

# **THE NEW INTERNATIONAL**

**A MONTHLY ORGAN OF REVOLUTIONARY MARXISM**

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**The LaFollette Progressives**

**An Editorial**



**Labor Politics and the Crisis**

**By David Cowles**



**Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg**

**By Max Shachtman**



**Why We Quit the Communist Party**

**By Charles Rappoport**

France

**By the Communists**

Palestine



**The Mexican Land Problem**

**By Bernard Ross**



**Book Reviews**

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# At Home

THE April issue of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL, from numerous reports at hand, everywhere sold more readily than all preceding issues. The greater variety of articles was favorably commented upon. In New York, Chicago and elsewhere, C.P.ers, anarchists and Lovestone supporters went for the April issue.

The Berkeley, Calif., Y.P.S.L. Circle made the most substantial gains in past weeks. The Circle now sells 50 copies; starting with ten, there has been an increase each month. Fine work, Berkeley!

Chicago continues to do splendidly with the magazine. Karl Shier reports steady progress and rising interest. Comrade Max Weinrib disposed of 15 copies; another 15 were sold at a meeting on the Trials. Over 350 copies continue to be disposed of monthly. On April 16, Chicago comrades held an affair for the benefit of the N.I.

St. Louis, Mo. has increased its bundle to 30 and handled extra copies for the Widick mass meeting. "April issue very good," writes Dave Burbank. Columbus, Morris Slavin, agent, likewise increased its order to 25, with an extra five for April. Likewise, Detroit. Austin, Minn., and Louisville, Ky., are disposing of small bundles. New orders have come in from Aberdeen, Scotland; Baltimore, Md.; Reading, Pa.; and Leeds, England. Agent M. Kahn, London, increased bundle order and Johannesburg, South Africa, increased once again. Clapham Socialist Book Shop, London, now disposes of 50 copies, but say they expect "to increase the order very materially in near future". Mark Hall, Fresno, Calif., writes, "Sales picking up; the N.I. is excellent." In Boston, "the April issue has been selling very well," writes T. Leonard; "the stores alone having disposed of 24 out of 34 copies so far".

Montreal, Que., comrade comments that the "April issue contains real meaty articles, immediately noticeable".

Some of the New York Y.P.S.L. Circles proceeded to take an interest in the THE NEW INTERNATIONAL. The best was the City College Circle which handled 40 copies. New York Y.P.S.L.s have still a very long way to go before it can be said that they come near the Y.P.S.L.s in other cities in interest and activity for the N.I. The N.I. sales in New York Party branches are taking on more stable forms under comrade Abe Miller's able direction. Subscriptions too have improved a bit in New York.

Quakertown, Pa., increased its order again, and in Pittsburgh a sympathizer, M.K., sells the magazine and places the N.I. on stands. Cleveland sales, Gerry Arnold, agent, are steadily improving. In Toronto, Canada, despite difficulties, more copies are sold each month. And in

# THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

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VOLUME IV                      MAY 1938                      NUMBER 5 (WHOLE No. 20)

Published monthly by the New International Publishing Company, 116 University Place, New York, N. Y. Telephone: ALgonquin 4-8547. Subscription rates: \$2.00 per year; bundles: 14c for 5 copies and up. Canada and Foreign: \$2.50 per year; bundles 18c for 5 copies and up. Single copy: 20c. Entered as second-class matter December 9, 1937, at the post office at New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879.

Editorial Board: JAMES BURNHAM, MAX SHACHTMAN, MAURICE SPECTOR.  
Business Manager: MARTIN ABERN

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Vancouver, B.C., "The N.I. is getting a nice reception. My newsstand sold six of last issue and is sure to sell more when it is known the stand handles the magazine," writes G.S.

Comrade Chester Johnson, Minneapolis, says: "The magazine meets with a very good response and we expect to be able to dispose of a larger bundle soon." A "Newsletter" concerning the N.I. and other Party literature was recently circulated among intellectuals, University of Minnesota teachers and students. Newsstands also handle the N.I.

A number of new agents are at work now for THE NEW INTERNATIONAL: E. Dean, Berkeley, Calif.; Ruth Querio, Allentown, Pa.; R. Ronald Larson, Kansas City; Karl Martin, Lynn, Mass.; Eloise Booth, San Francisco; John Murphy, Los Angeles, Calif.; Norman Gailar, Rochester, N.Y. (Y.P.S.L.). They are all on the job, even as are tested, reliable agents like Martell, Akron; Sol Thomas, Philadelphia; Morris Gandelman, New Haven; V. Harris, Hartford; C. Hess, Rochester; E. Paniceli, Detroit; Selander, Toledo; Eliz. Ryan, Oakland; R. Negin, Newark, N. J.; D. Herreshoff, San Diego; and others.

Bundle orders are becoming stabilized, as well as increasing, in the United States and also in Canada, South Africa, Australia, England and Scotland. This is evidence that THE NEW INTERNATIONAL has a number of thousand of steady readers, and there is reason to feel confident of the magazine's future on that score. Subscriptions, however, are the best

and surest base for the maintenance and development of such a publication as THE NEW INTERNATIONAL. Concerted efforts by the Party and Y.P.S.L. branches and Circles can convert at least hundreds of these readers of the N.I. into subscribers. The summer period is shortly ahead. Only through subscriptions can persons desiring to read the magazine be sure to get their copies. We request all branches to give consideration to an early subscription drive. There has been a pick-up in subscriptions in the past weeks, but largely through the direct promotion efforts of the business office, rather than the branches. But subscriptions, it is thus shown, can be obtained quite readily if members and branches will proceed to systematic visiting of prospects. The Upper West Side Branch in New York, as a branch, and its individual members, have the best record in sub-getting.

Comments on the N.I. from various sources continue to be laudatory and also confirm subscription possibilities if followed through.

So we move ahead, but not swiftly nor surely enough to make certain the maintenance of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL, much less its extension to 48 pages, which is our objective. Enlargements and improvements are possible — with your help. How? More and large bundle orders. Donations and affairs for the benefit of the magazine. Why not arrange a picnic now? *And more subscriptions!*

# Notes

WE ARE continually reminded by our printer that his type is not made of rubber and consequently will not stretch. This is one way of explaining the difficulty we encounter with every issue of our review when the problem arises of including all the significant subjects of the day that should be covered and the articles that have been written on them and submitted for publication.

As may have been noticed by our readers, we use no cartoons or photographs and the space allotted to advertisements is held down to an absolute minimum. Virtually every page is filled with solid reading matter (some readers say, too solid; but we are so anxious to utilize every bit of available space for our articles). Our 32 pages therefore contain more reading material in an average issue than is contained in the usual magazine of twice the number of pages. As a rule, an issue of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL contains as much as 40,000 words of reading matter, the equivalent of half the average novel.

In spite of this, however, we are obliged each month to hold over important articles and if they do not always appear in the issue where they would be most timely, we beg our readers to bear with us.

Among the articles that will appear in the June issue of the review is one that deals with the Kenosha convention of the Socialist party and the future prospects of the Thomas movement in the United States. Although the convention passed by almost like a ship in the night, without arousing any particular comment in the labor movement, it nevertheless has a distinct significance as a stage in the evolution of the American section of the Second International.

Another article that is being planned for publication is a reply to the essay by Max Eastman in a recent issue of *Harper's Magazine* on Russia and the socialist ideal. The essay has caused some stir in the radical movement especially because of Eastman's long association with it and because of his friendship for the Trotskyist movement when it was first launched in the Soviet Union. His virtual break with all the basic conceptions of the revolutionary socialist movement in the *Harper's* article will be subjected to analysis in our pages by one of the editors.

Another article of topical interest is "Five Years of the New Deal", a balance-sheet of the Roosevelt Administration drawn up by Maurice Spector. Too often the New Deal is discussed only in its isolated aspects, with a distorted picture resulting. The Spector article will endeavor to present the picture as a whole, as it appears from its inception to its present hapless state.

And, besides these, others and more of them.

# The Editor's Comments

THE OLD TWO-PARTY SYSTEM IN THE UNITED STATES IS DYING—THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RIFTS IN THE LOOSE COALITION THAT BROUGHT THE ROOSEVELT NEW DEAL INTO OFFICE—THE ANTI-ROOSEVELT BLOC IN CONGRESS AND THE WAGES-HOURS BILL—ROOSEVELT, BACK TO WHERE HE STARTED, PROPOSES A NEW SPENDING PROGRAM—THE TIMID LOCHINVAR FROM WISCONSIN AND THE IMPENDING POLITICAL REGROUPMENT IN THE U. S.

FOR THREE QUARTERS of a century, the Democratic-Republican "two-party system" has provided an adequate framework for United States politics. New party forays, as in the case of Theodore Roosevelt's effort in 1912 or the elder LaFollette's in 1924, spurted momentarily on a national scale, but were rapidly engulfed. The Progressive Party endured as a family domain in Wisconsin; the Farmer-Labor Party held on from the Non-Partisan League's sowing in Minnesota; but no new organization took root in *national* politics.

True enough, the "artificiality" of the two-party system has, since the war, been more and more widely recognized and admitted. No dominant issues any longer divided the Democratic and Republican parties. Their programs, leaders, and memberships did not represent important divisions in social and class forces. Their electoral campaigns were to a large extent simply bureaucratic struggles for the spoils of office. Nevertheless, while United States capitalism continued on the ascendant, while the illusions of American exceptionalism and the dreams of the new era held in their grasp all sections of the people, the system held well enough together. The brutal hammering of years of unrelenting crisis was required to knock out its props.

We are now witnessing the collapse of this traditional framework of United States bourgeois politics. The Democratic and Republican parties, maintained along the old lines, are no longer sufficient to hold within bounds the straining social forces. Names and labels are secondary; the name of one of the parties may be kept by what will be in actuality a new party. But that the old two-party system is dying, is on its death-bed, is now clear beyond question.

Indeed, it was really not the old Democratic party that won the 1936 election. It was Roosevelt and the New Deal that won. Roosevelt was in fact the candidate of a *coalition*, a coalition which utilized the emblem of the Democratic party for electoral purposes. This coalition comprised the ultra-reactionary Southern groups—the permanent backbone of the Democratic party, the unscrupulous and efficient city-machines of the North (Tammany, Hague, Pendergast . . .), the proletariat brought in through the trade union bureaucracy, and a large percentage of the farmers enlisted through the New Deal agricultural subsidies. The fact that Roosevelt was a coalition candidate, and not the candidate of the old relatively unified Democratic party, was shown during the campaign in a number of ways. Roosevelt himself made his own personal campaign, in comparative independence of the party. Many influential, one hundred percent Democratic stalwarts, like Alfred E. Smith, John W. Davis (both former Presidential candidates of the party), John J. Raskob (formerly chairman of the National Committee), broke with the coalition and supported Landon. The city machines likewise conducted their own campaigns,

often with an entirely different political content from Roosevelt's. The labor bureaucrats organized their section of the vote in their own way, going so far in New York as to found a new party organization.

## Congress and the Party Labels

IT WAS A FOREGONE conclusion that this loose coalition, formed under the label of the Democratic party, an amalgam of incompatible social forces, could not hold together under the pressure of crucial events. The honeymoon was brief indeed. The enormous nominal Democratic majority in both Houses of Congress crumbled last year at the first severe test: the Court Reorganization Bill. In the struggle over this Bill, a more natural lineup—with the Southern Democrats and the bulk of the Republicans on the one side, the New Deal Democrats and a few progressive Republicans on the other—emerged. In the Special Session, this division was deepened and clarified.

In the current session, the hardening of the new division dominates every particular issue: the filibuster over the Anti-Lynch Bill, the fight over the Executive Reorganization Bill, the Wages and Hours Bill, the "spending program". In each case we find virtually the same list of Roosevelt Congressmen versus the anti-Roosevelt bloc: in numbers nearly even, with the few in the center able to swing the result in one direction or the other. It is noticeable, as the development continues, that the more reactionary Northern Congressmen, like for example Senator Copeland of New York, get into harness with their more natural allies in the anti-Roosevelt bloc.

The fight over the Executive Reorganization Bill can be understood only as a testing of this new axis. After all of the concessions and amendments, there was certainly nothing in the Bill itself to arouse so almost unprecedented a storm. Many of its provisions have long been commonplaces in Washington, championed conspicuously though unsuccessfully by Hoover both while he was in the Cabinet and while President. Most of the proposals were, as claimed by the Administration, technical measures designed to increase the efficiency and workability of the bureaucracy. It is true that in some respects the Bill strengthened the hand of the Executive as against the Legislative branch of the government; and it was this aspect which explains and justifies the adverse vote of the Farmer-Labor Senators and Representatives. Nevertheless, this aspect was by no means dominant; some of the measures, such as the so hotly debated proposed office of an Auditor-General, would in point of fact have increased Congressional control over expenditures. But the specific Bill itself was, of course, forgotten. What was at issue was Roosevelt and his brand of social-reformism; and, by what was probably the closest

vote in the House ever recorded on a major question, this was defeated by opposition from the right.

## Politicians in Search of a Program

THE GREAT WEAKNESS of the anti-Roosevelt bloc is that it has no program, hardly even the pretense of a program. It borrows what ideology it has from the National Association of Manufacturers. But all of the impassioned talk about "no governmental interference", elimination of taxes which "hurt business", "giving private industry a chance", stopping government "punitive" measures against "legitimate" business, and the rest, is not merely reactionary but, under current conditions, stupid. These conceptions are all entirely negative, while the popular mind searches for, at the very least, some kind of positive answers. What mass strength the anti-Roosevelt bloc has derives not from anything which it has itself to offer, but from the new depression and the ever more apparent failure of the New Deal. In the last two regular sessions of Congress, and in the Special Session, the anti-Roosevelt bloc has not made a single proposal of its own on any important issue.

Roosevelt's program, also, it may be remarked, is pretty thoroughly deflated. It was pleasant, a year and a half ago, to say complacently, as the business index rose: "We planed it that way." Now, with the index dropping almost vertically, that easy phrase is a bitter thorn in the New Deal flank. Nevertheless, some shreds and tatters of the New Deal program still remain; and Roosevelt has added to them his clear-cut preparation for the new war. In these lies Roosevelt's remaining strength, still enough to hold for a while longer majority popular support.

On the heels of the defeat on the Reorganization Bill, the New Deal introduces a Wages and Hours Bill. It is a miserable enough bill, surely! It provides initially, in the case of a severely restricted section of industry, for a twenty-five cents an hour minimum wage and a forty-eight hour maximum working week, with the prospect of a forty cents minimum wage, forty hour maximum week to be reached in gradual stages over a period of years. Allowances for all kinds of "exceptions" are liberally included. The bill, of course, does not touch the problem of unemployment; and its forty-eight hour week has little relevance to the vast number of employed workers now on schedules of from ten to twenty hours. What a commentary this bill is on the functioning of United States capitalism! That, in a land of incomparable material and technical resources, the idea of a twenty-five cents minimum wage should be looked on as a "progressive step"!

Even such a bill, however, is too "socialistic", too corrosive of the fundamentals of American democracy, for the anti-Roosevelt bloc. It was reported favorably by the Labor Committee in the House, only to be buried by the nominally Democratic Rules Committee. Roosevelt has intervened to try to force consideration on the floor through petition (which must be signed by 218 members); but it is doubtful that the session will continue long enough to permit success for this manœuvre. Interestingly enough, the bill in its present form, unlike the two forms previously introduced, does not establish any wage differentials between the North and the South. This omission, guaranteeing beyond any kind of question the solid opposition of the Southern Congressmen, seems to be a New Deal recognition of the depth of the gulf in the Democratic party.

Defeat of the Wages and Hours Bill, nevertheless, does not weaken Roosevelt's mass support but rather helps sustain it. In particular, it aids the labor bureaucrats in their strategy of keeping the workers harnessed to New Dealism, since they can argue that Roosevelt, in spite of his inadequacies, is still their champion as against the right. And the Stalinists likewise—though they are careful never to remind their followers just what the shabby provisions of the Wages and Hours Bill specifically are—can con-

tinue demanding unity of all democratic and progressive forces against reaction.

The new "spending program", recently launched by a message to Congress and a Fireside Chat, is in reality Roosevelt's confession of the bankruptcy of the New Deal. After the five brave years we are right back where the only thing to do is to throw in a few more billion stop-gap dollars; all the grandiose plans and schemes have served only to expose more glaringly the insurmountable weaknesses of American capitalism. And the spending program itself is a pitiful gesture. It is advertised as a "\$4,500,000,000 measure", but this is not at all accurate. The de-sterilization of the gold fund does not represent new pump-priming expenditure, but merely a bookkeeping transaction to handle otherwise authorized expenditures without increasing the debt—quite possibly deflationary rather than inflationary in effect. A large part of the remainder is simply for loans to private industry, States and municipalities. Well under half of the total sum is to be used for new expenditure, and most of this for relief. There is no reason to believe that such a "program" can make any serious inroad on the new depression.

However, as in the case of the Wages and Hours Bill, Roosevelt at least proposes *something*, whereas the Congressional opposition suggests nothing in reply. And a spending program just before the opening of the election season is beyond defeat. The opposition will concentrate only on removing as large as possible a part of the funds beyond the immediate control of the President. Roosevelt in turn will seek a free hand, knowing from past experience just how effective is skillfully placed Federal money in swinging doubtful States and districts into the New Deal column.

## A Timid Lochinvar

THERE CAN BE no doubt that under the strain of the new crisis, social discontent is spreading rapidly throughout the country. Already in 1936, as we have said, the masses were straining outside of the old party framework, but were held in place by Roosevelt and his New Deal which, in their own minds, they differentiated from the Democratic party. The New Deal is going up in smoke. The centrifugal impulse grows stronger. The labor bureaucrats are compelled to extend Labor's Non-Partisan League on a national scale as an independent organization to hold their followers in check for Roosevelt. But the process is rapid, and there are signs that even such measures are no longer adequate.

To a certain extent, the middle classes have been swinging back from the New Deal toward the Republican-Southern Democratic bloc. But it is inconceivable that a mass swing of the workers and the lower middle classes could take, for any length of time and probably not at all, such a direction. The impetus is toward another pole.

Scouting the movements, feelers begin to be extended. Jumping the gun a bit, perhaps with too literal memories of his father, Governor Phil LaFollette sends the first cry along a new track. Quite suddenly, after a series of unexciting meetings with miscellaneous individuals and several radio talks in which he for the first time challenged Roosevelt's leadership, Governor LaFollette announced formation of a new party—the National Progressive Party, with the symbol of a blue cross ("abundance") within a blue circle ("unity").

LaFollette understands, evidently, that a political regroupment is under way. He seems to believe that it will take shape as a new capitalist third party. He realizes that a number of social groups will be making their bids for leadership of the new movement; and, as against the trade unions and the regular New Deal Democrats, he asserts the claims of the farmers and other sections of the middle classes. There is every evidence of haste in the manner in which the party was announced, and the wording of its program. It is likely that LaFollette has not yet decided how

serious he really is. He is not so much organizing a new party, as gathering together his own forces to try to assure himself and the groups for which he speaks the best possible bargaining position in whatever crystallized development finally matures. Most noticeable is his toning-down on criticism of Roosevelt in the speeches following the announcement of the party's formation.

The five-point preliminary program of the National Progressive Party is a vague and reactionary hodge-podge. In specific detail it is less progressive than the New Deal program, particularly in its omission of "labor planks" paralleling the absence of any labor leaders from the formation steps of the party. However, in its own vague way, it represents a middle class pseudo-radical move "beyond" the New Deal, and is not a simple return to the elder LaFollette's Populism. Significantly enough, the destiny which decrees that one part of the present third party movement

will break away toward Fascism is also foreshadowed: in the program's talk about the peculiar mission of the peoples of the Western Hemisphere to bring civilization to its apex, and in LaFollette's insistence on the symbolic primacy of his blue symbol.

The reception of the new party by the labor bureaucrats, LaGuardia (also simultaneously on a hunting tour through the Middle West), the New Deal Democrats, has been so far cool and reserved. They nevertheless understand its symptomatic importance. The general problem for all of the representatives of capitalism is to devise the means whereby the leap of the masses outside of the old two-party system will be blocked from issuance in independent class political action of the workers. They know how crucial a problem this is, and they are anxious to test its possible solutions thoroughly. There is no breathing spell ahead on the political horizon.

# Crisis and Reform Labor Politics

**T**HE TRADE UNIONS ARE in politics and they are there to stay. Along with this there is a growing sentiment within the labor movement for it to continue and spread out. Unfortunately the sentiment is too often accompanied by little knowledge of politics and less knowledge of labor politics. Often the spurs to action are high hopes and vague promises. At such time it becomes imperative to take stock, to see concretely the purpose of politics and to define the scope and limitations of labor politics specifically.

Politics under any system is a struggle by conflicting groups or classes for control of the state apparatus. Under capitalism, more than under any other system, the motive force of struggle is the endeavor to redistribute the wealth and income in closer accord with the demands of the victors. The struggle has a double aspect. One aspect looks toward the redistribution of national wealth and income within the limits of developing capitalism. Within these limits, after the Civil War, the northern industrialists fought party battles with the planter South, the western farmers fought their battles with the northern industrialists, and labor parties rose and fell. The assumption in all these struggles was that whoever won the state apparatus could distribute economic gains for their class without disturbing class-political relations. The second aspect looks toward a redistribution of wealth and income which is incompatible with the growth or maintenance of capitalism. This can no longer be settled by mere parliamentary victory.

The Civil War is a classic example. For decades before the war the growth of capitalism in the North and its extension West and South was becoming more and more incompatible with the expansion of the southern slave economy. The destruction of the class-political dominance of the cotton planters and the capture of the state apparatus by the northern industrialists were the preconditions of the further development of capitalism. At the same time, their victory meant the economic and political subordination of the South to the needs of northern industrial development. Both sides saw the full meaning of the conflict with increasing clarity. Which economic system shall prevail? Which social-economic class shall rule? The questions were posed in heated debates and parliamentary struggles. They were answered and settled by the roar of cannon and the smoke and battle of Civil War.

The entry of the trade unions into politics does not change the essence of politics. In a vague way, the rank and file union member feels that labor politics will enable the workers to get hold of the government and permit them to use it to strengthen the labor movement, to give the unemployed more relief and decent jobs, and force the capitalists to redistribute a bigger share of the national wealth and income to the working class generally. In the same vague way, they feel that this can be done within the limits

of capitalism and within the bounds of City Halls, state legislatures and Congressional corridors. The feeling is strengthened by the speeches of well-meaning reformers and the deceptions of the Stalinists. For labor reform politics, professional reformism, Stalinist opportunism and the vague sentiments of the untutored worker all agree on this: They all *feel* or *believe* or try to make the workers believe that *substantial* concessions can be won by labor politics fighting a parliamentary battle within the limits of capitalism, a battle that leaves undisturbed the class control of the state.

Those who take seriously their responsibility to the workers will not be satisfied with just proclaiming their beliefs or mouthing sentiments that gain fleeting favor. They will test their beliefs before they proclaim them. They will face the basic questions: Can capitalism grant substantial economic concessions to the workers? Can they be won in parliamentary struggles? Can they be won without disturbing the class control of the state? Can a reformist labor politics, as it is today and is developing into tomorrow, win and retain for the workers substantial economic concessions within capitalism? If capitalism *cannot* grant *substantial* concessions, such labor politics is built on quicksand. If it can grant them but *will not so long as the struggle is a parliamentary one, then reformist politics is self-imposed blindness*. If its class control of the state can nullify any parliamentary victories of the workers and labor politics leaves class-political relations undisturbed, *then this politics is the politics of defeat*. If the very nature of labor reform politics makes it incapable of winning or, if it can win, of holding on to the concessions it has gained for the workers, *then reformist labor party politics is false to labor*. But whether false or true is a question of fact. Let us consider the facts.

**THE BASIC QUESTION POSED.** The first question we must consider is: Can the workers gain *substantial* economic concessions within the limits of capitalism? This is the basic question, the answer to which determines the whole approach to labor party politics. The reason why is simple: Reformist politics operate within self-imposed limits, the limits of capitalism and its class relations. If capitalism is progressing and increasing production, profits and employment, reformist labor politics have room for effective action. In fact, such politics can benefit the workers substantially *only* in a period of progressing capitalism. But when capitalism is declining, and the capitalists are tearing down the concessions they had granted in the past, the limits within which such labor politics can function disappear. The concessions which it can win are mythical because capitalist decline is real. Reformist labor politics, which arise from the economic problems of the workers, are helpless to solve those problems.

There can be only two answers to this question—"yes" and "no". Those who say "yes" believe that capitalism will continue into an indefinite future, that it has within itself the elements of progress and growth, and that the workers will be able better to share in the profits of growth by means of reformist labor politics. Those who say "no" believe that capitalism is in decline and that its profits are declining. The concessions it can give to the workers are diminishing. The slight gains that such labor party politics can get will be distributed to a small, favored section of the working class. But for the workers as a whole, substantial concessions are impossible. They are incompatible with the continued existence of capitalism. The first is the answer of reformism. The second is that of Marxism. Reformist labor politics assume the first. Which do the facts support?

Whether American capitalism is progressing or declining can be determined easily by comparing two periods of economic activity. The appropriate years for comparison are 1929 and 1937. Both are peaks of economic activity, following years of depression. Both are turning points into depression. In all previous history the latest peak of economic activity was always higher than the one preceding. The trend was upward. How does 1937 compare with 1929? What is the trend here?

The trend here is plainly downward. According to all the most general indices of economic activity, 1937 was much lower than 1929. According to the comprehensive index of activity compiled by *Business Week*, business activity in 1937 was fully 30 percent less than in 1929. Much of the fall is due to the precipitate decline of financial expansion and stock exchange activity. The physical volume of production is much more significant. For production is the precondition of consumption and the sustaining force of society. What happened to production? It, too, declined although not so sharply. According to the Federal Reserve System, the averages of industrial production as a whole, which includes manufacturing and minerals, were:

Year	Index
1929	119
1937	110

The drop in industrial production is nine percent. However, this does not take into consideration the fact that the population increased by millions. If we take account of the population increase, the decline between 1929 and 1937 is not nine but almost 15 percent. (The *Monthly Labor Review* of November 1937 estimated the loss between 1929 and 1936 as being sixteen percent. Due to further increase in population at the same time that there was an increase in production, pretty much the same loss held for 1937.)

The class significance of the fall in production comes out more clearly when we divide industrial production into capital goods production and consumption goods production. From the point of view of the health of capitalism, the production of an increasing volume of capital goods is essential. Capital goods increase claims on income and increase the extraction of surplus value, thus increasing the rate or mass of profits, or increasing both rate and mass. From the point of view of consumption and the standard of living of the workers, an increasing volume of capital goods production, if not diverted to armaments, means a greater supply of the means of production to increase the plenty of consumers' goods. From either standpoint, a decline in the production of capital goods indicates a decline in capitalism.

And, certainly, the indices of capital goods activity paint a vivid and unmistakable picture of the decline of American capitalism. According to Standard Statistics, one of the best known agencies selling information to business firms and stock speculators, capital goods activity was:

Year	Index
1929	106.6
1937	85.4

Here is a loss of capital goods activity equalling 20 percent. This is a fact of profound significance. Viewed in isolation, it means that within nine short years one-fifth of the production of capital goods has been destroyed.

This is important in itself as a sign of economic decline. But it is even more important when seen against the background of economic trends and when it is looked at within the matrix of capitalist prosperity. In all previous business cycles, each successive peak of capital goods production was higher than the previous one. But capital goods production in 1937 did *not* exceed the previous peak. Not only did it not exceed, it did not equal it. And not only did it neither exceed nor equal but it remained stunted in its upswing twenty percent below the 1929 peak and then relapsed into the sharpest drop in economic annals. This is even more significant for prosperity under capitalism. Prosperity in the past was especially due, and mainly due, to the increasing output and absorption of capital goods. This stimulated prosperity. This sustained prosperity. As capital goods output increased, so did prosperity. The twenty percent drop in capital goods output has destroyed, within nine years, one-fifth of the economic foundations upon which American capitalism and its prosperity rest.

The dreary picture of widespread decline which this twenty percent drop sums up, does not show how unevenly distributed it was between specific industries, and within what a wide range the distribution took place. The fact is that in the nine years, 1929-1937, some industries fell as much as fifty, sixty and seventy percent. This was especially true of those industries which supplied the railroads. Among those capital goods industries which fell between forty and seventy percent were:

Industry	Percent Loss Between 1929-1937
Locomotives	69
Railroad passenger cars	64
Freight cars	53

Still other industries, especially those depending upon building construction, fell between twenty and forty percent between 1929 and 1937. These were:

Industry	Percent Loss Between 1929-1937
Cement	35
Fabricated Steel	33
Anthracite	32
Lumber	27

Among those industries which declined between ten and twenty percent were:

Industry	Percent Loss Between 1929-1937
Bituminous Coal	17
Pig Iron	14
Electrical Equipment (new orders)	13

And what is important in all instances is that the drastic declines occurred in industries which are the basis of industrial production.

Even the gains that were made in certain industries only emphasized the general decline. The machine tool industry produced twenty percent more in 1937 than in 1929. However, this increase was not due to domestic demand but "was largely the result of a pronounced rise in foreign buying" (*Survey of Current Business*, March 1938). When the rise subsided due to world depression, machine tool production fell precipitately. Electric power production rose 24 percent. However, this was not accompanied by greater industrial production but by intensification and displacement of labor. Truck production rose 16 percent. But this only indicated that small business men were increasing in number due to the efforts of unemployed workers to escape unemployment by going into business. The proof is that the output of large trucks, which are used by big firms, did not account for the rise in truck production. "The light commercial truck continued to account for most of the increase in total output." (*Survey of Current Business*,

March 1938.) And compared with the sharp and widespread drops in capital goods output in other and basic industries, these increases were insignificant.

Excepting those employed in them, the decline in these industries did not affect the living standards of the workers immediately and directly. These are capital goods industries and their decline is directly felt either by the capitalists who cannot produce, or those who cannot absorb, as much capital goods as before. The building construction industry bridges the gap between capitalists and workers, and its activity affects both classes directly and generally. For the capitalists, it is a great absorber of capital goods and a strategic factor in prosperity. For the workers, it means shelter, housing, an important item in their cost of living. Increasing building constructions aids the capitalists by absorbing capital goods. It aids the workers by causing greater competition between landlords, resulting in an easing up of rents, thus leaving greater purchasing power among the workers for other goods. Decreased building construction not only destroys a great market for capital output but it also leaves dilapidated houses and lowers the living standards of the masses by forcing up their rents. *Yet this very important industry declined 54 percent between 1928 and 1937.*

What affects the workers even more directly and substantially than housing is the output of consumption goods. Consumption goods output sustains life and determines the standard of living of the masses. The greater the volume of consumption goods output, the greater is the objective plenty which, if distributed, will lift the standard of living of the workers. Under capitalism, a fall in output accompanies a fall in mass purchasing power. Output is therefore a rough measure of general living standard. What happened to consumption goods output between 1929 and 1937?

Output of consumption goods dropped, although not nearly as much as in the capital goods industries. The index of consumption goods activity compiled by Standard Statistics shows a loss of 2.3 percent between 1929 and 1937. However, if we take into account the population growth which required a proportionate growth in consumption goods output, the actual decline was 8 to 9 percent.

What is more important, the Standard Statistics index does not show that the greatest losses in consumption goods output were in basic food commodities, such as meats, wheat flour, and sugar. Output in these commodities fell between 12 and 17 percent in 1937 as compared with 1929. Standing by themselves, these figures indicate a substantial enough loss in the living standards of the workers in whose food budget these are major items. But taken in conjunction with the increased population, the increased number of mouths which this falling production was to feed, the fall in living standards was even greater. Moreover, passenger car production which is an index of the purchasing power of the better paid workers and the middle class, was 18 percent lower in 1937 than in 1929.

Where there were gains in specific consumption goods industries, the gains were small. Where the percentage gain was large, it was because the industry was new and growing, and its commodities did not depend for their sale upon the wide masses of workers and lower middle class. Examples of such industries are electric refrigerators and electric washing machines. The former increased 182 percent between 1929 and 1937, and the latter gained 55 percent. In neither case were they large enough to make appreciable demands for capital goods, or contribute much to economic recovery.

**THE WORKERS SHARE CAPITALISM'S DECAY, NOT ITS PROFITS.** This widespread decline in both capital and consumption goods industries brings to a sharp focus the basic contradiction of capitalism—the contradiction between production and consumption. Capitalism does not produce unless ultimately it has consumers to whom it can sell its goods at a profit. But if it sells at a profit, it redistributes wealth and income and undermines and destroys future consumption. At the same time, the plight of the

workers is that they cannot buy goods unless they are employed in production, getting in this way the wages and purchasing power which make them the greatest class of consumers. Their purchasing power is at once a by-product of production and the ultimate sustaining force of production. The declines in production first destroy employment and the purchasing power which employment gives the workers. But in destroying the workers' purchasing power, falling production destroys also the ultimate force that can alone sustain production—consumption. Capitalist production, which first destroys employment and purchasing power, ultimately destroys itself.

The United States is the greatest market for its producers. Nine-tenths of all its production is sold in the United States. Among the consumers upon which all this production ultimately depends, the workers are by far the greatest class. They form seven-tenths of the working population. They represent the largest section of the whole population. They have no source of purchasing power outside of production. Their ability to consume the output of production, and thus sustain production, is itself a by-product of production. How have the production declines between 1929 and 1937 affected their employment and wages—their sole source of purchasing power?

The widespread declines in industrial production were accompanied by falling employment and even more sharply falling payrolls. Manufacturing, which employs about one-fourth of all workers, provided one-tenth less jobs and one-eighth less wages in 1937 than in 1929. The composite indexes of employment and payrolls fell 10 percent for employment and 13 percent for payrolls.<sup>1</sup> What this means becomes clearer when we separate the indexes into their component parts of durable and non-durable goods.

Employment and payrolls in the durable goods industries are especially significant because they contribute more employment and greater payrolls for each dollar of value produced than in other industries. But between 1929 and 1937 durable goods indexes fell 13 percent in employment and 14 percent in payrolls. It would have fallen further if it were not sustained by the auto industry, where the C.I.O. unionization drive forced up employment by 14 percent and payrolls by 13 percent. Shipbuilding which returned to its condition of 1929 stood at the transition point between this one sign of increased employment and the rest of the industries which differed between themselves only in the sharpness of decline. The machinery industries group fell off 5 percent in employment and 10 percent in payrolls. Steel lost 9 percent in employment and 8 percent in payrolls. Railroad repair shops, and lumber and allied products, fared much worse. The first lost 23 percent in employment and 26 percent in payrolls and in the second employment fell 36 percent and payrolls 42 percent.

<sup>1</sup> These, and subsequent computations, are based on the figures given by Standard Statistics in their book of basic statistics. Their source is the Bureau of Labor Statistics. There is some discrepancy between these figures and the figures given by the *Survey of Current Business*, which also says it draws its estimates from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The discrepancy between them is often considerable. This may be due to the fact that both are using different indexes published by the same Bureau of Labor Statistics. Since a summary bulletin of employment and payrolls for 1937 has not been published at the time of writing, the choice was between using the *Survey of Current Business*, published by the Department of Commerce, and using Standard Statistics. I have disregarded the figures of *Survey of Current Business*, first, because they are based on estimates which minimize and hide the plight of the workers; second, because the periodical uses its official position to spread Chamber of Commerce propaganda about labor. It is therefore not the most reliable source of labor statistics. Standard Statistics, which is an outright capitalist agency selling information to clients and responsible to them for its exactness, is more likely to publish unvarnished facts, without mincing or minimizing.

Why there are two index series, a new one which is for public consumption and the old one which is to be obtained on request, may puzzle those who believe in the glories of democracy. "ours" included, and the impartiality of its statistics.

That does not trouble the Bureau of Labor Statistics which publishes the two series in order to minimize and hide the extent of the declines in employment and therefore, payrolls. Even when it does publish its annual summary of 1937 the figures will have to be used with care. The extent to which it minimizes the true situation can be seen by taking two instances. In its monthly release of Employment and Payrolls of January, 1938, the Bureau of Labor Statistics gives its new series for anthracite and bituminous coal mining, with 1929 as 100. *National Income in the United States, 1929-1935* also gives indexes for the two industries and also takes 1929 as 100. That the new series minimize the depression is obvious from the figures:

	Index for 1934	Series in <i>National Income</i>
	New Series	in the U.S.
Employment in Anthracite .....	69.4	61.0
Employment in Bituminous .....	92.3	76.9
Payrolls in Anthracite .....	59.9	58.4
Payrolls in Bituminous .....	64.0	54.6

(Sources: *Emp. and Payr.*, Jan. 1938, pp. 23f. *Nat. Inc. in the U.S.*, 1929-1935, pp. 83, 85.)

Even where an industry did exceed its 1929 production, the workers got no benefits. The machine tools industry, whose output of 1937 was 20 percent higher than it was in 1929, celebrated this increase by cutting employment 18 percent and slashing payrolls by 23 percent.

The non-durable goods industries produce consumption goods. The growing population should have acted as a stimulus to increased output of consumption goods and an increased amount of employment and payrolls. Despite this, production declined and the indexes of employment and payrolls fell, 5 percent in employment and twice as much in payrolls. The disproportionate drop in payrolls was due to several reasons: the fall in employment was not so sharp because increased population sustained and increased the demand for output. However, the effective demand, the demand backed up by purchasing power, fell considerably due primarily to the sharp decline in employment and payrolls in the durable goods industries. The workers had less money with which to buy food and clothing. The competition between capitalists in consumption goods industries for the workers' purchasing power drove prices downward. Falling prices reduced profits. The capitalists passed on a substantial part of their decay to the workers in the form of falling payrolls. The absence of a strong labor movement in the consumption goods industries made it all the easier to do this.

A cursory glance at the individual groups of industries shows both the downward pressure of economic decline on employment and payrolls and the upward pressure of union organization. Taken as a whole, textiles and its products fell off 5 percent in employment and 16 percent in payrolls between 1929 and 1937. But the cotton goods industry, the most important one in the group, gave out 5 percent more employment and 8 percent more payrolls because it was wrested from the capitalists by the organization drive of the C.I.O. Food and kindred products, which are comparatively well organized, fell off in employment by 5 percent but the loss in payrolls was less than one percent. Chemicals and allied products gained 5 percent in employment and 5 percent in payrolls. However, these few bright spots were put completely into the shade as leather and its manufactures dropped off 10 percent in employment and almost 20 percent in payrolls; rubber products saw 19 percent of the jobs and 23 percent of the payrolls vanish into thin air; and tobacco manufactures experienced a 30 percent fall in employment and a 30 percent cut in payrolls.

Employment and payrolls fell sharply enough in the manufacturing industries. However, an occasional increase broke the monotony of decline. This is not true of the non-manufacturing industries. Here the decay of American capitalism reigns supreme and spreads decline with unvarying monotony. The declines differ only in sharpness, and on this basis we can divide the industries roughly into two groups. In the first group employment fell between 5 and 10 percent; in the other group it dropped between 20 and 50 percent.

In the first group are three industries:

<i>Industry</i>	<i>Percent Decline in Employment (1929-1937)</i>	<i>Percent Decline in Payrolls (1929-1937)</i>
Electric Light and Power and Manufactured Gas	4.6	Less than 1%
Wholesale Trade	8.1	23.5
Retail Trade	10.3	27.0

The fall in employment in the first of the three industries, like that which occurred in machine tools, took place despite the fact that its output in 1937 was fully 16 percent greater than in 1929. But the decline in employment in the other two industries reflect the decline in business activity and consumption. The reduction in wages amounting to three times as much as in employment shows vividly that here, where unions practically do not exist, the capi-

talists were able to place big chunks of their own decline on the backs of the workers. In short, where industries did enjoy greater activity and profits, the capitalists alone benefitted. Where they suffered decline, the capitalists shifted the burden on the backs of the workers.

In the second group are industries that have been the very backbone of American economic development and the very sustaining forces of capitalist upswing. But just as they rose most buoyantly in the days of prosperity and progress, so now they crashed most precipitately, carrying downwards with them both employment and payrolls. In the order of falling employment, the industries are:

<i>Industry</i>	<i>Percent Decline in Employment (1929-1937)</i>	<i>Percent Decline in Payrolls (1929-1937)</i>
Bituminous Coal	19.5	24.2
Telephone and Telegraph	22.2	10.7
Crude Petroleum Products	23.1	31.7
Electric Railroad and Motorbus Operation and Maintenance	26.9	29.4
Quarrying and Non-metallic Mining	48.6	55.6
Anthracite	50.1	56.8

In addition, employment in class I steam railroads, which means the largest railroad systems in the country, fell 33 percent between 1929 and 1937 and construction lost about 35 percent of its employment.

This, then, is the picture of American capitalism. It is declining sharply and, in its decline, it is spreading destruction everywhere—destruction of whole industries, destruction of employment, destruction of purchasing power, destruction of the standard of living of the American workers and farmers. Most of all, it destroys the myth that capitalism is progressive, and that it can give the workers substantial economic concessions without destroying itself entirely. And in doing this declining capitalism smashes the very foundation upon which reformist labor politics rest.

Subsequent articles will deal with the class political significance of reformist labor party politics in this period of economic decline.

David COWLES

AS WE GO to press, additional information comes from various parts of the world about significant reactions in the ranks of the official communist movement to the framing-up and execution of the entire old guard of the Russian Revolution.

We received in time for publication in this issue the statements of Charles Rappoport, of France, and of the protesting Communist Party militants in Palestine. They will be found in full on other pages. The following information came to New York too late for detailed publication or comment in the current issue:

Jean Boujor, one of the founders of the Communist Party of Rumania and among its most prominent figures, has come forward with a public protest against the accusations of Stalin-Vishinsky especially with reference to Christian Rakovsky, executed at the end of the last trial. Boujor himself is well acquainted with the kind of justice dispensed in Moscow by the bureaucracy, for he has served fifteen years in Rumanian prisons.

In Belgium, the Communist Party has finally confirmed the fact that its national secretary, De Boeck, has been expelled for "Trotskyism". De Boeck was at the front in the Spanish civil war when the decision against him was adopted, and he was compelled to flee from the familiar hand of the G.P.U. and take refuge in his own land, Belgium.

In Holland, Jef Last, the noted poet, has made an open break with Stalinism and its party. Last was a fighter in the Madrid militia, and in his declaration he denounced the Moscow Trials and the fact that for months the Soviet Union had sent no arms or munitions whatsoever to Loyalist Spain.

# Why We Quit the Communist Party

## The Palestine Communists Appeal

*To all communists, to all workers and all those who have remained faithful to the cause of the Soviet Union and the Revolution!*

**T**HE LAND OF OCTOBER AND Socialist construction, the conduct of the struggle against fascism and imperialism, the very banner of communism, all this is at present in irresponsible and destructive hands! This is the conclusion we must draw from the trials staged by Stalin-Yezhov. Is it possible that the person who believes in socialism should at the same time believe in the whole exhibition of degeneration and fantastic treachery, as expressed in the trials? Is it conceivable that the moral power of fascism is so strong and the influence of socialism so negligible in the land of deep-going revolution that precisely the most accepted and prominent leaders and teachers together with broad masses, hundreds of thousands of communists, should betray communism and sell themselves to fascism? Only those who themselves do not feel the abyss that lies between fascism and socialism, or who are defective spiritually, can believe or even be uncertain about this.

In the last nine months alone, preceding the trial of Zinoviev-Kamenev, three hundred thousand comrades were expelled from the C.P. as traitors, according to official reports in the press, and it was only after the trial that the wave of mass extermination of the Party commenced. Recently examples were made public of sections in which a majority was driven out as enemies of the people and fascists. In this manner fascism is supposed to have won over, besides the 300,000, many, many more. Were all this true, were we to believe it, this would be the most shameful death-blow to socialism as an ideal and as a movement.

Fortunately, all this is an absolute frame-up and lie. But this frame-up is a diabolical provocation, which threatens extermination, destruction, degeneration and which only serves the interest of fascism. Were bourgeois reaction to procure an *agent provocateur* and place him at the head of the labor movement with the object of besmirching it, paralyzing it and destroying it from the inside, it could not succeed any better than Stalin with his trials and his extermination of the party. They are not enemies of the people, spies and traitors, these hundreds of thousands and all the leaders—they are communists. They cannot be exterminated without these fantastic frame-ups, in which the narrow Stalin bureaucracy is especially interested in order to bring shame to the cause of the revolution in the manner of an *agent provocateur*. The trials represent a concentrated expression of all the methods of those in power. The lie of the trials has its imprint also on the "democracy" which the new Constitution is supposed to have ushered in, and with which we were duped. The cynicism of this deception is all too clear now. This régime of truly absolutist autocracy, which makes a fiction of every mass organization—they compel us to designate as most democratic. The lie exceeds all limits! Shall we continue to do violence to our revolutionary conscience and justify everything?

We have passed through our most conscious years with Stalin, not because we really considered him "our father", but because we were under the misconception that this was identical with devotion to the Soviet Union and to the cause of the class struggle and world revolution. We had all hoped that the methods were temporary and that things would change for the better. But Stalin continues ever more brazenly. He utilizes our devotion in order to continue his revolting, sinister and injurious deeds. He simultaneously deceives us and ignores us. Only if he should indeed have grounds to feel that we communists the world over will refuse to sanctify all his deeds, will he too realize that there are limits. Now however, he can no longer stop. The backward Stalin bureau-

cracy has bound up its faith with lies, deceit, corruption and a terror which steadily mounts not against enemy classes but against the working class and its vanguard and the left wing organizations abroad.

The general reaction to the Moscow frame-ups has been quite contrary to that which Stalin desired. This is especially true of the third big Moscow trial. Even the bureaucratized, iron-bound communist parties have not proved immune to the growing hostility felt towards the frame-ups. Not only are the "liberal" fellow-travelers of Stalinism now shying away from it, but hundreds of party members are silently dropping out of the ranks.

In this issue, we print two significant reactions to the third trial. Charles Rappoport, prominent figure in the Second International before the war, author of many works, including a life of Jaures and an exposition of historical materialism, became one of the founders of the Communist Party of France after the Russian Revolution. Up to recently, he was Paris correspondent of the Moscow *Izvestia*. Although—or rather just because—in past years, he went along, now passively, now actively, with the reactionary campaign against the "Trotskyists" and counselled expelled anti-Stalinists, as he now writes, to make spurious recantations in order to be re-admitted into the party, his present statement has unmistakable symptomatic significance.

Not less significant is the statement of the Palestine communists. Their names are not appended to the leaflet, which appeared originally in Yiddish, presumably because the C.P. is virtually illegal in Palestine. Even though neither the Palestine communists, nor Rappoport, draw the necessary political and organizational conclusions from their declarations—the need of the Fourth International—they are sufficiently important to warrant publication in the pages of our review.

We too are to a degree responsible for the results. And precisely because of our deep feeling of responsibility, we cannot and must not keep silent. We must no longer be misled by the fear that the bourgeoisie will utilize such exposures. On the contrary, it is our silence that it utilizes in order to identify all communists, and communism itself, with the falsehoods of the trials which are already so clear and so pronounced. Stalin's slander of the Soviet Union as a land which is permeated with ever-mounting fantastic crimes, serves only the bourgeoisie. With all our power we hurl back this Stalin-Vishinsky slander. We are deeply convinced that the Soviet Union is much higher and basically different from the way it is reflected in the trials and through the régime of such a backward and vulgar absolutism. The present identification not only of socialism but also of the Soviet Union with this government-by-trials is a great discreditment of the socialist cause; it is counter-revolutionary. And we are precisely the ones who must break with the methods of the trials, decisively and irrevocably. And the more demonstrations of this kind there will be, the less will the bourgeoisie be able to utilize the trials and besmirch socialism in order to curb the working class.

But already acute are the dangers of the present defeats of the Soviet Union and of the world working class—the direct result of Stalin's policy of trials and of the demoralization of the world communist movement, which is actually ruled by those who staged the trials. It must be thoroughly clear that Stalin's permanent struggle against the cadres of the party, of the army and of economy, are liquidating the foundations of the October Revolution and paralyzing the general state of the country. It must be clear that the continuation of the fascist methods and provocations within the labor movement of the world, discourages and disarms the working class in its struggle against fascism. The continuation of such methods will assure the victory of fascism, and then the Soviet Union itself will collapse.

Communists, workers! We call upon you to save the Soviet Union!

Raise your voice against the danger which threatens the land of October—against Stalin's policy of defeats!

Struggle against the trials which are driving the Soviet Union to the abyss!

Back to Leninism!

For revolutionary struggle of the international working class!

Down with the provocative trials!

Down with the hangmen of the October Revolution!

Long live the Soviet Union!

Long live the world revolution!

*Signed:* Members who resigned from the Communist Party of Palestine and its organizations.

## Charles Rappoport's Statement

PROPERLY SPEAKING, I should correct two inexactitudes in the title of my article, a title imposed upon me by circumstances. For it to be exact, two conditions are necessary: 1) that a communist party exists in France; 2) that I really and actively belonged to this party. These indispensable conditions do not exist. Instead of an independent communist party, there exists a 120 rue Lafayette<sup>1</sup> (or somewhere near the big boulevards, center of bourgeois life), a bureau for registering the orders of Stalin or of his loudspeaker, comrade Dimitroff.

As to my activity in the communist party, you will seek in vain for my name in the organs and the annals of the French communist party for the last dozen years.

Like 99% of the members of the communist party, I was a simple dues-payer, as they say in theatrical slang, "on the sucker list", without the right of discussion, and simply fulfilling in silence "the tasks" prescribed by the executive organs of the party.

That is all I have "left", or to put it differently, the moral responsibility and complicity for everything that is unanimously decided in the upper circles.

THE MOSCOW TRIALS. For several decades, off and on, I was intimately acquainted with the principal accused in all the large trials of the last two years. From the turn of the century I knew Kamenev and Zinoviev, Lenin's closest lieutenants, Karl Radek, Sokolnikov, former ambassador and member of my group in Paris during the war; Pyatakov and Krestinsky since 1922. I always had the greatest esteem for their revolutionary activity, even if I was not always in agreement with their methods. In my consciousness and in my spirit I know them to be absolutely incapable of the monstrous crimes they were made to admit. Their alleged confessions, often in contradiction with known material facts (imaginary voyages, non-existing hotels and fabulous interviews, denied by the persons to whom they are imputed, *etc.*), can only be explained by a sort of moral torture, by fear for the fate of dear ones, by the slightest chance of surviving and being able to act as a revolutionist, and by other similar causes. The head of the G.P.U., Yagoda, proclaimed by the Stalin government itself as a common criminal and executed as such, dominated Russia for a dozen years and was, it should not be forgotten, the stage-manager of the preceding big trials. One can imagine what methods this sinister personage was capable of employing.

No serious person, having a critical mind and judging things coldly and objectively, attaches any importance to these alleged confessions. They are rather considered as "enigmas" which must be solved.

To the above-mentioned causes of the famous confessions must be added the special psychology of the present Russian revolutionary circles.

<sup>1</sup>Address of the headquarters in Paris of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of France.

A Russian revolutionist holds up his head courageously and is capable of enduring anything in face of a declared enemy like czarism or capitalism. But the situation changes when he finds himself before former comrades and friends supported by the popular masses whose idol he once was, and who are fighting for the cause to which he has given his life. For these latter, he is capable of sacrificing everything, even his honor. In any case, he loses his countenance, his indomitable pride. He feels himself weak and demoralized. . . .

In January 1928, during the 15th Bolshevik congress which expelled Trotsky, Kamenev and Rakovsky from the party, I myself advised my friend Kamenev, who has since been executed, to fulfill the formality or the rite of "retracting" or of "repenting" in order to be able, I said, "to live and act as a revolutionist". It was in the Kremlin. Today, I regret this advice.

THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE MOSCOW KILLINGS. They are frightful. Already in the period of the civil war and up to Stalin's arrival in power, Russia lost its intellectual élite, the "famous intelligentsia", the noblest and most enlightened in Europe, dispersed in western Europe, or dead either in prison or in poverty. The mass executions, known and *unknown*, of the revolutionary communist Old Guard, of the highest functionaries of the State or of industry and the army, have terribly impoverished the U.S.S.R. The terror paralyzes the minds. The policeman and the stool-pigeon become the masters. One's own relatives and friends are distrusted.

It becomes impossible to breathe in this atmosphere. As under the régimes of the sordid Roman Empire, informing is taking on such scope that the Stalin government itself is beginning to be disturbed by it and, after having engendered it, seeks vainly to restrict it. Toadyism and baseness flourish. The best independent writers refuse to write under the lash of the State, or do not dare to publish. The press, all of it official, has a desolating uniformity and banality. The absence of freedom, which Stalin himself treats as rotten liberalism, unfailingly kills off all intellectual development and all literary creation.

Instead of carrying out the famous Stalinist Constitution which in articles 125 and 130, guarantees "all liberties" (of speech, press, assembly, *etc.*), they execute Bukharin, its principal inspirer, and almost all the old revolutionists. The high functionaries tremble before the accusation of "sabotage", always suspended over their heads and, sometimes, they demote and condemn themselves to subordinate positions in order to evade responsibilities. No Soviet citizen who goes to bed is sure of not waking up in prison.

Stalin can boast of having demonstrated by facts, on one-sixth of the globe, that socialism without freedom leads to the most abject tyranny, and let us add, the most formidable tyranny, for it extends not only over the political, intellectual and moral domain but also in the economic field, for the State becomes the absolute master of all the means of existence. The socialists before the Bolshevik revolution proved triumphantly that freedom without bread is a bad joke. Stalin has made the whole world understand that bread—and how meager even that—without freedom is too bitter. . . .

THE CAUSES OF THE DECAY OF THE BOLSHEVIK REVOLUTION. They are numerous and I shall not cite them all. Here are the principal ones: the former czarist régime plunged Russia into poverty and ignorance. The revolution emerged from a military débâcle and it retains the inefaceable traces of it. The Stalinist State is a police and military State. The exercise of absolute and police power has corrupted the characters and completely derailed the minds. With the aid of unheard of sacrifices it was possible to create new economic and technical conditions, transforming old agricultural Russia into modern industrial Russia. But it goes without saying that you cannot, within a few years and with the aid of well-paid German, American or French engineers, create new intellectual and moral conditions in a population

of 175,000,000 speaking a hundred different languages and dialects. The terroristic policy of Stalin, instead of promoting the intellectual development of Russia, deliberately strangles it and treats democracy, an export article for the West, with a supreme disdain.

**SOME PERSPECTIVES.** Many minds, even in the ranks of the communist parties and its sympathizers, have understood the obvious truths which I have just set forth. The cause of their silence? It is always the eternal Noah's cloak, terribly torn, which has been misleading people since the deluge. They do not want to play the game of the opponents of socialism and Soviet Russia, fortress of world peace. I too am of this opinion, but it is Stalin who, better than anyone else, plays the game of the opponents of the U.S.S.R. by his hecatombs and his régime of terror. As in the

days of the domination of the Church, it must and should be said that it is not those who denounce the scandal that constitute the scandal.

The hundred peoples of vast Russia are suffering atrociously and may be imprisoned, forced to confess and shot at the whim of the absolute master. We must cry out in a strong, loud voice, in one of the rare countries of Europe, poisoned by fascism and doomed to slavery, where it is still possible to make a free and independent voice heard.

In the interest of socialism, of world peace and of the peoples of the U.S.S.R., it is urgent that Stalinist despotism, which disgraces and ruins a sixth of the globe, disappears forever.

PARIS, *March 1938.*

Charles RAPPOPORT

# A Meeting of Bankrupts

**T**HE CONFERENCE OF THE International Bureau for Revolutionary Socialist Unity held in Paris, February 19-25 is hailed by its organizers as "A New Hope for World Socialism". The active participants of the conference are old adherents of the Bureau: the Independent Labour Party of England, the Socialist Workers Party (S.A.P.) of Germany, the Workers Party of Marxist Unity (P.O.U.M.) of Spain, the Italian Socialist Party (Maximalists); and in addition the International Communist Opposition (Brandler-Lovestone group which for about two years has been working with the Bureau). Among the other organizations represented at the conference are the Revolutionary Socialist Workers Party (R.S.A.P.) of Holland and the Archio-Marxist Communist Party of Greece; observers were present from the American and French Socialist parties.

In August, 1933, almost five years ago, the International Communist League (the predecessor of the Fourth International) proposed to the chief organizers of the recent conference, the I.L.P. and the S.A.P., mutual collaboration in the elaboration of programmatic documents for a new, Fourth International. The I.L.P. rejected this proposal out of hand: "Now is not the time to build a new international." In reality it was still flirting with the Communist International. The S.A.P. formally accepted collaboration with the Bolshevik-Leninists but in practise chose the Norwegian Labor Party and the Doriot group instead. It also shouted: "Now is not the time to organize the new international. We must wait until objective conditions are more favorable. With this as a pretext the S.A.P. did not proceed to work out common documents for a new international; or criticize the documents submitted to it (in draft) by the International Communist League. It preferred to organize the still-born "International Committee for the Struggle for Peace" on a program calling for disarmament, for "international democratic control over war preparations", etc. (See Leon Trotsky, "Centrist Alchemy or Marxism? On the Question of the Socialist Workers Party (S.A.P.) of Germany", *NEW INTERNATIONAL*, July 1935.)

During this period the Brandler-Lovestone group, whose strategy was the reform of the Stalinist International, condemned the Trotskyists as counter-revolutionists who were becoming the leader of centrist groups. The first two Moscow trials were defended by it as proof of the validity of its attack on Trotskyism. The counter-revolutionary attacks of Stalinism against the Spanish revolution and the P.O.U.M. and the purging of the Red Army shook it out of self-complacency. However, instead of re-evaluating its own past, its support of Stalinism and struggle against Trotskyism, instead of probing the roots of the catastrophic

destruction of the Russian Bolshevik party and the Comintern—the only guide to revolutionary politics today—it tenaciously defends the fundamentals of its old course. Today as yesterday this group remains the inveterate opponent of Trotskyism, that is, consistent revolutionary Marxism.

The Paris Conference marked the formal marriage of the Brandler-Lovestone group and the London Bureau. Its decision to organize a world center of revolutionary socialists "who, without adopting the position and the sectarian and factional tactics of Trotskyism, stand for the principles of the proletarian class struggle", a center that would be preparatory to "a Revolutionary Marxist International" was merely a reiteration of the old position of the London Bureau.

Had the London Bureau and its affiliates reacted correctly to the world-shaking events of the past years? Did experience show that changes in policy, in method, in organization were necessary? Or did it vindicate the previous program of the London Bureau?

Fenner Brockway, who made the main report, repeated the well-known criticisms of the Second and Third Internationals but had not a single word to say about the past policies and activities of the London Bureau and its affiliated organizations. The omission is hardly accidental. In fact, it is the key to the real character of both the old and "new" London Bureau. For a critical analysis would have revealed the platonic nature of its revolutionary socialism and internationalism; the contradiction between its words and deeds; the absence of agreement on any fundamental question; its belated condemnation of the Moscow trials, not to forget Brockway's proposal for an "impartial committee" to investigate the Moscow trials (four social-democrats) which would also be an "enquiry into the rôle of Trotskyism in the working class movement".

Nor do we find a bill of particulars on "the position and sectarian and factional tactics of Trotskyism". What position? Which tactics? War? People's Front? Spain? Soviet Union? Moscow Trials? Nothing in the report indicates that any discussion took place on Trotskyism. In any case, the conference agreed to condemn it—each participant for his own particular reason. All were anxious to avoid a serious analysis of the Trotskyist criticisms of the London Bureau, the I.L.P., P.O.U.M., S.A.P., I.C.O., etc. For their unity, platonic "revolutionary socialist" resolutions and a joint attack on Trotskyism were sufficient! All the characteristic traits of centrism mark the Paris Conference!

## I. BASIS FOR COLLABORATION

The seven-point basis for collaboration (included in the invitation to the conference) repeats the general revolutionary formulæ on the class struggle, rejection of Popular Frontism, against civil

<sup>1</sup>A *New Hope for World Socialism*. Resolutions adopted at the Revolutionary Socialist Congress, Paris, February 19-25, 1938, together with the Introductory Speeches. International Bureau for Revolutionary Socialist Unity. London.

peace in wartime, support of the colonial peoples, defense of the Spanish revolution and the P.O.U.M., defense of the Soviet Union and for proletarian democracy in Russia, for the overthrow of the capitalist state apparatus and the establishment of a proletarian dictatorship which will destroy the capitalist power, provide the maximum of workers' democracy and "not repeat the errors and terror of the Stalinist régime".

Collaboration on the above program "does not mean the formation artificially [!] of a new International" (p. 10). On the contrary, it spells the continuation of the old line of the London Bureau, the complete national independence of each affiliated group which in practise will be free to violate the abstract "revolutionary" resolutions on the pretext of "national peculiarities".

At a time when a strong international center is the crying need of the working class movement, the Paris Conference decides on three practical steps: publication of an international news service, publication of an international discussion journal, and an international fund for revolutionists suffering from persecution. The actual preparation of a new International, the elaboration of programmatic documents, the formation of a strong center, these are postponed to the indefinite future. The old formula of the London Bureau is constantly presented anew at each international conference.

For Lovestone the present London Bureau is practically tantamount to his "new International": "We need an International that will be a world federation of parties standing firmly on the same international foundation of revolutionary socialism but each self-reliant and independent in its organization, each itself determining its policy, strategy and tactics on the basis of its own conditions and the needs and interests of the masses." (*Workers Age*, March 19, 1938.)

## 2. THE PEOPLE'S FRONT AND SPAIN

For example, we may add: the London Bureau long ago condemned People's Frontism. The S.A.P. supported People's Frontism on the grounds of the peculiarity of the German situation. The P.O.U.M. entered the Catalonian People's Front government of Companys, the Stalinists and the anarcho-syndicalists in view of the "national peculiarity" of Catalonia and the "peculiar" character of its petty bourgeoisie.

At the Paris Conference the S.A.P. and the P.O.U.M. support the resolution against Popular Frontism. Yet, the conference "places on record its agreement in principle, without reserve, with the fundamental political line" of the P.O.U.M. The S.A.P.'s Popular Frontist line is overlooked. Why interfere with the "self-reliant and independent" sections so long as they accept revolutionary-sounding resolutions!

Not that criticism is forbidden. On the contrary, even affiliates of the London Bureau may criticize one another. But not at conferences; not in resolution form, in a word, not in a meaningful manner!

At one time, for instance, Fenner Brockway did criticize the P.O.U.M.'s entry into the Catalonian government. Writing after the May events in Barcelona, he stated:

"The entrance of the P.O.U.M. into the Government also reflected a considerable departure in policy." When the government included socialization of industry into its program, Nin entered the *Generalidad*. "Before long the Economic and Military Councils were abolished and the Government took over their duties.

"This was the second stage in the restoration of the power of the capitalist State machine.

"At the time the danger was not fully recognized though Marxist principles should have provided a warning. What has subsequently happened in Barcelona proves how accurate was the analysis of the founder of scientific socialist theory." (*The Truth About Barcelona*, emphasis in original.)

Brockway of course does not add: "and how justified was the sharp *timely* criticism of the P.O.U.M.'s policy by the Trotskyists"

at the moment it was being supported by Brandler, Lovestone and Brockway himself!

"Marxist principles" were reiterated at the Paris Conference but in a characteristic abstract, academic manner, unrelated to the actual experiences or proclivities of the participants. To criticize the P.O.U.M. or the S.A.P. at the conference would have been . . . "sectarian and factional Trotskyism"! But what is the value of Marxist principles—and what is involved is the Marxian theory of the state!—if they can be violated with impunity?

## 3. THE STRUGGLE AGAINST WAR

Similar "internationalism" is displayed in connection with the struggle against war. The conference resolution<sup>2</sup> condemns "the illusion that peace can be maintained by any 'Collective System of Peace' operated by Governments in a Capitalist world, and above all, by the League of Nations . . ." (p. 25). In another resolution the policy of appealing to capitalist governments for sanctions against Japan is criticized as "wrong in principle and dangerous in practise" (p. 39).

Taken seriously, these views are in conflict with the position of the Brandler-Thalheimer-Lovestone group. A little over two years ago, during the Italo-Ethiopian war, Thalheimer went to great lengths to defend the position of collective security. (I do not know of any repudiation of this position since then.) In the pages of *Controversy*, the discussion organ of the I.L.P. (Jan. 1936), he polemized against the I.L.P. opposition to government sanctions and advocated "pressure on the capitalist governments and the League in the direction of application of sanctions against Italy . . ." (p. 13). He alleged that the British workers were becoming class conscious only "because the working class raised the demand of sanctions towards the capitalist government" and that an opposition to this policy "is obviously for the benefit of Mussolini, and it has a damaging effect on the struggle for independence of the Abyssinian, the Egyptian and the Italian people . . ." (p. 13). The I.L.P. position against sanctions was welcomed by Trotsky, he wrote, "on the ground that it leads actually, and objectively, into an hostile position towards the line pursued by the Soviet Union in the Abyssinian conflict" (p. 14). Apparently Trotsky opposed sanctions because they would help the Soviet Union! Today Brockway and Thalheimer join forces to condemn "the position and sectarian and factional tactics of Trotskyism".

But has the Brandler-Lovestone group changed its position? It is true that the *Workers Age* criticizes the Stalinist collective security proposals and at the same time advocates a governmental embargo or economic sanctions against Japan! (See editorial, Dec. 25, 1937.) It supports the program of the "Keep America Out of War Committee" which demands "American coöperation for peace". Combine the two proposals and you have international coöperation for economic sanctions against Japan, collective security!

Lovestone can support an independent working class, anti-sanctionist position at Paris and, in New York, carry out the opposite in practise. He can support the "above-class" Keep America Out of War Committee—with its non-working class appeal and set-up—and make speeches in Paris against those who seek to build an anti-war movement not based upon the working class. In all this he does not violate his own conception of "internationalism".

## 4. THE SOVIET UNION

The Conference did not adopt a definitive resolution on the Soviet Union. The majority draft—proposed by the S.A.P. and

<sup>2</sup>The International Communist Opposition delegates voted against the majority war resolution, according to the *Workers Age* (April 2, 1938), because it calls for "revolutionary defeatism" in capitalist countries allied to the Soviet Union. The problem requires greater analysis than is possible in the present article. The phrase in dispute has been given various conflicting interpretations. In view of this, the meaning of the Conference resolution, which calls for the concentration on the overthrow of every capitalist government, including those allied to the Soviet Union, "using all means, including revolutionary defeatism", suffers from the characteristic vagueness of the other resolutions. In reality, revolutionary defeatism neither defines special "means" nor is it a slogan (as Thalheimer contends); it rather summarizes a particular strategy.

adopted as a basis for discussion—avoids all consideration of the class character of the Soviet State; by implication it denies that it is a workers' state. "It sees in the system of collectivism in U.S.S.R., even though it be bureaucratic, an enormous advantage for the world-wide proletariat. This requires of us the defense of the U.S.S.R." (p. 53). The resolution further condemns the Moscow trials, the social and foreign policy of the Stalin régime and calls for a return to proletarian democracy "expressed through the application of full democracy within the Communist Party and in an electoral system which gives political freedom to all workers and peasants" (p. 54).

There is no analysis of the causes of Stalinism nor the general strategy for the restoration of proletarian democracy in Russia. It is precisely the failure of the London Bureau to undertake a thorough analysis of the situation in the Soviet Union which resulted in its miserable—at best, petty bourgeois liberal—reaction to the first two Moscow trials. Now it seeks to perpetuate this situation, to satisfy itself with general phrases about the Soviet Union instead of making an exhaustive study of the problem, or a direct critical analysis of the documents of the movement for the Fourth International on the subject.

For the present, it suffices to say that the majority resolution proposal for "the application of full democracy within the Communist Party" is a utopian demand which shows a complete failure to understand the situation in the Soviet Union and the needs of the working class.

The I.L.P., the I.C.O. and the Socialist Party of Sweden introduced their own minority resolution on the Soviet Union. (The official report on this and other questions gives the impression of complete unanimity. A summary of the report of the spokesman for the majority resolution is given, no mention is made of a minority nor is the minority resolution itself given.) From the *Workers Age* report (April 2, 1935) we learn that the resolution "called for the defense of the Soviet Union as a workers' state with a socialist [!] economy; for democracy in the C.P.S.U., the Soviet trade unions and the soviets; for the struggle against Stalinism and solidarity with the revolutionary opposition to the Stalin régime in the Soviet Union".

In other words, the Brandler-Lovestone position that the C.P.S.U. is basically sound, "only" Stalin has to be removed—a task which can be accomplished by "peaceful" means. (The gyrations of Brandler-Lovestone on the Soviet Union have been analyzed in the *Socialist Appeal* and in the April 1938 and current issues of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL.) There is little sense in asking Lovestone (or Brockway) what "revolutionary" opposition they propose to support in the Soviet Union or how they intend supporting them. For their resolution on this question will remain as platonic as the others.

It is not accidental that Lovestone in his speech at the conference, where he briefly dwelt on the origin of the Communist International, "overlooked" Lenin's attacks on centrism in the working class movement. For Lovestone (as for Brockway) the term centrism no longer exists in his political vocabulary. For a centrist the term is merely an epithet!

It is thus seen that the centrist parties and groups—now joined by the shell of the old Brandlerist "International"—insist upon continuing their old course. Despite them, however, the need for creating a strong international center of revolutionary Marxists is now greater than ever before. The British *New Leader* compares the Paris Conference with the left wing Zimmerwald conference of 1915, but forgets that even then Lenin demanded the formation of the Third International. (By the way, how many "Zimmerwalds" does Brockway desire? His bureau has been in existence for about six years!)

The task of the international conference of supporters of the movement for the Fourth International which will convene shortly in Europe is enormous. Despite its small numbers, it will have to take bold steps forward in the creation of the world party of the working class, the Fourth International. The movement will be built against the sham internationalism of the London Bureau and its adherents. For revolutionary Marxists the struggle for proletarian revolution dictates a merciless struggle against centrism as well as reformism and Stalinism. Along this road the masses, including the proletarian revolutionists in the centrist parties, will be won to the banner of Marx and Lenin, the program of world socialism.

Joseph CARTER

# Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg

TWO LEGENDS HAVE BEEN created about the relationship between the views of Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg. Despite their antagonistic origins and aims, they supplement each other in effect. Neither one of the myth-makers approaches the extremely interesting and instructive subject from an objective historical standpoint. Consequently, the analysis made by each of them reduces itself to an instrument of factional politics which is, in both cases, the politics of reaction.

One school of thought, if such a term is permissible here, is headed by the faculty of Stalinist falsification. It covers up its reactionary objectives by posing as critics of Luxemburg and proponents of Lenin. A discussion of its arguments is rendered impossible by the very nature of its position, which formally prohibits both argument and discussion. Its scientific value is summarized in a few sentences from the papal bull issued by Stalin in 1932 in connection with the luckless Slutsky's study on Lenin's incorrect appraisal of Kautsky and Luxemburg: "You wish to enter into discussion against this Trotskyist thesis of Slutsky's? But what is there to discuss in this? Is it not plain that Slutsky is simply slandering Lenin, slandering the Bolsheviks? Slander must be branded, not transformed into a subject for discussion." The Stalinists have the Catholics' attitude toward their dogmas: they assume what is to be proved; their arbitrary conclusions are

presented as their premises; their statement of the problem is at the same time their answer—and it brooks no discussion. "*Bolshevism*" is absolutely and at all points and stages irreconcilable with "*Luxemburgism*" because of the original sin of the latter in disputing the "*organizational principles*" of the former.

The other school of thought is less authoritarian in tone and form, but just as rigid in unhistorical dogma; and if, unlike the Stalinists, it is not wholly composed of turncoats from revolutionary Marxism, it has a substantial sprinkling of them. Their objectives are covered up by posing as critics of Lenin and defenders of Luxemburg. They include anachronistic philosophers of ultra-leftism and express-train travelers fleeing from the pestilence of Stalinism to the plague of social-democracy. Bolshevism, they argue, is definitely bankrupt. The horrors of Stalinism are the logical and inevitable outcome of Lenin's "super-centralism", or—as it is put by a recent critic, Liston Oak, who seeks the "inner flaws of Bolshevism"—of Lenin's "totalitarianism". Luxemburg, on the other hand, stressed the democratic side of the movement, the struggle, the goal. Hence, "*Luxemburgism*" is absolutely irreconcilable with "*Bolshevism*" because of the original sin of the former in imposing its Jacobin, or bourgeois, or super-centralist, or totalitarian "*organizational principles*".

The use of quotation marks around the terms employed is justi-

fied and necessary, for at least in nine cases out of ten the airy analysts have only the vaguest and most twisted idea of what the disputes between Luxemburg and Lenin really were. In just as many cases they have revealed a cavalier indisposition to acquaint themselves with the historical documents and the actual writings of the two great thinkers.\* A brief survey will disclose, I believe, the superficiality of the arguments which, especially since the obvious putrescence of Stalinism, have gained a certain currency in the radical movement.

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Nothing but misunderstanding can result from a failure to bear in mind the fact that Lenin and Luxemburg worked, fought and developed their ideas in two distinctly different movements, operating within no less different countries, at radically different stages of development; consequently, in countries and movements where the problems of the working class were posed in quite different forms. It is the absence of this *concrete* and *historical* approach to the disputes between Lenin, of the Social-Democratic Labor Party of Russia, and Luxemburg, of the Social-Democratic Party of Germany, that so surely brings most critics to grief.

The "organizational dispute" between Lenin and Luxemburg did not originate in the former's insistence on a break with Kautsky and the centrists before the war. When Stalin thunders against anyone "who can doubt" that the Bolsheviks brought about "a split with their own opportunists and centrist-conciliators long before the imperialist war (1904-1912) without at the same time pursuing a policy of rupture, a policy of split with the opportunists and centrists of the Second International"—he is simply substituting *ukase* for historical fact.

The truth is that Rosa Luxemburg reached a clear estimate of Kautsky and broke with his self-styled "Marxian center", long before Lenin did. For many years after the turn of the century, Kautsky's prestige among all the factions of the Russian movement was unparalleled. The Menshevik Abramovich does not exaggerate when he writes that

A West-European can hardly imagine the enormous authority which the leaders of the German social-democracy, the Liebknechts, the Bebel, the Singers, enjoyed in Russia. Among these leaders, Karl Kautsky occupied quite a special place . . . serving for all the Russian Marxists and social-democrats as the highest authority in all the theoretical and tactical questions of scientific socialism and the labor movement. In every disputed question, in every newly-arisen problem, the first thought always was: What would Kautsky say about this? How would Kautsky have decided this question?

Lenin's much-disputed *What to Do?* held up, as is known, the German social-democracy and its leader, Bebel, as models for the Russian movement. When Kautsky wrote his famous article, after the 1905 revolution in Russia, on the Slavs and the world revolution, in which, Zinoviev writes, under Luxemburg's influence, he advanced substantially the Bolshevik conception, Lenin was highly elated. "Where and when," he wrote in July 1905, in a polemic against Parvus, "have I characterized the revolutionism of Bebel and Kautsky as 'opportunism'? Where and when have I presumed to call into existence in the international social-democracy a special tendency which was *not identical* with the tendency of Bebel and Kautsky?" A year and a half later, Lenin wrote that "the vanguard of the Russian working class knows Karl Kautsky for some time now as *its* writer", and a month later, in January 1907, he described Kautsky as "the leader of the German revolutionary social-democrats". In August 1908, Lenin cited Kautsky as his authority on the question of war and militarism as against Gustave Hervé, and as late as February 1914, he invoked him again as a Marxian authority in his dispute with Rosa Luxemburg on the national

question. Finally, in one of his last pre-war articles, in April 1914, "Wherein the German Labor Movement Should Not Be Imitated", speaking of the "undoubted sickness" of the German social-democracy, he referred exclusively to the trade union leaders (specifically to Karl Legien) and the parliamentary spokesmen, but did not even mention Kautsky and the centrists, much less raise the question of the left wing (also unmentioned) splitting with them.

It is this pre-war attitude of Lenin towards the German center—against which Luxemburg had been conducting a sharp frontal attack as early as 1910—that explains the vehemence and the significant terminology of Lenin's strictures against Kautsky immediately after the war broke out, for example, his letter to Shliapnikov on October 27, 1914, in which he says: "I now despise and hate Kautsky more than all the rest. . . . R. Luxemburg was right, she long ago understood that Kautsky had the highly-developed 'servility of a theoretician' . . ."

In sum, the fact is that by the very nature of her milieu and her work before the war, Rosa Luxemburg had arrived at a clearer and more correct appreciation of the German social-democracy and the various currents within it than had Lenin. To a great extent, this determined and explained her polemic against Lenin on what appeared to be the "organizational questions" of the Russian movement.

The beginning of the century marked the publication of two of Lenin's most audacious and stirring works, *One Step Forward, Two Steps Backward*, and its forerunner, *What to Do?* The Russian movement was then in no way comparable to the West-European, especially the German. It was composed of isolated groups and sections in Russia, more or less autonomous, pursuing policies at odds with each other and only remotely influenced by its great revolutionary Marxists abroad—Plekhanov, Lenin, Martov, Potressov, Trotsky and others. Moreover, the so-called "Economist" tendency was predominant; it laid the greatest stress on the element of spontaneity in the labor struggle and under-rated the element of conscious leadership.

Lenin's *What to Do?* was a merciless criticism of "Economism", which he identified with "pure-and-simple trade unionism", with *khovstism* (i.e., the policy of dragging at the tail of events, or of the masses), with opportunism. Social-democracy, he argued, is not a mere outgrowth of the spontaneous economic struggles of the proletariat, nor is it the passive servant of the workers; it is the union of the labor movement with revolutionary socialist theory which must be *brought into* the working class by the party, for the proletariat, by itself, can only attain a trade-union and not a socialist consciousness. In view of the dispersion of the movement in Russia, its primitive and localistic complexion, an all-Russian national party and newspaper had to be created immediately to infuse the labor movement with a socialist, political consciousness and unite it in a revolutionary struggle against Czarism. The artificers of the party, in contrast with the desultory agitators of the time, would be the *professional revolutionists*, intellectuals and educated workers devoting all their time and energy to revolutionary activity and functioning within an extremely centralized party organization. The effective political leadership was to be the editorial board of the central organ, edited by the exiles abroad, and it would have the power to organize or reorganize party branches inside Russia, admit or reject members, and even appoint their local committees and other directing organs. I differ with the Mensheviks in this respect, wrote Lenin in 1904:

The basic idea of comrade Martov . . . is precisely a false "democratism", the idea of the construction of the party from the bottom to the top. My idea, on the contrary, is "bureaucratic" in the sense that the party should be constructed from above down to the bottom, from the congress to the individual party organizations.

It should be borne in mind that, despite subsequent reconsideration, all the leaders of the *Iskra* tendency in the Russian movement warmly supported Lenin against the Economists. "Twice in suc-

\*So as not to clutter up the text with references, I am including all the works from which I quote in this article, in a single footnote. They are: Lenin, *Collected Works* [in German], Vols. IV, VI, VII, VIII, X, XII.—Luxemburg, *Collected Works* [in German], Vols. III, IV.—Radek, *Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Liebknecht, Leo Jogisches*.—Martov and Dan, *Die Geschichte der russischen Sozialdemokratie*.—*Die Neue Zeit*, 1904, 1910.—*Protocol No. 1, Session of Bolshevization Commission, E.C.C.I.*, 1925.—*Der Kampf*, 1921, 1924.—*Lenin Anthology* [in Russian], Vol. II.—Henriette Roland-Holst, *Rosa Luxemburg: Haar Leven en werken*.—Stalin, Kaganovich, Postyshev: *Questions Concerning the History of Bolshevism*.

cession," wrote A. N. Potressov, later Lenin's furious enemy, "have I read through the booklet from beginning to end and can only congratulate its author. The general impression is an excellent one—in spite of the obvious haste, noted by the author himself, in which the work was written." At the famous London Congress in 1903, Plekhanov spoke up in Lenin's defense: "Lenin did not write a treatise on the philosophy of history, but a polemical article against the economists, who said: We must wait until we see where the working class itself will come, without the help of the revolutionary bacillus." And again: "If you eliminate the bacillus, then there remains only an unconscious mass, into which consciousness must be brought from without. If you had wanted to be right against Lenin and if you had read through his whole book attentively, then you would have seen that this is just what he said."

It was only after the deepening of the split between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks (Plekhanov included) that the latter launched their sharp attacks on Lenin's polemical exaggeration—that is what it was—of the dominant rôle of the intellectuals as professional revolutionists, organizers and leaders of the party, and of the relationship between spontaneity and the element of socialist consciousness which can only be introduced into the labor movement from without. Lenin's defense of the ideas he expressed in 1902 and 1904 on these questions and on centralism, is highly significant for an understanding of the *concrete* conditions under which they were advanced and the *concrete* aims they pursued.

In "The Fruits of Demagogy", an article written in March 1905 by the Bolshevik V. Vorovsky (read and revised by Lenin), the author quotes Plekhanov's above-cited praise of Lenin's *What to Do?* and adds:

These words define perfectly correctly the sense and significance of the Lenin brochure and if Plekhanov now says that he was not in agreement, from the very beginning, with its theoretical principles, it only proves how correctly he was able to judge the real significance of the brochure at a time when there was no necessity of inventing "differences of opinion in principle" with Lenin. In actuality, *What to Do?* was a polemical brochure (which was entirely dedicated to the criticism of the *khvostist* wing in the then social-democracy, to a characterization and a refutation of the specific errors of this wing). It would be ridiculous if Lenin, in a brochure which dealt with the "burning questions of our movement", were to demonstrate that the evolution of ideas, especially of scientific socialism, has proceeded and proceeds in close historical connection with the evolution of the productive forces (in close connection with the growth of the labor movement in general). For him it was important to establish the fact that nowhere has the working class yet worked itself up independently to a socialist ideology, that this ideology (the doctrine of scientific socialism) was always brought in by the social-democracy. . . .

In 1903, at the Second Congress itself, Lenin had pointed out that "the Economists bent the staff towards the one side. In order to straighten it out again, it had to be bent towards the other side and that is what I did", and almost two years later, in the draft of a resolution written for the Third Congress, he emphasized the non-universality of his organizational views by writing that "under free political conditions our party can and will be built up entirely upon the principle of electibility. Under absolutism, this is unrealizable for all the thousands of workers who belong to the party." Again, in the period of the 1905 revolution, he showed how changes in conditions determined a change in his views:

At the Third Congress I expressed the wish that in the party committees there should be two intellectuals for every eight workers. How obsolete is this wish! Now it would be desirable that in the new party organizations, for every intellectual belonging to the social-democracy there should be a few hundred social-democratic workers.

Perhaps the best summary of the significance of the views he set forth at the beginning of the century is given by Lenin himself in the foreword to the collection, *Twelve Years*, which he wrote in September 1907:

The basic mistake of those who polemicize against *What to Do?* today, is that they tear this work completely out of the context of a definite historical milieu, a definite, now already long past period of development of our party. . . . To speak at present about the fact that *Iskra* (in the years 1901 and

1902!) exaggerated the idea of the organization of professional revolutionists, is the same as if somebody had reproached the Japanese, *after* the Russo-Japanese war, for exaggerating the Russian military power before the war, for exaggerated concern over the struggle against this power. The Japanese had to exert all forces against a possible maximum of Russian forces in order to attain the victory. Unfortunately, many judge from the outside, without seeing that *today* the idea of the organization of professional revolutionists has *already* attained a complete victory. This victory, however, would have been impossible if, in its time, this idea had not been pushed into the *foreground*, if it had not been preached in an "exaggerated" manner to people who stood like obstacles in the way of its realization. . . . *What to Do?* polemically corrected Economism, and it is false to consider the contents of the brochure outside of its connection with this task.

The ideas contained in *What to Do?*, which should still be read by revolutionists everywhere—and it can be read with the greatest profit—cannot, therefore, be understood without bearing in mind the specific conditions and problems of the Russian movement of the time. That is why Lenin, in answer to a proposal to translate his brochure for the non-Russian parties, told Max Levien in 1921: "That is not desirable; the translation must at least be issued with good commentaries, which would have to be written by a Russian comrade very well acquainted with the history of the Communist Party of Russia, in order to avoid false application."

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Just as Lenin's views must be considered against the background of the situation in Russia, so must Luxemburg's polemic against them be viewed against the background of the situation in Germany. In her famous review in 1904 of Lenin's *One Step Forward, Two Steps Backward* (an extension of the views of *What to Do?*), Luxemburg's position was decisively colored by the realities of the German movement. Where Lenin stressed ultra-centralism, Luxemburg stressed democracy and organizational flexibility. Where Lenin emphasized the dominant rôle of the professional revolutionist, Luxemburg countered with emphasis on the mass movement and its elemental upsurge.

Why? Because these various forces played clearly different rôles in Russia and in Germany. The "professional revolutionists" whom Luxemburg encountered in Germany were not, as in Russia, the radical instruments for gathering together loose and scattered local organizations, uniting them into one national party imbued with a firm Marxian ideology and freed from the opportunistic conceptions of pure-and-simple trade unionism. Quite the contrary. In Germany, the "professionals" were the careerists, the conservative trade union bureaucrats, the lords of the ossifying party machine, the reformist parliamentarians, the whole crew who finally succeeded in disemboweling the movement. An enormous conservative power, they weighed down like a mountain upon the militant-minded rank and file. They were the canal through which the poison of reformism seeped into the masses. They acted as a brake upon the class actions of the workers and not as a spur. In Russia the movement was loose and ineffectual, based on circles, as Lenin said, "almost always resting upon the personal friendship of a small number of persons". In Germany, the movement was tightly organized, conservatively disciplined, routinized, and dominated by a semi-reformist, centralist leadership. These concrete circumstances led Luxemburg to the view that only an appeal to the masses, only their elemental militant movement could break through the conservative wall of the party and trade union apparatus. The "centralism" of Lenin forged a party that proved able to lead the Russian masses to a victorious revolution; the "centralism" that Luxemburg saw growing in the German social-democracy became a conservative force and ended in a series of catastrophes for the proletariat. This is what she feared when she wrote against Lenin in 1904:

. . . the rôle of the social-democratic leadership becomes one of an essentially conservative character, in that it leads to working out empirically to its ultimate conclusions the new experience acquired in the struggle and soon to converting it into a bulwark against a further innovation in the grand style. The present tactic of the German social-democracy, for example, is generally admired for its remarkable manifoldness, flexibility and at the

same time certainty. Such qualities simply mean, however, that our party has adapted itself wonderfully in its daily struggle to the present parliamentary basis, down to the smallest detail, that it knows how to exploit the whole field of battle offered by parliamentarism and to master it in accordance with given principles. At the same time, this specific formulation of tactics already serves so much to conceal the further horizon that one notes a strong inclination to perpetuate that tactic and to regard the parliamentary tactic as *the* social-democratic tactic for all time.

But it is a far cry from the wisdom of these words, uttered in the specific conditions of Luxemburg's struggle in Germany, to the attempts made by syndicalists and ultra-leftists of all kinds to read into her views a universal formula of rejection of the idea of leadership and centralization. The fact of the matter is that the opportunistic enemies of Luxemburg, and her closest collaborator, Leo Jogisches (Tyzsko), especially in the Polish movement in which she actively participated, made virtually the same attacks upon her "organizational principles" and "régime of leadership" as were levelled against Lenin. During the war, for example, the Spartakusbund was highly centralized and held tightly in the hands of that peerless organizer, Jogisches. The Social-Democracy of Poland and Lithuania, which she led, was, if anything, far more highly centralized and far more merciless towards those in its ranks who deviated from the party's line, than was the Bolshevik party under Lenin. In his history of the Russian movement, the Menshevik Theodore Dan, who did not spare Lenin for his "organizational régime", and sought to exploit Luxemburg's criticism of Lenin for his own ends, nevertheless wrote that the Polish social-democracy of the time

shared in its essentials the organizational principles of Lenin, against which Rosa Luxemburg had polemized at the birth of Bolshevism; it also applied these principles in the practise of its own party, in which a rigid, bureaucratic centralism prevailed and people like Radek, Zalevsky, Unschlicht and others, who later played a leading rôle in the Communist party, were expelled from the party because of their oppositional stand against the party executive.

"Bureaucratic centralism", was (and is) the term generally

applied by Dan and Mensheviks of all stripes to Lenin and Luxemburg and all others who seriously sought to build up a purposeful party of proletarian revolution, in contrast to that "democratic" looseness prevalent in the Second International which only served as a cover behind which elements alien to the revolution could make their way to the leadership of the party and, at crucial moments, betray it to the class enemy. The irreconcilable antagonism which the reformists felt towards Lenin and Luxemburg is in sharp and significant contrast to the affinity they now feel towards the Stalinist International, in which full-blooded and genuine bureaucratic centralism has attained its most evil form. It is not difficult to imagine what Rosa Luxemburg would have written about the Stalin régime had she lived in our time; and by the same token it is not difficult to understand the poisonous campaign that the Stalinists have conducted against her for years.

The years of struggle that elapsed since the early polemics in the Russian movement, the experiences that enriched the arsenal of the great revolutionists of the time, and above all the Russian Revolution itself, undoubtedly served to draw the political tendency of Rosa Luxemburg closer to that represented with such genius by Lenin. Had she not been cut down so cruelly in the prime of her intellectual power, there is little doubt in my mind that she would have become one of the greatest figures and champions of the Communist International—not of the horribly twisted caricature that it is today, but as it was in the early years. It does not even occur to me, wrote Karl Kautsky, her bitter foe, in 1921, "to deny that in the course of the war Rosa drew steadily closer to the communist world of thought, so that it is quite correct when Radek says that 'with Rosa Luxemburg there died the greatest and most profound theoretical head of communism'".

The judgment is a correct one and doubly valid because it comes from a political opponent who knew her views so well. It is worth a thousand times more than all the superficial harpings on the theme of the irreconcilability of Marxism's greatest teachers in our time.

Max SHACHTMAN

# Principles and Tactics in War

THE REVIEW OF THE BOOK *The Case of Leon Trotsky* in the first number of the periodical *Der Einzige Weg* quotes the following interesting statement of comrade Trotsky on the difference in the tasks of the proletariat during a war between France-Soviet Union and Germany-Japan (reproduced here somewhat more completely):

STOLBERG: Russia and France already have a military alliance. Suppose an international war breaks out. I am not interested in what you say about the Russian working class at this time. I know that. What would you say to the French working class in reference to the defense of the Soviet Union? "Change the French bourgeois government," would you say?

TROTSKY: This question is more or less answered in the thesis, *The War and the Fourth International*, in this sense: In France I would remain in opposition to the government and would develop systematically this opposition. In Germany I would do anything I could to sabotage the war machinery. They are two different things. In Germany and in Japan, I would apply military methods as far as I am able to fight, oppose, and injure the machinery, the military machinery of Japan, to disorganize it, both in Germany and Japan. In France, it is political opposition against the bourgeoisie, and the preparation of the proletarian revolution. Both are revolutionary methods. But in Germany and Japan I have as my immediate aim the disorganization of the whole machinery. In France, I have the aim of the proletarian revolution. . . .

GOLDMAN: Suppose you have the chance to take power during a war, in France, would you advocate it if you had the majority of the proletariat?

TROTSKY: Naturally. (Pp. 289f.)

Within the limits of a book review it was naturally impossible, with this isolated, half-improvised, necessarily incomplete and

special colloquial statement, to develop the general problems of the revolutionary struggle in wartime or even to throw a sufficient theoretical light on that special question. Since the above quotation thereupon unfortunately led to misunderstandings, and worse yet, to malicious distortions ("preparing for the civil peace in France", renunciation of revolutionary defeatism, *etc.*!), it is well to make up here for the previous neglect.

As to the basic principles of the revolutionary struggle against war and during it, considerations of space compel us to confine ourselves here to our theses on war\*, which were adopted in May 1934 by the International Secretariat of our movement, have since formed one of the most important programmatic documents of Bolshevism, and acquire more topical importance with the passing of every day.

With regard to the specific question that interests us, comrade Trotsky, in the statement above, makes reference to the following points in the theses on war:

44. Remaining the determined and devoted defender of the workers' state in the struggle with imperialism, the international proletariat will not, however, become an ally of the imperialist allies of the U.S.S.R. The proletariat of a capitalist country which finds itself in alliance with the U.S.S.R. must retain fully and completely its irreconcilable *hostility to the imperialist government of its own country*. In this sense, its policy will not differ from that of the proletariat in a country fighting against the U.S.S.R. But in the nature of practical action considerable differences may arise, depending on the concrete war situation. For instance, it would be absurd and criminal

\**War and the Fourth International*. New York, 1934.

in case of war between the U.S.S.R. and Japan for the American proletariat to sabotage the sending of American munition to the U.S.S.R. But the proletariat of a country fighting against the U.S.S.R. would be absolutely obliged to resort to actions of this sort—strikes, sabotage, etc.

45. Intransigent proletarian opposition to the imperialist ally of the U.S.S.R. must develop, on the one hand, on the basis of international class policy, on the other, on the basis of the imperialist aims of the given government, the treacherous character of this "alliance", its speculation on capitalist overturn in the U.S.S.R., etc. The policy of a proletarian party in an "allied" as well as in an enemy imperialist country should therefore be directed towards the revolutionary overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the seizure of power. Only in this way can a *real alliance with the U.S.S.R.* be created and the first workers' state be saved from disaster. (P. 21.)

The wars of recent years did not represent a *direct* struggle between imperialist powers, but colonial expeditions (Italy-Abyssinia, Japan-China) and conflicts over spheres of influence (China, Chaco, and in a certain sense, also Spain), and therefore did not, for the time being, degenerate into a world conflict. Hitler hopes to attack the U.S.S.R. tomorrow just as Japan attacks China, *i.e.*, to alter the imperialist relationship of forces without directly violating the essential interests of the other imperialisms and thereby temporarily to localize the conflict. These events, occurring since 1934, have clearly shown that the above-quoted theses on the attitude of the proletariat of imperialist countries are valid not only in an anti-Soviet war but in all wars in which it must take sides—and those are precisely the ones involved in recent years.

\* \* \*

War is only the continuation of politics by other means. Hence the proletariat must continue its class struggle in war-time, among other things with the new means which the bourgeoisie hands him. It can and must utilize the weakening of its "own" bourgeoisie in the imperialist countries in order relentlessly to prepare and to carry out its social revolution in connection with the military defeat engendered by the war, and to seize the power. This tactic, known as *revolutionary defeatism* and realizable internationally, is one of the strongest levers of the proletarian world revolution in our epoch, and therewith of historical progress.

Only, where the struggle is imperialist only on one side, and a war of liberation of non-imperialist nations or of a socialist country against existing or threatening imperialist oppression on the other, as well as in civil wars between the classes or between democracy and fascism—the international proletariat cannot and should not apply the same tactic to both sides. Recognizing the progressive character of this war of liberation, it must fight decisively against the main enemy, reactionary imperialism (or else against the reactionary camp, in the case of a civil war), that is, fight for the victory of the socially (or politically) oppressed or about-to-be oppressed: U.S.S.R., colonial and semi-colonial countries like Abyssinia or China, or Republican Spain, etc.

Here too, however, it remains mindful of its irreconcilable class opposition to its "own" bourgeoisie—or its political opposition to the Soviet bureaucracy—and does not surrender without resistance any of its independent positions. As in the imperialist countries it strives with all its strength for the social revolution and the seizure of power, the establishment of its dictatorship, which, moreover, alone makes possible a sure and lasting victory over the imperialists. But in such cases, it cannot and does not, as in the imperialist camp, seek revolutionary victory at the cost of a military *defeat* but rather along the road of a military *victory* of his country.<sup>1</sup>

Class struggle and war are international phenomena, which are decided internationally. But since every struggle permits of but two camps (bloc against bloc) and since imperialistic fights intertwine with the class war (world imperialism—world proletariat), there arise manifold and complex cases. The bourgeoisie of the semi-colonial countries or the liberal bourgeoisie menaced by its "own" fascism, appeal for aid to the "friendly" imperialisms; the

Soviet Union attempts, for example, to utilize the antagonisms between the imperialisms by concluding alliances with one group against another, etc. The proletariat of all countries, the only internationally solidary—and not least of all because of that, the only progressive—class, thereby finds itself in the complicated situation in war-time, especially in the new world war, of *combining revolutionary defeatism towards his own bourgeoisie with support of progressive wars.*

This situation is utilized with a vengeance right now and certainly will be tomorrow, by the social-patriots of the social-democratic, Stalinist or anarchist stripe, in order to have the proletarians permit themselves to be slaughtered for the profits of capital under the illusion of helping their brothers of the U.S.S.R., China, and elsewhere. It serves the social-traitors, furthermore, to depict the revolutionists not only as "betrayers of the fatherland", but also as "betrayers of the socialist fatherland" (just as they are now shouted down as agents of Franco). All the more reason why the proletariat, especially in the imperialist countries, requires, in this seemingly contradictory situation, a particularly clear understanding of these combined tasks and of the methods for fulfilling them.

In the application of revolutionary defeatism against the imperialist bourgeoisie and its state, there can be no fundamental difference, regardless of whether the latter is "friendly" or hostile to the cause supported by the proletariat, whether it is in—treacherous—alliance with the allies of the proletariat (Stalin, the bourgeoisie of the semi-colonial countries, the colonial peoples, anti-fascist liberalism), or is conducting a war against them. The methods of revolutionary defeatism remain unaltered: revolutionary propaganda, irreconcilable opposition to the régime, the class struggle from its purely economic up to its highest political form (the armed uprising), fraternization of the troops, transformation of the war into the civil war.

The international defense of the proletarian states, of the oppressed peoples fighting for their freedom, and the international support of the armed anti-fascist civil war, must, however, naturally take on various forms in accordance with whether one's "own" bourgeoisie stands on their side or combats them. Apart from the political preparation of the social revolution, whose rhythm and methods are in no way identical with those of war, this defense must naturally assume military forms. In addition to revolutionary support, it consists, consequently, in military support of the progressive cause, as well as in the military damaging of its imperialist opponent.

The military support can naturally take on a decisive scope only where the proletariat itself has the levers of power and of economy in its hands (U.S.S.R., and to a certain extent, Spain in the summer of 1936). In the imperialist countries, which are allied with the countries conducting progressive and revolutionary wars, it boils down to this: that the proletariat fights with revolutionary means for an effective, direct military support, controlled by it, of the progressive cause ("Airplanes for Spain!" cried the French workers). In any case, it must promote and control a really guaranteed direct military support (the sending of arms, ammunition, food, specialists, etc.), even at the cost of an "exception" from the direct class struggle.<sup>2</sup> It will have to be left to the instinct and revolutionary perspicacity of the proletariat, which is well aware of its tasks, to make the right distinction in every concrete situation, to avoid injuring the military interests of the far-off ally of the proletariat out of narrow national class struggle considerations, no matter how revolutionary they seem, as well to avoid doing the dirty work for its "own" imperialism on the pretext of giving indirect aid to its allies. The only real and decisive aid that the workers can bring the latter is by seizing and hold the power.

<sup>1</sup>We leave aside the case where wars between two non-imperialist countries are only or predominantly the masked combat between two foreign imperialisms—England and America in the Chaco war—or the case where the war of liberation of an oppressed nation is only a pawn in the hand of an imperialistic group and a mere part of a general imperialist conflict—Serbia from 1914 to 1918.

<sup>2</sup>It may confidently be assumed that for the French bourgeoisie in wartime, a strike of the Marseilles harbor workers, which makes an exception of war shipments to Russia, in which it is least of all interested, would be particularly vexatious! No less nonsensical would it be, for example, in the course of a printers' strike, not to allow the appearance of the labor papers which are needed for the strike struggle itself.

It is otherwise—so far as the outward form of its struggle goes—with the proletariat of the imperialisms engaged in a direct struggle *against* the progressive cause. In addition to its struggle for the revolution, it is its duty to engage in military sabotage for the benefit of the “enemy”—the enemy of its bourgeoisie but its own ally. As a means of revolutionary defeatism in the struggle between imperialist countries, military sabotage, like individual terror, is completely worthless. Without replacing the social revolution or even advancing it by a hair’s-breadth, it would only help one imperialism against another, mislead the vanguard, sow illusions among the masses and thus facilitate the game of the imperialists.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, military sabotage is imperiously imposed as an immediate measure in defense of the camp that is fighting imperialism and is consequently progressive. As such, it is understood by the masses, welcomed and furthered. The defeat of one’s “own” country here becomes not a lesser evil that is taken into the bargain (a lesser evil than the “victory” bought by civil peace and the abandonment of the revolution), but the direct and immediate goal, the task of the proletarian struggle. The defeat of one’s “own” country would, in this case, be no evil at all, or an evil much more easily taken into the bargain, for it would signify the common victory of the people liberated from the existing or threatening imperialist yoke and of the proletariat of its enemy, over the common overlord—imperialist capital. Such a victory would be a powerful point of departure for the international proletarian revolution, not least of all in the “friendly” imperialist countries.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup>Lenin wrote on July 26, 1915 (see *Gegen den Strom*) against Trotsky’s false slogan of “Neither victory nor defeat” and said polemically: “And revolutionary actions during the war surely and undoubtedly signify not only the wish for its defeat but also an actual furtherance of such a defeat (for the ‘discerning’ reader: this by no means signifies that ‘bridges be blown up’, that abortive military strikes should be staged, and in general that the revolutionists should help bring about a defeat of the government).”—(My emphasis.—W.S.)

<sup>4</sup>Naturally, military sabotage in favor of the non-imperialist opponent of one’s own bourgeoisie is not to be extended in favor of its imperialist ally. The German proletarians, for example, would seek to disorganize militarily the eastern front, to help Soviet Russia; for the western front, where a purely imperialist war would be raging between Germany and a France allied to the U.S.S.R., “only” the rule of defeatism would be valid—for the French proletariat as well as for the German.

Thus we see how different war situations require from the revolutionary proletariat of the various imperialist countries, if it wishes to remain *true* to itself and to its goal, *different fighting forms*, which may appear to schematic spirits to be “deviations” from the basic principle of revolutionary defeatism, but which result in reality only from the combination of revolutionary defeatism with the defense of certain progressive camps.

Moreover, from a higher historical standpoint these two tasks coincide: in our imperialist epoch, the national bourgeoisie of the non-imperialist countries—like the Soviet bureaucracy—because of its fear of the working class which is internationally matured for the socialist revolution and dictatorship, is not in a position to conduct an energetic struggle against imperialism. They do not dare to appeal to the forces of the proletariat and at a definite stage of the struggle they inevitably call upon imperialism for aid against their “own” proletariat. The complete national liberation of the colonial and semi-colonial countries from imperialist enslavement, and of the Soviet Union from internal and external capitalist destruction and anarchy, the bourgeois democratic revolution, the defense from fascism—all these tasks can be solved, nationally and internationally, only by the proletariat. Their fulfillment grows naturally into the proletarian revolution. The coming world war will be the most titanic and murderous explosion in history, but because of that it will also burst all the traditional fetters and in its flames the revolutionary and liberative movements of the entire world will be fused into one glowing stream.

To present clearly, even now, to the proletariat the problems of the coming war and its combined tasks—this serious and difficult task is one of the most urgent of our day. The Bolshevik-Leninists alone have taken it upon themselves to arm the proletariat for its struggle and to create the instrument with which it will gain its future victories: the program, the methods, the organization of the Fourth International.

BRUSSELS, December 1937.

W. ST.

# The Course of Herr Brandler—II

## The New Constitution, the One-Party System and the Question of the New Party

**B**RANDLER-THALHEIMER WOULD not be Brandler-Thalheimer if they did not hail and defend the new Constitution of the Soviet Union, a swindle which appropriately takes its place alongside of the scandal-trials. Just as they defend Stalin’s theory of socialism in one country against Stalin’s practise of it, they demand the realization of Stalin’s Constitution against Stalin. If Stalinism represents bureaucracy in the labor movement, then Brandler-Thalheimer are its bureaucretinistic shadow. As regards the criticism of Stalin’s Constitution itself, we can rest content to refer to the particular chapter in Trotsky’s *Revolution Betrayed*.

Even if we took the Constitution seriously and literally, it does not signify a step forward from the Leninist Constitution to classless society, but rather a step backward. It replaces the workers’ right of direct participation in the soviets by the abstractions and fictions of bourgeois constitutions. Lenin called the soviets “working organs” in contrast to the parliamentary chatter-chambers of the bourgeois democracies. Where Lenin wanted to solve the contradiction between law-making and administration in the framework of the soviets by giving both functions more and more directly to the masses themselves, Stalin solves the contradiction in the framework of the “total state”; that is, as completely as possible against the people. The same bureaucrats who administer the laws meet in “parliament” to make them.

Under Stalin, therefore, the participation of the people in making the laws is considerably less than in bourgeois democracies and exactly as great as under fascism—that is, equal to zero. That is the real content of Stalin’s Constitution. All of the formulas taken from the Leninist Declaration of Rights of the Toiling People are only imitations, decorations, sand in the eyes of the people. The Stalin Constitution is nothing but the deceptive cloak of the Bonapartistic dictatorship. The masses who will rise against this dictatorship will also cast aside this deceptive cloak and reintroduce in its stead the Leninist Constitution in accordance with its spirit as well as its letter.

In the socialist Declaration of Rights of the workers and peasants in Lenin’s Constitution there is nothing about establishing the organizational monopoly of the communist party. This, however, is a component part of the Bonapartistic constitution, an expression of the hierarchy of party secretaries who aim to perpetuate constitutionally their “organizational monopoly” as well as their “right of inheritance”. Nowhere did Lenin raise the “organizational monopoly” of the communist party to a principle. In the first months after the revolution the Bolsheviks were in a coalition with the Left Social Revolutionists. In 1918 Lenin was considering legalizing the Menshevik opposition of the Martov tendency in the soviets.

Only the long-drawn-out civil war and the resultant extreme criticalness of the internal situation prevented the realization of this plan and made the suppression of all parties a bitter necessity. At the end of the civil war the Bolsheviks enjoyed such great

authority, whereas the Mensheviks and the Social Revolutionists were so discredited, that no one demanded the legalization of opposition parties. Already in 1921-1922, however, the tendency of misusing the organizational monopoly of the communist party arose: Secretaries began to rule over the masses and command them, instead of convincing and educating them. The last writings of Lenin were directed precisely against this tendency and Trotsky continued this struggle. The efforts of Lenin and Trotsky aimed at opening new roads and canals to the political activity of the masses and at checking the all-powerful party secretaries.

The party secretaries won out, however, and stabilized their hierarchy. Undoubtedly, from this moment on the organizational monopoly of the communist party turned from a lever of progress into an instrument of reaction, from a tool of the masses into a tool against the masses. The sharper the forms of this antithesis, the more legitimate became the aim of the masses and their ideological vanguard to counterpose to the party of secretaries a party of their own. The C.P.S.U. is today nothing but a loathsome police apparatus, the most corrupt police apparatus history has ever known. When Brandler demands the maintenance of the "organizational monopoly of the C.P.S.U." that only means that he puts himself on the side of the G.P.U. against the workers. "Where it is a question of further development of socialist foundations and of the Soviet State, there is no room for parties who deny and struggle against this foundation." Brandler has forgotten that he said at the beginning of his pamphlet: "Stalin's régime now turns against the soviet state itself, against the proletarian dictatorship, against communism." Stalin's régime is identical with the régime of the C.P.S.U., which has become Stalin's party. Therefore, the C.P.S.U., whose organizational monopoly is demanded by Brandler turns in destructive fashion against socialist foundations, the development of which he demands.

Brandler's mental processes must really be frizzled. To be correct one must say that if the socialist foundations are to be preserved and if on this basis there is to be progress toward socialism, then there is no room in the Soviet Union for the party of Stalin, the party of bureaucrats, falsifiers, gangsters and G.P.U. provocateurs. A new revolutionary party must take its place. Someone will, of course, ask, will this new party in its turn again demand an organizational monopoly?

In his book *The Revolution Betrayed* Trotsky demands the restoration of the freedom of soviet parties. Brandler calls this demand flatly "counter-revolutionary". He interprets soviet parties to mean Mensheviks and Social-Revolutionists, and assumes, therefore, that legalization of the propaganda of these parties would lead directly to counter-revolution. Here again is another of Brandler-Thalheimer's peculiar zigzags of thought. They have proved that no basis at all exists for the Trotskyist "pessimistic distortion" that the Soviet Union could again become a prey to capitalism; they have "proved" that industry and agriculture are moving along a smooth road to socialism, and that one fine day they will finally outstrip Europe and America, and so forth and so on; and then these same people suddenly think that a little bit of Menshevik propaganda would be enough to let the whole thing collapse like a house of cards!

We, on the contrary, have our eyes open to the contradictions of soviet society and to the dangers threatening it, but on the other hand we do have so much confidence in the future of socialism and in ourselves, that we hope to conquer Menshevism along democratic paths, through the weight of our arguments, without calling the police for help. The civil war and the immediate threat presented by the armies of intervention gave the Bolsheviks no time to overcome the Menshevik prejudices of a minority along democratic paths; the repressive measures were the expression of a momentary necessity and also of a momentary weakness, since the Bolsheviks thereby admitted that the propaganda of the Mensheviks was becoming dangerous to them. At any rate, the civil war

and Menshevik participation in intervention justified repression at that time.

After the civil war had been ended, however, it was the duty of the Bolsheviks to exchange anew the weapon of police repression for the democratic armament of agitators and Marxist politicians. Precisely this did not suit the bureaucrats. The system used in the civil war of stifling the voice of criticism by means of force was so much easier; it did not make so many demands on one's own intellect, on one's own mental elasticity. The bureaucracy continued to flay all opposition with the methods of the civil war. In the midst of the general political exhaustion it conquered in this manner, but one would have to be pretty blind not to realize that a victory gained in this manner is an admission of the immense political weakness of the bureaucracy. This bureaucracy is not only incapable of open discussion with the oppositionists of its own party before the masses, but even unable to defend the October Revolution against Menshevik criticism. What else can it mean, if twenty years after the October Revolution it still keeps the Mensheviks in jail? The October Revolution certainly did not proclaim the goal of making jail for political prisoners a permanent institution. Even a victorious counter-revolution grants amnesty to its opponents after a number of years, when it feels itself strong enough for it. Victor Serge rightly asks, should the revolution be less generous?

A revolutionary tendency in the Soviet Union will today, of course, put on its program, beside the freeing of all oppositional communists, also the demand for amnesty for Mensheviks and Social-Revolutionists. Today it is not those Mensheviks in concentration camps and isolators, but the Mensheviks in government positions, who are a danger to the Soviet Union. It is not Basarov and Eva Broido, but rather Vyshinsky, Saslavsky, Potemkin, Mikhail Koltsov, Troyanovsky, Maisky, *etc.*, who are leading the Soviet state to ruin. Freedom for the Menshevik prisoners and jail for the Menshevik careerists—this would be a fitting slogan.

Moreover, Trotsky's demand for the restoration of the freedom of the soviet parties does not primarily apply to Mensheviks and Social-Revolutionists. Because of the position they took toward the October Revolution and the civil war following it, these parties have forever forfeited their position among the Russian workers. Where political life continues to burn faintly under the blows of the terrible police terror, in the concentration camps and isolators, there live primarily the different oppositional fractions of the C.P.S.U. the Trotskyists, the Democratic Centralists, other ultra-leftists, partly also remains of the old Right, and so forth. Perhaps in the course of a re-blossoming of political life, in the wake of a mass uprising, the differences between these groups will prove to be so small, that they can be decided within one party. Possibly, even probably, a number of parties will be formed. No one can prophecy as to that.

What other road could there be for these parties but to weigh their arguments, one against the other, within the rejuvenated soviets, to try to convince the masses? We, at any rate, see no reason to fear the arguments of possible Russian followers of Brandler, and we are convinced, that we can get the better of them without having to call for the help of the police. Moreover, the masses learn slowly, but they *learn* from their experiences. Surely, after the terrible experience with the Stalin régime, they will not again be willing to grant the "monopoly of organization" to one single party. The future of the Soviet Union lies in soviet democracy. If this word, however, is not to be a swindle and a deception, then the workers themselves in the soviets and in the industries must have the right to decide which party they want to follow. They can permit neither the bureaucrat Stalin, nor the bureaucretinist Brandler, to decide for them.

## Reform of the C.P.S.U. and the Soviet Union

Up till the year 1933 Trotsky and we, who are not ashamed of calling ourselves his pupils, stood for the perspective of peaceful reform within the C.P.S.U. and the Soviet Union. Brandler-Thalheimer at that time denied the necessity of any reform. In the Soviet Union and in the C.P.S.U. everything was going fine; it was only in the policy of the International that there were, deplorably and for incomprehensible reasons, "mistakes". That was their standpoint until yesterday. Today, however, they remember the last writings of Lenin, and believe that they have uttered the ultimate word of wisdom with his advice to the party, to remove Stalin from the position of General Secretary of the party. Lenin's advice was meant for a party which showed merely the first symptoms of sickness, a party at whose head Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Bukharin and Pyatakov still stood. Lenin's operation, if carried out at the correct time, promised at least a certain hope for the cure of the party.

In the meantime 15 years have passed. The sickness has devoured head, heart and kidneys of the party. Only the bureaucratic posterior has gotten bigger and bigger and crushes each and every intellectual stirring. To give the same advice, which Lenin gave to the Bolshevik party, to the party of Kaganovich, Molotov, Yezhov, Chubar, Zhdanov, etc., today, and expect a cure from it, that is something that only complete blockheads can do.

But Mr. Brandler cannot be shaken so easily. "It is the head of the party, above all, that is rotten; the ranks are healthy and alive," he declares. The head "above all" is rotten? What else is rotten, if the ranks are healthy and alive? And how is it possible for a rotten head and healthy, living ranks to be compatible for such long periods of time? Elsewhere Brandler-Thalheimer even declare in their bureaucratic, foolhardy manner, which is intended to cover up their own intellectual uncertainty: "Only complete ignoramuses can talk of masses whom the Stalin régime has dulled and left without any will of their own. Quite the contrary!" Quite the contrary! The Stalin régime has notoriously educated the masses to the highest standards of political activity and political thought! This, however, does not keep Brandler-Thalheimer from talking elsewhere again of the "intellectual devastation" of party life called forth by Stalinist practise. How can the ranks of the party be healthy and alive in the presence of intellectual devastation, and how can the political education and development of the masses be even possible under such conditions? Evidently only "complete ignoramuses" can entangle themselves in such contradictions!

In reality the C.P.S.U. no longer has a stable base at its disposition. For the last 15 years party cleansings have been directed not against careerists and opportunists, but, on the contrary, by the latter against revolutionary workers. During the last year alone approximately 2,000,000 workers were excluded from the party. The base of the party changes continuously. It does not receive any kind of political education. It has no rights at its disposal. It is a mere ball in the hands of the bureaucracy. The valuable old Bolshevik cadres are atomized, physically destroyed, in concentration camps, in misery. Young, independently thinking elements are continuously being excluded. The best elements are already outside of the party. And in so far as there still are scattered, honest elements in the party, capable of development, they do not have the slightest possibility of asserting themselves.

Surely one could have said of the German social-democracy of 1914, with much more justification, that only its head was rotten, the ranks, nevertheless, healthy. Despite this, the Marxists rightly proclaimed the necessity of a new party, since the "healthy base" was bound hand and foot to the mighty bureaucratic apparatus of the party. At that, the reformist bureaucracy was far from having the same power over the workers as the Stalinist one. It was, in

contrast to the latter, not the only employer. It did not have command over a G.P.U., Mauser pistols, Siberia. Even if one takes into consideration the fact that the social-democratic bureaucracy was able to lean upon the repressive apparatus of the bourgeois state in its fight against the revolutionary elements, nevertheless the power of Ebert and Scheidemann was never as great as that of Stalin and Yezhov. Without a doubt there was more democratic freedom and more rights for the members in the party of Ebert and Scheidemann than in the present C.P.S.U.

For the present Brandler himself gives us an example, by declaring the slogan for the new party correct for Catalonia, but not for the rest of the world and not even for the whole of Spain. The Catalonian P.S.U.C. arose from a merger with the social-democracy; in this case the 21 conditions (which the Second World Congress set up for admission entrance into the Comintern) demand a split! Scholasticism, pedantry, and stupidity here have their rendezvous! Evidently the 21 conditions are, for Brandler-Thalheimer, a kind of holy article of faith, which they memorized without ever having understood its meaning. The 21 conditions demand first of all a break with the *policy* of social-democracy, with the policy of Menshevism. The main characteristics of social-democratic policy were: coalition with bourgeois parties, support of the bourgeois republic and the imperialist League of Nations, granting of war credits to the bourgeoisie, deluding the people with pacifist phrases, etc. Where, today, is there a country where these traitorous policies are not being practised by the respective section of the Comintern? If, consequently, the 21 conditions are to have a meaning, then they demand today everywhere a break with the Comintern, and the proclamation of the new, Fourth International.

When comrade Trotsky stated, after the historic defeat of the German proletariat in 1933, that now the German C.P. had experienced its 4th of August, i.e., it had turned at last from a progressive into a counter-revolutionary factor, Brandler-Thalheimer replied, in keeping with their limited intellect, that this analogy was completely lacking in historical imagination: the social-democrats on the 4th of August went openly into the camp of the imperialists; whereas such a thing was out of the question on the part of the Comintern. As regards this detail, Stalin has hurried to meet Brandler halfway. Since Stalin's May 1936 declaration to Laval that the Soviet Union was in complete sympathy with the armament need of French imperialism, the desertion of the C.I. into the camp of imperialism has become an indisputable fact. But Brandler-Thalheimer still refuse to draw a clear line between themselves and the Comintern, again emphasizing how much their last answer to us was inspired by opportunist considerations instead of a desire for revolutionary clarity.

Closely bound up with the question of the new party is the question of the new revolution in the Soviet Union. Here, too, events have long since outdistanced the perspective of peaceful reform. Hitler's victory over the German working class also hurled the Russian workers further back. The relation of forces changed heavily in favor of the bureaucracy; the social gulf between it and the workers grew enormously. At the same time all roads of democratic equilibrium were blocked. All safety valves were sealed. The murder of Kirov, arranged by the G.P.U., gave the signal for unheard-of terror which has raged for the last three years and engulfed the country like a tidal wave. The Stalin régime is preparing a terrific explosion of the wrath of the populace. One must be completely stultified not to understand this.

It can, therefore, only cause laughter when Brandler decrees "that the liquidation of the bureaucratic régime must come not from outside of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, but from inside it [literally] and not against the Red Army, but together with it". School-teacher Brandler commands history, but history will mock him. In the coming great historical crisis the opportunistic party of Stalin-Yezhov, held together by narrow, material interests and by incredible moral and physical terror,

will doubtless fall to pieces. If in these circumstances a new party does not arise, the building of which must naturally be prepared now—a party which continues the traditions of October and again gives the industrial proletariat the foremost place in society and lays out a road for the peasantry—then the Soviet Union will doubtlessly fall to pieces and fall prey to capitalism. He who today still links the fate of the Soviet Union to that of the C.P.S.U. makes himself an accessory to the crime which leads from the unavoidable decay of the latter to the downfall of the former.

If we say, that in the Soviet Union a political revolution is being prepared and contrast this term with a social revolution, *i.e.*, a fundamental transformation of property relations, then of course this does not mean that the political revolution has no social content. Even political revolutions which were consummated upon the basis of bourgeois property had social content, in so far as they had for their aim and result a social shift within bourgeois class society. The conflicts between finance capital, industrial bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie created the foundation for the revolutions of 1830 and 1848. In spite of this, the term political revolution is justified, since the oppressed layers struggled for the bettering of their condition not by means of an overthrow of property relationships, but through a redistribution of political positions of power and a change in political régime.

In a like manner, in the Soviet Union, the political revolution is being called forth by the conflict between the bureaucracy and its related privileged layers on the one hand, and the proletariat and lower peasant layers on the other. The proletariat, of course, does not desire to fill the strategic political positions in order to abolish the socialization of the means of production and the nationalization of land and soil, but in order to accomplish far-reaching social reforms on the basis of the socialist property relationships.

The nature of these reforms is quite evident. The renewed Soviet régime will abolish the privileges of the bureaucracy and raise the standard of living of the masses. It will build workers' apartments instead of palaces for the bureaucracy; it will raise the quality of mass consumption articles and stop the production of luxury articles, and so forth. In short, the direction of the whole process will be fundamentally changed.

After what has been said above, we can dispense with further polemics against the Brandlerian assertion, that "the Trotskyist demand for the overthrow of the bureaucratic régime is hopeless, because it is without a social base". The reader will easily realize for himself that Brandler has here, against his will, aptly characterized his own position. For indeed, what purpose would there be in the overthrow of the bureaucratic régime, how is to be understood if the organizational monopoly of the C.P.S.U., if the huge differences in income between the bureaucrats and workers, if the right of inheritance and the Stalinist constitution should be retained? The reader will certainly not get an answer to these questions from Brandler-Thalheimer.

A few words in conclusion. The numerous self-contradictions of Brandler's pamphlets can be accounted for by the fact that Brandler, on the one hand, in breaking loose from Stalin, depends on some of the arguments of Trotskyist criticism, and on the other hand, uses the "arguments" of Stalinism against Trotsky. That also explains why Brandler-Thalheimer, in the matter of the bloody terror directed against the Trotskyists, don't take any clear, unequivocal position, but lay the blame on both parties: Trotsky, also, is equally responsible for the methods of Stalin, because he writes articles against him! What disgusting Philistines!  
OSLO, February 1938. Walter HELD

# Problems of Colonial India\*

AGAINST THESE TRAINED armed forces, against this rigidly mechanized bureaucracy and colonial state apparatus built up by England with minute and loving care over a period of two centuries, the Indian nationalist movement has raised itself—for the most part, with incredible feebleness, cowardice and subservience. Not because there was lacking the necessary human material and widespread social discontent for a powerful, dynamic liberation movement. These factors have been present ever since those days when England entered the stage of aggressive, imperialist penetration (1840's). But to the present day, the nationalist movement has been under the complete control of the *national Indian bourgeoisie*. This bourgeois leadership has aimed primarily at the maintenance and strengthening of England's grip upon India, because it well knows that any serious liberation struggle against England will set into motion great forces within India itself—forces inevitably bound to threaten its own class existence: the peasant-agrarian revolution against the Hindu landowners, moneylenders, *etc.*, the proletarian revolution against Hindu industrialists and finance-bankers in the large cities.

A real liberation struggle means *the class struggle for socialism*. India's capitalists and landlords recognize this and thus basically oppose both liberation and independence. At the most, they desire minor political concessions giving them greater freedom to carry on their own private exploitation of the masses. It is similar to the middleman of capital who, while cheating the farmer, tries to take a little extra "cut" for himself. The most "left" section of the Indian bourgeoisie, the Hindu liberals, desires Dominion Status or "Swaraj" (Home Rule)—that is, the opportunity to set up an

Indian parliament, modeled after Britain's Parliament, in which they can ape their English brothers at playing the game of parliamentary cant. To an unparalleled extent, the Indian bourgeoisie is tied hand and foot to the ruling class of the imperialism oppressing its native country. The official press of both countries continually harps on the fact that there is no *real*—either internal or external—dissension between them—only slight disagreements. Absolutely true! Yet this class ally of England dominates the liberation movement!

Several years ago the world witnessed violent rioting and fighting between Hindus and Moslems at Chittagong. English and Indian rulers alike united in suppressing not only the riots but also their meaning. The official press (including that of America) plastered the label of "religious strife" over the events. Actually, the riots were a struggle between revolting, land-hungry Moslem peasants and their Hindu landlords! The *Midland Daily Telegraph* (1930) gives another example of the economic content behind so-called religious riots. "The population of the village [recently destroyed in a "religious" battle] is almost entirely Mohammedan, with a small section of Hindu moneylenders and traders to whom many of the Mohammedans are indebted. Communal feeling is, therefore, aggravated by economic causes." The fire of class struggle burns with elemental heat within India. It is present in Indian life from its most primitive forms to its most contemporary. Thus it is impossible to speak of the Indian bourgeoisie leading a liberation struggle—it is a formidable obstacle on that road.

The *Indian Nationalist Congress* (I.N.C.) is the best known expression of Indian nationalism. For many years it was an outright pro-British fraternal organization, not even seeking minor

\*This is the second section of the article the first part of which appeared in the April issue.

political reforms. Through it Britain worked to build up and cultivate the friendship of a native bourgeoisie. Under pressure of the Swarajist Party (a liberal-bourgeois party organized by C. R. Das, who was also an important figure in the English Fabian and coöperative movements), a slight turn was given to the I.N.C. helm. Although still made up entirely of native bourgeois organizations, it began to demand certain political concessions from England. These demands, needless to say, were presented in humble, lackey-like fashion. This slight shift took place around 1890 when, for the first time, working class and peasant organizations became known to the Indians. During the pre-war period, under the harsh military rule of Lord Curzon, there appeared the first primitive manifestation of a growing revolutionary spirit—acts of terrorism carried out by Indian students. The inevitably unfavorable rejoinder to this was an Act of Parliament permitting Lord Curzon (and future Indian Viceroys) to exercise a six-month emergency decree-power whenever he so desired. Suppression of newly formed organizations, wholesale arrests, *etc.*, followed.

Meanwhile, to satisfy more vociferous elements in the I.N.C. a kind of Parliament was established. (Morley-Minto Constitution of 1909.) Of course, Constitutional provisions assured beforehand English control of the majority membership. (Highly selective voting requirements, a set number of Englishmen to constitute part of the Parliament without having to be elected, *etc.*) Again, due to the post-war revolutionary fire kindled by the October Bolshevik Revolution, the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms were adopted, granting further political concessions. The Russian Revolution gave to the nationalist movement its first revolutionary element—the Indian Communist Party. (The Social-Democracy had never attempted to organize a colonial movement in India—or, for that matter, in *any* colonial country.) To further guarantee the friendship of the native bourgeoisie, “Dyarchy,” the greatest political concession up till then, was granted. This reform established Provincial Parliaments with exceedingly minor functions. But the nationalist movement in general and the revolutionary C.P. of India in particular continued to grow. It was at this time that Gandhi first assumed importance in the Indian movement.

## 2.

What is Gandhism? Of all the innumerable blights weighing down up the long-oppressed Indian masses, the curse inflicted by Gandhism is the worst. Gandhism is the art of leading the Indian people up a blind alley and then showing the way out—straight into the arms of England. The man himself dissolves into insignificance when placed beside his ideas and their tragic effect in disorganizing and disorientating the liberation movement. Yet these ideas have always been reflected in his personal career. Gandhi comes from a high-caste Hindu family and was educated as a barrister in England. He practised law among Indians who had been shanghaied from India and brought to do forced labor in South Africa by the English. There he developed his “non-violence” and “passive resistance” doctrine, before his return to India. During the World War Gandhi supported the English imperialists and actively helped recruit Indians into the British European armies. (Tens of thousands of Indians fought in Europe, and India paid over to England a total sum of 240 million pounds.) After the War, his ideas were rounded out into a full-blown ideology and he began to recruit the mass movement which reached its height in 1930-1933 under the name of “Civil Disobedience.”

Gandhism is the epitome of petty-bourgeois reactionary doctrine. The two basic ideas are: (1) Liberation can be attained by ethical means—*i.e.*, non-violence; (2) India must return to the ways of the ancient Hindus. These conceptions were employed in India on a gigantic scale and under almost ideal conditions. An elemental movement of the masses, sweeping from the depths of Indian society, was cut off at the very peak of its development when its

leaders time after time capitulated before the threats of England. (Delhi Pact, 1931; Poona Agreement, 1934.) Each time, Gandhi strangled the movement when it appeared on the verge of transcending his bourgeois ideas, with the result that his vast following became discouraged and more than ever a prey to the exploitation of the Indian and English bourgeoisie. The objective rôle of Gandhi has been to handcuff the workers and peasants and then turn them over to the whip of imperialism. He is known as Britain's greatest policeman in India! The reactionary content of his doctrine is further embodied in his idea that India must return to the past. The one progressive aspect of Britain's historic rule, that of partly freeing India from the backwardness of Asiatic antiquity, appears to have been, for Gandhi, retrogressive. Petty-bourgeois thought has always been distinguished by its yearnings for the customs of the past, but certainly never on such a scale as Gandhi would have it. His ideal India is that of the hand spinning wheel and distillation of salt from the sea. From this it naturally follows that the present caste-system, remnant of the ancient hereditary labor-division, meets with his full approval. Gandhi desires to “alleviate”, not destroy, the sufferings of the Untouchables. As for the workers, they do not belong in his India. With them he has no concern.

## 3.

A large share of the responsibility for Gandhi's influence rests upon the Indian Communist Party. We have mentioned its growth in numbers and influence during the post-war period. In 1925, the swing to the right of the Comintern began the period of Stalinist opportunism. Just as it was marked by the tragic defeat of the second Chinese Revolution (1925-1927), so in India it saw the decline of the communist movement and its subordination to petty-bourgeois and bourgeois control. The Indian C.P. nestled itself deeply in the I.S.C., under the stifling wing of the “progressive national bourgeoisie”.

The defeat of the Chinese Revolution had its inevitable effect upon the Indian movement. There began a period of decline, retreat, withdrawal. The Indian C.P. preferred to learn nothing from the events in China and before long, under orders from the Comintern, they executed their turn into the insanity of the “Third Period”. They boycotted not only the Indian Nationalist Congress (now become a nest of Indian “fascists”), but the labor and peasant movement itself. It was the same story as in every country. “Red Trade Unions” (the Girni Kamgar), corresponding to the American T.U.U.L., were organized—on paper; complete aloofness from every slight manifestation of struggle; complete loss of any following or influence among the workers and peasants; bureaucratic expulsions for any opposition to the divine line; complete eclipse of the Indian C.P. Yet precisely during these years (1930-1933) the Gandhist influence reached its high point. Through the Civil Disobedience movement Gandhi held full sway over the masses and led them to defeat and humiliation before their British masters. The amazingly limited character of this bourgeois-led movement is shown by the fact that while the peasants stopped rental payments to their British landlords, they were forced to continue these payments to their Hindu landlords. Instead of active participation with the aim of broadening the struggle's scope, the isolated Indian Stalinists stood aside and launched manifestoes denouncing the “social-fascist” leaders. By the middle of 1933 Civil Disobedience had halted before the tomb that lay in wait for it, and Gandhi was soon on his way to help the British forge new fetters on prostrate India (the Round-Table Conferences).

## 4.

Not till 1936 was there any serious sign of a revival in nationalist or revolutionary sentiments. In that year the I.N.C. held two important sessions heralding a new period of activity. A most casual reading of the Indian press at that time was sufficient evi-

dence that Britain was preparing to impose upon India a new constitution, one that had been *ten years* in the making and which the British imperialists knew would meet the sternest opposition. The year opened amidst a wave of strikes, arrests, police beatings (the infamous *lathi* charges), enforcement of curfew laws, lock-outs, martial law measures, *etc.*, *etc.* Britain announced that the new Constitution (the Government of India Act, adopted by Parliament in 1935) would be launched officially in April, 1937. India rose almost as one man in opposition. All turned towards the 50th Indian Nationalist Congress to be held at Allahabad, in December of 1936.

What is this New Constitution? Its provisions include the most reactionary measures yet foisted upon the Indian masses. Its broader provisions (not yet put into effect) create a Federal India, abolishing the Native States and welding them into one centralized federation. The old system of "Dyarchy" which granted the provincial assemblies minor powers is abolished. Its general purpose is to make of India one complete political unit under the military domination of the imperialists.

The more concrete measures of the New Constitution are already in effect under the "Bill of Provincial Autonomy and Self-Government". Listen to what this liberal and democratic bill contains:

(1) The Governor-General (a British appointee) shall direct and control the Departments of Defense, External Affairs and Ecclesiastical Affairs.

(2) "The Governor-General and the Provincial Governors can issue any executive order, without consultation with either Minister or Legislature, he may consider necessary; he can dismiss and replace any Minister or Ministers, with or without resort to a dissolution of the Legislature, and if he fails to find an alternative Government capable of administering law and order on lines consistent with the discharge of his special responsibility, he will be

obliged to declare a breakdown of the Constitution, and to assure himself all such powers as he judges requisite to retrieve the situation."

(3) The Governor-General can dissolve, prorogue or summon the Legislature; veto all bills and act as he sees fit despite any act to the contrary the Legislature may have adopted.

(4) Any legislation affecting the Sovereign, the Sovereignty of the Crown over any part of British India, the Army Act, the Air Force and Naval Discipline Acts, the Constitution Act itself, *etc.*, is placed beyond the scope of the Legislature.

(5) The same holds true for legislation affecting the Police, the Special Branch (secret police), Indian Reserve Bank and finances in general.

(6) Approximately 10% of the population may vote, since only this percentage fulfills the property and educational qualifications.

(7) There are separate electorates and constituencies for different communities and religions ("Divide and Rule").

(8) One-third of the seats in the Federal Lower House automatically go to the Indian Princes and Rajahs. Almost one-half are theirs in the Upper House.

(9) Tens of thousands of trade-union voters are automatically disqualified from voting.

"A New Charter of Bondage", Nehru called it. It presaged a vast expansion of militarism over India, it meant an increase in the permanent armed forces stationed throughout the country, it implied a state of perpetual martial law. With nervous anxiety the British rulers awaited the outcome of the I.N.C. meetings. They saw with what eagerness the masses awaited instructions to launch a mass struggle against the proposed "Slave Constitution".

S. STANLEY

## The Land Problem in Mexico

SINCE pre-Hispanic times, the struggle for land has been the crucial issue around which Mexican economic existence has revolved. The land problem, far from being mitigated, still less liquidated, has progressively increased with the passing centuries and far overshadowed all other economic and social problems.

Successive Indian migrations and the subsequent clashes they entailed between the various aboriginal nations and tribes, had as their motive power the desire for more land and its usufruct. The social results of those struggles took the form of dominant and tributary nations with the latter, as a result of conquest, forced to yield as tribute an ever-increasing amount of their agricultural products.

The arrival of the Spaniard accentuated an already acute land problem. The communal agricultural system of the Mexicans, prevalent alike among the dominant as well as subject nations, and guaranteeing to the entire population a means of subsistence, proportional to good or bad harvests, was displaced by a decadent European feudalism. The aborigine population, dispossessed and landless, was enslaved to a new class of Iberian feudal landlords. During the four centuries of Spanish rule, successive Spanish monarchs parcelled out among court favorites, lesser *Hidalgos*, army officers, upper clergy, soldiers and

adventurers, immense tracts of the country's best arable land. The land grants of the Spanish monarchy or land taken by adventurers and subsequently sanctioned by the crown, were immense. The *conquistador* Hernán Cortés quite modestly carved out for himself an estate of twenty-five thousand square miles.

The Spanish governments did decree legislation aimed at protecting the Indians against some of the more flagrant abuses of the *hacienda* system. The *Campulli*, or communal lands adjacent to the villages, were declared inviolable and the usufruct of those lands to be enjoyed exclusively by the villagers. Indians were exempted from the payment of taxes. A royal decree declared illegal any formal enslavement of the natives. However, virtually all the protective legislation remained a dead letter and, with the passing of time, the Indians, if not legally, actually became enslaved to the feudal *hacienda* system. A means to that end were the brutal and iniquitous debt systems devised by the landlords which shackled the peasant and his offspring to the landed estate during their entire lifetime. The *hacendado* received with the royal grant the right of *encomienda*, allowing him to draft Indians from adjacent villages to labor upon his estate. Under the system of *repartamiento*, Indians under the supervision of their own foremen

were transplanted to various regions of the country either to toil exhaustingly in the mines or on the *haciendas*.

The economic hardships of the peasantry, the product of out-moded feudal relations on the land, steadily increased after Mexico obtained its independence in 1824. The standard of living of the impoverished peasantry sharply decreased during the century preceding the bourgeois revolution of 1910. While in 1908 a peasant earning 25 centavos daily could purchase 30 litres of corn, the average daily income of 35 centavos in 1908 could only purchase 8 litres. Particularly under the Díaz régime, representative *par excellence* of the feudal aristocracy, did the economic despoilment of the peasantry reach new heights. We already mentioned the fact that during the colonial epoch the Spanish government protected the communal holdings of the villagers. Díaz and his clique of *Científicos* (intellectual supporters), abetting a formerly unheard of land speculation, permitted and encouraged the landlords to encroach upon those meagre holdings. The final result was that by 1910 over 25,000,000 acres of national lands had been turned over to the *hacendados* and foreign imperialist interests. The acute stage the land problem had reached by 1910 can be shown by the following: while a population of close to 13,000,000 possessed 26

per cent of the arable land, 11,000 landlords possessed 55 per cent.

The Mexican war for independence, unlike the American revolutionary war, was not led by a strong, influential commercial or manufacturing bourgeoisie. Therein lies an explanation for the fact that the forces of feudal-clerical reaction were able to utilize the independence movement for their own ends. The father of Mexican independence, the Catholic curate Hidalgo, initiated the struggle for liberation from Spain on September 16, 1810. He was primarily motivated by the abstract political slogans of the French revolution and only vaguely and casually treated of the necessity for a social upheaval based upon a radical overturn in land relationships, *i.e.*, the confiscation of the large country estates of Spaniard and Criole and their division among the landless peasantry. But the millions of illiterate peasants steeped to their very marrow in ignorance and superstition, the great majority not even knowing Spanish, flocked to the Hidalgo banner not for "liberty", "equality", and "justice"—political conceptions absolutely meaningless to them—but because they instinctively felt that with the hated Spanish oppressor expelled, their stolen lands would be returned.

When Hidalgo was captured by the loyalist armies, another priest, José María Morelos assumed the leadership of the revolutionary forces. A first-rank military strategist, he had a much keener political insight than his former chief and realized that the further progress and development of the nation demanded a solution of the land question. He incorporated land reform in his program and actually began to carry out revolutionary land measures in the territory under his control. Unfortunately, he was captured and executed by the enemy in 1815. The old order was triumphant. But history has a way of producing ironies.

When Ferdinand VIII granted Spain a liberal constitution in 1818, the Mexican clergy, the staunchest defender of the old régime and until then vociferously opposed to independence, fearing the consequences of the Spanish events in Mexico, aligned itself with a clique of military reactionaries under Augustine de Iturbide and proclaimed the independence of the country. Mexico became an independent nation not as the result of a socio-economic upheaval led by a revolutionary class, but as the product of a political revolution instigated by precisely those social forces interested in preserving the old feudal régime with its basic relationships of landlord and peon.

Post-independence Mexican history is replete with struggles between the reform movement which began to assume momentum toward the middle of the eighteenth century and the Catholic hierarchy, the best organized and the most powerful of the old régime's defenders. The clergy's interest in the land question and its manifest desire to preserve the land relations inaugurated by Spanish colonization, was

not solely based upon pure metaphysical reasoning, but had its firm roots in the inexorable cold logic of social materialism. In the '20s when Mexico set forth on its destiny as an independent nation, over one-half of the nation's real estate was owned by the Catholic church. Political power shifted almost incessantly between 1828-1860 (the country had about 50 revolutions during those years) but the forces of clerical-landed reaction, supported almost invariably by the military, were too strongly entrenched to be overthrown by a handful of radical bourgeois idealists expressing the aspirations of a class which as yet was economically insignificant.

In 1833, the reform camp under Gómez Farias gained, temporarily, the upper hand. The church was deprived of its property and shorn of its political power. However, clerical reaction led by general Santa Anna was not long in regaining its former privileged position. In the '50s, Benito Juarez again led the reform movement to power. A pure-blooded Indian, he undoubtedly was the greatest Mexican statesman of the last century. He separated church and state and started to distribute land among the peasantry. Overcoming the powerful internal opposition of the church and the French invasion carried out in connivance with the former, the entire reform movement came to an unfortunate end with his untimely death. The reactionary general, Porfirio Díaz seized power and, during his thirty year tenure in office, brutal terror against all enemies his main political weapon, reconsolidated and augmented the power of the clergy and feudal landlords.

It was during Porfirio Díaz' rule that the groundwork for the bourgeois revolution of 1910 was definitely laid. With the turn of the century a new native industrial bourgeois had already sprung up on Mexican soil, particularly in the textile field. That bourgeoisie, together with a fairly numerous urban petty bourgeoisie, feeling itself shackled by the semi-feudal Díaz government, began to prepare its forces for revolution. The industrial proletariat, the greatest social force of contemporary Mexican history, molded during the last decades of the 18th century by foreign imperialism, was a necessary ally for the bourgeoisie in the anti-Díaz struggle.

It is not our purpose here to present biographical sketches of some of the outstanding forerunners of the 1910 upheaval—for example, Francisco Magón. It will suffice here to say that on the eve of the revolution the greater part of the revolutionary forces were led by Francisco Madero.

Madero started his anti-Díaz campaign in 1908 when the latter, perhaps not realizing the consequences of his action, announced that he would not seek reelection. Díaz intended to use that announcement as a political stratagem to weed out all possible opponents. Declaring the presidential elections a farce, Madero proclaimed revolution in 1909. One of the planks of his plan of San Luis Potosí called for a radical redistribution of the lands. But actually, like Father Hidalgo 100 years

earlier, Madero considered the revolutionary movement to be of a purely political nature, separating it from a simultaneous social upheaval. A liberal democrat, he believed that the ills of the nation could be cured by such purely political slogans as "No Reëlection", "Effective Suffrage" and the granting of other civil liberties embodied in the constitution of 1857. Madero, hence, ignored agrarian reform. At the time of his assassination in 1914, he had already alienated the support of the millions of desperate peasants who were beginning to seize the land themselves.

The greatest Mexican land reform apostle, subsequent to the revolution of 1910, was Emiliano Zapata. A revolutionary peasant leader from the state of Morelos, he condemned Madero's betrayal of the landless peon. The "Plan of Ayala" proclaimed by Zapata on November 28, 1911, called for the immediate distribution of one-third of the land belonging to the large estates. The peasant movement assumed gigantic proportions and it was not long before Zapata marched into Mexico City and actually controlled the country. But as has happened to most great Mexican revolutionaries, Zapata fell victim to treachery and was assassinated.

In 1915, president Venustiano Carranza, frightened by the surging peasant movement, decreed that all communal lands taken away from the villages since 1856 must be returned. However, by the end of 1920, only about 5,000,000 acres had been distributed by his government and in such a poorly unorganized fashion, that the reform rebounded against itself.

The constitution of 1917, the legal document of the victorious bourgeoisie, included sections on the land reform and for the first time since 1910 gave the reform a juridical foundation. The mildness of the stipulations on agrarian reform with the guarantee to pay compensation for all expropriated lands, reflects the vacillatory position of the national bourgeoisie and its absolute incapacity to resolve the land problem. Our contention that the native bourgeoisie of colonial or semi-colonial countries cannot carry out the bourgeois revolution on the countryside, *i.e.*, the confiscation of the large landed estates and their division among the landless peasantry, is not based on blind prejudices but has been proven time and again by historical realities.

Twenty-seven years have passed since the revolution of 1910, yet the land question remains to be solved. True it is that the various bourgeois governments during the past quarter of a century, have carried out various land and social reforms and have raised the level of existence of thousands of peasant families. After stabilization had been established in the Twenties, the governments of Obregón and Calles distributed to 500,000 peasants some 8,000,000 acres of land. The Cárdenas government, the most radical of all the bourgeois governments, has to date distributed 25,000,000 acres of land to 660,000 peasants. Extensive irrigation projects and

dams have been and are being constructed. But *latifundismo* still remains a potent force. From proper government statistics we learn that the *ejidos*, coöperatives of peasants who have received lands, possess 45 million acres of land. Since 1910, only 1,324,759 peasant families have been benefitted. On the other hand, there are 610,000 non-*ejidal* farms, covering a land surface of 307 million acres. Of the latter, farms or estates of over 25,000 acres have a land surface of 171 million acres. Thirty percent of the land is still owned by large landlords. These figures, more than anything else, reveal the impotency of the bourgeoisie and its inability to give the land to the peasants.

But critics may object and interpose that the Cárdenas government is different from its predecessors and will proceed with the land reform program until the land has been given to the peasantry. But the latest reports from Mexico show that possibilities for further agrarian reform are virtually excluded today. Lacking funds, the government is decreasing financial allotments aimed at bolstering and consolidating the *ejidos*. That, coupled with the sabotaging campaign of the landlords before which the government remains complacent, is actually undermining the economic stability of the *ejidos*. Ten thousand peasants are unemployed today in the famous Laguna sector where the government has been con-

centrating its land reform program. Serious troubles are brewing on the countryside.

What the Mexican bourgeois cannot accomplish, historical development has destined for the proletariat. If history has taught us anything during the 25 years of the Mexican revolution it is that the only class capable of resolving the land problem in colonial or semi-colonial countries and of leading the starved landless peasantry, is the industrial proletariat. Upon its shoulders falls the truly gigantic task of resolving not only the problem of land in Mexico, but also of its complete social reorganization.

Bernard ROSS

## The Crisis of Stalinism in Brazil

THE CONSEQUENCES of the defeats of the Stalinist policy in Brazil have not yet been fully revealed. The final result of the Stalinist "putsch" of November, 1935, is the present Vargas dictatorship. After the putsch, last year, during the short so-called legal period (legal save for the workers' parties, naturally), the Communist party, pursuing a beaten-dog policy, began to run after one of the two so-called democratic bourgeois candidates for the presidency (the president of the Brazilian republic was to have been elected by direct suffrage, as in the United States; the elections were to have taken place on Jan. 2, 1938, and Vargas' mandate expired in May of this year).

Against the bourgeois candidates, the Bolshevik-Leninists of Brazil raised the name of Luiz Carlos Prestes, who was going to be sentenced by the tribunal expressly created for that purpose. The trial aroused an enormous interest among the people. It was a real trial against communism. Prestes declared himself to be a communist before the judges; it is as the "leader" of communism that the judges have sentenced him to almost 20 years in prison. In advancing Prestes' name, the Bolshevik-Leninists said plainly that Prestes himself was not a genuine communist since he was a Stalinist, but that circumstances have made him, in the eyes of the bourgeoisie, the representative of communism and of the oppressed and rebellious working masses. To vote for Prestes in these circumstances, they said, was to pose class against class, was to draw the balance-sheet of the communist and revolutionary forces of the country, was to struggle for the creation of a mass movement independent of the bourgeoisie, for the legalization of workers' and revolutionary parties and for the amnesty.

By means of this position the Brazilian Trotskyites threw the C.P. into a very difficult position. The base of the Stalinist party vacillated. The party, which was lined up with the bourgeois parties, had been forced to abandon the struggle for amnesty for the thousands who were imprisoned and sentenced as a result of the unfortunate putsch, including all its own principal leaders. The

Stalinist party confined itself to asking the bourgeois "democratic" candidates, through private delegations, whether they promised an amnesty; neither of the two wished to compromise himself: amnesty for Berger (Ewert, the secret envoy of the Executive of the C.I., former member of the Reichstag from the C.P.G.) and for Prestes was a slogan whose revolutionary and class character was too evident for the bourgeois to be able to adopt it. And for that reason this slogan was suppressed in the electoral campaign. Only the Trotskyites openly supported it.

The effects of this infamous position of the Stalinist leaders were not slow in appearing. As a final touch, the bourgeois candidate who was supported by the Communist Party capitulated miserably to the reaction, consenting to have his friends in the chamber of deputies vote for the promulgation of the "state of war" as demanded by Vargas in a message sent to the chamber. The promulgation of the "state of war" with the suppression of all constitutional guarantees was the beginning of the Bonapartist-fascist *coup d'état* prepared by Vargas, a group of generals, and the *Integralistas* (fascists). The Stalinist leaders were as shameless as their candidate and all the self-styled "leftists" and petty-bourgeois democrats. They fell into passivity and refused to call the masses to struggle against the "state of war" in order to avoid "provoking" the reaction and "accelerating" the *coup d'état*. (The very day of the promulgation of the "state of war", the ministers of war and navy—a general and an admiral—solemnly swore, in a manifesto to the people, in the name of the armed forces, that the elections would take place on Jan. 2 because, they said, the "state of war" had no purpose other than the definitive extermination of communism and the prevention of a new uprising such as that of November, 1935, prepared by the Comintern, according to the documents seized by the general staff. But the whole world knew that these documents had been forged by the fascists, with the complicity of certain generals and of Vargas himself. All the petty-bourgeois cretins lived in the illu-

sion that in the end the elections would still be held on Jan. 2, because it was necessary to have confidence in the word of the leaders of the army and the navy. All the petty-bourgeois cretins, it is true . . . but the Stalinist leaders also. And they refused joint action with us.)

All this could not but have produced certain repercussions in the C.P., entirely monolithic though it was. The divergences blazed up in the Political Bureau itself. Two of its members, not wishing to consider the bourgeoisie as the principal leading force of the "revolution of national liberation", opposed C.P. support of the bourgeois candidacy of José Americo de Almeida. They foresaw the formation of a "democratic front", "independent" of the two so-called democratic bourgeois candidates (there was also a third bourgeois candidate, the leader of the "Green Shirts", the open fascist candidate).

Almeida's shameless capitulation aggravated the differences in the Political Bureau. The region of São Paulo (in all probability the most important of the party) stood with the two members of the P.B. in the minority and demanded the convocation of a national conference. The majority of the P.B. refused and responded by expelling the two dissenting comrades. Already, after Vargas' *coup d'état*, the region of São Paulo has held a regional conference which adopted political and organizational theses. These elements criticize the policy of the "bureaucracy" (a term which they themselves apply to the majority of the party leadership), and consider the present official leadership illegal. With the support of six regions, the regional conference of São Paulo set up a provisional Central Committee instructed to convoke a national conference; the official leadership is considered removed until the national conference is held.

The factional struggle has taken on a very violent character. In the southern and central regions of the country it seems that the dissenting wing has the great majority of the party. But it has no connections with the regions of the North. Moreover, it holds the technical apparatus of the

party in its hands, and continues to publish the party organ, *A Classe Operaria*. It has already published several brochures. The leaders of the dissident wing hold a centrist and very inadequate position. Their criticisms bear especially upon the last period, that of 1937, of C.P. policy. They want a return to the A.N.L. (National Liberational Alliance) of 1935. Their positions are very confused and full of contradictions. So far they have taken a position only on national problems. They even consider themselves the faithful and legitimate interpreters of the line of the Seventh Congress of the C.I. On every occasion they cite Stalin and Dimitrov. In answer to the accusation of being "Trotskyites" they have begun a violent anti-Trotskyite campaign. This is a general view of the situation.

The dissident movement is far from being politically homogeneous. Many tendencies exist side by side with all the nuances of centrism. There is even an ultra-leftist tendency.

It is unnecessary to emphasize the importance of this dissident movement formed inside the monolithic Stalinist bloc. It is the first time that a movement of rebellion against the leading bureaucracy has been organized with such amplitude in the C.P. itself, and from top to bottom. Only with difficulty will the Stalinist party survive

such convulsions, which are only the culmination of a catastrophic policy.

In order for the dissidents to be able to arrive at the elaboration of a correct policy, all the lessons from the experience of past errors must be drawn. But only the Bolshevik-Leninists can do this. The Brazilian comrades, organized in the Leninist Workers' Party, have done it in their theses, their documents and publications. The success of the oppositional tendency of the Brazilian C.P. is assured only to the extent that it can evolve toward the Bolshevik-Leninist position. Our Brazilian comrades are working, and must persevere, along this line. It may be that, thanks to exceptional and local circumstances, the first historic split of the Stalinist monolithic bloc, corresponding to the needs of regroupment of the new phase of the world revolutionary movement in which we are now living, will take place in Brazil. In any case the full significance of the split lies in the fact that it broke out on the basis of fundamental principles of the Stalinist strategy in the present epoch.

A part of the leadership, under the blows of successive defeats and under enormous pressure from the proletarian base of the party, breaks with discipline, breaks with the dogma of the infallibility of the leadership and dares to discuss. It denies the progressive and revolutionary character of

the bourgeoisie in the anti-imperialist movement of national liberation of the oppressed peoples. The leaders of the oppositional movement are still one-hundred-percent Stalinists. But they have engaged in the struggle with decision, and the process of the struggle can lead them much farther than they thought. Before long they will come to understand that the problem is neither local nor national, but international. In the revolutionary and proletarian movement in Brazil, no other tendency apart from ours — Trotskyism — is known outside of the Stalinist party. Aside from us there are only the tightly-closed anarchist circles of São Paulo. No other intermediate grouping exists. The socialists were only a small group of petty bourgeois far away from the masses, who existed only in legal periods, on the eve of elections. In this sense one can say that the road towards the Bolshevik-Leninist position is a little smoother in Brazil than in other countries.

The comrades of Brazil must hold themselves in readiness to follow all the tactical turns necessary to aid the dissident movement in finding the best entrance, and with a minimum of losses, to the path of revolutionary Marxism and Bolshevik-Leninism. Whatever may be its final results, this split has a progressive character and opens up new perspectives.

## Archives of the Revolution

DOCUMENTS of the HISTORY and THEORY of the WORKING CLASS MOVEMENT

### The Russian Opposition: Questions and Answers

1. IS IT TRUE that the Opposition desires to transform the party into a conglomeration of factions, groupings, etc.?

*Answer:* It is a nonsensical canard. The Opposition stands for reinforcing the proletarian dictatorship which is being weakened by shifts towards petty bourgeois elements. The dictatorship of the proletariat can be realized only through a party that is unified and capable of fighting. Various assertions to the effect that the Opposition is in favor of factions and groupings are lies spread for factional purposes.

2. Is it true that factionalism is growing and assuming threatening proportions in the party?

*Answer:* It is true. The case of comrade Lashevich and others is only a manifestation of the growing danger. The difference between the Opposition and the ruling faction by no means consists in the fact that the Opposition is either reconciled to factionalism or considers it a normal condition for the party. But the Opposition cannot concede that factions appear and grow due to the ill-will of isolated individuals. The Opposition holds that the cause of factionalism is the bureaucratic régime in the party.

The present document was written by Leon Trotsky. Although there is no precise date attached to it, it is apparent from the text that it was written between the middle and the Fall of 1927, that is, in the period when the struggle between the Left Opposition Bloc (Trotskyists-Zinovievists) against the Stalin-Bukharin régime was reaching its height. In the familiar question-and-answer form, it gives a popular presentation of the Opposition's standpoint. It is perhaps the best example of several similar documents which, because it was denied access to the party press, the Opposition was compelled to circulate among the party membership in the form of multityped or mimeographed manuscripts. When it is borne in mind that it appeared more than a year before the break-up of the Stalin-Bukharin bloc, and in a period when the "monolithism" of the latter was violently affirmed, its prediction of the decomposition of the ruling clique is all the more remarkable. More than a year afterward, it will be remembered, the Stalin faction was engaged in a furious struggle against the right wing group of Bukharin-Rykov and its allied group of trade union opportunists represented by Tomsky.—ED.

3. Is it possible to put an immediate end to bureaucratism?

*Answer:* Naturally, that is impossible. In this sphere the Opposition does not at all demand some kind of miracle. But the

point is that bureaucratism is not diminishing but on the contrary growing monstrously. Every serious attempt in the party to check bureaucratism calls forth reprisals from above and drives people to the path of factionalism and division. The more bureaucratism struggles against factions, all the more does it breed and feed them.

Ideological near-sightedness is always bound up with bureaucratism. The leaders of the ruling faction, who are isolating themselves to an ever-greater extent, prove incapable of estimating the situation as a whole, foreseeing the future and issuing broad directives to the party. The policy becomes pettifogging or tail-endist. Attempts on anyone's part to generalize the difficulties, grasp their connection and look ahead into the future, arouse alarm in the conservative bureaucratic mind and call forth accusations of factionalism. The more difficulties in economy and politics the régime accumulates, the more intolerant it becomes.

4. What is the basic cause of bureaucratism and pettifoggery?

*Answer:* The basic cause for it is a backsliding from the proletarian class line. The bulk of the party is composed of workers.

The party's traditions are revolutionary and proletarian. The backsliding from the class line engenders the necessity to force policies by bureaucratic apparatus methods.

5. Does this imply that a split or the formation of two parties is inevitable or indispensable?

*Answer:* By no means. The attempt to ascribe such views to the Opposition is the most unconscionable and envenomed weapon in the struggle. It is necessary to conduct a struggle against the shift from the class line by inner-party means. We can and must straighten out the deviation within the framework of a single party.

6. In what does the shift from the proletarian class line find its expression?

*Answer:* In the following:

a) The inability to understand the dangers that lurk in the lag of industry behind the development of national economy as a whole;

b) The bureaucratic attitude towards such questions as wages, a régime of economy, unemployment, housing construction, etc.;

c) the under-estimation of the differentiation in the village and glossing over the growing rôle of the Kulak;

d) the attempt on the part of the People's Commissariat of Agriculture, rural coöperatives and other organizations to steer a course toward the productively powerful middle peasant, *i.e.*, in reality the kulak;

e) the under-estimation or the inability to understand the dangers flowing from the fact that the political activity of the urban and rural petty bourgeoisie is growing more rapidly than the activity of workers, agricultural laborers and poor peasants;

f) the extension of the electoral decree and the actual elections in the interests of the petty bourgeoisie;

g) the embellishment of the Soviet state as it exists and the denial of the necessity of drawing it closer to the workers;

h) the embellishment of the N.E.P. and the glossing over or mitigating of its contradictions, minimizing the specific weight of capitalist tendencies;

i) the centrist deviation on questions of the world labor movement (the Anglo-Russian committee, the Kuomintang, etc.);

j) the support given to grossly mistaken and dangerous hopes in the bloc with opportunist and treacherous leaders which is alleged to help secure the U.S.S.R. against war;

k) the urge to break with the Profintern and join the Amsterdam International (making corresponding changes in the statutes of the Red trade unions);

l) the systematic struggle not against the right deviations but against those who warn against the latter;

m) enrolling among the ultra-lefts not only the real ultra-lefts but all those who are fighting to rectify the proletarian line.

7. Is it true that the policy of the Opposition threatens to disrupt the *smychka* [alliance] between the proletariat and the peasantry?

*Answer:* This charge is utterly false.

The *smychka* is now being endangered on the one hand by the lag of industry, and on the other by the growth of the kulak. The shortage of industrial goods is driving a wedge between the country and the city. The kulak is beginning to subordinate to himself economically and politically the middle and poor peasants and to oppose them to the proletariat. This process is still in its inception. But the threat to the *smychka* flows precisely from this source. The under-estimation of the lag of industry and of the growth of the kulak acts to violate the correct Leninist leadership of the alliance between the two classes which is the foundation of the dictatorship in the conditions in our country.

8. Is it true that the Opposition maintains that state industry must be ceded to foreigners as a concession?

*Answer:* Such an assertion is a revolting slander. The use of such methods is made possible only owing to the fact that the party has been strangled by bureaucratism.

*Pravda* asserts that comrade Medvedyev, in a letter written by him in January 1924, came out in favor of giving up a great section of our state industry as a foreign concession. This letter of comrade Medvedyev's, written some two and a half years ago, has never been published anywhere. No one knows anything about it and no one can judge whether *Pravda* correctly cites its contents. But what possible connection is there between this letter which is unknown to anybody and the 1923 Opposition and the Leningrad Opposition (1925)?

The Opposition considers the question of the tempo of the development of state industry as decisive for the fate of socialism. To this end it demands a change in the system of taxation, the policy of prices and a redrafting of the budget. Concessions can and must occupy in our economy only a rigidly restricted and subordinate position. Every attempt to extend the framework of concessions beyond specific limits, *i.e.*, to offer foreign capital a dominant, or even only a considerable influence in our economy would be tantamount to an outright betrayal of the cause of Socialism.

9. Is it true that the Opposition is in a bloc with the Amsterdam deviation?

*Answer:* This assertion is as absurd as the previous one and it is based on the self-same mysterious letter of comrade Medvedyev's. If comrade Medvedyev or any other member of our party were to come out against the Profintern and for Amsterdam, the Opposition would once again categorically and mercilessly condemn such an opportunist deviation, just as it has already done with regard to certain leading members of the Central Trades Union Council who effected behind the backs of the party an alteration in the statutes of almost all our trade unions by deleting "Profintern" and replacing the latter with "the international alliance of trade unions" which can signify nothing else but a removal of obstacles for an entry into Amsterdam.

Generally speaking, the attempt on the part of *Pravda* to place the blame at the door of the Opposition is made possible only owing to the monstrous suppression

of the freedom of criticism and of the open functioning of thought in the party.

10. Is it true that the Opposition denies the possibility of building socialism in our country?

*Answer:* This accusation is false and it is based upon an erroneous formulation of the question itself. Decades are required to build socialism solely with our own forces in our backward country. To presuppose that in the course of such a long period of time capitalism will be maintained and will continue to develop in other countries while we are in the meantime building socialism is to deny the ties of world economy and of world politics and to fall into crude national narrow-mindedness. The building of socialism in our country is an integral part of the world proletarian revolution. The success of socialist construction in our country is inseparable from the success of the revolutionary movement in the entire world. The Opposition is profoundly convinced of the victory of socialism in our country not because our country can be torn free of world economy and world revolution but because the victory of the proletarian revolution is guaranteed the world over.

The shift from the proletarian line inevitably leads to national narrow-mindedness, to an underestimation of our dependence on world economy and the crude embellishment of the N.E.P.

11. Is it true that the Opposition is a faction?

*Answer:* It is impossible to deny the danger of the transformation of the Opposition into a faction. This danger is being created and aggravated by the policies and organizational measures of the ruling faction which is becoming ever less tolerant of criticism, collective discussion, and of a freely elected and collective leadership.

12. Can a "majority" constitute a faction?

*Answer:* It can. The present majority is a faction. A majority is not some sort of perpetual body of one and the same composition. In a party that thrives on the basis of internal democracy new questions as they arise give birth to new groupings and shifts. The faction of the majority has as its task the transformation of the present majority into a permanent majority, independently of its political line and of the changing tasks or the changed views of the real majority of the party. The faction of the majority is absolutely incompatible with a régime of party democracy. The faction of the majority is bound by its own secret discipline and this alone defrauds and perverts the genuine will of the party. The faction of the majority uses the party machine to prevent the party from determining by democratic means where the real majority and minority are. The most pernicious form of factionalism is the factionalism of the ruling majority which speaks for the party as a whole.

The factionalism of the minority flows inevitably from the factionalism of the majority.

13. Is it true that the Opposition endangers the unity of the party?

# BOOKS

*Answer:* The unity of the party is threatened by the existence of a shut-in faction of the majority which is shifting the party policy from the proletarian line and is driving into the Opposition all those who struggle for the proletarian line and for the rehabilitation of the party régime.

What the leaders of the ruling faction understand by the unity of the party is the following: "Don't you dare criticize our policy; don't dare pose any new tasks and new questions without our permission; don't dare to pose seriously the question of a struggle against bureaucratism, the question of industrialization, wages, poor peasants, etc." From the standpoint of the leaders of the ruling faction the unity of the party is endangered by every word and every action that is directed against the mistakes of the leading group. But this only means that the leading group refuses to reconcile itself to a régime of party democracy.

14. Is it true that the Opposition has moved away from the Leninist views on party leadership?

*Answer:* No, that is not true. Just the contrary is true. It is the present leading group that directs all of its efforts to smash the old leading nucleus which was formed in joint collaboration with Lenin. During Lenin's illness and now after his death, the party was many times told of the importance of preserving the succession and continuity of the leadership. The chief slogan was: Long live the old Leninist guard! It was explained to the party that the experience of leadership is acquired in the course of many years and that in our party the leadership is most closely bound up with the experience of the two revolutions through which the party passed under the leadership of Lenin.

At the present time the Stalinist group is making an abrupt turn on this question, by opposing to the old guard new forces, "practicals" who grew up on the basis of creative work, etc. Such a counterposition is by itself a step toward renouncing the revolutionary traditions of the party, a step toward pettifoggery and opportunism. This deviation is being covered up by thoroughly reactionary speeches against the "émigrés" and in favor of people rooted in the "native soil". The theory of socialism in one country is best adapted for this new narrow, nationalistic, horse-trader's formulation of the question of party leadership.

15. Is it true that by "smashing the Opposition" it is possible to secure the unity of the party and the unanimity of the leadership?

*Answer:* No, this is a gross fallacy. The bureaucratic suppression of the party is pregnant with ever greater divisions. The ruling faction is by no means unanimous. It contains a right deviation toward the kulak, the petty bourgeoisie and middle class elements in general. It contains a trade unionist deviation which is marching hand in hand with the deviation toward the petty proprietor but which frequently comes into hostile conflict with the latter. It contains purely machine elements who

## History to Order

TRAITORS IN AMERICAN HISTORY. Lessons of the Moscow Trials. By EARL BROWDER. 32 pp. New York. Workers Library Publishers. 5c.

To dispel the disbelief generated by the Moscow Trials and to envelope them with some semblance of plausibility, the Stalinists are compelled to commit falsifications of all kinds. The facts of history, geography, biography, and psychology are submitted to the most violent operations to make them fit into the frame-up system. This system, which has today become the principal political weapon of Stalinism in all fields of activity, breeds lies just as a putrefying carcass breeds maggots.

The greater the frame-ups, the grosser the falsifications. The process of systematic lying, begun in 1923 with the factional struggle inside the Political Bureau of the Russian communist party and perfected by Stalin, reached a climax in the recent Trial of the 21. This trial was received with such unanimous skepticism and condemnation by almost every section of the labor and liberal movements unvassalized to Stalin that his attorneys in the western world have been driven to wild extremes in their efforts to improvise some sort of defense for the judicial assassinations.

Since the fabric of the trials themselves is too flimsy to withstand the slightest critical examination, these apologists attempt to divert attention from an analysis of the charges and testimony or any comparison of the "confessions" with verifiable facts and documentary proofs. To escape the

are without a definite political line but who shield the right deviation from the criticism of the Opposition. Finally, it contains numerous elements who have completely preserved their revolutionary proletarian spirit but who have yet to give themselves an accounting of the shifts in party policy and party régime. At the present time the leaders of the majority faction are able to fuse it together by machine methods in the struggle against the Opposition. If we were to allow even for a moment that the Opposition is "smashed" then the faction of the majority, backsliding to the right, would immediately begin to split up into new factional groupings, with all the ensuing consequences. Within the factional tops there is already a sharp friction that is being suppressed only by factional discipline. It is possible to prevent the development of this friction into new factional struggles not by smashing the present Opposition but on the contrary by assuming an attentive attitude towards its criticism, by effecting a genuine rectification of the party line and by reestablishing democracy and collective leadership in the party.

Moscow, 1927.

Leon TROTSKY

control of everyday evidence, they even flee from the present into the past for some support, however far-fetched and insubstantial, to buttress their crumbling structure of falsehoods.

One of the masters in the Stalin School of Falsification is Earl Browder, secretary of the American section of the Communist International. *Traitors in American History* is a reprint of his speech delivered at a meeting of the New York functionaries of the communist party at the Hippodrome on March 18 of this year. In this pamphlet the patriotic Browder runs through American history in a frantic search for parallels to the Moscow Trials. Since he is unable to find them there, he does not hesitate to manufacture them out of whole cloth, or to twist the commonest facts into the most fantastic and unrecognizable shapes. The prosecutor Vishinsky's falsification of Russian revolutionary history sets the pattern for a similar falsification of American revolutionary history by Browder.

Has it turned out, according to the trials, that the foremost members of the Bolshevik party in Lenin's day were nothing but traitors, spies, scoundrels, wreckers and poisoners, or that of all the survivors of Lenin's Central Committee Stalin alone escaped degeneration into Fascism? What, asks Browder, is so absurd or "un-American" about that? That is no indictment of Stalin's régime. "If Stalin, Molotov, Kalinin must be made responsible for Trotsky, Bukharin, Tukhachevsky . . . then George Washington must be made responsible for Benedict Arnold and Thomas Jefferson for Aaron Burr."

Poor Benedict Arnold! It is not sufficient that he suffer ignominy for his renegacy to the colonial revolution. He must now do double penance for his crime by helping to cover up Stalin's own renegacy to the revolution in 1938. But Browder's attempt to use him in this fashion will not work. If analogies are in order, Arnold may be compared to a Czarist officer, who, after fighting well in the Red Army, sold himself to the interventionists. There were several such individuals in the Russian Revolution.

But the Stalinists would have us believe that, twenty years after the establishment of the soviet state and seventeen years after the end of the civil war, the heads of the Red Army (Trotsky, Tukhachevsky), together with six leading generals, the head admiral of the Navy (Orloff), and even the head of the Kremlin Guard (Yenukidze) became traitors, rascals, degenerates. These are not isolated individuals, like Arnold, who were exceptions among the hundreds of faithful officers in the Continental Army and are remembered solely on this account, but the whole commanding staff of the military forces of the Soviet Union from its birth to the present day! That is to say, Generals Washington, Stark, Sullivan, Greene, LaFayette, Steuben, as well as John

Adams, Esek Hopkins, and Benjamin Franklin, conspired to overthrow the Republic they had created and defended two decades after the Declaration of Independence.

Aaron Burr is not only "the Cataline of America", as Hamilton characterized him; he is also "the Trotsky of America", according to Browder. With a disregard for historical fact astonishing even for a Stalinist, Browder informs us that: "With the advent of Jefferson and the Republican-Democratic party to power in 1800, the Federalist party quickly passed over to wholesale treason, which lasted for fifteen years. Hamilton was the leading figure in this treason, for the first period, etc." Any good history of the period (McMaster, for example) will inform the student that Jefferson was elected to the Presidency over Burr in 1800 by the votes Hamilton controlled in the House of Representatives.

Aaron Burr's intrigues came to nothing. Had Burr seized power through his machinations and then arranged a great treason trial with Washington, Franklin, Henry, Adams, and Paine in the prisoner's dock alongside of shady characters without a record or reputation, and had them confess to conspiring with Great Britain and France to dismember the Union (which he himself had done), then one could begin to approximate the fantasy of the Moscow Trials.

The circumstances surrounding Aaron Burr's trial and subsequent acquittal do throw an oblique light on the character of Stalin's rule. Jefferson, who remained true to himself and the planting aristocracy he represented, took the entire episode very lightly, confident of the firmness of his government. That Stalin feels himself obliged, first to discredit, and then to execute, his old comrades in arms, is an index, not only of his own betrayal, but also of the shakiness of his régime.

During this revolutionary epoch there did occur a genuine historical precedent to the Moscow Trials that illuminates these contemporary political events far more than Browder's fanciful analogies: the trials of the Jacobins in the French Revolution. The revolutionists of that day were tried together with royalists, spies, and thieves; accused by the Thermidorians of being in England's pay; and guillotined. The agents of reaction are rarely original in their methods of getting rid of troublesome revolutionists. They can only unconsciously plagiarize from their predecessors. Just as Vishinsky, when he accuses Trotsky of being an agent of the *Gestapo*, is echoing the charges of the reactionary press against Lenin and Trotsky in July 1917, so Stalin's amalgams simply reproduce, under different conditions, the Thermidorian frame-ups against the Jacobins.

Browder points to the traitors in high office at the beginning of the American Civil War as proof of the guilt of the Old Bolsheviks. His comparison could pertinently refer to those reactionaries of today who prepare their *coups* under the wing of Popular Front governments in France and Spain. But it could apply to the Moscow Trials only if Grant, Stevens,

Seward, Garrison, Greeley, and nine-tenths of the Republican chieftains had been found to conspire with czarist Russia and monarchist Germany to restore slavery in 1880. It suffices to suggest such a hypothesis to expose its absurdity.

But Browder exposes himself far more successfully than any historical criticism can do when he forsakes the past for the present. The descendants of the traitors and assassins of the past are at work all around us today, he shrieks hysterically. "The open incitations to assassination of President Roosevelt that have been published in the *New York Herald-Tribune*, the *New York Sun*, and the McClure Syndicate confidential dispatches are only a little whiff of the devil's brew of treason that boils in Wall Street circles. The recent column of the well-known Republican commentator, Mark Sullivan, in which he compares President Roosevelt with a skunk, and proposes to remove a skunk from the national premises by writing polite letters to him, was but a cowardly echo of this assassination propaganda in high places. Treason is afoot in America today. Let the Moscow trials arouse the American people to more alertness toward it!"

Ridiculous, incredible, mad? Of course. And yet there is a method in this madness. If Trotsky's injunction to the communist party to fulfill the last words of Lenin in his testament: "Remove Stalin!" can be used by Vishinsky as irrefutable evidence of Trotsky's terrorist instructions, why cannot Mark Sullivan's political opposition to Roosevelt be interpreted by the American imitators of Vishinsky as proof of terrorist activities? The one has just as much credibility as the other. That is to say, none whatsoever. The political psychology of the Stalinist Thermidorians and their totalitarian policy require that they identify all political opposition with terrorism.

Browder's pamphlet is just another little frame-up of the Stalinists, no different and no more successful than the big Moscow frame-ups. His attempt to place Max Eastman in the same category as Mark Sullivan is on a par with the Thermidorian mixture of the royalists and revolutionists.

On the cover of this yellow and black pamphlet is the illustration of a rattlesnake, which is supposed to be a symbol of treachery. That rattlesnake symbol has had an interesting evolution in American history. When it was first used by the American rebels in their struggle against England for liberty and independence, with the slogan: "Don't Tread on Me!", it had a genuine revolutionary significance. In 1860, however, at the beginning of the Second American Revolution, the rattlesnake entwined around the palmetto tree was the fighting symbol of South Carolina, the vanguard state of the secessionist slaveholders, who used the same slogan for completely reactionary ends. "Copperhead" was the designation for the Southern sympathizer in the free states.

Our own revolutionary history teaches that the same symbol, the same slogan, and the same terms may express (and hide) at different stages of development of a great

revolutionary movement, a diametrically different content. The symbols persist in the popular consciousness even although the social interests they formerly denoted, have shifted. The new reactionaries pervert the old revolutionary traditions and exploit them against the people's interests.

So has it become with the word "communist" and with all the glorious traditions attached to the term and the organization. The Moscow Trials are an unmistakable warning that the social revolutionary interests once identified with this name and banner have no longer anything in common with them. The revolutionary rattlesnake of 1776 has become transformed into the reactionary rattlesnake of 1860, and stings to death its former collaborators.

This is the great historical lesson of the Moscow Trials, although it is the precise opposite of the lesson Browder intended to inculcate in his venomous pamphlet.

George NOVACK

## Einstein

THE EVOLUTION OF PHYSICS. By ALBERT EINSTEIN and LEOPOLD INFELD. *Illus.* 313 pp. New York. Simon and Schuster. \$2.50.

We live in one of the great ages of physics. Our age has been called great in other respects too, but in physics we can be sure. Physical theories developed in the present century have already shown themselves direct agents in the solution of problems of extraordinary difficulty and scope. The power to predict, to control, and to understand have been strikingly extended in the past thirty years. The work of physicists of the preceding three centuries has of course resulted in a much wider range of applications, most of them unforeseen by the theoreticians, but we know that theoretical advances in this field are always followed by developments in engineering and technology and the present age cannot be an exception in this respect. The book under review takes no explicit notice of the material value of physical theories; it is concerned almost entirely with the effect of new experimental results upon the theories of the past. It is thus a history of "pure" physics. Because of this restriction in the scope of the book, the confused philosophical considerations on "reality" are less of a blemish than they would be in a book that was actually concerned with the evolution of physics.

The few broad facts that are clear concerning the nature of physical theory do not suffice to determine a philosophy of physics. Physical theories change with the discovery of new facts and laws, with the developments of new materials and techniques, with the ideas of the men who are physicists. The striking changes in general viewpoint that are sometimes called revolutions in physics (there have been at least two since 1904) never negate the observed facts of earlier epochs, but generally describe all the facts formerly known more simply and effectively, at the same time that they make place for newly-discovered facts and relations. Thus physical theories al-

ways show essential connectedness with their predecessors and in this sense too, there may be said to be evolution in physical theory.

It has always been the aim of physicists to frame their theories so that a maximum number of true (observable) relationships can be deduced logically from a minimum number of premises or assumptions. It is in this sense that physics has always been and continues to be a logical science. This does not contradict the empirical aspects of the science, which appear always in the deducible consequences and sometimes in the stated assumptions.

Physics has always been a social activity, although this book takes no pains to indicate the important implications of this fact. Like all science it requires the most intense coöperation between contemporaries, and between living physicists and their predecessors. It is a social activity too in that it requires planned support beyond the hope of immediate material return, and in that it is limited and expanded by the state of material culture in which it finds itself. In a smaller sense it is a social activity in that physicists have always written explanations of their work for laymen. Lastly, it is clear to the most casual student of the history of science, that the physics of today is not the result of the work of a string of geniuses, unsupported by anything except their own thinking. It is the result of the steady accumulation of data, laws, techniques, by thousands of workers, of whom a small but important fraction are able to advance general theories for which the layman tends to give them the "credit".

But these few general facts about the growth of physics (change and evolution, connectedness, logicity, sociality), do not suffice to give us a clear view of the nature or of the importance of physical theory. Einstein and Infeld cannot help us much with this problem, since they refrain from indicating even in the barest outline either what its social uses are, what its applications may be, or what its aesthetic virtues are (e.g., its extraordinary compactness due to its mathematical form).

The book describes, in remarkably clear terms, the rise of the "mechanical" view in pure physics, culminating in the work of Newton. The general program of the mechanists, to describe all the phenomena of physics in terms of *force* acting as attractions and repulsions between bodies or *particles*, met with great success in most areas until the beginning of the nineteenth century. The increasing difficulty of explaining the wave-nature of light, and later the facts of electro magnetism, on mechanical bases stimulated physicists to develop the so-called field theories, which are non-mechanical in that the space between bodies becomes as important as the bodies themselves. This development is also explained with exceptional clarity, but purely on the level of physical ideas, out of all reference to use, and to the increasing facilities for research made possible by application of earlier physical theories.

Why is it that a book of such purely in-

tellectual content, requiring from the layman many hours of sustained concentration, is highly praised by all the reviewers, and already is being widely read? Many readers will hope to find the answers to the questions raised above, and most of the reviews do not indicate these lacks. Many have been hearing for twenty years that the theory of relativity could be understood by only twelve men and they now see before them the possibility of joining that select company. The opportunity of listening to one of our indubitable giants of the intellect seems here to be opened to us. This opportunity actually exists, but much of the power of the ideas of the relativity theories is lost in this presentation. The great ideas in physics are great because they summarize compactly and precisely great masses of information. It is not possible to skim the cream off this mass and present it as the theory of relativity without disappointing those who thought, rightly, that "there was more to it than that". In short, we have here a presentation—well written and carefully worked out—of some ideas which derive their power from their contexts (inside physics and in the engineering world), carefully removed from those contexts so as to make them manageable in a single volume.

This book has then, from a layman's point of view, three major lacks. It does not show how physics gets applied, or how powerful the older theories were in helping engineers solve their problems, and make their machines. It does not put forth an intelligible philosophy justifying the existence of pure physics. It does not have a bibliography that would help interested persons to read further in the various fields discussed.

It is, however the best book known to the reviewer, for the general reader who simply wants to know what the theory of relativity is like.

A. B.

## Politics and Art

THE TRIPLE THINKERS. By EDMUND WILSON. 289 pp. New York. Harcourt Brace and Co. \$2.75.

Seven years after Mr. Wilson's critical *chef-d'œuvre*, *Axel's Castle*, which describes the curve made by Symbolism in the arc of literary history, comes *The Triple Thinkers*, not because another literary curve needs to be plotted, but because the author has accumulated enough essays to make a volume. But before taking up the present book, let us glance at the method of literary criticism employed by Mr. Wilson in *Axel's Castle*, for the fatal character of that method is exposed in *The Triple Thinkers*.

Mr. Wilson regarded Symbolism as the culmination of a series of reactions in aesthetic behavior; it is the question of the reaction of Romanticism against Classicism, of Naturalism against Romanticism, then a sort of reassertion of romantic elements by Symbolism against the previous reassertion of classical elements by Naturalism, and we end up with Symbolism in

the way a history text-book would end up with the triumph of the liberal democratic forces with the election of Roosevelt in 1932. It is a matter of observing coherently and persuasively the consequences of struggle between specific dogmas.

This constitutes the criticism of "tendencies"—an historical criticism in which the literary "tendency" is equivalent to the party platform in politics. Symbolism is an aesthetic formulation from which or to which the individual (Joyce, Proust, Eliot, Valery, etc.) may adhere or depart as his personal lights direct him, as Roosevelt's formulation of liberal democracy as a party platform is modifiable by his personal conception and solution of various particular problems. Therefore Mr. Wilson's interest in drawing attention to the Symbolist dogma in the deliberate formulations of various individual writers (powerful enough to attract followers and disciples and a large audience of readers) is of a pedantic character—or in the more concrete sense, a pedagogic character. Fundamentally, *Axel's Castle* serves as a solid study-base for organizing readers into professional supporters of literature and literary criticism.

What is the case with *The Triple Thinkers*? Now Mr. Wilson has no recently-born dogma to describe, no believable literary myth to identify and embroider, no widespread group of readers to call into economic-literary line. For he is a qualified specialist and therefore understands the limits of his specialism. This is clear in the final essay of this book: "Marxism and Literature", which shows, rather unresourcefully, the failure of Marxism to include the literary tendency by providing an aesthetic formulation. This is something of a platitude by now, so that when Mr. Wilson quotes, with an air of finality, an inferior critic's observation that Aristotle did not formulate the principles involved in the creation of Euripides' and Æschylus' dramas till half a century after they were written, he is decidedly guilty of overstating his case.

It is true that no work of literary genius has arrived which indicates the possibility of a new dogma, a new aesthetic formulation, which is the only thing that gives Mr. Wilson's "Aristotelian" capacity any work. But since *Axel's Castle* is supposed to have familiarized us all with Mr. Wilson's specialty, he is anxious to show that he is not falling down on the job, because there is no job for him to fall down on; that is, any that he can handle. Naturally, then, he is anxious to quote the best authorities, and his pages are mottled with quotations from Marx, Engels, Trotsky and Lenin—all to the simple end which Trotsky argued so definitely in *Literature and Revolution*: such phenomena as the Proletcult, and its abject failure, prove the validity of Marx's attitude toward literature and that a new culture does not automatically move in on the heels of a revolution, even if it is a Marxist revolution. The growth of a new culture under a new economic condition must be slow and painful.

However, Mr. Wilson is not so poorly

# CLIPPINGS

## Stalin's New Party

The *New York Times* (Apr. 23, 1938) prints an interesting wireless dispatch from its Moscow correspondent, Harold Denny, in connection with the elections in the constituent republics of the U.S.S.R. and in the local organizations of the Communist Party.

ONE OF the most important political developments of the last few years in the Soviet Union has been the eclipse of the communist party. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that in Russia the old communist party has been destroyed. Certainly the party that Lenin knew has vanished, the bulk of its one-time leaders have been disgraced and killed by their own brethren in the faith.

The communist party was conceived in the beginning as a spearhead of the "proletarian dictatorship"—a tightly knit and thoroughly disciplined phalanx of the most politically advanced minds. Within this body the utmost freedom of opinion and debate was permitted up to the moment when the votes were cast deciding the party's "line".

Thereafter every member must adhere to the line in monolithic solidarity. Such freedom of opinion up to that point persisted throughout Lenin's party leadership and was suppressed by Stalin in the course of his struggle with various oppositions, from the Trotskyist Leftists to the Bukharin Rightists. Since 1930 there has not been freedom of discussion within the communist party—even in advance of decisions on the party's line.

In the first years of the Bolshevik revolution, party congresses were held frequently. The constitution adopted at the eighth congress of the Russian communist party in 1919 specified that regular congresses should be convened at intervals of two years. This was amended to three years at the seventeenth party congress, when Stalin was in full control. That was in February 1934. Thus four years and two months have elapsed since the last party congress, which is a clear violation of the amended party constitution.

During that period the Soviet State has admittedly become a one-man dictatorship. Within the past years, since Stalin was finally able to rid himself of the crafty, powerful and unprincipled Henry Yagoda—former secret police chief, who was shot last month along with men whom he insulted by his very presence in the prisoners' dock—there has been no power but Stalin. He alone decides the party line, and woe to him who strays from it.

Within the past year the Stalin dictatorship has solidified its power even against the opposition of the "best brains of the party". As well as any foreigners here can see the situation now through the smoke screen that the régime is always able to throw over its activities, only three or four men have any real say about what goes on in Soviet Russia. . . .

equipped a professional as to let his case, which is urgent, slip into the mists of indefinite waiting. The final essay has a formal relation to the foregoing essays, which have been "politically" conscious. But their uniform intention has been to show that meddling in politics never did any first-class writer any good; Flaubert, he says, confused the development of socialism with an individual socialist of his time; Bernard Shaw's career, by Mr. Wilson's analysis, proves that his confused political mind progressively deteriorated his art. The implication of Mr. Wilson's method of exposition here is a false one in relation to his essay on Marxism. In the cases of such writers as Flaubert and Shaw, it was proper and inevitable that their politics and art had separate demarcations, because one was reactionary and the other was progressive. But that does not mean that an artist must always be politically backward or reactionary. Perhaps it means specifically that Shaw and Flaubert became bad artists when they took up material which they could not control. But that does not mean that such material is uncontrollable, and that it may not become progressively more controllable.

Mr. Wilson is willing to admit that such a writer as Silone is a forward-looking sign of the times, but he omits an analysis of Silone, which is significant. It signifies, most probably, that Mr. Wilson cannot make up his mind about Silone's meanings. So, although his advanced liberalism makes him desire not to seem hostile toward Marxism, the inevitable form of his intellectual prejudice reveals his more significant desire to maintain his professional prestige at the expense of the best socially inspired literature of the time. For the insinuations of his book are plainly reactionary. The reason is that Mr. Wilson lacks that creative nature of the critic so conspicuous in a man like Coleridge, as many contemporary novelists lack the critical nature of the creator, which causes literary artists to know the direction of the present, for they divine the images of the future.

Parker TYLER

### A Gift for a Friend

ONE OF the most effective methods employed by the bourgeois reviews is to request their readers to send a subscription as a gift to a friend. The reader pays for it; the friend becomes a reader. We do not have the slightest hesitation in adopting the idea and we recommend it to the serious attention of our readers. If you have a friend who is not now a reader of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL, send us a subscription for him, even if he is not politically friendly to our review, or more accurately, especially if he isn't. We suggest that THE NEW INTERNATIONAL is especially fitted to break down the prejudices of an opponent and to re-awaken both his critical faculties and his ability to think independently. "Students and faculty members at Kent State University like THE NEW INTERNATIONAL," writes one of the students. And from the other end of the world, Capetown, South Africa, Paul Koston says: "We would like to see an even larger NEW INTERNATIONAL."

So, by the process which began with the expulsion of the Trotskyists and which was extended to all other oppositionists through the period that saw the liquidation of the Old Bolsheviks three years ago and the degradation and execution of most of the old communist leaders within the last two years, Stalin has gradually substituted rule by the political police—inheritors of the tradition of the Czarist Cheka, namely, the G.P.U. and the present N.K.V.D.—for rule by the communist party.

But that, even for a man as strong as Stalin, is not enough, even taking into consideration the invaluable power, through its ramifications, of the political police. Every indication is that Stalin wishes to place his rule over the country on a stronger and wider basis.

The basis in the old communist party fell from under him. Those famous communists of Lenin's time wished to be rid of him, if not to destroy him physically. So he destroyed them. But Stalin is no mere Czar (though much more than any Czar ever was) wishing to rule by force alone.

There are innumerable indications that Stalin wishes the sentiment of the people to be behind him. He and his adjutants have done everything imaginable to "sell him" to the country. Most of the people intimately acquainted with Russia today believe he has done so with a high degree of success to the younger generation.

## A Stalinist Reply

The editor of the *Daily Worker* (Apr. 25, 1938) makes a devastating reply to Mr. Denny.

AS A representative of one of the leading Tory organs of U.S. capitalism Mr. Denny finds himself in agreement with the "remnants of the bourgeoisie" in hating the outstanding communist leader who is anathema to the fascist dictators with whom the Tories are making deals—dirty deals approved by Mr. Denny's editorial bosses.

That Mr. Denny has tried to concentrate his slander on comrade Stalin is evidence of the fact that he can no longer slander the U.S.S.R. and the great achievements which comrade Stalin's leadership has brought to the Soviet Union and to all progressive humanity.

### BACK NUMBERS AVAILABLE

It is now possible to obtain back numbers of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL, for which there have been numerous requests in order to complete their volumes or to obtain a special issue. THE NEW INTERNATIONAL first appeared in July 1934 and to date 19 numbers have been published. Each issue contains valuable documentary and historical material and articles of lasting value. While not all issues of the magazine are available, it is possible to supply most of them; namely, 15 of the 19, including THE NEW INTERNATIONAL in the present format. The management will fill all requests for these numbers at ten cents per copy until the supply is exhausted. The following is a list of the issues which are available:

1934: August; September-October; November; December.

1935: July; August; October; December.

1936: February; April; June.

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C. A. Smith, Editor, **CONTROVERSY**,  
organ of Independent Labor Party.  
London, England.

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These comments, and the many others we have received, are an indication that **THE NEW INTERNATIONAL** is living up to its name, and is carrying on the great tradition of genuine internationalism to which the magazine is dedicated. **THE NEW INTERNATIONAL** is a cooperative enterprise, and its readers and friends have as great a part to play in building and strengthening it as have the editors, contributors, and the business staff.

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