population to new lands after 1860 was largely along lines drawn before that time, and to a great degree was merely a further spreading out over already partially settled areas."

It is true one has to dip deeply and push aside a conglomeration of details to find his main trend of thought. Although it is clouded, it is worthy of examination. Shannon's thesis of gradual settlement, of slow extension of frontiers, is offered in lieu of the hypothesis presented by Walter Prescott Webb in *The Great Plains: Study in Institutions and Environment*. Webb discusses the 100th Meridian as a major dividing line, creating the so-called "institutional fault." Webb contends that the environmental factors caused a major break in the settlement of this country in that the Great Plains were settled last, i.e., settlers moved from the North Central States to the West Coast before the Great Plains were settled.

The environmental factors that Webb stresses are such things as lack of water for grazing or homestead farming, absence of woodlands or forests—resulting in scarcity of lumber for building and wood for fuel—and adverse climatic conditions, such as strong winds and dust storms.

Shannon counters with statistical data showing that a frontier was established first in Ohio, then settlers moved to the Midwest and then on to the Plains. He sees the process as one of gradual adjustment rather than one of sharp breaks and cleavages.

This type of academic shadow boxing is interesting, but adds little to our understanding of the problematical situation and the adjustments of the people.

On the Public Domain

Shannon does make a contribution in the section entitled "Disposing of the Public Domain." The myth of homesteading is exploded by proving conclusively that of the eighty million acres of homesteads settled under sixty thousand patents, less than one-sixth of the acreage went to homesteaders who lived and kept their holdings. He proves that the homesteaders were pawns of the monopolists and the land speculators, with

the bona fide homesteaders receiving the least desirable tracts, in poorer lands and far from transportation facilities.

In the last section of the book Shannon invalidates the old "safety-valve" hypothesis. His data shows that from 1860 to 1900 the flow was from the farm to the city and not vice versa, as is usually thought. He contends that it is time that a new hypothesis were advanced: that the rise of the city was a safety valve for rural discontent. In this section on "The Farmer and the Nation," Shannon depicts agriculture as declining in importance. He shows that from 1860 to 1900 agriculture's share in the national income and national wealth was steadily decreasing.

The book contains some very important factual material and also some major ideological contributions, but it falls short in analyzing the problems involved in the farmer's last frontier.

Shannon fails to grasp the problems involved in a maturing agriculture. He did not gear his analysis toward an examination of a problematical situation, and the shifts in the process which are brought about by institutional changes. The instability of agriculture, the increasing rate of farm tenancy, and the loss of the owner-operator ideal, are all dealt with as fixtures.

Not daring to suggest a new institutional setting to cope with the closing of the frontier, Shannon must manipulate his charts and graphs and elaborate in a matchbox: For if he were to poke his nose into the outer environs, things might be combustible.

JIM BLACK.

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Historical Retrogression Or Socialist Revolution

A Discussion Article on the Thesis of the IKD

The document of the German comrades, "Capitalist Barbarism or Socialism," proposes a thesis of historical retrogression and a program of "democratic-political revolution" which in my view is in fundamental opposition to the general principles of Marxism and the specific perspectives of the Fourth International for the socialist revolution in Europe. I propose here to refute them as comprehensively as possible in the space at my disposal.

PART I: THE THEORY OF THE QUESTION

The retrogressionists post their thesis in Hegelian terms. We have therefore first to grapple with the dialectic.

In the Dialectic of Nature, Engels lists the three basic laws: (1) The law of the transformation of quantity into quality. (2) The law of the interpenetration of the opposites. (3) The law of the negation of the negation. The third "figures as the fundamental law for the construction of the whole system." The interconnection can be demonstrated as follows:

Capitalist society is a negation of a previous organism, feudal society. It consists of two opposites, capital and labor, interpenetrated—one cannot be conceived without the other. The contradiction between capital and labor develops by degrees in a constant series of minor negations. Thus, commercial capitalism, through quantitative changes in the mode of production, develops a new quality and is transformed into industrial capitalism with, of course, corresponding changes in its opposite, labor. This industrial capitalism is further negated by monopoly capitalism which is further negated by state-monopoly capitalism. But this increasing negativity, i.e., this constant transformation into a higher stage in a certain direction, only sharpens the fundamental antagonism which constitutes the organism. The maturity of the organism is demonstrated by the fact that the contradictions become so developed that the organism can no longer contain them. There arises the necessity of a complete negation, not of successive stages of development but of the organism itself. The organism will be negated, abolished, transcended by the antagonisms developed *within its own self*, without the intervention of any third party. That is negation of the negation. That is abolition or *self-abolition*.

The key word for us here is the word *abolition* (German: *Aufhebung*). The retrogressionists use the word *Selbst-Aufhebung*. The implication is that this means self-abolition, while *aufhebung* means plain abolition. But in the dialectic of Hegel and Marx, all abolition of an organism means self-abolition. Two years ago I had to deal with this very question and wrote as follows:

"For the word abolition, *aufhebung*, Marx went again to Hegel, to show quite clearly what he had in mind. *Aufhebung* does not mean mere non-existence, or abolition, as you abolish a hot dog or wipe some chalk off a board. As Hegel explains at length (*Logic*, tr. Johnston and Struthers, vol. 1, p. 120), it means for him transcendence, raising of one moment or active factor from its subordinate position in the dialectical contradiction to its rightful and predestined place, superseding the opposite moment with which it is interpenetrated, i.e., inseparably united, in this case, raising labor, the basis of all value, to a dominant position over the other moment, the mass of accumulated labor. Thereby self-developing humanity takes the place formerly held by self-developing value. The real history of humanity will begin." (*Internal Bulletin*, April, 1943.)

In *The Holy Family*, Marx has a long passage, of which this is a fair sample:

"... The proletariat is as proletariat forced to abolish itself and with this, the opposite which determines it, private property. It is the negative side of the opposition, its principle of unrest."

"If the proletariat is victorious it does not mean that it has become the absolute side of society, for it is victorious only by abolishing itself and its opposite. Then both the proletariat and its conditioning opposite, private property, have vanished."

In *Capital* itself, the word he almost invariably uses for the abolition of capitalist production is *Aufhebung*, i.e., its substitution by socialist production, its own interpenetrated opposite.

Dialectic as Scientific Method

In 1915, Lenin wrote that "dialectic is the theory of knowledge of (Hegel and) Marxism." (*Collected Works*, vol. 13, pp. 321-327.) And Lenin not only calls this "the essence of the matter but condemns Plekhanov and other Marxists for paying "no attention" to it. This, for Marx and Lenin, is a scientific method, not faith.

It is this grave weakness in Plekhanov which has led to so much confusion in Marxism and the dialectic. As Lenin saw, Hegel, idealist though he might be, understood this perfectly. In the *Larger Logic* (tr. Johnston and Struther, p. 65, vol. 1) he says:

"The one and only thing for securing scientific progress (and for quite simple insight into which, it is essential to strive) is knowledge of the logical precept that Negation is just as much Affirmation as Negation."

All the great Marxists understood that for the scientific analysis of capitalist society, you must postulate the positive in the negative, the affirmation in the negation, i.e., the inevitability of socialism. Give it up, play with it and you lose, for example, the Marxist theory of the socialist revolution as the culmination of the daily class struggle. If the revolution is not understood as rooted inevitably in the objective necessity of socialism, then it is attributed to the subjective consciousness of the leaders. It is because the Mensheviks and the Eastmans deny the inevitability of socialism that they repudiate the Marxist conception of the party and accuse the Bolsheviks of imposing their dialectical religion upon the Russian workers in October, 1917. For the Mensheviks and the Eastmans, Russia could have had *either* a democratic revolution *or* the dictatorship of the proletariat. Lenin and Trotsky always maintained the opposite, that they were acting in accordance with inner historic necessity as it expressed itself concretely in 1917.

Hegel could not maintain the dialectical method consistently because he based himself on the inevitability of bourgeois society. Marx could retain and extend it only by basing himself on the inevitability of socialism. As he wrote to Weydemeyer on March 5, 1852, he had discovered neither the class struggle nor the economic anatomy of the classes.

"What I did that was new was to prove... that the class struggle necessarily leads to the dictatorship of the proletariat."

Perhaps the most useful statement of dialectic as a scientific theory for Marxists is made by Rosa Luxemburg (*Reform and Revolution*):

"What precisely was the key which enabled Marx to open the door to the secrets of capitalist phenomena? The secret of Marx's theory of value, of his analysis of the problem of money, of his theory of capital, of the theory of the rate of profit, and consequently of the entire economic system, is found in the transitory character of capitalist economy, the inevitability of its collapse, leading—and this is only another aspect of the same phenomena (emphasis mine—J. R. J.)—to socialism. ... And it is precisely because he took the socialist viewpoint for his analysis of bourgeois society that he was in the position to give a scientific basis to the socialist movement."

Bernstein believed that *Capital* was not scientific because Marx had had the conclusions in his head long before he wrote it. He did not understand that Marx could only write it because he took as a premise the transitory nature of capitalist society and the inevitability of socialism. This is the guide to Marxist theory. The test is in practice. If the inevitability of socialism is the key by which Marx opened the door to his world-shaking discoveries, the "if the world revolution fails to come" is the key by which the retrogressionists open the door to theirs.

"The Invading Socialist Society"

As far back as *Anti-Dühring* (1878), Marx and Engels saw socialism invading and dialectically altering capitalism.

"In the trusts, freedom of competition changes into its opposite (emphasis mine—J. R. J.), into monopoly. The planless production of capitalist society capitulates before the planned production of the invading socialist society."

This is the philosophical concept which permeates "The Histor-

ical Tendency of Capitalist Accumulation," the most famous chapter in *Capital* and all Marxist writing. This for the retrogressionists is their "center of gravity." Let us see what Marx says:

The very laws of capitalist production bring forth the "material agencies" for its dissolution—concentration of production and socialization of labor. But on these material agencies as basis spring up "new forces and new passions." This is the proletariat. "Centralization of the means of production and socialization of labor at last reach a point where they become incompatible with their capitalist integument. This integument is burst asunder." This is the proletarian revolution.

Only then does Marx sum up the process in terms of property which is a legal, historical manifestation of the productive process. He says:

"The capitalist... mode of appropriation, the result of the capitalist mode of production, produces capitalist private property."

Production, appropriation, property.

"This is the first negation of individual private property, as founded on the labor of the proprietor."

Labor, you note, is the foundation. A certain kind of property is the result of a certain mode of production, a certain type of labor.

"But capitalist production begets with the inexorability of a law of nature its own negation. It is the negation of negation. This does not reestablish private property for the producer but gives him individual property based on the acquisitions of the capitalist era, i.e., on coöperation and the possession in common of the land and of the means of production."

Hitherto among Marxists and anti-Marxists, this was understood to mean socialism. The retrogressionists challenge this. They say:

"The capitalist mode of production begets its own negation with the inexorability of a law of nature *even if the socialist revolution fails to come.*"

This they tell us is the "deepest essence of the historical tendency of capitalist accumulation." So that when Marx wrote "negation of the negation" he did not mean socialism only. He meant that capitalist private property and capitalist production were going to be negated, destroyed, proletariat or no proletariat. This, Marx's most emphatic statement of the proletarian socialist revolution as the inevitable alternative to capitalism, is historically, i.e., in life, interpreted to mean that capitalist property can be abolished and a new kind of state (bureaucratic-collectivist, managerial) will take its place. This certainly is the most remarkable interpretation of Marxism ever made and is likely to remain so.

Class Struggle or National Struggle

I have to confine myself here to its immediate political consequences. The material self-abolition of capital is for the retrogressionists a process by which the capitalists expropriate one another and the many capitalist nations are expropriated by one. In their preoccupation with the expropriation of the property, they lose sight of the antagonistic rôles of bourgeoisie and proletariat in the process of production.

It appears immediately in their analysis of Europe. This is based not upon the class struggle in production between the German centralization of European capital and the European working class. For them, the basic analysis is of one imperialist nation oppressing and expropriating other nations. The native bourgeoisie of the occupied countries is not defined basically in its economic association with the centralized capital of Europe but as part of the expropriated and exploited nations. The class struggle of the European proletariat against the existing capitalist society is thus replaced by the national struggle of individual nations, including bourgeoisie and workers. Hence the national struggle for them is not primarily a class struggle to overthrow a certain mode of production but a struggle to "reconstruct the whole screwed-back development, to regain all the achievements of the bourgeoisie (including the labor movement), to reach the highest accomplishments and to excel them." But if the proletariat is to "reconstruct the whole screwed-back development," etc., etc., then the task of the proletariat can only be to rebuild the whole bourgeois-democratic, i.e., the national, structure. Turn and twist as they may, the retrogressionists are in a vise from which they cannot escape.

The Economic Laws of Motion: The "General Law"

Without a firm grasp of the laws of production, you are blown all ways by every wind. Let us see what the retrogressionists do with the general law of capitalist accumulation which is Marx's

theoretical basis for the historical, i.e., the actual, living tendency. The retrogressionists say:

"The theory of the retrogressive movement is therefore no more than the theoretical grasp of the laws of motion of the capitalist mode of production *at the point of transformation into their opposite in the reversal determined by its contents, in which they become concretely demonstrable laws of its collapse independent of the proletarian revolution.*" (P. 334.)

Marx has summed up the general law as the law of the organic composition of capital, the relation of the constant capital (the mass of machinery, concrete labor, use-values) to the variable capital (labor-power, the only source of value). The relation is 1:1, then 2:1, then 3:1, then 4:1, etc. This developing ratio is the organic law of capitalist society, i.e., it is of the very nature of the organism.

You would expect that anyone who had discovered economic laws of retrogression would show how *this* law was in retrogression. But you search the retrogressionist document in vain. Not a word. Why? Because no such economic movement exists. Where in the world is there any retrogression in this organic law? In fascist Germany the relation of constant to variable capital increased enormously. In Britain, in the U.S.A., in Japan, in China, in India, in Latin America, the war has seen a vast increase; the post-war will see a still greater. What post-war Germany loses will go to increase the ratio of its neighbors. Whatever production does take place in Germany will take place according to the organic composition of 1945 and not according to that of 1845.

If the victorious powers dare to deindustrialize Germany, all that they will do is to transform millions of proletarians into an industrial reserve army on a vast scale which is precisely the "absolute general law of capitalist accumulation." Colonization of France or Germany can only be an agitational phrase. In the sense of a historical retrogression it means creating a countryside like that in India or China with feudal and semi-feudal peasants comprising the large majority of the population. The relations of production, the social relations and the whole political structure of those countries would be altered. A *bourgeois-democratic revolution would be on the order of the day.* The victorious imperialisms, as Lenin foresaw, cannot do it. Capitalist competition, which is in its present form imperialist war, compels them to obey the general law of capitalist accumulation and tomorrow will force them to rearm, i.e., reindustrialize Germany. Into these Marxist fundamentals they have introduced an unexampled confusion.

Retrogression and the Industrial Reserve Army

The retrogressionists say: "Under imperialism production is carried on in a capitalist manner from A to Z, but all relations from A to Z are *qualitatively* altered. The 'camp system,' labor and forced labor service, prisons, etc., become by the massive extent and the manner of their utilization, first, special forms of slave labor, and beyond that, imperialist forms of utilizing the capitalist overpopulation." (P. 342.)

Wasn't it Marx who told us that the antagonism of capitalist production "vents its rage in the creation of that monstrosity, the industrial reserve army, *kept in misery in order to be always at the disposal of capital.*" If today they are kept in labor camps, it is because the proletarian movement toward the socialist future is such that capital must assume complete control over the workers not only inside but outside of the process of production. But do these workers "qualitatively" produce more surplus value or less? Do they alter the organic law? Do they modify or accentuate the contradiction between use-value and value? Do they become isolated groups of slaves, serfs on widely separated latifundia, on manorial farms, or on medieval peasant allotments? Do they acquire the social and political characteristics of slaves and serfs in the Middle Ages? To this last question the retrogressionists answer "Yes." They say that society "harks back in reverse order to the end of the Middle Ages, the epoch of primitive accumulation, the Thirty Years War, the bourgeois revolutions, etc. In those days it was a question of smashing an outlived economic form and of winning the independence of nations—now it is a question of abolishing independence and shoving society back to the barbarism of the Middle Ages." (Pp. 333-334.)

It is not a question of smashing economic forms, not a question of winning a new society. That is merely the program of the Fourth International. That, they tell us, is not the question. Independence has been abolished, society has been shoved back to the barbarism of the Middle Ages and the proletariat, to save the situation, must

restore democracy. They *must* write this. Socialized labor, the socialist proletariat, has vanished into the labor camp. The historical initiative is placed entirely in the hands of the bourgeoisie.

According to their mode of scientific analysis, the world revolution cannot but fail to come. The throwback of labor to the Middle Ages is their general law of capitalist accumulation. To think that this can be arrested by democratic slogans is, to put it moderately, a retrogression to the Utopias not even of the nineteenth century but of the Middle Ages.

The Productive Forces

The retrogressionist thesis claims to be based upon the collapse of capitalism "independently of the question of the extension of the market." (P. 333.) Very good. To this, as is characteristic of them, they give not a word of analysis. I have to try to *illustrate* the difference between this theory and that of the underconsumptionists.

If you observe the growth of capital empirically, i.e., with bourgeois eyes, then it must *appear* that as the market declines, the productive power also declines and therefore brings the whole process to a standstill. In reality the struggle for the declining market *makes each competitor increase its productive power in order to drive its competitor off the field.* Naturally this leads to a fine crash. But in the crash the technologically backward units go under and the system as a whole emerges on a higher technological level—of course to start the whole process again. But the growth of the productive power of capital can come only by the higher organic composition. This leads to the falling rate of profit and it is the falling rate which compels a crisis. In Vol. III of *Capital* (p. 301) Marx says that it is "the fall in the rate of profit [which] calls forth the competitive struggle among the capitalists, not vice versa." Most Marxist commentators recognize that the Marxian crisis is not a crisis of incapacity to sell goods or, in bourgeois terms, of "effective demand." It is when the crisis is imminent that capitalists rush to sell goods and naturally the bottom falls out of the market. Blake expresses it very well, in *An American Looks at Karl Marx*:

"Thus the limiting factor of consumption is a *precipitant*, the discharge of workers in the means of production is a *manifestation*, the transferred crack in consumers' purchases the '*cause*' of a panic, while all along the crisis is implicit, overcome by *accumulation by the stronger...*"

Now every serious dispute by serious people about the future of capitalist society will in the long run find the protagonists lined up, in the camp either of the Leninists or the underconsumptionists. The retrogressionists say that they follow the Leninist interpretation. Yet their thesis is that the productive forces have ceased to grow and they quote Lenin and Trotsky. I do not propose to take up Trotsky here. He undoubtedly wrote this many times. He also wrote other passages in apparent contradiction. At any rate he left no developed economic thesis. But Lenin did. He wrote *Imperialism* to prove the decline of capitalism. Nevertheless he states (and more than once): "It would be a mistake to believe that this tendency to decay precludes the possibility of the rapid growth of capitalism. It does not. In the epoch of imperialism, certain branches of industry, certain strata of the bourgeoisie and certain countries betray, to a more or less degree, one or another of these tendencies. On the whole, capitalism is growing far more rapidly than before."

But argument about this does not need quotations from Lenin. In 1929 the productive power was higher than it had ever been; in 1939 it was still higher than it was in 1929; by 1942 it had reached fantastic heights compared with 1939. Do the retrogressionists dare to deny this? War is only capitalist competition carried out by national units, and the laws hold firm. In times of peace the fundamental movement is development of the productive power precisely because "the market" is declining. In war, where the world market is exhausted and can only be redivided, each national state fanatically develops the productive power. If capitalism lasts until 1968, then the preparation for World War III would result in a productive power far beyond that of 1942.

What then is responsible for the retrogressionists' thesis of lack of growth of the productive forces? Having abandoned the inevitability of the socialist revolution, and having adopted a theory of the tendency of capitalist accumulation, which increasingly disorganizes and colonizes the proletariat and hence makes it unfit for the socialist revolution, they cannot see the growth of the productive forces which organizes and disciplines the proletariat in the process of production and prepares it for the socialist revolution. Having

given up the process of production as the means of developing the productive forces and organizing the proletariat, they must look outside the process of production, i.e., to democracy.

Productive Forces and Social Relations

Underconsumptionists are distinguished by the fact that value plays no part in their analysis. Thus they lose sight of the fundamental contradiction of capitalist production, that between the means of production in its value form (the main concern of the bourgeoisie) and means of production in its material form (the main concern of the proletariat). They thus ruin the possibility of future analysis. A recent article in the *Saturday Evening Post* shows how clearly the bourgeoisie sees its own side of this question. Admiral Ramsey says that all the existing planes must be systematically destroyed because in five years' time they would be obsolete. And not only planes, but means of production. General Arnold demands "research laboratories for ever-increasing aeronautical development, a progressive aviation industry capable of great expansion quickly." Thus essentially as in competition for the market, the material form of the products may be still valuable and able to give great service to the proletariat and the people. But their value, in terms of socially necessary labor time on the world market, is equal only to that of the latest discovery, actual or potential. Hence reorganization of production for more and better production, socialist of labor, increase of the industrial army. The general and the admiral were forward-looking but still did not see far enough. The discovery of atomic energy poses the question of the reorganization of the whole technological system. The second bomb, *two days later*, made the first obsolete. The retrogressionist thesis makes it impossible to interpret the general capitalist development as socialist society invading capitalism. For then atomic energy is a sign of greater labor camps and therefore of a quicker return to the Middle Ages. Instead of calling upon workers in view of the economic development to prepare for power they are compelled to demand more frantically than ever, a defense of democracy.

What then is the fundamental error of the retrogressionists? They have as always lost sight of the invading socialist society, the socialist future in the capitalist present. Capitalism fetters, i.e., hampers, impedes the development of the productive forces. But it does not bring them to a halt. They move forward by advance, retardation, standstill, but they move forward, bringing the proletariat with them. The theoretical analysis is that the more capitalism increases the productive forces, the more it brings them into conflict with the existing social relations. The more it increases and develops the productive forces the more it socializes labor and the more it degrades it and the more it drives it to revolt. Where Marxism deals in contradictions, growths and deepening of antagonisms, and therefore of class struggle, the retrogressionists deal in absolutes. The productive forces have ceased to grow. Having decided to operate on the basis of "if the world revolution fails to come," the retrogressionists, rudderless, deny historical fact—the growth of the productive forces since 1917—make a complete jumble of Marxian economics, all in order to show society on its way back to the Middle Ages. You do not make these blunders without dragging others, and more serious ones, in their train.

Idealism and Positivism

The vital question is to get hold of the intimate connection between retrogressionist theory and their practical conclusions. In his Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic, Marx pays noble tribute to Hegel for his discovery of the dialectic but foretells that his incapacity to take it further, i.e., to socialism, opens the way to uncritical idealism and equally uncritical positivism. The retrogressionists fall inescapably into both.

In Vol. II Marx divided capital into Department I, means of production and Department II, means of consumption, and bases his further analysis upon this division. The retrogressionists divide the productive forces into means of destruction and means of construction. What is this but idealism—classification according to moral criteria? One stands almost in despair before this muddle. Oil, coal, steel, Willow Run, Curtiss-Wright, were they means of destruction in January 1945? And what are they now in August 1945? Are they once more means of construction? If so, they move from being means of destruction to being means of construction under the same class rule. This is the economics of Philip Murray. The retrogressionists do not know with what sharp weapons they are playing. All Marx's economic categories are social categories.

In the analysis of capital as value, constant capital symbolizes the bourgeoisie, variable capital the proletariat. But men use not value but steel, oil, textiles. Thus, in his analysis of capital as material form, Department I (means of production) is in essence representative of the bourgeoisie and Department II (means of consumption) is representative of the proletariat. The struggle between constant and variable capital, between Department I and Department II is expressive of the struggle of classes. What struggle goes on between means of destruction and means of consumption? The retrogressionists are defining things as things and not according to a social method—the most elementary positivism. But idealism and positivism are not terms of abuse. Politically they mean one thing—analysis of productive forces as things in general, analysis of the proletariat as people in general.

The Phenomenology of Mind

Marxism is distinguished from idealism and positivism of all types by the fact that (a) it distinguishes the proletariat from all other classes by its types of labor and (b) by the revolutionary effect upon the proletariat and society of this type of labor.

The concept of labor is the very basis of the dialectic, and not merely of the Marxian dialectic but of the dialectic of Hegel himself. In the *Phenomenology of Mind*,* in the section on Lordship and Bondage, Hegel shows that the lord has a desire for the object and enjoys it. But because he does not actually work on it, his desire lacks objectivity. The labor of the bondsman, in working, in changing, i.e., in negating the raw material, has the contrary effect. This, his *labor*, gives him his rudimentary sense of personality. Marx hailed this and continued the basic idea in his analysis of handicraft and the early stages of capitalist production (simple co-operation). The laborer's physical and mental faculties are developed by the fact that he makes a whole chair, a whole table, a piece of armor or a whole shoe.

With the development of the stage of manufacture, however, there begins the division of labor, and here instead of making one object, man begins to produce fragments of an object. In the process of production, there begins a stultification, distortion and ossification of his physical and intellectual faculties.

With the productive process of heavy industry, this stultification is pushed to its ultimate limit. Man becomes merely an appendage to a machine. He now no longer uses the instruments of production. As Marx repeats on page after page, the instruments of production use him. Hegel, who had caught hold of this, was completely baffled by it and seeing no way out, took refuge in idealism. Marx, using the Hegelian method and remaining in the productive process itself, discovered and elaborated one of the most profound truths of social and political psychology. In the very degradation of the workers he saw the basis of their emancipation. Attacking Proudhon for misunderstanding dialectic, he wrote of the laborer in the automatic factory:

"But from the moment that all special development ceases, the need of universality, the tendency towards an integral development of the individual begins to make itself felt." (*Poverty of Philosophy*, 1847)

This need of the individual for universality, for a sense of integration so powerful among all modern oppressed classes, is the key to vast areas of social and political jungles of today. The fascists, for example, understood it thoroughly.

Twenty years later in *Capital* Marx developed the political results of the argument to the full. "It is as a result of the division of labor in manufactures, that the laborer is brought face to face with the intellectual potencies of the material process of production as the property of another and as a ruling power." (Kerr ed., p. 397) He does not need revolutionary parties to teach him this. This process is his revolutionary education. It begins in manufacture. "It is completed in modern industry . . ." This is the misery that is accumulated as capital is accumulated. It may not be formulated. But the moment bourgeois society breaks down and the worker breaks out in insurrection, for whatever incidental purpose, resentment against the whole system explodes with terrible power.**

The educational process is not individual but social. As Marx insisted and Lenin never wearied in pointing out, in addition to this

*One of the three basic books used by Lenin in his studies for Imperialism.

**The babblers who think that all the American workers want is "full employment" are in for a rude awakening. That capitalism increases the use-values (radio, education, books, etc.) that he uses outside of production only increases his antagonism.

personal, individual education, capital educates the worker socially and politically. In *Capital* (pp. 532-3) Marx quoted a passage he had written twenty years before in the *Manifesto*. Former industrial systems, all of them, aimed at conservation of the existing mode of production. Far different is capital:

"Constant revolutions in production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones. All fixed, fast-frozen relations with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and superstitions are swept away. All new formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses his real conditions of life, and his relations with his kind."

This is the history of Europe during the last thirty years and particularly the last five.

The very climax of Marx's chapter on The General Law is to warn that "This antagonistic character of capitalist accumulation is enunciated in various forms by political economists, although by them it is confounded with phenomena, certainly to some extent analogous but nevertheless essentially distinct and belonging to pre-capitalistic modes of production," i.e., the Middle Ages. And why essentially distinct? Because in capital alone the degradation and its historical conditions also create in the workers the determination to overthrow the system and acquire for themselves the intellectual potencies of the material process of production. Who doesn't understand this in his bones can be a sincere revolutionary but cannot lead the proletariat. The retrogressionists ruin this conception. They say that "the minute the proletariat loses his right to strike, his freedom of movement, and all political rights," he ceases to be the "classic 'free' proletarian . . ." (p. 331) For the analysis of production and the stages of production, they have substituted the legislative or repressive action of the bourgeois state. They say that "The modern slave differs much less politically from the slave of antiquity than appears at first glance." (p. 331) The retrogressionists carry their democratic conceptions into the process of production itself. They say: "Politically, and to a large extent economically, it (the proletariat) lives under the conditions and forms of slavery." (p. 339) They seem incapable of understanding that increase of misery, subordination, slavery is part of capitalist production and not retrogression.

At this stage we can afford to be empirical. In 1944 the Italian proletariat in North Italy lived under fascism. Mussolini, to placate this proletariat, called his state the Socialist Republic. Every worker who punched the clock and found no work got three-quarters of his day's pay. Mussolini passed decrees which aimed at making the workers believe that industry was socialized. When the Germans were about to leave, these workers negotiated with them and with Mussolini and drove them out. They seized the factories. They hold them to this day. Such is modern industry that a mere general strike poses the socialist revolution and the question of the state-power with workers organized in factory committees and soviets. Yet the retrogressionists say in 1944 that because of the absence of bourgeois-democracy the more you looked at these workers the more you saw how much they resembled the slaves who lived in the Italian latifundia 3000 years ago.

Revolutionary Perspectives and Proposals

Except seen in the light of their analysis of the proletariat in production, the revolutionary perspectives of the great Marxists have always seemed like stratospheric ravings.

In 1848 Marx said that "the bourgeois revolution in Germany would be but the prelude to an immediately following proletarian revolution." In 1858 he wrote to Engels: "On the continent the revolution is imminent and will immediately assume a socialist character." Twenty years later, introducing Marx's *Civil War in France*, Engels wrote: "Thanks to the economic and political development of France since 1789, Paris has for fifty years been placed in such a position that . . . no revolution could there break out without the proletariat . . . (after victory) immediately putting forward its own demands . . . demands . . . more or less indefinite . . . but the upshot of them all . . . the abolition of the class contrast between capitalist and laborer." The word "immediately" appears every time.

Their enormous confidence is based not upon speculation on the psychology of workers but upon the antagonism of objective relations between labor and capital. From this came their proposals.

In 1848 in the *Manifesto* Marx says that Communists support every movement against the existing order, but "In all these movements they bring to the front, as the leading question in each, the property question, no matter what its degree of development at the time." For whatever its degree of development at the time, at the moment of insurrection, it flies to the fore.

The Revolutionary Epoch

Production, production, production. By 1905 the miserable individual production of 1871, which had nevertheless produced the Commune, had developed into genuine large-scale industry. Trotsky, watching the revolution in feudal Russia, declared that the victorious bourgeois-democratic revolution would "immediately" assume a socialist character. Lenin, as we know, opposed him. We now know who (despite many important qualifications) was essentially right. 1905 is a very important year. *The development of industry brought the political general strike and the soviets.* They represent the industrially and socially motivated rejection by the workers of bourgeois democracy. Marx's 1850 subjective demand for revolutionary workers' organizations are now objective realities, henceforth inseparable from revolution, as 1917 and post-war Europe and Asia were to show.

In 1938 in the Founding Conference Theses, Trotsky wrote that "The Spanish proletariat has made a series of heroic attempts since April 1931 to take power in its own hands and guide the fate of society." Are these workers in the "true-bourgeois" tradition of forty years?

He says of the French proletariat that "the great wave of sit-down strikes, particularly during June 1936, revealed the whole-hearted readiness of the proletariat to overthrow the capitalist system." He left it to the Philistines of all shades to point out that the Spanish workers in 1931 were thinking only of overthrowing the monarch (as presumably the Belgians today), and the French workers only of the 40-hour week.

In 1940 Trotsky's *Manifesto* had not the faintest breath of retrogression or belief that the workers for forty years have been dominated by "the true bourgeois tradition of revisionism" (p. 340) *He says the exact opposite.* For him in 1939 the workers wanted to "tear themselves free from the bloody chaos" of capitalist society. In 1940 they had "lost practically all democratic and pacifist illusions." Note that we are here a stage beyond 1848. The crimes and failures of the modern bourgeoisie have created the *subjective consciousness* of the modern proletariat which re-enforces the objective antagonism of developed modern industry. Trotsky calmly posed three possibilities. The victory of Anglo-American imperialism, an indecisive struggle, and the victory of Hitler in Europe. The last concerns us most. Fascism would over-run Europe. But that would only be a prelude to a ferocious war with the U. S. The perspective of soviets, armed insurrection and the social revolution would remain. As industry had developed since 1848, so the crisis of 1940 presented us with antagonisms a thousand times more developed including a socialist proletariat. Yet there is never a word from the retrogressionists as to the relation of their theory to the perspectives of the leader of the Fourth International.

Historical Retrogression

What would be a retrogression? In the Junius pamphlet (1914) Rosa Luxemburg, although opposed to the imperialist war, put forward a program which did *not* call for social revolution. Lenin attacked this as a national program. The "objective historical" situation demanded the socialist revolution. He said that a throw-back in Europe, i.e., retrogression, was not *impossible*, if the war ENDED in the domination of Europe by one state. . . . This was exactly Trotsky's point when he emphasized that even if Hitler won in 1940, he would have to fight the United States. The war, i.e., the bourgeois crisis would not be *ended*. If, continued Lenin, the proletariat remained impotent for twenty years. Who, who (now) dares to say that the European proletariat is impotent? But the impotence of the whole European proletariat for twenty years would not be retrogression. *In addition*, for the same twenty years, the American and the Japanese proletariat must fail to achieve a socialist revolution. Then, and only then, after several decades, or in the time of our sons' sons (Trotsky in 1938) would the revolutionary socialist movement recognize retrogression and

once more raise the national program of the restoration of the bourgeois national state.*

But the retrogressionists, the vanguard of the vanguard, no sooner saw Hitler dominating Europe, then in the very midst of the war, when the whole situation was in flux, they proclaimed their labor camp theory and a "democratic-political revolution" for national independence and democracy. Not only that. Their economic analysis (such as it is) leads them to foresee that the victorious imperialist nations, Anglo-American and Russian imperialism, will continue the same process. Hence their "democratic political revolution" still holds the stage.

Two Types of Democratic Demands

It should be obvious that what Lenin said about "democratic demands" has nothing at all to do with this dispute. It would be a crying and intolerable imposition to attempt to confuse the two. For Lenin all democratic demands in advanced countries were a means of mobilizing workers to overthrow the bourgeoisie. *He* said that we could have socialist revolution without one democratic demand being realized. The retrogressionists say we must have a "democratic-political revolution" so as to give the workers a chance to "reconstruct" the whole "screwed-back development," and to learn to link scientific socialism to the labor movement. The two perspectives are at opposite poles. Never before has any revolutionary made such a proposal. Trotsky proposed that the democratic slogans of right to organize and free press be raised in fascist countries, but warned that they should not be a "noose fastened to the neck of the proletariat by the bourgeoisie's agents." (Founding Conference.) Writing of "transitional demands in fascist countries," he warned: "Fascism plunged these countries into political barbarism. But it did not change their social structure. Fascism is a tool in the hands of finance-capital and not of feudal landowners. A revolutionary program should base itself on the dialectics of the class struggle, obligatory also to fascist countries, and not on the psychology of terrified bankrupts." For him the Soviets "will cover Germany before a new Constitutional Assembly will gather in Weimar."** But the retrogressionists do not propose democratic demands which are to be thrown aside as soon as the masses move. They do the exact opposite. They propose a *revolution* for democratic demands. What is this but a rejection of the social revolution until later when the whole "screwed-back development" will have been "reconstructed." This is the theory. Let us see how it measures up to events.

J. R. JOHNSON.

(The concluding part will appear in the next issue.)

*That, said Lenin, was not impossible. But a few months later he said emphatically that the victorious bourgeoisie might think they could do this, but they could not. The economic retrogression of Europe by political means would be a colossal, in fact, an impossible task. (Collected Works, XIX, p. 22.)

**Those who want to use the fact that this did not happen are free to try. They should, however, think many times before they begin this type of argument.

THE TRUTH ABOUT INDIA:

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Correspondence . . .

March 17, 1945.

To the Editorial Board of *Labor Action*,
New York, N. Y.
Comrades:

We have just received a copy of your issue of December 11, 1944, in which appears, under the title: "A Letter from German Socialists," a statement made in the name of the "Committee Abroad of the IKD."

The very fact that this committee has sent you this letter, which you introduce as coming from "our" comrades, is a disgraceful action on the part of a leadership claiming to "represent" a section of the Fourth International. But that is a matter which will be settled within the ranks of the Fourth International itself.

The Committee of the IKD, by its letter, and you, by endorsing it, endeavor to throw suspicion upon the information published concerning the activity of the Fourth International on the European continent under the yoke of the Gestapo. You present this information as unreliable and unverifiable. But in spite of the still difficult communication, you were not—at the time of your publication—altogether ignorant of parts of this activity, of the clandestine meetings, the illegal publications, the many victims. You affect to ignore this and are very eager to show your *political* hostility by publishing a scandalous letter: German militants have forgotten or have been unable to register with the so-called IKD leadership before being murdered by the Gestapo. Therefore, they are not Fourth Internationalists! The Stalinist slanders against us are more dangerous, but certainly no more odious, than the alleged objectivity to which you pretend.

In fact, the comrades here are now in direct contact with the European parties, and the information to which the "Committee Abroad of the IKD" objected was information given directly by the provisional European Secretariat of the Fourth International.

In the above-mentioned statement, the so-called leadership of the IKD and yourself ignore and refuse to recognize the members of the Fourth International, militants who have propagated the program of the Fourth International under the Gestapo terror. It is obvious that this so-called leadership of the IKD and yourself, having both abandoned fundamental points of the Bolshevik-Leninist program, are only recognizing each other in order to fight against the program of the Fourth International and the organizations struggling for it.

To conclude, may we add that, at present, the groups which had fought each other bitterly for many years, are either unified or attempting to unite on the basic program of the Fourth International. Conditions in Europe are sweeping away those who have used revolutionary words to cover their skepticism and they are leaving room only for those who really take the revolu-

tionary struggle to heart. The distance which is separating you from the comrades in Europe should incite you to some caution in dealing with them.

Bolshevik-Leninist greetings.

A GROUP OF EUROPEAN EMIGRES,
Members of the Fourth International.

P. S.—Copies of this letter have been sent to *The Socialist Appeal*, London, and *The Militant*, New York.

Statement of IKD

On December 11, 1944, *Labor Action* published an open letter of information which was addressed "To the Editorial Boards of *The Socialist Appeal* (London), *The Militant* (New York) and *Labor Action* (New York)." We, the AK of the IKD (the Committee Abroad of the International Communists of Germany) wanted to make public through this letter that the IKD could not possibly be identified with a certain "German group in France" whose actions had been related in a letter from the European secretariat of the Fourth International. The main paragraph of our letter of information read as follows:

We are not in a position to lay claim to the aforesaid "German group" as part of the German section of the Fourth International. To be sure, the IKD (International Communists of Germany) was the only *German* organization that belonged to the Fourth International, in France as well as in Belgium, Holland, England, Norway, etc. However, as far as we are able to do so, we should like to avoid the impression that we (*the IKD*) succeeded, after the catastrophe in France, in leaving behind a group that "published a printed paper." To judge from the name of the paper,¹ it is most likely a few *Austrian* comrades who are involved, who belonged neither to the IKD nor to the Fourth.² We have no reason, therefore, to lay any claim to them today, and must wait for further information to confirm or refute our supposition.

In addition to the above statement of fact, we asked all comrades (anyone) to help us gather information about the fate of those of our friends who remained in France. That was all.

The Militant, although it published the letter of the European secretariat, had no room for our essential information. The same is true of the *Fourth International*, which now (July, 1945) enters the faction fight with a "Protest" against our letter of information. The "Protest" comes from those well-known European comrades who once before supplied the *FI* with a polemical powder-keg (see "The Higher School of Polemics"). We shall not do them the honor here to investigate their indignation in

1. *Arbeiter und Soldat* (Worker and Soldier).

2. The Austrian group of whom we are thinking is described correctly in a report from a French comrade as being "ultra-left" and anti-Trotskyist.

much detail. It is only too well known in the SWP that there was no other German organization that belonged to the Fourth International, outside of the IKD. And in as much as the "Protest" admits that "German militants have forgotten or have been unable to register with the so-called IKD leadership before being murdered by the Gestapo," everything is in order. We only repeat then: We left no group in France that would have been able to put out a printed newspaper. In all modesty, we of the IKD take credit for many sacrifices and casualties in France, but for no heroic deeds. The credit is due to those who had "forgotten" or else were "not in a position" to join the IKD. So why all the noise?

The SWP is at constant variance with us and intends to fish in the beclouded puddle of factional maneuvers. With the help of the European comrades, it wants to establish a counterbalance to the inconvenient IKD. For this reason the SWP is spreading slander, gossip and dirt with this implication: The IKD is not the "real" IKD. There is also an opposition (namely, those "European comrades" who don't belong to the IKD) which should really be considered as the "real" IKD. In their turn, the European comrades (they have long been waiting for their turn to come) who are old-timers as far as mud-dragging is concerned, write:

"It is obvious that this so-called leadership of the IKD and yourself (by this meaning *Labor Action*), having both abandoned fundamental points (?) of the Bolshevik-Leninist program (?), are only recognizing each other in order to fight against the program (?) of the Fourth International and the organizations struggling for it."

Hurray, dear friends; you have done well in copying this from E. R. Frank and other honorable members of the SWP! You are really "recognizing each other" and as identical twins you wear identical clothes. We wish you good results and some more "fundamental points." But alas, the poor readers of the *FI* will have to wait some more centuries for your "proofs."

Foundation of Our Information

We would have wasted no words at the time about the whole affair if it had been a question of formality or even of discipline. Just as little was it a matter of those cheap "principles" sold by the SWP (a penny apiece). On the contrary, we were here in deliberate opposition to those practices of the SWP, which have nothing to do with politics.³ There were concrete political

3. Here are two examples: The English Workers International League (despite our vote) had to wait for years to be recognized because, supposedly, they had infringed upon the discipline ordered from America. This was only a matter of alleged disciplinary infraction, as the political development of the League was proved correct, while the IS was incorrect; the League showed a sound politi-

circumstances that induced us to send our letter of information.

Beyond a doubt the majority of the Fourth International is made up of ultra-leftist sectarians, that is, passive theorists who spend their time printing self-contradictory statements. In one case, though, they seem to have carried their ultra-leftist heroism so far as to lead to simple adventurism, and that was in the case of the "German group" discussed above. The German Trotskyists in France (not to be confused with the IKD) have published a newspaper under the name of *Arbeiter und Soldat* (*Worker and Soldier*). Aside from the French organs, the rest of the Fourth International press, (*Militant*, *FI*, *Socialist Appeal*) also published enthusiastic reports about this German paper. With special diligence this was prominently put forth:

"It was in connection with the activity round this paper that thirty German soldiers were murdered by the Gestapo. The leader of this group, Comrade Wintley, was murdered by the Gestapo."

That sounds serious at first, and at this point we want to put the question of Com-

cal and organizational development, while the "official" English section remained a tiny and politically dead sect. But formal, bureaucratic and political viewpoints (matters of prestige) triumphed. The League remained "unofficial" until the SWP (unfortunately with the excellent assistance of Comrade D. Logan), after extensive maneuvers, succeeded in imposing its bureaucratic will. Ever since, the habits of the SWP are not held in high regard by the English comrades. They lack only the deeper insight that the miserable "organizational methods" of the SWP are simply the Ersatz for politics. On the other hand, one day the Italian group was attacked by an editorial in *The Militant*, because they had "forgotten" to express the SWP position on the Russian question. The Italians were given a flat ultimatum: either commit yourself in no uncertain terms to the "defense of the SU" or... the Fourth International has no room for you. When we via IS came out against this overbearing editorial, we did so, among other reasons, with the reference that the "unconditional defense of the SU" is neither a principle nor a "fundamental point in the program." According to Trotsky, it is possible to be against the "defense of the Soviet Union" and still be a member of the Fourth International. But the Italian comrades did not even come out against this proposition. They "forgot" (if you like) and were busy with their own political problems. The IS gave us their answer through E. R. Frank: "I don't care for what the Italian comrades are doing. I ask them for principles." Napoleon has spoken, but it doesn't concern him whether or how his soldiers are fighting. He is a second Othello. There arose a "terrible suspicion" in him. Then with a drawn dagger beneath his cloak, waking as Othello over Desdemona, he asked the Italian comrades with a voice from the grave, "Have you already said your prayers for the SU tonight?" As a result of which the Italian revolution was victorious and all because of the "principled leadership" in New York. In any case one can easily draw a picture, judging from these examples, of the righteous hypocrisy of the SWP and the "European comrades." Whole sections of the International are maltreated, without a single political reason to show for it. Then they "protest" (basing themselves in a revolutionary-sentimental appeal on the "fight" of the comrades in France, whom they had previously abused in England and Italy) against information, which was presented in a positive manner and which presented neither an ultimatum nor conditions, nor dealt with "principles" or discipline."

rade Wintley and the German soldiers (as individuals) out of the way. In other words, the good will, the courage, the idealism, the devotion and the self-sacrifice of all those who took part cannot in the least be doubted. They died as victims of fascism. Let us honor their memory and their personal valor.

But, on the other hand, we have been, are and remain convinced that in Germany, France, etc., it is not the coming "proletarian revolution," but rather serious political work and revolutionary preparation that was then and is now the immediate task. For this reason we are fighting against this kind of intellectual, political and physical juggling with revolution, which not only doesn't advance our cause, but which is also ruining the Fourth International. According to present reports, for instance, the number of casualties in the French organization is much higher compared to that of other French parties. For us this fact becomes a serious political question and is not necessarily anything of which to be proud. If we are mistaken, please enlighten us, but we conjecture that the high number of casualties is the result of the inability of the French comrades to protect themselves through the existing mass movement (resistance); the inability to "lose" themselves in it, and with its help to carry on work, etc. Instead, they depended on inadequate, illegal methods, on political isolation, and were unnecessarily endangered for the sake of "radical" aims. The bitter truth is in the fact that the French organization (as the whole of the Fourth International) did not want to have anything to do with the national resistance movement and that they condemned the slogan of "national insurrection" as being "vulgar and deceptive." It happens, though, that this vulgar and deceptive slogan expresses the whole immediate necessity of the masses, who therefore left the FI alone. Result—heroic sacrifices and nothing else.

Therefore, when we learned that *Arbeiter und Soldat* had so many casualties, we wanted to be careful and distinguish ourselves from them politically. We would have been grateful if the "European comrades" had informed us whether the publishers of *Arbeiter und Soldat* were really German comrades or whether they were members of a certain Austrian group, which is known to us (and we emphasize) as being adventurous and ultra-left. We had said: "We must wait for further information to confirm or refute our supposition." But instead of further information we are flooded by a river of dirt and indignation in the form of a "Protest." However, no cause is served by that and this political question still remains unanswered:

What attitude should be taken toward the *Arbeiter und Soldat*, which in May, '44 (in France), calls on the German worker to establish a workers' state by overthrowing the capitalists? What should one say when this paper prints this headline on its front page:

"As of May 1st, 1944, the Road to the Revolution!"

In our opinion, this sort of thing should not be encouraged (as is done by *The Militant*, *FI* and *Socialist Appeal*) but one

should rather have a critical attitude and say: Just because Comrade Wintley and the German soldiers meant well does not change the fact that they were on the wrong road. Only when the European Executive Committee (which worked together with the German group and followed the same ultra-left politics) and the Fourth International free themselves from this grotesque "Course Toward the Revolution" and the eternal setting up of a workers' state—only then shall the danger of adventurism be banned. Only when the Fourth relearns completely, begins to synchronize practical methods with concrete political tasks shall the thirty-one casualties in connection with *Arbeiter und Soldat* have any political meaning. At times it is much "easier" to die for a great ideal than to be able to live for the same ideal; that is, to realize it through the use of correct politics.

All this is temporary conjecture and is aimed at the representation in the "official" press of the Fourth. Outside of this, though, the whole is not yet explained. Several versions exist and we should like to come back to the case as soon as the correct version is ascertained. Again we ask our friends (and enemies) to help us obtain more facts, reports and other material concerning the case. Beyond this, we wish and are striving for the reorganization of all known German groups (which has now again become possible). But despite this we shall never by-pass for the sake of a factional advance, a political question in one case which we would otherwise criticize in another (SWP).

FOR THE AK OF THE IKD.

London, August 15, 1945.

To the Editors.

Dear Comrades:

The article, "The International Significance of the British Elections," by A. Arlins, in the October issue of *THE NEW INTERNATIONAL* is printed without any comment by the editors. Yet the "retrogression theory," which is the basis of the analysis in the article, has never been adopted as the position of the party, or even discussed to any extent in our party. The article, in effect, rejects the theses laid down by the Fourth International, which includes the "Transitional Program" as our strategy in this period of the "Death Agony of Capitalism" and upon which our party stands. At least we have never rejected the main line of these theses, nor have there been any proposals to reject them. Arlins' article throws out the window the basic Marxist tenet that the working class has the task of emancipating humanity (substituting the concept that the emancipation of humanity is the task of... humanity). And it heaps abuse upon our sister sections of the Fourth International.

In order to really deal with Comrade Arlins' article it would be necessary to demonstrate the incorrectness of his theory of retrogression. That can hardly be the job of this letter, except in so far as it calls attention to the political results of that theory as shown in his article. I want instead to deal briefly with the other points made above.

1. In the place of the transitional pro-

gram as the strategy through which the masses are set on the road to proletarian revolution, the article substitutes national rebellions of the peoples leading to socialism. It should be noted that the official party position on the national question points out the importance of giving a class content to the slogan of national liberation and poses the perspective of proletarian revolution through the development of dual power (workers' councils).

Example of Trotsky

The theses, resolutions, etc., of the "official Fourth" are characterized by Arlins as "simply a dead alphabet for the feeble minded," etc. To make very clear that he rejects the whole strategy of the Fourth International for our epoch, he points proudly to the fact that in previous writings he and his collaborators "did not occupy themselves with 'proletarian' revolutionary prospects. Except for scorn and contempt, not a single word will be found in all our writings about all this revolution rubbish of the Fourth." The chief reason why occupying oneself with proletarian prospects is "revolution rubbish," according to Arlins, is the non-existence or smallness of a revolutionary vanguard. When Leon Trotsky wrote his thesis on the "Death Agony of Capitalism," the proletarian vanguard was also small and in many countries non-existent. And undoubtedly Comrade Arlins must put into the category of "revolution rubbish" a blazing headline in *Labor Action* some time ago which read "The Italian Revolution Has Begun." Further, Arlins suggests that the Fourth International "prohibit itself for two years (just as a test!) from even speaking of the proletarian revolution and its leadership by the Fourth." He should undertake a polemic against Trotsky, who did not hesitate to call upon the Spanish workers during the Civil War or the French workers in '36 to make their proletarian revolutions, despite the fact that the Fourth in those countries at the time was anything but mass parties.

2. But Comrade Arlins' rejection of proletarian revolutionary prospects is really based on his theory that the emancipation of humanity is the task of...humanity. To quote, "the development enters into a stage in an immediately practical sense, in which the realization of socialism is no longer chiefly the task of the working class but the equally immediately practical task of humanity itself." We were taught by Marx that the task of emancipating humanity is the historic mission of the working class; not because we are anxious for the working class to have the sole honor, but for the scientific reason that the working class, by virtue of its rôle in production, is the only group in society capable of creating the dictatorship of the proletariat, which, to repeat more ABC's, is the precondition for socialism. Obviously, that non-class entity, "humanity," cannot create a class state, however much the working class state will need the support of all sections of capitalist-oppressed humanity.

On Status of Proletariat

Comrade Arlins has replaced the working class with "humanity" because for him

Marx's theory of the ever-increasing concentration of the proletariat is a "mechanical conception" which he replaces with "The new quality which forces its way through more and more in imperialism is called the decentralization of the proletariat, atomization, splintering."

No one can deny that one of the political consequences of fascism for the working class movement is the atomization of the proletariat (although hardly forever). This political fact Arlins confuses with the economic fact that capitalism, especially in the era of monopoly imperialism, increases the concentration of the proletariat, with the consequent socialization of labor. It is precisely this socialization of labor which is the basis for socialism. This tendency is, if anything, strengthened by fascism.

3. It is no wonder that Arlins discovers that "outside of England, there is no labor movement in the world." Not in France, Holland, Belgium, Italy, Norway, Sweden, Canada, Australia, America? Arlins' "partiality" to the English extends even to the English section of the Fourth International (despite its adherence to the "theses for the feeble-minded"). It, presumably, is exempt from the "Political sterility, confusion, theoretical and propagandistic unscrupulousness, ludicrous phrasemongering and factional maneuver..." and the "legendary internationalism" of the Fourth International. Its exemption seems to be based on its "excellently conducted election campaign," which is a sign that it is a "politically oriented organization."

I, too, think that the work of the English comrades is "excellent." But excellent organizational work must have some connection with a political line. The politics of the English Trotskyists is based on the theses of the Fourth International. Its newspaper continually talks about proletarian revolution, the transitional program, it is very friendly to the SWP in this country, etc. This, according to Arlins, should condemn it to "political sterility."

The French Movement

But the English Trotskyists are exempted from the wholesale condemnation of the Fourth International which Arlins indulges in. The French comrades do not come off so easily. They are hit with every brick in Arlins' arsenal. Now, Arlins is quite correct to criticize the French comrades if they were in "deserted factories" during the Nazi occupation. It is pretty stupid for anybody, let alone revolutionists, to hang out in deserted factories. I have the impression, however, from reprints of *Vérité* in *The Militant*, that our French comrades were engaged in more creative revolutionary activity during the occupation. Nevertheless, if they spent any time at all in deserted factories while the masses were elsewhere, their error should be pointed out. But the criticism should be made in a comradely tone. Instead, Arlins relegates them to political limbo.

If it is possible to take a friendly attitude toward the English despite their support of Stalin's army, it should be possible to see some hope for the French section of the Fourth International despite its alleged mis-

takes during the occupation. After all, both sections have fundamentally the same political line. And, after all, the French comrades must be somewhat "politically oriented." They have just conducted an election campaign in which they received 8,000 votes in one section of Paris, and well over 2,000 votes in Grenoble. Quite a feat for politically sterile people in a country which doesn't even have a labor movement.

I imagine, however, that Arlins will fail to see the votes gotten by the French Trotskyists, in the same way that he fails to see a labor movement in France. His blindness is caused by the reactionary-pessimistic tint of the glasses through which he looks at the development of the workers' revolution.

The editors of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL should make it clear to the magazine's readers that Arlins' views are not the official views of our party and that his attitude toward the Fourth International is not our attitude.

Fraternally,
RUTH PHILLIPS.

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