

Fourth International

The Crisis in France



France Heads Toward A Decision

By E. Germain

French Foreign Policy

By Jean Paul Martin

The 1948 Election Campaign

of the

Socialist Workers Party

September 1948

25c

Manager's Column

The group of revolutionists in Cyprus who recently applied for membership in the Fourth International requested regular copies of Fourth International and The Militant, to follow the American Trotskyist movement.

This is the group who for years did not know what "Trotskyism" meant when the Stalinists accused them of it. Finally they investigated and discovered they really were in agreement with the policies of the world movement founded by Leon Trotsky. Now they will have a chance to learn how the American Trotskyists conduct an election campaign against the world's mightiest imperialist force, Wall Street's Republican-Democratic regime, while the Stalinists support a third capitalist party.

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* * *

"I have had hard times recently," writes M. K. of Montreal. "I was ill and unable to work. Besides physical nourishment I must have mental nourishment. I cannot do without your publications, The Militant and Fourth International, and would ask that you continue my expired subscription a few months longer and I will make every effort to remit full payment and some more besides. Can you do it? Thank you very much."

We know just how M. K. must feel. We also know he'll pay when he can "and some more besides" to help send the magazine to some other hungry reader.

* * *

A new subscription just arrived from Geneva, Switzerland, for Fourth International and The Militant. The \$10 payment included \$5.50 as a donation. Our thanks to M. S.

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This is how a revolutionary periodical gets along. One worker's donation helps another in distress. Tomorrow the tables may be turned but the process is the same.

Workers make donations to Fourth International and The Militant for the same reason they read these publications —because they agree with the political ideas and pro-

* * *

gram presented, and want to help spread the message of socialism as far as possible.

* * *

Four out of every five Fourth International subs received this month were in combination with The Militant or from Militant readers. That is about the year-round average: 80% of F.I. readers also take The Militant. One sound practical reason is that the two subs in combination may be had for \$2.50. This reduced price cannot be listed on the expiration notices sent out with the magazine, but subscribers may alter that form when renewing at \$2.50 for the combination. When they send \$3 we tack a little onto the two subs.

In any case, we are trying to average up all Militant-F.I. subs so they will come out even. When Fourth International appeared bimonthly for five issues, all combination subs were thrown out of balance. As rapidly as possible this is being corrected whenever both subs are renewed in combination.

* * *

Fourth International is, of necessity, getting far less attention than The Militant during the Socialist Workers Party presidential campaign. Thousands of new workers are being reached with the special 25c introductory subscription to The Militant, and all emphasis is being put on the campaign paper. It is reasonable to expect many of these new readers will soon develop a great intellectual appetite and will want to get the theoretical magazine also.

The election campaign reaches them first with the weekly paper and perhaps a pamphlet or two. It is up to our co-thinkers throughout the country to see that these new readers get the opportunity to become acquainted with Fourth International.

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FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

VOLUME 9

SEPTEMBER 1948

NUMBER 7

The 1948 Election Campaign *of the* Socialist Workers Party

By the Editors

The July Convention of the Socialist Workers Party made a decision to participate in the 1948 election campaign. The Convention nominated Farrell Dobbs and Grace Carlson as the SWP standard-bearers in the presidential elections, recommending to the branches that they run, wherever possible, candidates in their localities (as has been done in New Jersey, Connecticut, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin, Minnesota, California and other states).

This was a bold decision. It was taken under circumstances with few parallels in the history of the labor movement either of this country or abroad. The obstacles facing the SWP appeared virtually insurmountable. There were the legal barriers erected by the American capitalist class to safeguard its two-party system which has thus far served the bourgeoisie even more efficiently than the one-party system in totalitarian countries.

To these and other innumerable hardships confronting all minority parties there must be added the extra handicap of our revolutionary party being blacklisted as "subversive" by the Hitlerite edict of Truman's Attorney General. But this, too, was only one element in the fierce red-baiting which is instigated by the State Department and the top brass in the armed forces and which is inundating the country through a thousand state and local channels.

The party was, moreover, compelled to undertake this campaign with slender resources. The odds were indeed overwhelmingly against us when it came to electioneering, which has long been converted into a Big Business enterprise, monopolized by the Sixty Richest Families who pump into their two-party system millions upon millions of dollars to stage sham parliamentary battles.

And as if this were not enough, the SWP had to enter the field of national politics as a novice, having never before run presidential candidates. This by no means exhausts the long list of hardships of which the leadership and the party ranks were fully cognizant.

Nevertheless the party leadership and the rank and file alike entered the 1948 campaign with great enthusiasm and utmost determination. This undertaking and the spirited

manner in which it has been conducted, along with the party's undeniable achievements to date, constitute unquestionable proof of the Trotskyist party's tremendous vitality and dynamism.

What is the fountainhead of this boldness, this enthusiasm, this dynamism of the SWP?

It does not at all spring from parliamentary illusions, from parliamentary cretinism which is the hall-mark of such organizations as the Thomas "Socialists" or the equally somnolent Socialist Labor Party, which awoken at election times only in order to doze off immediately thereafter, like the dormouse in the fable.

The real source of the party's vitality lies in its profound conviction of its historic mission — a conviction which, in its turn, stems from the theoretical foundations of the party, its unified system of ideas, the most advanced, audacious and fruitful in mankind's history, inspiring unswerving faith in the need and inevitability of socialism.

Whatever may be our shortcomings in parliamentary activity—and they are undeniably many—our party has demonstrated in all other fields of the class struggle its superiority over every other party inside the labor movement.

One of the distinguishing traits of our movement from its inception twenty years ago has been this, that we have never permitted our ideas to remain on paper, but, on the contrary, have, at every stage, no matter how limited were our forces and resources, sought to introduce them into the day-to-day life of our class, and to intervene to the fullest extent possible in order to raise the conscious level of the American workers. Indissoluble bonds unite us with the working class.

The whole history of our party eloquently testifies to this. Thus, the Trotskyist-led struggles of the Minneapolis teamsters and the famous Toledo Autolite strike of the early Thirties were the real precursors of the epoch-making battles which subsequently led to the birth of the CIO.

The most resolute and consistent fighters against Fascism have been the Trotskyists. We were the first to sound

the alarm concerning the dire threat of Hitlerism in Germany; in 1939 we were the initiators of the huge anti-Nazi demonstration in Madison Square Garden, New York; we spearheaded the recent postwar struggles against incipient native fascist formations, in particular, the one led by Gerald L. K. Smith. It is not accidental that in the current campaign, the militant anti-fascist demonstrations in Minneapolis still echo through the columns of the press there.

No less crystal clear is our record as the most irreconcilable political opponents of Stalinism. Here, again, we were the first, and indeed for many years the only ones, to expose and fight this counter-revolutionary monstrosity inside labor's own ranks, just as we fight Stalinism unfalteringly today.

We have been in the very forefront of the struggles for the rights of Negroes and other minorities. Every major postwar struggle in this field has found the SWP either in the role of initiators or the most active participants, as witness the Fontana Case, the Freeport (L.I.) Case, the Hickman Case.

In the struggle against imperialist war we stand alone with an unblemished record. We were the only ones who came into a head-on collision with the capitalist state and still continued to challenge and expose its war, as is evidenced by the famous Minneapolis Case which resulted in the railroading to jail of 18 leaders of the SWP and of the Minneapolis Drivers 544-CIO.

The determination and ability of the SWP to continue class struggle policies in wartime were by no means confined to the Minneapolis Case, but were expressed in a whole series of struggles, including the struggle against the no-strike pledge, against Jim Crow in the armed forces and in industry, for the sliding scale of wages, for a break with the capitalist outfits like the National War Labor Board, for independent labor political action, and so on. The inception and spread of extensive mass movements, such as the one against the no-strike pledge, is a striking example of how a relatively tiny minority can exert influence and intervene in events far beyond its physical resources and size.

In wartime the SWP demonstrated how deep were its roots in the working class, as well as its ability to fight for the interests of its class under the most adverse conditions. It was precisely for this reason that the Civil Rights Defense Committee was able at the time to mobilize liberal and labor organizations representing 5 million members to back the demand for the liberation of the 18 victims of the Minneapolis Case.

With the termination of hostilities, the struggles of the SWP continued, altering not in substance but merely in form. The struggle against the warmakers goes on, as does the fight against reaction and its anti-labor offensive. Directly carried over from the war has been the struggle against inflation and for the sliding scale of wages; so, too, has been the fight against Jim Crow and for the preservation of civil liberties. The struggle against Taft-Hartleyism poses sharply the need of a united class front against enemy assaults and invests the call for a Congress of Labor with special urgency. In brief, what the

SWP has been struggling and continues to struggle for is summed up in the different planks of its Election Platform, pointing the way for the establishment of a Workers and Farmers Government.

Here we come to the nub of our 1948 election campaign. It was undertaken by the party leadership and the ranks alike above all because it constitutes a component part of a consciously-set goal: the transformation of the party from a propaganda group into a party of mass action.

What the party sees in this election campaign and what it has seized so eagerly is an opportunity to accomplish a qualitative change in its methods of functioning, to divest itself of all the vestiges of a propaganda group. Such a change would actually amount to a leap forward on the road which the party consciously entered in its 1944 Convention—the road of transforming itself into a party of mass action.

Nobody claims that the SWP is already this kind of party at the present stage. But it is much further advanced along this road than appears from our limited resources and size, which all our opponents seize upon in order to denigrate us. But this external side is only one aspect of the matter. Far more decisive are the internal dynamic factors we have already mentioned, above all, the party's direct bond with the working class.

Furthermore, even in their treatment of our present material strength and numerical size, our adversaries are guilty of one-sidedness. It is not so much that none of them have themselves been able to build anything resembling a mass party. It is rather that they ignore the existing relation of forces between the parties in the American labor movement. In point of size and resources the only party that is able to match ours is the Stalinist party, whose influence and strength are declining at an accelerated rate while ours are growing. In the decisive aspect—the party's relation to the working class, its indissoluble ties with the class—we have already surpassed all the others, despite the obvious handicaps.

We leave aside the overall difficulties of building a mass revolutionary party after decades of defeats of the world labor movement such as we have passed through. Suffice it to point out, however, that so far as this country is concerned, the period of formation of mass working class parties still lies in the future. It is this fact, coupled with the existing relationship of forces inside labor's ranks, that makes the SWP such a powerful factor, despite all its limitations of resources and numbers. It is this that makes us all the more confident of the future.

When the period of mass radicalization does actually set in—as it must—where will the masses turn? Even the eventual formation of the Labor Party would solve only one problem, namely, the accomplishment of the long-belated break with capitalist parties and capitalist politics. But the moment this is accomplished, far bigger problems will inescapably arise—what policy, what program should labor follow? Here we are bound to come into our own, for we alone have the answers capable of withstanding the test of events; we alone have assembled the

cadres with demonstrated ability to apply the revolutionary program in action.

In this sense, too, our achievements in the 1948 election campaign, along with the lessons drawn from these experiences, mark a milestone in our progress toward the party of mass action.

This is the central task of our epoch. By solving this task we obtain the master key to the solution of all the other tasks. For this task is that of forging the decisive instrument that will enable the working class to fulfill its historic mission—the reorganization of society on a socialist basis.

French Foreign Policy

By Jean Paul Martin

The desperate domestic political crisis which today convulses France can perhaps be best understood in the light of her foreign policies, which are in essence an extension beyond French frontiers of the policies pursued at home. In following the current French developments the reader will find extremely illuminating the analysis which appears below. It is a translation of an article published in the June-July issue of Quatrieme Internationale.—Ed.

* * *

French imperialism pursues those policies which are in accordance with its available means. Judging by France's balance sheet from the last war, these means have been drastically reduced. In the interval between the two world wars, France was able to profit by the antagonisms between other imperialisms of relatively equal strength, and she was in this way able to maintain an international position out of all proportion to her actual industrial and financial power.

Following World War II, which resulted in France's losing the bulk of her foreign investments and her merchant marine along with the destruction of her productive apparatus in the amount of 470 billion francs (1938 currency), French imperialism saw itself relegated to a position similar to Italy's after 1918. But the disposition of the pieces on the international chess-board is entirely different today from what it was in the first postwar period. Today the world is divided into the Soviet bloc and the American bloc, within which there is an enormous disparity between the US and the other imperialisms.

Immediately after the war, France mapped out a policy of relative independence with regard to American imperialism. This assumed two forms.

At the outset, there was a rapprochement with the Soviet Union, concretized in a pact concluded by de Gaulle himself. This move answered the twofold preoccupation of the French bourgeoisie at that time: to safeguard themselves against a settlement of the German question in conformance with English and American views, which even at that time did not appear as firm as those of the Russians; and to sustain at home the policy of class collaboration which the Communist Party sponsored and which was absolutely indispensable for a relative rehabilitation of the shattered capitalist economy. This orientation was in practice abandoned by all the parties of the bourgeoisie to the extent that the antagonism between the US and the USSR sharpened and the plight of French economy made

American aid all the more urgent.

Thereafter, French foreign policy revealed itself highly sensitive to London's attempts to throw off the stranglehold of American aid through the creation of a Western European bloc under Anglo-French auspices. But this orientation, too, has proved a failure to date, for lack of an adequate basis.

And so France finds that her policies implemented by her actual means turn out, in the end, to be just what they are today, namely, the policies of a capitalist power absolutely at the mercy of the United States. France's dependence on the US is primarily economic. Up till now American aid has enabled France to satisfy the immediate food needs of her population along with the needs of her industries; and to avoid a full-fledged economic catastrophe with all its political and social consequences.

American and German coal alone, which France cannot obtain anywhere else, gives the United States an effective control over one-third of French industry. At the same time, although France has cut to the minimum the imports her economy must have, while raising her exports as high as today's conditions permit her trade balance, nevertheless, continues to show a growing deficit, amounting to 63 billion francs in the first quarter of this year (as against 36 billion francs deficit during the same 1947 period).

The total 1947 deficit reached the sum of 1,120 million dollars (in 1938 it amounted to only 45 million dollars) and has been covered only thanks to American credits. If we assume that this year's unfavorable trade balance will be the same as last year's and if we further assume that American aid to France, through the operation of the Marshall Plan, will amount to \$1,131,200,000 for the first 12 month period, then it is obvious that this aid will barely cover this deficit. But if we take the figures issued by the Monnet Commission, which has calculated that the development of French economy in 1948 would require, in addition to all other resources, a supplementary sum of 365 billion francs, or, at official rates of exchange, some 1.7 billion dollars, then we must conclude that aid under the Marshall Plan to France, important as it is, will cover only about two-thirds of the deficit of France's national economy.

At all events, the foregoing figures show that in the present condition of French economy, American aid is an indispensable capital contribution which literally shackles

the French bourgeoisie to the chariot of Yankee policies in Europe and throughout the world.

How extremely feeble is the international position of French imperialism has been graphically demonstrated in recent days in two different instances: the Viet-Nam affair and the German question.

The Viet-Nam Imbroglia

Viet Nam is today the weakest link of the French empire. Cognizant of the obvious decline of French rule of this rich country, whose position in the Far East is so highly strategic, Moscow and Washington, to say nothing of China, have been vying to inherit it. Bollaert, Commissioner of the Paris government, has conducted elaborate behind-the-scenes machinations among Viet-Nam "collaborationist" circles in order to set up a "federal Viet-Nam government" of puppets and to eliminate Ho Chi Minh, who is correctly considered to be under Stalin's orders. But these laborious efforts have yielded, after several months, very meager results. Expressed here is the fact that on the real field of battle, that of military operations and armed force, French imperialism has been unable to reach any decisive results.

In Indo-China an unstable equilibrium has been established: the French troops occupy the cities and certain vital communication centers, while the Viet-Nam troops control the rural areas and thus render impossible the economic exploitation of the country for the benefit of the imperialists. This is graphically illustrated in another way—by the precipitous decline of all Indo-Chinese exports since 1946.

The recognition of the "independence of Viet Nam within the framework of the French Union" and the setting up of a "Vietnamese central government," presided over by Nguyen Van Xuan, *citizen of France and general of the French Army*, palmed off as the incarnation of the "free" spirit of the Vietnamese people—all this demonstrates to what sorry expedients the colonial administration of the Paris government has been reduced. For there is very little chance that this Indo-Chinese Quisling government, offered by the ex-Emperor Bao Dai (who appears rather to be playing the game of the Americans), will be able to dupe the Vietnamese people and pacify the country in the interests of imperialism.

The Viet-Nam imbroglia drags on, but the prosecution of the war, disregarding the human sacrifices, is a drain on the French budget, completely out of proportion to the results achieved or anticipated. In reality, the Indo-Chinese war merely represents a venture to safeguard France's colonial prestige. An outright abandonment of Indo-China or very important concessions in this part of the French empire, entail the risk of dangerously compromising the position of Paris, already so delicate, in all the African colonies, especially in Algeria and Morocco.

Settlement of the German Question

But it is, above all, on the German question that the extreme enfeeblement of France's international position has manifested itself most crassly. French policy on this

issue is motivated by the following two considerations: to exploit the plight of Germany, conquered and occupied, in order to extort the maximum profit of all kind for the benefit of France's own economy; and to prevent Germany from recovering and becoming capable again of competing with France on the world market.

These considerations have determined the two principal points of France's German policy on the method of exploiting the Ruhr, the arsenal of German and European economy, and on the form of government for Germany. On the first point, France's policy has been to try to increase her share and to diminish Germany's; as for the second point, she has sought to avert the rebirth of a centralized German Reich.

By taking as our gauge the recent London Conference, April 20 to June 1, which decided the fate of Western Germany, we may measure the long road of concessions travelled by French diplomacy, so far removed from its initial positions.

As regards the Ruhr, the original position, obstinately defended by de Gaulle, was for lopping off this key area from Germany and internationalizing it. In face of the unanimous opposition to this extreme position, de Gaulle himself has had to yield and to recommend, together with the whole French bourgeoisie, international control of the Ruhr. Russia's participation in this control was naturally implied. But this position, too, soon had to be abandoned and France had to be content with control limited to the Western powers exclusively, i.e., the United States, England, France, and the Benelux countries.

France demanded that control be extended to management as well as to the redistribution of the Ruhr's output. The London Conference stripped France of the last possibility of any kind of effective control on her part, by deciding that control should be limited to redistribution of the Ruhr's coal, coke and steel. Furthermore, this control itself will prove illusory and will not obstruct the progress of rebuilding Germany which has been undertaken under American control. On this point, American interests have prevailed completely. Actually, the seizure by American capital of the large Ruhr enterprises has already been accomplished on an enormous scale and dictates the whole American policy in Germany. After compelling the British to abandon their plans to "socialize" the Ruhr enterprises, the Americans succeeded in placing responsibility for the management of these enterprises in the hands of the Germans themselves, that is, in the hands of their junior economic partners.

So far as Germany's form of government is concerned, France has up to now held the position of setting up a German Confederation, i.e., a loose collection of small German states, each enjoying utmost autonomy. The London Conference has just decided otherwise: The Constituent Assembly for Western Germany which is to convene next September 1 and thereafter must be elected in conformity with a system chosen by the German states themselves. It is more than likely that they will adopt the system of universal suffrage, opposed by France who fears the unification of Germany from below.

Thus, on the main issue in the settlement of the German question, the cause jointly defended by the English and the Americans (there was a previous behind-the-scenes agreement between the English and the Americans, arrived at in order most effectively to exert pressure on their most recalcitrant partner), prevailed all along the line against the French resistance.

The scope of these concessions has been so great that all the adversaries of the incumbent French government have not failed to exploit it, particularly the de Gaullists and their closest partners in the matter of German policy, the French Stalinists. Their protests are countered by the official organ of Quai d'Orsay, *Le Monde*, June 3, by two kinds of justification: a) the crushing superiority of the Anglo-American consortium, the U.S. in particular; and b) the security guarantees granted to France.

The Anglo-American bloc, according to *Le Monde*, has been a reality for 18 months—since the setting up of the Bi-zone (this is an exaggeration in our opinion)—and it is clear that France no longer commands the force necessary to oppose it. Under the Bi-zone's command are 40 million out of the 45 million inhabitants of Western Germany; it is the master of the Ruhr; and the rebuilding of France depends on the Marshall Plan, and hence on the United States."

On the other hand, to the fears expressed several times by Quai d'Orsay to the effect that setting up a Western German government might provoke a violent Russian reaction, Washington has replied by pointing out that the London agreement is one part of a whole series of interdependent agreements and adopted positions which form an indivisible whole—the Marshall Plan, the Five Power Pact, support extended to this pact by President Truman's March 12 speech and by the Vandenberg resolutions adopted May 20 by the Congressional Foreign Affairs Committee (*Le Monde*, June 5). In plain language, this means that France can get security guarantees only to the extent that she becomes a component part of Washington's European and world policies.

On the first point (made by *Le Monde*), all the pro-government newspapers in France, echoed this same argument that French resistance could only be in vain, and that in any case, it would not prevent the Anglo-Americans from proceeding further. This argumentation of the pro-"Third Force" press was necessary in order to counteract the propaganda of the opponents of government policy and in order to obtain the ratification of the London agreements by Parliament.

Who indeed is protesting against this policy which is being dictated to the French bourgeoisie by its actual position on the international chess-board? As we have already remarked, the protests come, on the one hand, from de Gaullists, and on the other, from the French Stalinists. Since they bear no governmental responsibility, and consequently run no risk of being subjected to an immediate test, both sides can boast of their ability to serve the French bourgeoisie by means of an international policy different from that of the existing government.

De Gaulle represents the ultra-nationalist aspect of

French international policy, which meets with approval among the most reactionary French bourgeois circles: The monopolists who fear American competition and dread lest the rebuilding of Germany, financed by Washington, will deprive them of their own base and their own markets;* the large-scale farmers of North Africa and Indo-China and the wealthy peasants. On the other hand, de Gaulle seeks his following among the petty bourgeoisie, who comprise the bulk of his troops and who are sensitive to slogans of imperial "grandeur" and of traditional hatred of the "Boche." His reactionary movement with its Fascist tendencies needs nationalist provender along with the illusion that France is still a great world power, guarding her empire and playing the leading role in continental Western Europe.

De Gaulle believed that by resisting America he would be able to bring her to entrust France rather than Germany with the pivotal position in European reconstruction, under Washington's control. That is why he withdrew for a while, assuming an attitude of haughty reserve toward the U.S. But when the conflict between the U.S. and the USSR became the dominant factor on the world arena and raised the specter of a dreaded advance by Moscow into the West and of a new world conflict, de Gaulle was, owing to France's extreme economic weakness, obliged in his turn to choose the American game and enter into it without reservations. He acclaimed the "strength" and "generosity" of the U.S., emphasized for his part the need of a Western European bloc, as a shield against new advances by the USSR and by "communism," and revised his policy toward Germany.

On this last point, he agreed to renounce his original proposal of separating the Ruhr and adopted instead the proposal to place it under "international" control. And in his recent Compiègne speech he, too, greeted, in his own fashion, the plan for Germany's entrance into the Western family. His current reservations concerning the decisions of the London Conference, and even his criticism, so bitter in its tone, do not alter the fact that in order to carry out a policy different from the one dictated by the Anglo-Americans it is necessary to have the means to implement it.

De Gaulle has now the choice between a policy of blind submission to Washington or of adopting an attitude of abstention and protest, which is, in no sense, a policy. Such an attitude can be of use to de Gaulle only as demagogic pap to feed his petty-bourgeois troops, so long as he finds himself in an opposition, but it will never serve him as a governmental program.

The position of the French Stalinists is symmetrical to that of de Gaulle, provided we always bear in mind that the Stalinists have the advantage of being the highest bidders. In fact, it was the Political Bureau of the French Communist Party which first raised a "solemn protest

* "A picture is being vigorously painted in Paris of the 'fearsome' character of an American proposal, which would, in effect, extend the projected control of the Ruhr to certain industrial networks in our own Lorraine (i.e. the French steel industry)."—From a leading article in the periodical *Une Semaine dans le Monde*, May 29.

against the policy of national default." (Report of the June 3 session, *l'Humanite*, June 4.) And in order to forestall de Gaulle from exploiting the issue, the Political Bureau recalls that this policy of "abandonment" is only a natural outgrowth of the "policy unceasingly defended by General de Gaulle." According to the French Stalinists, "national default" consists in the fact that the rebuilding of Germany is taking precedence over the rebuilding of France, and that the latter is abandoning reparations.

The anti-German attitude of the French Stalinists is in sharp contrast, but in form only, on the one hand, with the current policy of the Kremlin, which has become the champion of German unity and independence and which has Marshall Sokolovsky for its spokesman in Germany; and, on the other, with the policy of the German Stalinists. But this attitude of the French Stalinists serves exclusively for attacking the whole pro-American foreign policy of the French bourgeoisie. "A settlement of the German question in conformity with the interests of France implies necessarily a *total revision* of our country's foreign policy as a whole." (P. Courtade, *l'Humanite*, June 4.)

It would, in fact, be erroneous to believe that the opposition of the French Stalinist Party to the London decisions means that this party is wedded to the same views on the German question as those held by the French bourgeoisie concerning the Ruhr and the political regime for Germany. The Stalinist Party will in practice defend only the position defended by the USSR on these questions; its present opposition is kept deliberately vague and remains content with an anti-German attitude whereby it appeals to the nationalist sympathies of the urban and rural petty bourgeoisie. It is at bottom a demagogic and opportunistic attitude, completely subordinated to the current interests of Soviet foreign policy. Should an agreement be reached between the USSR and the United States on the German question, the French Stalinist Party would direct all its fire against the disrupters of "Allied agreement and solidarity," with the same fierce indignation it is evincing today against those responsible for "national default."

What Will Be France's Role?

Caught between American "generosity," as it has been so elegantly termed (that is to say, the indispensable Marshall Plan aid) and American "egoism" (that is to say, conditions attached to this aid, corresponding to the interests of Yankee imperialism), France is forced, in the final analysis, to accept American policy "as a whole," i.e., to capitulate all along the line. The blows dealt France by the last imperialist conflict have deprived her of any real basis for an international policy which can remain in the least independent.

Her main future preoccupation is to safeguard the remains of her empire, in order to still be able to appear as a great power and by means of super-exploitation of the colonies, to maintain the equilibrium of the mother country, to which is tied the very fate of the social regime of the French bourgeoisie. So far as her European policy is concerned, France can have no ambitions other than to

carve out the best possible share of American aid for herself and to secure the best possible position in "European reconstruction," under American control, in the expectation that the war against the USSR and the latter's defeat, which has been proclaimed as certain by all reactionaries, will open up better perspectives for her.

In the interval between the two wars, France played the role of policeman over Europe, in a large part for her own account. Today her ambitions do not transcend the role of mercenary in the service of so powerful a master as Yankee imperialism.

To fulfill this honorable mission, which serves at the same time to safeguard "law and order" at home and to impose obedience upon colonial slaves in revolt, France must maintain a powerful army. Required above all is an army of great manpower. Thus, of a total of 1,500,000 men, which the Western Bloc would have at its disposal, France has subscribed a "provisional" force of 757,000 men, which requires 310 billions of francs, that is to say, almost as much as the *deficit* of her national economy for the year 1948, and *more than the total American aid* for the same period. This is, moreover, equally true of the entire Western Bloc, whose military expenditures for 1948 amount to some 4,500 million dollars, or almost as much as the American aid.

By this we may measure the utter, monstrous absurdity of a reactionary social regime. But it is naturally utopian to expect the French bourgeoisie to listen to reason. In order to smash its policy on this question, as on others; in order to bring France out of the swamp of decay and mediocrity into which she is sinking deeper and deeper, nothing less than a revolution will avail. It is the revolution of the proletariat setting up its power by means of committees, following the immortal example of the Commune.

June 1948.

A NEW PAMPHLET — JUST OUT!

A Letter to American Negroes

by William E. Bohannon



● Born in Savannah, Georgia, William E. Bohannon moved with his family to Newark, N. J., when he was five years old.

● Bohannon has played a prominent role as a member or officer of both CIO and AFL unions. He is a member of the executive board of the Newark Branch of the NAACP and was one of the organizers of the Newark unit of the March on Washington movement.

● He is now the Socialist Workers Party candidate for Congressman from the 11th District in New Jersey in the November elections.

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Oil and Labor

By JOHN FREDERICKS

III. Role of the Trade Union

The article below, dealing with the role of the trade union in the oil industry, concludes the study of the oil industry. Part II, published last month, analyzed the economic structure of this industry, setting forth the case of Standard Oil Co. as a classic example of monopolization, with its concentration of capital and swollen profits. Especially noteworthy is the close alliance of Government and private industry in the formulation of oil policy. Part I of this study, published last May, was devoted to an analysis of the process of production in the oil industry.—Ed.

The centralization of the means of production is but one side of the coin; the other is the socialization of labor. In analyzing the role of the trade union we are confronted with three facets of the problem: 1. the Oil Workers International Union, CIO; 2. the "independent" union, and 3. the social conceptions of the oil worker.

1. OWIU-CIO

The history of the OWIU has yet to be recorded in all its stormy detail. From the facts available, the earliest efforts to organize the oil workers took place under IWW leadership through the Marine Transport Workers in Galveston, Texas. In the East, various crafts had been organized from the birth of the industry, such as carpenters, teamsters and construction workers, but there seems to have been no attempt to organize oil workers on an industrial scale until 1917.

At that time spontaneous action by oil workers in coastal gulf cities and in the new fields in California led to the establishment of the International Association of Oil Field, Gas Well and Refinery Workers of America, AFL (1918). At their first convention in El Paso, Texas (1918), the union had five locals in Texas and 16 others scattered through California, Louisiana and Oklahoma. The union reached a peak of membership in 1921 with 24,800 members as a result of organizing drives during and following World War I. However the anti-union wave that followed the war, and the inability of the AFL bureaucracy to combat it, reduced the union to a total membership of only 300 in 1933.

The CIO, only 2 years after the failure of the AFL, organized 42,800 workers. Following the general pattern of other CIO unions in the Rooseveltian era, the growth of the OWIU was rapid and in many respects haphazard. Its first constitution shows traces of radicalism as evidenced by numerous references to "class solidarity," "labor is entitled to the full product of its toil," and so on. But there is no doubt that in building the entire International union from raw material, untrained in the traditions of unionism, Rooseveltian conceptions gained great headway.

Contrary to legends of the backwardness of Southern workers, the oil workers in the South and the Mid-West showed little hesitancy in joining the union. One after another the big oil companies were brought to their knees and forced to sign union contracts.

The days of the Roosevelt administration, when a

union election could be obtained at the drop of a hat, and easy victories were possible under the Wagner Act, led the new union leadership to become soft and overconfident of government support in contract negotiations. Moreover, it is not unusual to find today's union president becoming tomorrow's plant superintendent, and vice versa.

The top International leadership is composed of "old timers" who have built a solid bureaucracy. The average union official and the hired hands of the International are usually "Johnny-come-lately's" in the union. These people understand nothing of the class forces behind a trade union. Inability to readily obtain company consent to a union election or to obtain formal recognition from the government and the operators is a signal for them to abandon the struggle and move elsewhere. The union leadership simply has no stomach for militant economic action, even with the unanimous backing of the rank and file.

Yet it was the "54-40 strike" of 60,000 workers in the oil industry after V-J Day that set the postwar strike ball rolling and established the 18½ cent wage pattern which was accepted by the rest of the CIO. Again in 1948, this time without a strike, the oil union has attempted to set a wage pattern lower than the goal set by the CIO, settling for 8%.

The union leadership inserted into its 1946 contract a provision for a sliding scale of wages to meet the increased cost of living, but the effect has been to use this clause to prevent strikes. The industry has been periodically granting increased wages to union and non-union employes indiscriminately, every three or six months.

2. The "Independent" Union

A notable exception to the organized shop—Standard Oil of N. J.—has been widely discussed in leading capitalist journals, such as *Fortune*, as the outstanding example of "industrial harmony." ("Thirty Years of Industrial Peace," *Fortune*, Nov. 1946.) It represents a curious anomaly and is in seeming contradiction to the value of unionism. Let us have a closer look.

The history of labor relations at Standard Oil stems back to the infamous Ludlow Massacre, which scared Rockefeller, Sr. into an attempt to prevent similar outbreaks. As the result of the experience in the Colorado Fuel and Iron Co. plan of employe representation, Rockefeller set up an employe representation plan at his Bayonne, N. J. refinery in 1918. The object was to prevent unionization of the workers by a real union. Whenever the bona-fide union in the field obtained better wages or conditions, the company union of Standard Oil met them and sometimes gave the workers even better conditions. This company union continued successfully from 1918 to 1934, when such company unions were declared illegal.

With the advent of the Wagner Act, the "unions" of Standard Oil were ordered to dissolve. After several quick changes in their constitutions and the holding of democratic elections, the Standard Oil unions passed muster as a genuine bargaining agency with the NLRB. However, each

unit of the company had its own union and in no two plants were the workers affiliated with each other.

The following is a picture of the situation in 1946:

55 "Independent" Unions	35,884 members
6 CIO locals	353 "
4 AFL locals	455 "
1 Railroad Brotherhood	30 "

The CIO locals operate in Montana refineries, in a coke plant in West Virginia and a bulk plant in Detroit. The AFL operates in the Baton Rouge plant but, as can be seen from the foregoing figures, almost all the workers voted for the "independent" union. The industrialists brag about this state of affairs as clear proof of the superiority of their type of "worker benefits" over "high dues" of the established trade unions. To believe the explanations and record in *Fortune*, they would seem to have an unbeatable plan. That 93% of their veterans returned to the company after military service is claimed by them as proof of the superiority of their system. Yet the hopes they nurse are illusory.

The attitude of the workers in the plants is of prime importance. They know that without the existence of the OWIU their standard of living would fall far below the average for the rest of industry.

Still, the very existence of the "independent" unions is a challenge to the trade union bureaucracy that they have as yet been unable to solve.

3. Social Conceptions of the Worker

A worker who has spent many years in the Texas oil fields and who is familiar with the industry in everyday life reports:

Working conditions in the oil refineries today are probably the best in the nation. This is caused by a number of things:

1) The refineries are almost completely automatic, not because the companies are interested in making things easier for the men, but because temperature control is of primary importance in making good petroleum products. Automatic instruments are the best means for doing this. The installation of instruments did not replace men but on the contrary created a need for more men with technical knowledge. Instruments fail quite frequently, especially during rain or electrical storms, and at such times it is of great importance to have plenty of trained men on the job who can detect the trouble immediately and correct it. An operator may not do anything for several years, but a moment's work at the right time will save the company enough money to pay his salary for thirty years. . . . With the new refineries comes the utilization of by-products, formerly considered waste. Increased knowledge of hydrocarbons and the utilization of butylene, formerly a nuisance, for synthetic rubber has greatly increased company profits.

2) The percentage of income going to the worker is the lowest in any industry—about 6%—while in the auto industry it is 45%.

3) The present tendency is to keep on hand a large "technical force." In many cases the refiners have a larger technical supervisory and foreman force than they have workers. There are many reasons for this. The company believes that a "title" will inspire the oil worker to think he is better than other workers and therefore "part of management." This lessens the interest of such workers in the problems of their class. The company can also maintain that

these workers do not come under the collective bargaining agreement. (Since oil refineries entail such technical work as is connected with automatic production, it is easy for management to maintain this fiction. The most recent trend has been to make stillmen* a part of management. Stillmen were for many years the backbone of the union and leaders of the community. Now as technical men and part of management they have no voice in the union, are on a monthly salary, and work many extra hours overtime without pay. The union leadership has failed to put up a real fight for these men or to counteract this type of union-busting up-grading.

4) Maintenance crews are much smaller than before. With increased technical knowledge the companies are going in for what is called preventive maintenance. Maintenance crews have been greatly reduced. The company is assisted in this process by the reactionary AFL craft union leadership. It has become the practice to hire AFL construction men to replace CIO maintenance men. The oil workers see their jobs being abolished with no protest by the CIO leadership and are consequently transferring to the AFL to keep their jobs. The AFL maintains closed-shop conditions for their men and hiring halls for building-trades workers. These circumstances divide the workers in the plants and impair their bargaining strength.

5) The unions maintain no educational system of any kind. The companies take advantage of this by having excellent propaganda departments of their own which point out the "advantages" of "free enterprise," and do their best to destroy the union.

6) It should be noted that the oil industry operates on a 24-hour basis. The bosses are notoriously averse to spending the wee hours on the job. Even among the lowest brackets of lieutenantcy of the boss class this aversion to night work is evident. As a result, during the best part of two shifts (16 hours) the control of the plant rests largely in the hands of its operators, "assisted" by supervisors who succumb to the general aversion and spend as much time as possible doing nothing. Since shift workers rotate, it thus comes to pass that practically all of the workers of a typical plant are used to the idea of operating the multimillion dollar plant without the tender ministrations of "supervisory personnel." The typical refinery (and the typical chemical plant) goes blithely on its way under the care of the workers regardless of the presence of bosses. Often the individual oil worker is quick to realize that both the supervisor and the absentee owner are of no practical value in the process of production, and he is not averse to making this observation out loud in more heated moments. It would be no trick at all to continue operation without the bosses and owners. The workers in the refineries and chemical plants of the South are aware of their power and, for one, wouldn't be surprised to find them among the leaders in the establishment of workers' councils at the proper moment.

* The work of an old-time stillman is described by Stuart Chase as follows:

A pressure still operated for 48 hours and then had to be cleaned out for the next run of product. When the temperature dropped to about 250°F a workman crawled inside, padded like an Eskimo, and with a big iron bar began to chip and scrape the tarry residue left on the bottom. A few hours later the still would have been cool enough for anyone to do the job, but empty stills make no money.

It is little wonder that these men who risked their lives every day inhaling poisonous fumes were the most oppressed, the most militant and the first to strike for more humane conditions of work.

Since most of the oil refineries are located in the South it is natural to expect that a large percentage of the workers in these plants would be Negroes. The Negro workers in this industry are subjected to the same degrading, discriminatory practices that are to be found in most other plants, plus those special discriminatory Jim-Crow practices that are reserved for Southern Negroes. Generally speaking they are relegated to the dirtiest, most menial tasks in the plant. Nevertheless the Negro worker is the most militant and best union member to be found in the plant. The union itself does not tolerate Jim-Crow practices.

As regards the stupid legends that gain wide circulation concerning the "backward character of Negroes" and the alleged likelihood of Negroes becoming strikebreakers, a white Southern oil worker makes the following comments:

I know of case after case wherein not only did the Negro not need white leadership, but actually led white workers in militant strike action. I can refer you to the organizing campaign of the Steelworkers at the American Rolling Mills in 1946, when the AFL crafts took over completely, except for the Negro group in the plant who held firm and eventually carried the plant for USA-CIO. Again, in the organizing drive of "Operation Dixie" at the Southern Acid and Sulphur Plant early in 1947, the unshakable bloc of CIO-committed Negroes broke the AFL counter-offensive to bits. In the defeat of the Steelworkers at the Hughes Tool Co. two years ago, the Negroes were the last hold-outs. Again in the creosote plants, now entering the OWIU fold in Houston, Texas, the Negroes were their own inspirers.

Two contradictory manifestations stand out in the foregoing reports. One, the reactionary conceptions of the labor bureaucracy, which, in this case, parallel those of the "independent" company-union men. The other—and of greater importance—is the advanced social conceptions with which the workers in a semi-automatic industry become imbued. As our worker-reporter revealingly puts it: *"Often the individual oil worker is quick to realize that both the supervisor and the absentee owner are of no practical value in the process of production, and he is not averse to making this observation out loud in more heated moments."*

In a critical situation this awareness of their power will readily lead to revolutionary action by the oil workers. What is going to be decisive in a big forward movement is not the backward section, but the most advanced group in this industry. Those who after V-J Day set the pattern for the entire labor movement will not buckle to the paternalistically-minded. On the contrary, it is they who will lead, while the latter will be those who follow in the general stream.

CONCLUSIONS

The discoveries in the oil industry point inescapably to vast changes in the social organization of labor. To give an example: As a small part of the problem of refining, the petroleum engineer was forced to develop an automatic oiling device which feeds any amount of oil to moving parts of machines. If this device, plus automatic oil controls already developed, were to be applied to the boiler room of an ocean-going liner, the need to employ a black gang would be almost eliminated. There is no engineering

reason why a gang of men should have to work below decks in the heat of the boiler room, oiling, wiping, firing boilers and such work. When oil industry machines and controllers are applied to the maritime industry, the black gang will be either forced out of the industry or shifted to fill a new role aboard ship. The lives of many thousands of workers will be involved.

The integration of separate industries, and with this the integration of the worker as a highly developed scientist of technology, is now concretely posed in the sphere of the relations between oil and the coal industries.

The known reserves of oil are limited. The industry has therefore constantly sought a substitute for crude oil. The desperate search of the Germans led them to develop a process for making gasoline and oil from coal. During World War II the Fischer-Tropsch process and the IG hydrogenation process were developed which successfully convert coal into gasoline and oil. These processes can utilize any type of coal, some of which were formerly of no commercial value. It also makes mechanical mining machines, that have heretofore been of little value, again profitable to operate. It makes possible the conversion of coal into powder at the mine face and blowing it to the surface through pneumatic tubes into a refinery located at the mine-mouth. The coal worker would then become an oil worker, or vice versa. The two would become interchangeable.

Yet the interchangeable relationships of coal and oil remain pipe-dreams. That is not because many millions of dollars' worth of new plants employing these ideas are not now on drafting boards. They are. The practical processes are already known and patented. A \$300,000 plant of this type based on the Fischer-Tropsch process is being constructed now by Standard Oil Co. \$40,000,000 are invested in the IG hydrogenation processes. The relationships of production, the role of the millions of workers in oil, coal, electric power, railroads, are yet to be developed. Yet when these relationships do take form, it will be as the result of the form assumed by the process of production. What is needed to realize automatic production is well developed and all-rounded individuals who understand the science of this process of production.

The most finished expression of this technological movement so far is the unleashing of atomic energy. The profound technological revolution embodied in these chemical industries is sufficiently, though not by any means completely, indicated in the fact that they are taking place in the basic sphere of the production of power. Synthetic though these industries are, raw materials, such as the oil itself, or uranium in the production of atomic energy, assume an importance which does not lessen but greatly intensifies the struggle for control of the world. At the same time, as oil indicates with extreme clarity, the role the proletariat will have to play in these industries, the insoluble class conflicts in the coal industry, for example, in the United States and in reality all over the world, show that the reorganization of this industry in harmony with the new discoveries, while offering one way out for the growing revolt against wage labor in the mines, is utterly beyond bourgeois society. The threat of disruption by oil hangs over the coal industry. To the limited extent that

the bourgeoisie does attempt reorganization or coordination it is compelled to sharpen the differentiation among the strata of labor in the industry, creating privileged technological castes, while the state intervenes more and more to enclose the masses of the workers in a totalitarian vise.

The labor struggles in the atomic energy plants are sufficient evidence of this. Tomorrow, as the social crisis and the war crisis deepen, the workers in the all-important oil industry will be threatened with a similar regimentation. Precisely because the structure of the coal industry does not permit the regimentation inherent in the capitalistic control of oil and atomic energy, great battles in the coal industry between the proletariat and the state continue. Meanwhile even within the limited reorganizations possible to the bourgeoisie, the workers are continually faced with new problems as old job classifications are abolished, new ones established.

"The bourgeoisie cannot exist," wrote Marx and Engels a century ago, "without constantly revolutionizing the instruments of production, and thereby the relations of production, and with them the whole relations of society. Conservation of the old modes of production in unaltered form, was, on the contrary, the first condition of existence for all earlier industrial classes. Constant revolutionizing of production, uninterrupted disturbances of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distin-

guish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones. All fixed, fast frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses his real conditions of life and his relations with his kind."

Marx attached great importance to this passage which first appeared in the *Communist Manifesto* and which he quoted in one of the most important sections of *Capital*. The oil industry, as one of the most advanced industries of the modern world, illustrates with unusual richness and concreteness this characteristic of bourgeois society at the stage of the immense antagonisms and contradictions which mark the ripeness for transition to socialist society. The old struggle for "higher wages" and "improved working conditions" tend to assume a new quality from within the very process of production itself. Like the problem of inflation, they become insoluble in the purely economic field of wage and price discussions and demands. The workers face either a desperate attempt of the bourgeoisie to solve these problems and discipline labor by the police-state and the machine gun in the factory or an effort by themselves to organize the proletarian state and the proletarian control and management of industry. The one method leads to barbarism, the other to socialism.

April 15, 1948.

Stalinists Falsify Marxism Anew

State of Teaching Marxism in the Soviet Union

By F. FOREST

World War II took a heavy toll of men and materials in the Soviet Union. Exacting intolerable sacrifices from the Russian proletariat in order to rebuild the devastated country, the Kremlin bureaucracy seeks through terror and persecution to maintain its power. It must do so without bringing down upon itself the wrath of the Russian masses. This is a constant nightmare to the bureaucracy. It is in desperate need of an ideology that will help keep the masses in submission. Hence it has been systematically seeking to falsify and undermine every tenet of Marxism, the theoretical weapon for revolutionary practice. The basis of this was laid long ago with Stalin's promulgation of the theory of "socialism in one country."

But until 1943, the year the Soviet press hailed as "the year of the great conversion to the conveyor-belt system," not even the totalitarian Stalinist bureaucracy dared lay hands openly on Marx's *Capital*. In that year, however, there was published in the country's chief theoretical journal an obscurely entitled article, "Some Questions of Teaching Political Economy." (*Under the Banner of Marxism*, Nos. 7-8, 1943. All quotations in the text for which no source is cited are taken from this article. The magazine has since ceased publication, but in 1944 this article was issued as a separate pamphlet under the

title, *Political Economy in the Soviet Union*, International Publishers.) This article initiated a new cycle in the Stalinist revision and falsification of Marxism.

The article caused a sensation in the European and American press because, reversing the traditional Marxist conception that the law of value is in the last analysis the dominant economic law of capitalist society, it claimed that the law of value also functioned "under socialism." To support this new anti-Marxist theory, the author was driven inescapably to undermine the old foundation, viz., the structure and content of Marx's *Capital*. The article is unsigned, but it bears the stylistic imprint of A. Leontiev, one of the editors of *Under the Banner of Marxism*. This gains further confirmation with the publication of a new pamphlet by A. Leontiev, entitled *Marx's Capital*, which repeats, practically word for word, the attack on the structure of *Capital* contained in the article under discussion. The establishment of the authorship of the article is, however, an entirely incidental matter since the views expressed are not those of an individual author, but the viewpoint of the Kremlin bureaucracy, with Stalin at its head.

Leontiev asserts that Soviet teachers have erred in constructing their courses on political economy "as a simple

copy of the structure of *Capital*." This, according to Leontiev, (1) violated "the historical principle," and (2) was "harmful pedantry." Obviously, it was not the *teaching*, but the *political economy* taught, that was under attack here.

I. The Structure of Capital

1. "The Historical Principle"

To justify this latest assignment to Soviet teachers to violate the structure of Marx's *Capital*, the Kremlin theoretician elaborates the following thesis:

The sequence that Marx follows in his exposition of problems in *Capital* is a natural consequence of the fact that he was blazing new trails in a science in which his aim was to reconstruct the science of political economy. But it is wholly obvious that in studying the fundamentals of this science and particularly so in mastering an elementary course, it is impossible entirely to preserve a logical order: this would be harmful pedantry and opposed to the necessity of teaching political economy as a general historical science.

Presumably Marx wrote *Capital* as he did because Marx was just a trail-blazer, and not because *capitalism* was as it was and continues to be, a class society. Presumably Marx wrote *Capital* not as a *critique* of political economy but as a contribution to a "reconstructed" political economy.

Leontiev dares to base his conception of a political economy as a "general" historical science on a statement from Engels, to the effect that "in the *widest* sense" (my emphasis — F.F.) political economy is "the science of the laws which govern the production and exchange of the material means of livelihood in human society." Leontiev, however, has evaded the essence of the quotation on that very page which Engels aimed precisely against the Leontievs of his own day:

Whoever wishes to bring the political economy of Patagonia under the same laws as those of modern England would, in so doing, obviously bring to light nothing but the most banal commonplaces. [Herr Eugen Dühring's *Revolution in Science, Anti-Dühring*) Chas. H. Kerr & Co., 1935, p. 148.]

In any case, Marx's *Capital* is not a study of political economy "in the widest sense." It is an analysis of the *capitalist* mode of production and *its* mode of thought. It is an analysis of no other system. Marx, in a single phrase, separated himself from all political economy by subtitled *Capital*, "A Critique of Political Economy." Marx demonstrated thereby his determination to destroy the very foundations of political economy—the capitalist mode of production. Leontiev's attempt to transform political economy into a "general historic science," on the other hand, compels him to place upon the proletarian revolutionist Marx the bourgeois task "to reconstruct the science of political economy."

2. The Commodity

Leontiev cannot but concede the indisputable fact that Marx begins his work with an analysis of a commodity. But, argues Leontiev, "if we teach political economy ac-

ording to the historical principle, it is necessary to consider such categories as commodities and money not only in the section devoted to capitalism, but also in the preceding parts of the course." And, of course, if a commodity can be "considered" in courses dealing with pre-capitalist societies, why not for post-capitalist societies? In brief, by means of his newly-conditioned "historical principle," the Stalinist falsifier seeks to divest the commodity of what Engels called its "particular distinctness," and to transform it from a *class* phenomenon to a phenomenon common to all societies. Thereby Leontiev has once again enthroned the commodity and with it the fetishism whereby the relations between human beings "assume the fantastic form of relations between things." The relation between workers and capitalists can thus be made to appear as the mere exchange of one commodity—money, for another—labor power, and not as it really is—a social relation between classes.

Marx, on the other hand, by beginning his analysis of capitalist production with an analysis of what he called "the economic cell-form" of capitalist wealth, was able to bring out most clearly the fetishism inherent in the commodity:

A commodity is therefore a mysterious thing, simply because in it the social character of men's labor appears to them as an objective character stamped upon the product of that labor; because the relations of the producers to the sum total of their own labor is presented to them as a social relation, existing not between themselves, but between the products of their labor. (*Capital*, Vol. I, p. 83.)

Marx proceeds, first, to reveal that the twofold character of the commodity—its use value and exchange value—arises from the nature of the human activity involved—abstract labor and concrete labor. This, writes Marx categorically, "is the pivot on which a clear comprehension of political economy turns." (*Ibid*, p. 48.) Then, with broad historic strokes, Marx traces the development of the commodity from the stage when it makes its first appearance—the surplus of primitive communes—to the highest stage, its "classic form," under capitalism. Thereby he makes abundantly clear that the law of value cannot apply until abstract labor has been developed. The labor process of capital, wherein surplus value is extracted, is, of course, the essence of capitalist production, as it is of Marx's work. But capitalist production and capitalist theory is based upon the *historical* transformation of labor into a commodity.

Therefore, when Leontiev says that "This *exposition* (the exposition of a commodity) serves him (Marx) as the necessary prerequisite for the discovery of the secret of surplus value, which is involved in the transformation of labor power into a commodity," he is turning Marx on his head. It was the transformation of labor power into a commodity and into abstract labor which made possible the production of surplus value. Marx's exposition is based upon this historic development. Not *vice versa*.

3. History and Logic

It is generally known that the structure of Marx's greatest work was not fixed from the beginning. From

the publication of the *Critique of Political Economy*, the first version of *Capital*, in 1859, to the French edition of *Capital* in 1875, Marx had many times, as he put it, "to turn everything around." Marx continued to work on *Capital* till his death and the fourth, the German edition, includes changes he made in 1883, but no major modifications were introduced in the first volume after the French edition. And the one thing that remained unchanged in all versions of *Capital* is this, that they all began with the analysis of the commodity.

Eight years after the death of Marx, Engels analyzed what Adoratsky called "that form of presentation which most clearly reflected the dialectical content of this, the chief work of Marxism." (*The Correspondence of Marx and Engels*, ed. by Adoratsky, International Publishers, 1934, p. 110.) Here is how Engels then explained the structure of *Capital*:

If you just compare the development of the commodity into capital, in Marx, with the development from Being to Essence in Hegel, you will get quite a good parallel for the concrete development which results from the facts. (*Ibid.* p. 495.)

Thus, far from breaking with history, the structure of *Capital* is deeply rooted in history. In the dialectical materialism of Marx there is no contradiction between the historical and logical method of treatment. In the structure of *Capital* is reflected a historical development, a specific historic epoch. Capital is the product of historical evolution, and, whenever Marx viewed any aspect of capitalism as a logical abstraction, he constantly checked and rechecked and illustrated the corresponding economic category by the facts of its historical development.

Leontiev, on the other hand, introduces "the historical principle" only in order to rob the commodity of its class content and clothe it in "general historic" garb. The compelling force here is the need to falsify the Marxist analysis of the law of value. Since Marx's entire analysis is rooted in capitalist relations of production, the Stalinist theoretician would be unable to maintain that the law of value functions in the Soviet Union without "revising" the Kremlin's claim, that the Soviet Union is a land where socialism is "irrevocably established." He must either do this or else he must revise the concept that the law of value is dominant in capitalist society alone. There are good and sufficient reasons why the Stalinist hack preferred the latter course. But to accomplish this feat of distortion, Marx's analysis of a commodity had to be "revised," and with it the structure of *Capital*,

II. The Law of Value

1. The Dual Character of Labor

The break with the structure of Marx's *Capital* lays the theoretical groundwork for a complete revision of Marxist economic theory, but the new edifice still remains to be constructed. It is no simple matter to extend the operation of the law of value to a "socialist" society. So solid was the structure Marx had built to prove the opposite that no one—not even the all-powerful *Polburo*

of the Russian Communist Party—could merely circumvent what Marx called his major original contribution: the analysis of the twofold character of labor. Nor could the Stalinist henchman, Leontiev, reconcile his admission that labor in the Soviet Union bears a dual character with the claim that all capitalist relations had been eradicated in the USSR. The central point of Marx's critique of political economy is contained precisely in Marx's exposure of its failure to see exploitation, although it had discovered that labor was the source of all value. Ricardo, Marx had written,

... sees only the quantitative determination of exchange value, that is, that it is equal to a definite quantity of labor time; but he forgets the qualitative determination, that individual labor must by means of its alienation be presented in the form of abstract, universal, social labor. (*Theories of Surplus Value*, Rus. ed., Vol. II, 2, pp. 183-4.)

The qualitative determination of labor is the *exploitative* relation. By laying this bare, Marx revealed also how the law of value is, in reality, the law of surplus value. The Leontiev of the pre-1943 vintage, summed this up well enough when he wrote:

The Marxist doctrine of surplus value is based, as we have seen, on this teaching of value. That is why it is important to keep the teaching of value, free from all distortions because the theory of exploitation is built on it. (*Political Economy, A Beginner's Course*, International Publishers, 1935, p. 88.)

2. Leontiev Discovers a New Duality

Not even the Leontiev of 1943 can deny the exploitative nature of the dual character of labor. But he attempts to argue that whereas this is true "under capitalism," it does not hold "under socialism," where:

... this dual character of labor is no longer linked with the contradiction between private and social labor which is characteristic of commodity production on the basis of private property. Under capitalism the right of the producer to property in the products of his labor is replaced, as a result of the force of the laws of capitalist production, by the right of the capitalist to appropriate the product of alien, unpaid labor. In socialist society, all labor useful to society is rewarded by society.

It is easy to see why Leontiev would like to hide Part I of *Capital* from the eyes of the Russian workers. He wishes to screen social relations behind the fetishism of commodities. It is thus that he "discovers" that, regardless of the dual character of labor, *all* labor "useful" to society is properly "rewarded." This quagmire of Stalinist falsifications becomes the basis for inventing a "duality" between "labor useful to society" as opposed to labor "useless to society."

It is clear that Leontiev acted as he did not because he "willed" it. As a servant of the Kremlin bureaucracy, fearful of the wrath of the Russian workers, he could not do as Marx did—leave the market and follow the worker into the factory. It was there that Marx saw that not only are the commodities the laborer produces alienated from him, but so is his very activity. This being so, it became the basis of Marx's original contribution to political economy:

the analysis of the dual character of labor, which arises in the sphere of production, not in the sphere of distribution. Leontiev, on the other hand, who has remained in the market not by accident, is now prepared to replace the duality between concrete and abstract labor by another: the "duality" between "labor useful to society" as opposed to labor "useless to society." The Stalinist hack tries to tell us that *because* "all labor useful to society is rewarded by society," it therefore follows that:

Hence there is abolished that characteristic of commodity production by which labor spent on the production of useful objects may prove useless to society, labor which finds no social recognition because the commodity it produced remains unsold.

Leontiev's tortuous attempts to resolve the irresolvable contradiction between his admission that labor in the Soviet Union bears a dual character and his claim that all capitalist relations have been eradicated, has ended, of necessity, in his abandonment of the Marxist analysis of the dual character of labor.

3. "Distribution According to Labor"

The method by which Leontiev seeks to revise the Marxist analysis of the dual character of labor is the same method by which Stalin, as far back as 1930, sought to falsify the Marxian analysis of expanded reproduction. (Cf. Trotsky's "Stalin as a Theoretician." His new "revisionism," Leontiev clothes in a formula culled from the Stalinist Constitution of 1936: "*distribution according to labor.*" Leontiev apparently believes that by employing this phrase he has succeeded in translating the law of value into a function of socialism.

At the same time this Stalinist "theoretician" rejects the formula that has always stood in Marxist theory for socialism and the abrogation of the law of value: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his need." Moreover, *Under the Banner of Marxism* also rejects as inapplicable to the land where socialism has been "irrevocably established" the Marxist formula applicable to countries "*just emerging from the womb of capitalism:*" payment according to "the natural measure of labor"—*time*. Finally, the author makes clear that the money which is the medium of payment for labor is not some scrip notes, but money as the measure of value: "labor continues to be the measure in economic life." Thus, by the time Leontiev has wound up the argument for the Stalinist "socialist principle" of "distribution according to labor," that formula has every outward appearance of payment of labor—as of any other commodity—at value, a basic manifestation of the dominance of the law of value under capitalism.

Leontiev's attempt to extricate himself from what logically flows from his own argumentation further deepens the self-contradictions in which he is immersed. Just as previously he tried to smooth his path toward breaking with the structure of *Capital* by defining political economy as a "general historic science," so now Leontiev tries to erect a bridge toward the Stalinist falsehood contained in the assertion that the law of value functions

"under socialism." He begins with a broad generalization to the effect that "there can be no scientific knowledge if one recognizes no laws." He then goes on: "In reality it is an elementary truth that a society, whatever its form, develops in accordance with definite laws which are based on objective necessity. This objective necessity manifests itself differently under different forms of society." From this generalization Leontiev then leaps to the following anti-Marxist conclusion:

Thus we see that there is no basis for considering that the law of value is abrogated in the socialist system of society. On the contrary, it functions under socialism, but it functions in a transformed manner. Under capitalism the law of value leads inevitably to the rise and development inevitably linked with the destruction of productive forces, with crises, with anarchy of production. Under socialism it acts as a law consciously applied by the Soviet state under conditions of the planned administration of the national economy, under the conditions of the development of an economy free from crises. . . Under the domination of private property in the means of production, operation of the law of value leads inevitably to the rise and development of capitalist exploitation; in a socialist society the rise of exploitation is blocked by the domination of the socialist property in the means of production.

Leontiev apparently believes that the words, "under socialism," suffice to clothe in socialist raiment the dominant economic law of capitalism.

4. Theories of Value

In his attempt to lift the theory of value out of its capitalist context and transform it into a "universal theory of value" Leontiev at one and the same time asserts that the law of value functions "under socialism" and also that it functioned in pre-capitalist societies. A basis for this is laid by Leontiev not only in his article, "Some Questions of Teaching Political Economy," but also in his pamphlet, *Marx's Capital*, where he tries to prove "the historical emergence of value in deep antiquity." The authorship of this new theory Leontiev modestly ascribes to Engels.

In the book, *Engels on Capital*, published in 1937, there is a little essay in which Engels develops a statement of Marx. This is to the effect that the lower the stage of civilization the closer do prices approximate values, the higher the stage, the more indirect the approximation. In that limited sense* of the relationship of value to price, Engels shows how effectively the law of value functioned in the pre-capitalist period. Leontiev is suddenly full of praise for Engels:

Engels' article on the law of value and the rate of profit, besides being an important supplement to the third volume

*And only in that limited sense since Marx had been most explicit in his expose of Adam Smith's error in considering that the law of value functioned "purest" under simple commodity production. Adam Smith fell into this error, explains Marx, "because he had abstracted [the law of value] from capitalistic production and precisely because of this it appears as if it were invalid." (*Theories of Surplus Value*, Rus. ed., Vol. III, 3, p. 55.)

of *Capital*, is of great value for the understanding of the economic theory of Marxism as a whole.

This "Marxism as a whole" the Leontiev of the pre-1943 vintage interpreted very differently, and precisely in his own introduction to this same essay of Engels:

Whereas at the hands of the Social-Democratic theoreticians of the epoch of the Second International, the categories of value, money, surplus value, etc., have a fatal tendency to become transformed into disembodied abstractions inhabiting the sphere of exchange and far removed from the conditions of the revolutionary struggles of the proletariat, Engels shows the most intimate, indissoluble connection these categories have with the relation between classes in the process of material production, with the aggravation of class contradictions, with the inevitability of the proletarian revolution. (This introduction by Leontiev appears in the Russian edition only, *O Kapitale Marksa*, published by the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute under the supervision of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party, 1937.)

Now the Stalinists were not the first to try to extend the operation of the law of value to "the socialist state of Marx." The bourgeois economist, Adolph Wagner, tried to do the same thing in 1883. In no uncertain terms Marx castigated "the presupposition that the theory of value developed for the explanation of bourgeois society, has validity for the 'socialist state of Marx'." Marx reiterated: "...in the *analysis* of value I had in view bourgeois relations and not the application of this theory of value to a 'socialist state'." (*Archives of Marx-Engels*, Rus. ed., Vol. V, p.59.)

This is the last writing we have from Marx's pen. Engels continued Marx's work, criticizing the then Marxist disciple Kautsky for treating value in a "Kantian manner":

Value is a category characteristic only of commodity production, and just as it did not exist prior to commodity production, so it will disappear with the abolition of commodity production. (*Collected Works of Marx-Engels*, Rus. ed., Vol. XXVII, p. 386. No English translation is available.)

Precisely. No one could possibly attribute to Engels a view of value other than that held by Marx. In *Anti-Duebring*, written in collaboration with Marx, Engels argued that it would be sheer absurdity "to set up a society in which at last the producers control their products by the logical application of an economic category (value) which is the most comprehensive expression of the subjection of the producers by their own product." (*Op. cit.*, p.347)

The whole elaborate structure that the Stalinist henchman tries to erect crumbles under the impact of the heavy blows Marx and Engels dealt in their own day to all other theories of value.

"Of course it would be an absurd and scholastic approach," Leontiev states suddenly, "to presume that Marx and Engels could foresee and foretell the concrete, practical way to employ the law of value in the interests of socialism." It could have been foreseen "neither by Marx nor even by Lenin." (My emphasis — F.F.)

Only "the genius of Stalin," continues the Stalinist hireling, could work out the application of the law of value

to a "socialist society." This, we are told bombastically, opens a new stage of "Marxist-Leninist economics":

The assertions of Stalin on the fate of economic categories of capitalism under conditions of socialist society are theoretic generalizations from the magnificent experience of socialist construction in the USSR and signify a new stage in development of the science of Marxist-Leninist economics. These statements are among the most important principles of the political economy of socialism created by Comrade Stalin.

The only truth in this statement is that "the political economy of socialism" is wholly an invention of Stalin, and his corrupt henchmen.

III. Dialectical Philosophy, Kremlin Style

1. Soviet Reality

Not the niceties of pedagogy but the pressing needs of the Soviet economy made necessary the revision of the law of value in the Marxist sense. Not by accident the crowning achievement of this revision came with the promulgation of the Fourth Five-Year Plan, which was openly based on "the use of the law of value."

To "make use of the law of value" meant the conscious subordination to the force of this law. How seriously this task was executed by the Soviet intelligentsia can be seen from a lecture on "The Time Factor in the Matter of Capital Investment" that Academician Strumilin delivered to the learned council of the Institute of Economics of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR. If "a high rate of socialist accumulation" is to be achieved, states Strumilin, it will be necessary to consider not merely "prime cost" but "full cost":

In order to change from "prime cost" to full cost of the projected articles and their production, it is necessary therefore first of all to add to the paid share of labor that of its share which is reserved as a matter of planned accumulation. (*Bulletin of the Institute of Economics, Academy of the USSR*, No. 3, 1946. Emphasis in original.)

With this as a basis, Strumilin proceeds to calculate the relationship of dead to living labor, of capital investment to rate of profit, thus achieving statistical measurement for calculating the rate of "socialist accumulation" which could be the envy of any bourgeois economist.

Ever since the outbreak of World War II the Kremlin bureaucracy has tried to raise *per capita* production through the institution of what it has dared to call "socialist emulation." This new competition between *factories* has supplemented Stakhanovism, or competition between *individual* workers. The totalitarian bureaucracy is attempting to make the maximum speed of production of an individual Stakhanovite into the norm for *all* workers, factory by factory. This has only deepened the conflict between the Stalinist regime and the Russian masses. The need arose for a new ideology to discipline the Russian proletariat. The attempt to undermine and falsify every tenet of Marxism was the result.

2. The New Phase of Falsifications

The new phase of falsifications gained a momentum of its own and could not stop half-way. The very logic of

the break with the structure of *Capital* compelled the falsification of its content as well. The next inevitable stage was to distort the significance of Marx's immortal work. It was no longer to be considered the basic work of *Marxism*, but only of *Marx*; here "the historical principle" was applied to show that *Capital* was the greatest work up to Lenin and Stalin." (*About the Preliminary Variant of Marx's Capital*, p. 4. My emphasis—F.F.) This new pamphlet by Leontiev was published in Russian by the Academy of Sciences of the USSR in 1946, one year after the appearance of Leontiev's pamphlet, *Marx's Capital*, and three years after the publication of "Some Questions of Teaching Political Economy." But the sequence did not reach its culminating point until the revision had been extended to the philosophy of Marxism itself. Once the Stalinist bureaucracy laid its brutal hands on *Capital*, it of necessity had to intensify its falsifications of dialectical materialism itself.

If a "revision" of Marxist analysis of the law of value was made imperative by the functioning of the Soviet "socialist" economy, the arbitrariness of bureaucratic planning demanded as imperatively the discovery of a "new dialectical law." There was no way out of the impasse except through the endowment of "criticism and self-criticism" with supernatural powers. This was the compelling reason why the Secretary of the Central Committee donned the mantle of philosopher, and no Soviet philosopher missed the significance of Zhdanov's appearance at their conference in June 1947.

3. "A New Dialectical Law"

Zhdanov spoke with the authority of the *Polburo* when he assigned the "philosophic workers" their new task. This consisted in asking them to find nothing less miraculous than "a new dialectical law," one that was "free of antagonisms." The key passage in Zhdanov's speech is worth quoting in full:

In our Soviet society where antagonistic classes have been liquidated, the struggle between the old and the new, consequently, the development from the lower to the higher, takes place, not in the form of a struggle of antagonistic classes and cataclysms, as it does under capitalism, but in the form of criticism and self-criticism, which is the genuine motive force of our development, the powerful instrument in the hands of the party. This is without doubt a new form of movement, a new type of development, a new dialectical law. (Published in Russian in *Questions of Philosophy*, No. 1, 1947; also in *Bolshevik*, No. 16, Aug. 30, 1947. English translation is available in the April 1948 issue of *Political Affairs*.)

With the demand for a theory of value that was not at the same time a theory of surplus value, the Stalinists tried to divest the labor theory of value of its class content. With the demand for a new dialectical law free of contradictions, they seek to make, not the masses, but the totalitarian bureaucracy ("the critics"), the driving force of history. Idealism has thus been enthroned in the Kremlin, and scientific socialism reduced to the petty-bourgeois socialism of a Proudhon. Perhaps the best way to describe the vulgar thinking of the Stalinist bureaucracy is to

quote what Marx said of Proudhon's way of thinking a full century ago:

In place of the great historic movement arising from the conflict between the productive forces already acquired by men and their social relations, which no longer correspond to these productive forces; . . . in place of practical and violent action of the masses by which alone these conflicts can be resolved — in place of this vast prolonged and complicated movement, Monsieur Proudhon supplies the evacuating motion of his own head. (*Marx-Engels Correspondence*, p. 16.)

4. Soviet Philosophy and Soviet Reality

The destruction of the warp and woof of historical materialism was made necessary by the very depth of the Soviet crisis. At the very time of Zhdanov's appearance among the learned philosophers, there was published in the Soviet Union a new book by the Chairman of the State Planning Commission, Voznessensky, entitled *The War Economy of the USSR during the Period of the Patriotic War*.

This work is not merely a description of the Soviet war economy, but it is the legal code promulgated by the Stalinist bureaucracy for the development of the post-war economy. It is at the same time an unconscious admission that the bureaucracy has failed to raise the productivity of labor to the level needed "to catch up with" capitalism, let alone achieve the transition to "communism."

The bureaucracy is attempting to resolve the deepening contradictions of the Soviet economy in its usual manner—through bureaucratic stifling of mass initiative. But this is a double-edged sword. It is true that it is two decades now since the Russian workers have had any control over the Plan. But while this has increased the bureaucracy's stranglehold of the worker, it has also deprived the bureaucracy of any of the practical experience of the workers at the point of production. The Plan has long been executed without the benefit of the old Workers Conflict Commission, abolished in 1940, but in recent times all previous limits of arbitrariness have been surpassed. The top Planning Commission sets up the plan, and the workers have nothing to do but follow orders. But the complete divorce between the masses and Stalinist state represented by this stage of bureaucratic planning means also the complete loss of objectivity for the planners, and the Soviet economy keeps staggering from one crisis to another. At the same time purges continue in every sphere: economic, political, philosophic, literary, scientific, pedagogic and artistic.

The cycle of falsification begun in 1943 has reached its culminating point. Marx used to say of classical political economy: for it there *was* history, but there is no history any longer. Of the Soviet bureaucracy it may be said: for it there *once was* revolution, but now there is only "criticism and self-criticism." This criticism and self-criticism manifest themselves as purges, more purges, and still more purges. In this sense, the theoretical thinking of the Stalinist bureaucracy has been reduced to what Trotsky once called "the empiricism of a machine gun."

September 1948.

France Heads Toward a Decision

By E. Germain

With the international and French bourgeoisie having shifted abruptly in favor of completely supporting de Gaulle's movement, and with the Stalinists systematically stifling the workers' will to struggle, we are today rapidly approaching a decisive turn in the French situation.

Such a turn began shaping up with the fall of the Marie government which entailed the liquidation of Paul Reynaud's "plan of financial rehabilitation."

Why Did the French Bourgeoisie Change Its Policy?

The Reynaud plan had been looked upon by the French bourgeoisie as a whole as the last opportunity for solving the immediate economic difficulties within the constitutional framework under the government of the "Third Force" (the reformists plus the bourgeois center parties). This plan corresponded to the new needs which have been systematically replacing the old economic difficulties of French capitalism. Three years ago, the French economic crisis was a function of extreme underproduction, acute scarcity of consumer goods and a chronic lack of raw materials. Today the self-same basic illness—the senility of the capitalist order in France—assumes new forms: a commercial crisis, piling up of goods, flight of capital, export difficulties because production costs are far above those of competitors disposing of a more modern productive apparatus, the USA, Great Britain, Canada and even Belgium.

The needs of the bourgeoisie are consequently summed up in the demand for RATIONALIZATION. This means: balancing the budget by eliminating expenditures for nationalized industries and for social security; cutting production costs and speeding up the reequipment of industry by lengthening the work-week, that is to say, by intensifying the super-exploitation of labor-power; "inspiring new confidence in the currency" by slashing the taxes upon rich peasants and the big bourgeoisie in order to halt the flight of capital.

This program also received the enthusiastic backing of American imperialism which was by no means desirous of investing its Marshall Plan billions in an already bankrupt enterprise. "To rationalize and render profitable capitalist France"—this was the program, this was the focal point of the interests of the bourgeoisie, of the well-to-do middle-class layers, of their Yankee "protector" and of all the conservative political groupings from the MRP to the de Gaullists.

DeGaulle's "Public Salvation" Campaign

General de Gaulle offered no opposition whatever to the Reynaud plan. His attack centered solely on Reynaud's personal participation in the government of Andre Marie, because, according to de Gaulle, Reynaud in this way contributed to "gilding the coat of arms of a dying

regime." At the same time this would-be Bonaparte prepared a huge publicity campaign eloquently entitled, "For Public Salvation." The significance of this campaign was clear: De Gaulle was telling the bourgeoisie that the economic program advanced by Reynaud could never be realized within the constitutional framework through a coalition of parliamentary parties; but that, on the contrary, it demanded the reinforcement of the authority of the State, that is to say, the installation of de Gaullist semi-dictatorship. De Gaulle's campaign was an invitation to the bourgeoisie to leave his hands free for the creation of political and social conditions necessary for realizing the program of capitalist salvation.

So long as Reynaud appeared to be able to impose his solutions by parliamentary means, the bourgeoisie hesitated to come out openly in support of de Gaulle and to incur the costs of a constitutional crisis. But the working class began seething, becoming more and more intensely agitated against the Reynaud plan, which was a plan of working class misery. This agitation led to a powerful resurgence of united working class action, with the split-off reformist trade unions of *Force Ouvriere* being drawn into opposition to the Reynaud plan by the irresistible tide of labor discontent. The pressure from below inside the *Force Ouvriere* has been so strong that the reformist chieftains found themselves compelled to take an ever more critical attitude toward Reynaud. The unity of the coalition Cabinet was thereby disrupted. Marie offered his resignation to the President of the Republic and a protracted governmental crisis ensued, demonstrating, especially after the swift downfall of the second Schumann government, the impossibility of continuing the "Third Force" coalition under the existing relation of forces.

The Bourgeoisie Goes Over to DeGaulle

At the very time when this series of governmental crises was taking place, de Gaulle was in the process of executing the first phase of his "public salvation" campaign. He undertook a grand tour of public meetings in Southern France and Corsica. At Nice he issued for the first time the cry: "We are marching to power!" It was not a chance remark. During the fortnight which elapsed between the abandonment of the Reynaud plan and the downfall of Schumann's government, the entire public opinion of the bourgeoisie went over, bag and baggage, into the General's camp. *Le Monde* and *Le Figaro*, the two semi-official organs of the bourgeoisie who had previously maintained a slightly ironical and disapproving attitude to the General, suddenly began to sing his praises. *The New York Herald-Tribune* analyzed de Gaulle's chances of seizing power at once. The moderate conservative Swiss weekly *Die Weltwoche* expressed the hope that de Gaulle would be able to come to power immediately and with a minimum of trouble; six months

ago this same weekly had been violently attacking the de Gaullist movement. For any attentive observer there can be no doubt that the bourgeoisie has decided to back to the limit the pretensions of the General.

Queuille's government today is generally considered, by analogy with the German events of 1932, as a "Von Papen government," secretly supported and at the same time undermined by the de Gaullists, and designed to assure the legal passage of power to de Gaulle. This legal transfer is of utmost importance to the bourgeoisie. They understand only too well that the slightest provocation in the streets can still produce a powerful upsurge of working class resistance, which must be avoided at all costs. That is why the bourgeoisie severely reprimands the police each time the latter shows itself too "energetic" in the face of working class manifestations.

The Criminal Policy of the Stalinists: On the Parliamentary Field

A legal passage of power to de Gaulle is not possible within the framework of the existing constitution except through the dissolution of the National Assembly. It is the Assembly which alone has the power to order its own dissolution. How can it be forced to do so? The de Gaullists have openly disclosed their plan. In October, cantonal elections of slight importance in themselves, are to be held. If the de Gaullists score during these elections such smashing successes as will show that the existing Assembly bears no relation at all to the actual disposition of the various political forces in the country, then the Assembly will be compelled to dissolve. The struggle for the passage of power to de Gaulle comes down by and large to the struggle for the cantonal elections in October.

But the parties of the "Third Force" are desperately opposed to cantonal elections in which they will doubtless see the complete collapse of their forces. The Stalinists hold the balance of power between the parliamentary bloc of the "Third Force" and the de Gaullist bloc. They have begun to cynically abstain in votes upon this question, thus creating a constitutionally impossible situation: the opponents of cantonal elections have a slight majority in the Assembly, but carry little weight in the Council of the Republic (an upper chamber similar to the Senate). But recently, during a debate in the Assembly on September 20, Jacques Duclos, chief Stalinist whip, brusquely announced that his party, alongside of the de Gaullists, would demand cantonal elections. If the French CP maintains this position, the cantonal elections will unquestionably be held in October, provoking such a de Gaullist landslide as will cause the Assembly to dissolve and, in all likelihood, as Pierre de Gaulle declared recently in New York, bring his brother into power by the end of this year.

We see here a duplication by the French Stalinists of the criminal policy followed years ago by the Stalinists in Germany when they joined with the Nazis to precipitate the notorious "Red Referendum" in Prussia in order to bring about the overthrow of the Social-Democratic government.

It is not, however, in the Assembly that the Stalinists are rendering their best services to de Gaulle. They do this by their cynical trade union tactics which they have been systematically applying for the past month in order to break the militancy of the workers and in this way eliminate the last factor that could still defeat the General.

The Criminal Policy of the Stalinists: In the Factories

Since the close of the vacation period a violent agitation set in among the working class, reaching its peak when the Marie government fell. The strikes realized in life unity in action from below as well as at the top among the different trade unions and they swept virtually over the entire country. The Stalinists did everything in their power to keep these strikes within the limits of "demonstrations," that is to say, movements limited to stoppages of a few hours or of a single day. This tactic drains the energies of the proletariat, spreads among the toilers, the impression that they are subjecting themselves to useless sacrifices, provokes among the bourgeoisie the impression of proletarian feebleness and creates among the middle class an atmosphere of intensified nervousness, without in any way imbuing them with the idea of working class power that might cause them to hesitate anew.

During the second week in September, when the Parisian metal workers struck, this criminal tactic of the Stalinists reached unheard-of proportions. The mass of the workers demanded a general strike; clashes broke out on Haussman Boulevard where the police charged and fired on the demonstrators; the entire communist-worker vanguard was prepared to go to the end and there was open talk of the struggle for power. The Stalinist chieftains brutally curbed the movement and thus provoked a fearful demoralization.

The reasons for this defeatist Stalinist policy are evident. The Stalinist chieftains fear the revolutionary masses. They still nurse a slim hope that will be able, by their desperado policy, to force the SFIO (French SP) into a new "People's Front" coalition. For the French Stalinist leaders the fate of the continent will be at stake in the first phase of the next war. They hope to be installed in power by Russian bayonets. A de Gaullist dictatorship would enable them to mobilize a new "democratic resistance" movement. It concerns them little that in the meantime tens of thousands of the best working class militants will have been crushed morally and physically by the dictatorship. On the contrary, after his recent experience with Tito, Stalin prefers more than ever to set up Quislings who lack a powerful mass base which could provide them with an independent means of support. Such are the overall considerations which impel the Stalinists to cold-bloodedly sacrifice the French proletariat for the benefit of de Gaulle.

DeGaulle and Hitler

Assuredly, it would be profoundly erroneous to mechanically identify the de Gaullist movement with that of the Nazis. Hitler was the mouthpiece of a petty-

bourgeoisie that was pauperized, desperate and prepared for the worst; de Gaulle, on the contrary, is the idol of a middle class that is conservative, newly-rich and desirous of order and tranquility. Hitler's arrival to power signalized the need of German capitalism to break out by force from the constricting frontiers of Versailles which were strangling the over-developed productive forces; Germany's imperialism was epileptic in its aggressiveness and rushed to precipitate the second imperialist world war. The arrival of de Gaulle to power would, on the contrary, express the need of French imperialism to maintain by force the existing framework of the French empire, which has become far too vast for the senile structure of French capitalism; French imperialism is conservative and, abandoning one by one all of its "own" objectives, it plays ever more the role of the leading stooge of the Yankee imperialist bloc.

But there is one feature that is common to both the French situation today and that in Germany before 1933, namely: today as in the past, it is impossible to realize the program of "bourgeois salvation" without destroying the capacity of the working class to resist. Even if de Gaulle should come to power in a "cold" way and even if he should accept a coalition with the remaining fragments of the Social Democracy, the logic of the situation

would compel him to begin by outlawing Stalinism, and then the trade unions "under Stalinist control" and finally, the labor movement as a whole.

The outcome is as yet far from decided. The weeks ahead will undoubtedly see successive upsurges of resistance by the proletariat. In the factories heated discussions, are taking place over the question: "What to do?" In these debates, only the Stalinists and the Trotskyists participate. This struggle of ideas is the struggle over who shall influence the action of the vanguard of the communist workers in the factories. The comrades of the PCI (French Trotskyist party) have again succeeded, even to a greater extent than in the November-December 1947 strikes, in influencing important sectors toward broader and more decisive struggles. But their weight in the entire situation still remains too slight to modify it fundamentally. Only a spontaneous and sharp upsurge of the communist vanguard can again produce a change in the situation. To pave the way for this upsurge—that is the task to which the revolutionary militants are devoting all their energies today. Until it comes, their work of agitation is concentrated on preparing their future inside the labor movement as the party which had the correct policy at the critical hour.

September 22, 1948.

From Slavery to Minimum Wages

By George Olshausen

We print below a serious and highly informative study of an important phase of the class struggle in the United States. The author's views are not shared by the editors on several points. For example, in our opinion, the causes for the revival of slavery are treated too sketchily and one-sidedly; the same applies to the elucidation of the reasons why cotton planting expanded in slave form rather than as wage labor. Nor are the concrete conditions under which the Civil War developed treated adequately. Regrettable is the omission of all reference to the clash between slave agriculture and small farming which played an important role in the course of events at the time. We hope that the publication of this article will lead to a closer study and further discussion and illumination of the contributions already made by the author.—Ed.

* * *

It has often been said that free labor is more efficient than slave labor and that the latter cannot compete with the former. It has also been said that slavery was on its way out in America after the Revolution but received a new lease on life in 1793 from the invention of the cotton gin.

These two statements suggest an inconsistency. They raise the question—if free labor is more efficient, why did the cotton gin revive the system of slave labor? And if slavery had an upsurge in 1793, why did it disappear in 1865?

An attempt to answer these questions reveals a thread of economic development running from 1793 to 1929, unbroken by the Civil War. Slavery imposed burdens upon the masters. Most of the slave states had laws requiring slaveowners to furnish their slaves with adequate food and clothing and to care for the aged and crippled. Penalties were also imposed on anyone who injured the slave of another whether through overwork or beating. Some states fixed maximum hours of work. Obligations of slaveowners applied equally to overseers and to sheriffs who detained or hired out fugitive slaves.

Here are some of these laws. (Obligation of master to slave unless otherwise indicated.)

Alabama: Const. 1819, Art. III, Sec. 1 — gives legislators power to obligate slaveowners to treat slaves with humanity; to provide necessary food and clothing. Code (Ormond Bagby and Goldthwaite, 1852) Secs. 2043, 3297 — adequate food and clothing; care during sickness and old age.

Arkansas: Const. 1836, Art. IV, Sec. 25 — legislature has power to require slaveowners to treat slaves with humanity. Stats. 1837, Ch. 56, Sec. 4 (p. 359), masters of emancipated slaves must support them if infirm or over 45. Stats. 1848, Ch. 63, Sec. 5 — master of emancipated slave must support if infirm, over 45, or minor.

Florida: Stats. 1822, p. 121, Sec. 13 — master of emancipated slave must support if infirm, over 45, or minor. Stats. 1824, p. 289, Sec. 3 — adequate food and clothing; overwork prohibited.

Georgia: Colonial Records, XVIII, 136 (1750 — cited in Flan-

ders, *Plantation Slavery in Georgia*, pp. 25-6) 16-hour day; Digest Laws of Georgia (Prince, 1820), p. 460-67, Sec. 1 — maintain old and infirm. Stats. 1833, p. 196, Sec. 12 — adequate food and clothing; overwork prohibited.

Kentucky: Laws 1830, p. 173 — Ch. CCCXXVI, Sec. 4 — adequate food and clothing.

Louisiana: Stats. 1804, p. 107, Sec. 23 — master of emancipated slave must support if over 45 or minor. Stats. 1806, p. 126, Ch. XXX, Sec. 3 — slaves arrested because imported in violation of laws prohibiting slave trade must be provided with adequate food and clothing. Stats. 1806, Ch. XXXIII (pp. 150ff, "Black Code"), Sec. 39 — adequate food and clothing. Stats. 1855, p. 377, Act. No. 308, Sec. 18 — adequate food and clothing. Repealed, Stats. 1857, p. 229, Sec. 43. (As the Civil War approached, the slave laws in several Southern states became more and more severe.)

Mississippi: Const. 1817 (Poindexter Rev. Code, 1824, p. 539), Art. VI, Sec. 1 — legislature shall have power to require slaveowners to furnish slaves adequate food and clothing. Rev. Code 1857, Ch. XXXIII, Sec. II, Art. 5 — adequate food and clothing.

North Carolina: Rev. Laws 1715-39 (ed. 1810) p. 44, Laws 1741, Ch. XXIV, Secs. 4, 5 — adequate food and clothing; Sec. 9 — full wages and treatment to servants during sickness. Public Acts 1715-1803 (Iredell & Martin) Stats. 1798, pp. 2-120, Preamble, Secs. 1, 2, 3 — support in old age and during disability. Public Acts 1715-1803 (Iredell & Martin) Stats. 1801, pp. II-179, Sec. 1 — adequate food and clothing for emancipated slaves. Sec. 2 — masters leaving country must give bond for support of slaves. North Carolina Acts 1826, p. 13, Ch. XXI, Sec. 7 — adequate food and clothing. North Carolina Stats. 1864-5 — resolution protesting against ill treatment of slaves "conscripted" for military purposes at Wilmington, N.C.

South Carolina: Cooper, So. Carolina Stats. at Large, Vol. VII, Stats. 1690, No. 57, p. 343, Sec. II — adequate clothing; *ibid.*, p. 352, Act No. 314, Sec. XXII — adequate food and clothing for runaway slaves held by sheriff; *ibid.*, p. 371 — Stats. 1722, Act No. 476 — Sec. XXII — adequate food; *ibid.*, p. 397 — Stats. 1740 — Act No. 670, Sec. XXXVIII — food and clothing; Sec. XLIV — 15-hour day. Cooper, So. Carolina Stats. at Large, Vol. II, p. 52; Stats. 1691, Act No. 60 — adequate food, clothing and lodging (servants and slaves); *ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 14; Act No. 383, Sec. XIII — white servants — adequate food and lodging, not to be overworked or beaten excessively; Sec. XIX — support sick servants; Sec. XXII — clothing at end of servitude; *ibid.*, p. 628, Stats. 1744, Act No. 710, Sec. XXV — support of sick servant; Sec. XXVI — clothing at end of term.

Texas: Const. Art. 8, Sec. 1 — legislature shall have power to pass laws requiring slaveowners to furnish adequate food and clothing. Const. 1864, Art. VIII, Sec. 5 — legislature shall have power to pass laws requiring slaveowners to treat slaves with humanity. Tex. Laws 1858, Ch. 121, p. 156 — adequate food and clothing.

Virginia: Acts of Assembly. Now [1752] in force in the colony of Virginia with the Titles of such as are expired or repealed (1748), p. 285 Sec. V — adequate food, clothing and lodging; Acts of the Assembly, now [1769] in force in the colony of Virginia (1753) p. 308 Sec. V — adequate food, clothing and lodging; Sec. XV, maintain during sickness. Acts of the Assembly, now [1794] in force in the colony of Virginia — p. 195, Sec. XXXVIII — masters must maintain emancipated slaves if unsound, minors, or over 45.

The South Carolina and Georgia maximum work-day of 15 and 16 hours respectively seem fantastically long, but industrial capitalism denied the principle of limitation altogether (see below in text); and British industry in the Nineteenth Century maintained much longer working hours.

(Compare Marx, *Capital*, Ch. X, Sec. 3, referring to an English town meeting of Jan. 14, 1860: "What can be thought of a town which holds a public meeting to petition that the period of labour for men shall be diminished to eighteen hours a day?")

In the writer's own experience in 1925, during the canteloupe season in Imperial Valley, California, workers icing refrigerator cars were usually kept working 15 hours a day (14 hours on Sundays) which was sometimes stretched to 17 or 18 hours. Toward the end of the season, after reduction from double to single shift, the remaining single shift was sometimes worked 23 hours out of 24.

Obviously, these laws were maximum hour, minimum wage and pension laws adapted to a system of chattel slavery.

After slavery was abolished, all such laws were held unconstitutional when aimed at employers of wage labor. The capitalist would submit to no shackles such as a slaveowning society had imposed upon its members. But after the depression of 1929-33, this very same type of legislation reappears on the capitalist scene: minimum wage and maximum hour laws are now found to be constitutional; social security legislation on a wider scale than ever before becomes an accepted function of government.

These facts and others mentioned hereafter provide a clue to the causes for the spurt which slavery took in 1793 and for its disappearance in 1865. They also show that the same causes continued to operate uninterruptedly and ushered in a new phase of American capitalism after 1929.

We shall first analyze the respective characteristics of wage labor and slavery which gave slavery its second wind in 1793. Then we shall show how these same characteristics brought the downfall in 1865 not only of the slave system but of the social obligations imposed by law upon the master toward the slave. And lastly, how these characteristics, still operating under changed conditions, tended to restore employers' obligations after the depression.

1. Slavery vs Wage Labor, 1793-1865

The assertion that slave labor cannot compete with "free" labor has two distinct aspects. On the one hand, there is the competition of work by *independent* proprietors with that of slaves; on the other, the competition of *wage* labor and *slave* labor.

Settlement of the continent involved only the first of these phases. Farms were originally cultivated by independent peasant proprietors. Since there were not enough wage laborers either in America or Europe to supply hands for large plantations, slaves were imported to furnish employee labor where such was needed. (Cf. Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*, 1944, p.6.) Since the early competition was between independent, farm proprietors and slaveowning planters, it follows that the slaveowners were the first *large-scale* employers in United States history.)

In the Southern colonies slave labor proved more efficient than the work of independent proprietors for two chief reasons, both springing from the nature of the regional crops. The Northern colonies were found suited to cereal crops,* the Southern to sugar, rice, tobacco, and

* J. B. Cairnes, *The Slave Power*, pp. 44-7 ff (1863); Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*, p. 6; R. B. Flanders, *Plantation Slavery in Georgia*, pp. 71-2 (1933).

cotton (*Ibid.*). On the one hand the cotton could be cultivated more efficiently over large than over small areas. On the other, the concentration of field hands per acre for cotton and allied crops kept down the expense of supervision. Wheat or corn required one laborer per each twenty acres; tobacco and cotton one laborer for every two or three acres (*Ibid.*). Under slavery the Northern crops would require almost as many overseers as slaves and the expense of supervision would tend to wipe out any gain from large-scale operations. With the Southern crops that was not so. Under these circumstances, the independent peasant proprietor in the Southern colonies could not compete with the slaveowner when the English colonies were first settled.

But in and after 1793 there was a different problem. The industrial revolution brought industries, particularly to the Northern colonies. These were not operated solely by their owners. They required labor, which was supplied by immigration from Europe. In the South, too, there was a pool of free labor never surpassed in numbers by the slave population (Cairnes, *op. cit.* pp. 47 ff, 120.) The disappearance of slavery up to 1793 fits very conveniently into the formula "Slave labor is dearer than free labor whenever abundance of free labor can be procured."* (Its course was aided by the financial ruin of the Virginia tobacco plantations.)**

Why, then, did invention of the cotton gin bring with it a revival of slavery?

In order to answer this question, we have to examine in greater detail the supposed relative merits of slave and "free" labor. In favor of wage ("free") labor it is said (1) that slaves cannot perform complicated operations (Cairnes, *op. cit.* pp. 46-50ff, 120.); (2) that the laborer is more productive when spurred by hope of reward than by fear of punishment: Adam Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, Book III, Ch. ii, p. 365 (1937 ed); J. B. Cairnes, *op. cit.* pp. 41-2, 44-5; F. L. Olmsted, *Seaboard Slave States*, p. 105 (1861); Williams, *op. cit.* p. 6.); 3) that wage labor requires an outlay only of wages for time worked while purchase of a slave is a capital investment for his entire value. (Cairnes, *op. cit.* pp. 66-7, 120; de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, p. 466 (ed. 1898, Reeve's Tr.); R. B. Flanders, *op. cit.*, p. 19n. "Slaves are costly instruments of production and the commodities which they raise cannot be sold to procure their clothing and subsistence. The responsibility of the employer of free labor is at an end when he has paid the covenanted wages." *London Economist* in 1853, quoted in A. Simons' *Class Struggles in America*).

In favor of slave labor it has been said that the fertile soils of the South could "afford" the dearer labor of slaves.

* H. Merivale, *Lectures on Colonization and Colonies* (1928), quoted in Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*, p. 65. Cf. R. B. Flanders, *Plantation Slavery in Georgia*, p. 12. As to decline of slavery when Union was established, see Cairnes, *The Slave Power*, p. 176.

** As early as 1730, the Governor of Virginia described the tobacco trade as having "fallen into a miserable condition," *Journal Virginia House of Burgesses, 1727-40*, p. XIX.

(Adam Smith, *op. cit.* Book III, Ch. II, pp. 365-6; Williams, *op. cit.* pp. 6-7.)

Two of these considerations are clearly beside the point. To say that the most fertile lands could "afford" slave labor gives no explanation of why slave labor was so much more profitable as to be readopted. Similarly, saying that slaves can do only simple tasks, and that wage labor is needed for complicated work would, if true,* furnish no reason why slave labor should surpass wage labor for simple work.

One alleged disadvantage of slave labor is often cited: it is good only in single crop cultivation and therefore operates to suppress diversified farming. (Williams, *op. cit.* p. 7; Cairnes, *op. cit.* pp. 46, 54-8, 121, 135-6, 151-2—quoting Warner, *Progress of Slavery*.)

Analysis will show that two of the reasons mentioned constitute real advantages of wage labor over slave labor: (1) You can extract more work out of the laborer by hope of reward than by fear of punishment; (2) the wage laborer is paid only if, as and when he works, while the slave involves an overall capital investment. A third advantage is that the means of discipline used against wage earners are much less costly than those used against slaves. The suggested disadvantage of slavery—that it hinders diversified agriculture—puts the cart before the horse. The fact is that slave labor tends to flourish when agriculture is limited to one crop. This phenomenon dovetails with the respective modes of enforcing discipline on wage and slave labor. In order to demonstrate these propositions, it is necessary to examine the concrete workings of the two systems.

Under the wage system the employer hires the laborer only if, as and when he needs him. In slack seasons he "lays off" unwanted employees. What happens to such "laid off" workers is neither the employer's responsibility nor concern. In practice, the worker will be unemployed for a while and then find work with another employer.

But this merely negative freedom from responsibility is pyramided into an affirmative asset. Wages under capitalism follow the cost of the laborer's necessities of life, (Marx, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, Ch. VI, VII); in modern parlance, they are geared to the cost of living. This means that, by hypothesis, the laborer has no surplus, and every layoff carries with it the threat of starvation.** Such a threat lends itself to use as a weapon. The foreboding of being fired, and firing itself, are unpleasant enough that they serve as

* The proposition is doubtful, in view of the experiences with slavery in ancient Greece and Rome and in Latin America. Compare Tannenbaum, *Slave and Citizen*, pp. 58-9 (1947). Even writers on North American slavery have hinted that confining Negroes to the most elementary tasks was not inherent in slavery as such, but merely an item in the policy of American slaveholders. Cairnes, *The Slave Power*, pp. 101-5; see also de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*, pp. 119-20.

** There are no words in the language which throw so much terror into the hearts of workers as 'slack season' and 'fired'. Other words might conjure up the fear of death, but they do not plunge a man into the same dank prison of worry and care; at best they can be fought against. But the fear of hunger, of finding one's self without a roof over one's head, thrown out on the sidewalk, is greater than the fear of death. (Sholem Asch, *East River*, Part II, Ch. 12.)

means of enforcing the laborer's obedience. Thus the wage system has the beauty of furnishing a means of discipline which costs the employer nothing and which is actually an offshoot of his initial freedom from responsibility. Formerly, docking wages was also used as punishment, but at present it is generally prohibited for infractions other than failing to report for work. Docking not only cost the employer nothing but brought him additional profit. (Marx, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, Ch. IV, Sec. 4.) Moreover, the wage system has still another spur which costs the employer just as little as coercion.

The promise of self-advancement is held before the wage earner like a carrot before a donkey's nose, and draws him on to greater efforts for the employer's profit. (Marx, *op. cit.* Vol. I, Ch. XXIII; also see quotation from *Voyage au Bout de la Nuit*, below in text.)

As against this, the slaveowner must first of all support the slave throughout life, whether working or not. In the second place discipline under the slave system is enforced by means of quasi-military patrols and the overseer's lash. All three—the patrols, the overseer and the lash—cost money. (The overseer perhaps has his counterpart in the foreman. But quasi-military patrols and corporal punishment were costs without parallel under the wage system.) Discipline becomes an item of expense. The spur of self-advancement falls away.

The greater efficiency of the wage system thus rests on a specific and tangible basis. A few quotations point up this view. Adam Smith says of the slave (*Wealth of Nations*, Book III, Ch. II.) "Whatever work he does beyond what is sufficient to purchase his own maintenance, can be squeezed out of him by violence only, and not by any interest of his own." Note the implication of this sentence; that under a system other than slavery, an "interest of his own" is a means by which "work can be squeezed out of" the laborer.

The novelist Celine* observes, regarding the quasi slavery in French West Africa.

The cudgel ultimately tires the person who wields it, whereas the hope of becoming rich and powerful with which the whites are burdened, costs nothing, absolutely nothing." *La trique finit par fatiguer celui qui la manie, tandis que l'espoir de devenir puissants et riches dont les blancs sont graves, ça ue coute rien, absolument rien.*—Celine, *Voyage au Bout de la Nuit* (1934) p. 175.)

Marx says, in discussing the reproduction of capital, "From a social point of view, therefore, the working class, even when not directly engaged in the labor process, is just as much an appendage of capital as the ordinary instrument of labor. Even its individual consumption is, within certain limits, a mere factor in the process of production." (Marx, *op. cit.* Vol. I, Ch. XXIII.) And again, "As a producer of the activity of others, as a pumper out of surplus labor and exploiter of labor power, it surpasses in energy, disregard of bounds, recklessness, and efficiency,

* Celine subsequently became violently anti-Semitic and anti-Soviet. (*Bagatelles pour un Massacre*, 1937.) This does not change his earlier work.

all earlier systems of production based on directly compulsory labor.")*

The consequences have often been noted. Compare J. E. Cairnes, "So long as he is compelled to work for the exclusive benefit of a master, he will be inclined to evade his task by every means in his power as the white man would do under similar circumstances; but emancipate him and subject him to the same motives which act upon the free white laborer and there is no reason to believe that he will not be led to exert himself with equal energy." (Cairnes, *op. cit.* pp. 41-2.) Celine reports the same phenomenon with the opposite editorial slant:

The natives hardly work at all, except when beaten. They retain that much self-respect. The whites, on the other hand, made perfect by public school education, do everything of their own accord. (*Les indigenes eux ne fonctionnent guere en somme qu'a coups de trique, ils gardent cette dignite, tandis que les blancs, perfectiones par l'instruction publique, ils marchent tout seuls.* *Op. cit.* p. 175.)

In contrast to the sympathetic attitude of Celine is the contempt expressed in Olmsted's *Seaboard Slave States*. The facts are the same, however:

In working niggers, we must always calculate that they will not labour at all except to avoid punishment, and they will never do more than just enough to save themselves from being punished, and no amount of punishment will prevent their working carelessly and indifferently. (Quoted from an interview with a Virginia planter.)

There remains the feature often mentioned, that slavery gives no opportunity for diversified undertakings. Observers agree on this point, both as to agriculture and industry. A multitude of different industries, as well as a diversified agriculture were unfavorable to slavery.** Conversely, slavery thrived only in one-crop (or two-crop) economies. (Cf. Cairnes, *op. cit.* p. 79.) Without further analysis writers on the subject have taken slavery as the cause and lack of diversification as the effect. If an explanation is offered, it is usually that the slave can perform only simple tasks, and has not the skill to do varied work. But this explanation is contradicted, *first* by the experience of ancient as well as Latin American slavery in which slaves were used not only for highly skilled but for intellectual undertakings; and *second* by recognition that ignorance and lack of skill were the result of policy practiced on the slaves by the masters. We suggest here that the conventional treatment of this question involves a confusion of cause and effect. A one-crop economy drew slavery in its wake, not vice-versa.*** For a one-crop economy deprives the

* Marx, *op. cit.* Vol. I, Ch. XI. Almost the same thought is expressed by Henry George, *Progress and Poverty*, Book III, Ch. II, in a comparison much to the disadvantage of the condition of the wage-earner.

** Williams, *op. cit.* p. 7; Cairnes, *op. cit.*, pp. 46, 121; Flanders, *op. cit.*, p. 88; Beard, *Rise of American Civilization*, Vol. I, p. 55.

*** This is not say that slavery, once established as a vested interest, did not set up a reaction which operated to maintain the conditions most suited to the system. (Cf. Flanders, *op. cit.* p. 69.) Even today after legal abolition of slavery, one-crop agricultural communities tend toward relations resembling slavery. For example, employes are held continuously in debt to the landowner and so bound to him.

employer of the greatest advantage which the wage system gives him under ordinary circumstances: complete freedom from responsibility for the laborer while the latter is not working. Under the wage system the employer exercises his right to lay off; and calling it a "right" implies that it is advantageous to the employer. It can be advantageous only so long as no repercussions need be feared from the discharged workers. This is true as long as those who are thus unemployed (1) have the hope of getting work elsewhere, and (2) constitute sporadic units with no tendency to unite into a coherent mass.

Under a one-crop economy, both of these elements are lacking. In agriculture lay-offs must be seasonal. All lay-offs would occur at about the same time for a given crop. The hypothesis of one-crop means that the same lay-off would take place everywhere, simultaneously; those laid off would be without hope of finding work elsewhere. To have the whole laboring population suddenly dumped into unemployment carries at least the danger of rioting; at most it invites revolution. The lay-off under such circumstances is not the same flawless expense-cutter as under a system of varied industries.

Consequently, a different method is adopted. The master maintains the employe at all times—whether working or not. And this carries with it the master's claim upon the servant's continued services. Requiring the master always to maintain the servant, yet permitting the latter to quit whenever he likes, puts the masters at a disadvantage to which they would never acquiesce. Hence, the one-crop economy produces full-fledged slavery—with the slave tied to his employer and the employer bound to maintain the slave uninterruptedly. But the chain of causation does not end here. These consequences produce further consequences. On the one hand, from the major premise that the master must maintain the slave at all times, it is but a step to more detailed requirements such as adequate food and clothing, reasonable hours of work, sustenance during old age. Such legislation is accepted in the same matter of course way as legislation prohibiting cruelty to animals.

In the second place, binding the slave to the master eliminates casual hiring and firing for all purposes. Discharge cannot be used to enforce discipline. Instead, the master must resort to physical coercion, like whipping. As already pointed out, this constitutes an item of expense, whereas under the wage system, discipline is enforced without cost.

These deductions are borne out by the experiences of the Southern planters with "free" labor before the Civil War. By 1860 the "poor whites" in this region were more numerous than slaves and slave-owners combined (Cairnes, *op. cit.* p. 120.) There was undoubtedly a substantial number in 1793 and the years immediately following. Yet, the cotton growers never succeeded in utilizing this supply of labor. Cairnes says, "It is universally agreed that the labor of the mean white is more inefficient, more unreliable, and more unmanageable than the crude efforts of slaves." (*Ibid.* pp. 125-6.)

Thus the system of slavery developed as a second-rate substitute in one-crop economies which were unsuited to

the capitalist methods of paying the worker only while working, and firing him at will.

2. The Civil War to the Great Depression - 1865-1929

Capitalism and slavery were each by its own dynamic driven to continuous expansion. Wage capitalism followed the law of capitalist expansion. (Marx, *op. cit.* Vol. I, Ch. XXV; Vol. III, Ch. XIII.) Slavery sought expansion for two reasons—a primary, economic one, and a secondary, political one. Single-crop agriculture led to soil exhaustion. Where the soil was no longer suited to the crop, its cultivators had to seek new fields.* Politically, the slavery interests wanted to acquire a new slave state matching every new free state, so as to keep a political balance in the Senate. (Cairnes, *op. cit.* p. 171; Marx, "Letter to *Die Presse*," Oct. 20, 1861; also note below, referring to John C. Calhoun's speech of Feb. 19, 1847.)

The Civil War was precipitated when both sides tried to expand into the same territories at the same time.** In this it followed the most approved pattern of imperialist wars: two imperialisms expanding into the same area, where they tread upon each other's toes.

By 1861, however, Northern industrialism was set to expand, not only into the territories, but into the slave states themselves. It actually did so, like water breaking a dam, hard upon the conclusion of the Civil War. We have seen how slavery places leg-irons on the master as well as on the slave. Industry entering the Southern states would demand the same freedom as in the North. Abolition therefore becomes a necessity in order to relieve the incoming masters from the burdens of slavery. The humanitarian appeal is secondary and strictly subservient to the economic purpose.

Precisely that had been the course of abolition in the Northern states. As observed by de Tocqueville in 1835, "It is not for the good of the Negroes but for the good of the whites, that measures are taken to abolish slavery in the United States."***

* Cairnes, *op. cit.* pp. 151-2, quoting Warner, *Progress of Slavery*, p. 227; Cairnes, *ibid.*, pp. 154-5, 171; Marx's "Letter to *New York Daily Tribune*," Sept. 18, 1861 (printed in Marx and Engels, *The Civil War in the United States*, pp. 3 ff); *ibid.* pp. 58 ff, "Letter to *Die Presse*," Oct. 20, 1861.

** Cairnes, *op. cit.* pp. 154-5, 236; Marx, "Letter to *Die Presse*," Oct. 20, 1861. Marx quotes Toombs as saying "In fifteen years more, without a great increase in slave territory, either the slaves must be permitted to flee from the whites, or the whites must flee from the slaves."

Many thought that if slavery were not abolished it would cover the entire country outside of New England. ("Letter to *Die Presse*," Nov. 7, 1867, in Marx and Engels, *The Civil War in the United States*, p. 30.)

Lincoln's dictum, "I believe this government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free" (Speech at Springfield, June 17, 1858) is thus an expression of deep economic insight, not merely a rousing do-or-die challenge.

*** *Op. cit.* p. 462. On pp. 470-71 de Tocqueville offers the following explanation for the disappearance of slavery around the time of the American Revolution:

"No sooner was the law of primogeniture abolished than fortunes began to diminish—Thus one of the most immediate

"At the present time, it may be attacked in the name of the master; and upon this point interest is reconciled with morality." (*Ibid.* p. 46.)

Once emancipation had been accomplished, humanitarianism went by the board. Quoting again from de Tocqueville, "The states in which slavery is abolished usually do what they can to render their territory disagreeable to the Negroes as a place of residence and, as a kind of emulation exists between the different states in this respect, the unhappy blacks can only choose the least of the evils which beset them." (*Ibid.* p. 472n.)

Events followed the same course after the Civil War as they had before. Slavery was abolished nationally. The Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments were passed to implement emancipation. Soon after they became law, they were used much more to protect the freedom of the capitalists — the new masters — than of the Negroes — the former slaves. Justice Black gives a history of the Fourteenth Amendment in his dissent to *Adamson vs California*, 91 L. Ed. Adv. Ops. 1464. Among other things he says (p. 1484):

The foregoing constitutional doctrine, judicially created and adopted by expanding the previously accepted meaning of "due process" marked a complete departure from the Slaughter-House philosophy of judicial tolerance of state regulation of business activities. Conversely, the new formula contracted the effectiveness of the Fourteenth Amendment as a protection from state infringement of individual liberties enumerated in the Bill of Rights.

As indicated by this excerpt, there was a brief period during reconstruction when the Fourteenth Amendment was thought to be chiefly for the protection of human rights. But as soon as postwar excitement died down, the juggernaut of industrial economy rolled on from the point reached in 1861. Viewed in retrospect, Marx was perhaps too optimistic about the immediate effect of abolition on the American labor movement. (*Cf. Capital*, Vol. I, Ch. X, Sec. 7.)

As prior to 1861, abolition having been accomplished, humanitarianism went by the board. Quite logically, the Fourteenth Amendment was used to protect the wage employer from the very burdens which had beset the slave owner.

consequences of the equal division of estates has been to create a class of free laborers. As soon as competition began between the free laborer and the slave, the inferiority of the latter became manifest, and slavery was attacked in its fundamental principle, which is, the interest of the master."

Compare Trotsky, *In Defense of Marxism*, p. 18:

"The first Bonaparte halted the [French] revolution by means of a military dictatorship. However, when the French troops invaded Poland, Napoleon signed a decree, 'Serfdom is abolished.' This measure was dictated not by Napoleon's sympathies for the peasants, nor by democratic principles, but rather by the fact that the Bonapartist dictatorship rested not on feudal but on bourgeois property relations."

In *Dred Scott vs Sandford*, 60 US 393, Chief Justice Taney gathered considerable historical material to support his view that (referring specifically to the Connecticut emancipation law of 1784) (p. 413): "The measure was one of policy, and to prevent the injury and inconvenience to the whites, of a slave population in the State."

Whereas maximum hour laws were among the tribulations of a slaveowner's life, such laws were, after the Civil War, held unconstitutional for industrial employers. (*Lochner vs New York* (1905) 198 U.S. 45.) Whereas, slaveowners were compelled by statute to furnish their slaves with adequate food and clothing, minimum wage laws were now held unconstitutional. (*Adkins vs Children's Hospital* (1923) 261 U.S. 525; *Moorehead vs New York ex rel. Tipaldo* (1936) 298 U.S. 587. It is immaterial that the *Adkins* case, coming from the District of Columbia, involved the Fifth Amendment instead of the Fourteenth. After the Fourteenth was enacted, the Fifth was made to cover the same ground in all matters concerning the Federal Government. *Moorehead vs Tipaldo* is placed in the period 1865-1929 although decided in 1936. The same is true of other cases cited below which were decided previous to 1937. Judicial decisions always lag somewhat behind events.)

The slaveowner was required by law to maintain his slaves in their old age but a statute requiring railroads to contribute toward an old age pension fund for its employees violated due process of law. (*Railroad Retirement Board vs Alton RR* (1935) 295 U.S. 330. This case, like *Adkins vs Children's Hospital*, involved an Act of Congress and was decided on the Fifth Amendment.)

In the same way the Fourteenth Amendment was used to secure the employer's weapon of discharging employees. Statutes forbidding discharge because of union membership were held unconstitutional. (*Coppage vs Kansas* (1915) 236 U.S. 1; *Adair vs U.S.* (1908) 208 U.S. 161 — a Fifth Amendment case.)

In short, the Fourteenth Amendment was applied as a codification of the trend which brought it into being. It is, therefore, quite immaterial whether the framers of the Amendment consciously phrased its language to make it cover corporations. (This is Beard's theory, *Rise of American Civilization* (1943 Rev.) Vol. II, pp. 111-14; also *cf. Graham*, "The Conspiracy Theory of the Fourteenth Amendment," 47 *Yale Law Journal* 371, 48 *Yale Law Journal* 171.)

Liberation of employers from the chains which had bound slaveowners was its primary purpose, protection of individual liberty only a derivative and subservient one. For this reason, also, Justice Black's elaborate historical argument that the protection of individual freedom was "the avowed purpose" of the Fourteenth Amendment must be discounted as too optimistic. (*Adamson vs California*, 91 L. Ed. Adv. Ops. 1464, 1477, 1484, 1490-1505.) One need but add: for all its scholarship, the opinion is still a dissent.

3. Since 1929

Thus matters stood when the Great Depression hit the country in 1929. It soon produced mass unemployment. We have seen that under one-crop agriculture, slavery had been used to obviate just this condition. Layoffs, as practiced under the wage system, would have left all workers unemployed at the same time — namely, during off seasons. Because the entire economy was devoted to

one crop, they would have had no place to go. Such mass unemployment was too dangerous to be useful. It was avoided by the slave system.

In an economy of varied industries, the right of layoff and firing enables employers to extract and realize surplus value beyond anything possible under slavery.

The depression, however, saw large numbers of workers unemployed at the same time and none able to go elsewhere for jobs. This condition was just as dangerous in an industrial economy as it would have been under one-crop agriculture. So government relief was instituted to furnish a minimum subsistence for those unemployed by reason of capitalist "layoffs." But this relief was paid out of taxes, which in turn were part of the surplus value extracted under the system of wage-labor, layoff and firing. Part of what the capitalist had taken with one hand, he had to give back with the other. The old system of employing men only while they worked, laying them off and forgetting them, firing and forgetting them, was no longer the ideal way of garnering surplus value.

Provision had to be made for workers even while not working if the machinery of capitalism was to keep functioning. The golden era of capitalist irresponsibility came to an abrupt close.

With its passing the constitutional system which had implemented it was quickly swept aside. No more did the Fourteenth Amendment stand in the way of imposing part of the community's obligations upon employers as such. The decisions which had held minimum wage laws unconstitutional were overruled as inconsistent with the needs of a society engaged in paying out relief. The United States Supreme Court said, through Justice Hughes,

There is an additional and compelling consideration which recent economic experience has brought into a strong light. The exploitation of a class of workers who are in an unequal position with respect to bargaining power and are thus relatively defenseless against the denial of a living wage, is not only detrimental to their health and well being, but casts a direct burden for their support upon the community. What these workers lose in wages, the taxpayers are called on to pay. The bare cost of living must be met. We may take judicial notice of the unparalleled demands for relief which arose during the recent period of depression and still continue to an alarming extent despite the degree of economic recovery which has been achieved. It is unnecessary to cite official statistics to establish what is of common knowledge through the length and breadth of the land. . . The community is not bound to provide what is in effect a subsidy for unconscionable employers. The community may direct its law-making power to correct the abuse which springs from their selfish disregard of the public interest. (*West Coast Hotel Co. vs Parrish* (1937) 300 U.S. 379, 399.)

Similarly, the Social Security Tax — a means making employers support workers while unemployed — was now found to be constitutional. The Supreme Court's opinion accurately reflects first, the capitalist philosophy of having

the employer-employee relation completely free from social controls, and second, the return to pre-Civil War models after the depression wrecked the economic and governmental machinery which had been in use from 1865 to 1929.

In *Chas. C. Stewart Machine Co. vs Davis* (1937) 301 U.S. 548, approving the constitutionality of the Social Security Tax, the court first remarked (p. 578): "We are told that the relation of employment is one so essential to the pursuit of happiness that it may not be burdened with a tax."

Then it refutes this argument by referring to English and Colonial taxes on employment, laid respectively in 1695, 1777, 1778, 1780, 1784, and 1786. (301 U. S. 544, 579-81.)

Justice Cardozo concludes by observing (p. 580): "Our colonial forebears knew more about ways of taxing than some of their descendants seem to be willing to concede."

As with abolition of slavery, this social legislation was pushed by humanitarians on humanitarian grounds. But also as with abolition, it changed from a wish to a fact only as and when it furthered the aims of those who dominated the country's economy. Significantly, the date of the last employment tax (1786) coincides almost exactly with the lowest ebb of slavery before its revival by the cotton gin in 1793. In the Northern states slavery continued to disappear; governmental attentions (like taxes) which made employers anything less than free as air, preceded the "peculiar institution" into limbo.*

In the cotton states the trend reversed itself for a while and employers were regulated more closely than by mere taxation. Abolition of such restraints was achieved later and by force.

This event cleared the way for an industrial economy based on employer irresponsibility which was to enjoy its heyday during a period of expanding capitalism dubbed by Mark Twain "The Gilded Age." In time it cracked up from internal stresses. After 1929, employer irresponsibility no longer served capitalist ends and capitalism restored the old controls. "Out of the mother; and through the spring exultances, ripeness and decadence; and home to the mother." The legal history of American employers has come to a full circle.

*The employer-employee relation of this period, still bore vestiges of feudalism which today suggest similarity to slavery. An example is the system of industrial servants, Cf. N. Car. Laws 1741, Ch. XXII; So. Car. Stats. 1717, Act No. 383 — Secs. XIII, XIX, XXII, as well as all of the previous laws cited at the beginning of this article. Resemblance to slavery on the one hand and state control over employers on the other both faded as industrialization progressed. Compare the experience of Prussia, where, after Napoleon's invasion of 1806 and 1807, the peasants' subjection to the feudal lords and the lord's duty to care for the peasant in times of need, sickness and old age, were abolished simultaneously. Engels, *Anti-Duehring*. (Part I, Ch. X, p. 95 — 4th German ed.)

Resolution on the Workers Party

Adopted by the Second Congress of the Fourth International

When the petty-bourgeois opposition within the Socialist Workers Party constituted itself in 1940 into an independent formation (the Workers Party), it thereby split away not only from the SWP but also from the Fourth International itself. This was inevitable not only because the SWP, at the time, constituted the section of the FI in the USA, but also, and much more, because the political and organizational differences which underlay the split were fundamental to the political and organizational concepts of the FI. In other words, it was a principled split although it took place in an unprincipled way.

Splits (even more than faction struggles) have their own logic and momentum. Just as, on the one hand, splits without principle, if persisted in, beget principled differences on which to perpetuate themselves, even so, principled splits, if persisted in, can end up only in the counterposition of program to program in every field of politics and the class struggle. This is exactly what happened in the case of the Workers Party.

The faction struggle in the Socialist Workers Party preceding the split was found in the very course of its development to turn not on the meager concept of "bureaucratic conservatism" but on the more substantial questions of the nature of the proletarian party and the fundamental principles from which its program flows. In demanding that as a minority tendency within the party it be given the right to appear before the masses with its own specific programmatic and policy concepts and proposals, the minority faction in fact challenged the concept of democratic centralism at the very root and sought to substitute for it an organizational concept which abandoned all centralism in favor of a petty-bourgeois anarchist brand of democracy. By their attitude to Marxist philosophy and to the Marxist conception of the state, they similarly struck at the very root of the Marxist method. It was thus apparent already before the split that the minority faction represented nothing else than a petty-bourgeois current within the SWP.

Those who walk out of the proletarian party not only walk out on their colleagues but also into another and an alien environment. The proletarian party is a developing collective body which, driving as it does toward a definite objective by definite means, also provides a specific milieu in which the revolutionary cadre is formed and hardened. Even a petty-bourgeois opposition which remains within the party has therefore the opportunity not only of setting itself right politically but also of proletarianizing itself effectively. The party assists in protecting them from the influences of the alien class milieu in which they otherwise move. By walking out of the party, therefore, they bring themselves under the full blast of alien class influences.

This was also the case with the petty-bourgeois opposition when it walked out of the SWP and the FI; and

although its subjective desire might have been to remain on the ground of the proletarian revolutionary movement, the intensified pressure of bourgeois influence attendant upon an imperialist war which was neither interrupted by nor followed by successful revolution has tended steadily to push the WP off the ground on which it sought to stand, in the direction of, if not wholly onto alien class ground. Nothing less than this is the meaning, for example, of its theory of bureaucratic collectivism, its views on the so-called national question, and indeed, its whole perspective of pessimism in regard to the proletarian revolution (e.g., the theory of retrogression); for all these theoretical positions, and in particular the practical actions resulting from them in war and peace, constitute nothing but capitulation to bourgeois pressure in the sense of adaptation to the bourgeois program.

It is precisely in this sense that the present program of the WP can be characterized as petty-bourgeois and revisionist; for revisionism is the program of the adaptation of the proletariat to the bourgeoisie; and the petty-bourgeois, whether individually or in an organized grouping, who fails organically to assimilate the program of and to integrate himself into the proletarian revolutionary movement becomes, thereby, the transmitting mechanism of bourgeois influences in the proletarian movement despite every subjective desire to the contrary. The WP has become the consistent banner-bearer of petty-bourgeois revisionism.

A split casts upon the party obligations radically different from those which are cast upon it by a faction struggle. In the case of a factional struggle the task of the party is to provide an adequate arena for the proper discussion and democratic decision on the points at issue. In the case of a split, on the other hand, the first task of every party member is to *defend the party*. This task, the SWP, and with it the International, correctly understood. They have successfully repelled the successive attacks which the WP organized both nationally and on an international scale during the last eight years.

The first of these attacks was the attempt to organize a rival International in the guise of a Committee for the Fourth International. For, to call for a Fourth International was, in the first place, to deny the reality and the validity of the Fourth International that was already there. This attempt petered out. Not a single Fourth Internationalist formation could be found by the WP to support this committee despite a world-wide search by its agents. The next attack came in the form of an unprincipled bloc with the AK of the IKD, with which the WP entered into a broad agreement to struggle against the FI on both the political and organizational field. This bloc, like the previous committee, also petered out.

This sustained effort to compete organizationally with the FI, an effort which covered the duration of the second imperialist war and its immediate aftermath, thus failed,

The WP has furthermore failed in its effort to establish itself as a viable party in opposition to the SWP. The rest of the postwar period has therefore seen the WP engaged in a sustained effort to gain legitimacy in the movement *via* some form of fusion with the SWP. "Unity" with the SWP has been the slogan of the WP since 1945.

It is to be stressed that this "unity" campaign has been conducted within the framework of a steady continuance of the sustained hostility which the WP has shown, ever since its inception, both to the FI program and, especially to the FI organization. However, the fact that the WP sought "unity" with the SWP without abandoning any of its theoretical positions would not of itself exclude unity if its announced intention of observing party discipline as a minority within the SWP was for the purpose of constructing the revolutionary party under the leadership of the existing majority. But this was not the case with the WP. Its conception of unity proceeded, as it still proceeds, from the idea of transforming the SWP and the movement into an arena for continuing the factional struggle which it has manifestly failed to conduct successfully from without. In other words, it was and is only seeking to execute in relation to the SWP and the movement a form of the entrust tactic, with the object of capturing the organization or splitting it at an opportune moment.

The first major indication of the real meaning of this conception for the WP came in the fact that its first "unity drive" proved to be nothing else than an effort to link up with a minority faction within the SWP. The SWP's defense of itself against this attempt was successful, though it entailed the split of the Goldman faction.

The next major indication of the meaning of "unity" to the WP came with the unity negotiations which were initiated by Smith in February 1947. The WP purported to be ready to accept discipline in the case of a fusion with the SWP. It was on this basis that it undertook to accept in advance the decisions of the EPC.

The joint statement of the SWP and the WP committing the two organizations to unity was consequently signed in February 1947. Its sequel, however, was not a growing rapprochement between the two parties, but rather a sharpening of the struggle between them; a situation which was characterized by a series of violations by the WP of the spirit and conditions of the very agreement they had signed. The November 1947 Plenum resolution of the WP, explicitly repudiating the joint statement of February 1947, was only an open announcement of a situation previously existing. The WP had already long ago ceased to act in any way in terms of the agreement.

In the resulting situation the Johnson-Forest tendency, drawing the necessary conclusions from this "unity" experience, broke away from the WP and joined the SWP. As for the SWP itself, it registered the collapse of the "unity" at a Plenum of February 1948, and defined its attitude to the WP as follows:

"The rejection of the road to unity confronts the members of the WP either with the prospect of a revisionist future without perspective or a return to the doctrines of revolutionary Marxism and the Movement. Those who wish to build a genuine revolutionary workers' party in the country along Trotskyist lines have no choice but to quit this bankrupt petty-bourgeois group and join the ranks of the SWP."

That the SWP correctly analyzed its experience in the above resolution has since been made crystal clear by a declaration of the National Chairman of the WP. This statement was to the effect that, in case the movement followed its present policy in relation to the Soviet Union involved in war with an imperialist power, then, despite every present announcement of readiness to abide by majority decisions, he and his supporters would unhesitatingly split away again from the SWP and the movement.

By the above statement, the WP representative acknowledged not so much that the WP conception of discipline varied in peace and war, as that it would split the SWP again in wartime if it could not succeed in capturing it for the WP tendency or program in peacetime. In other words, they sought re-entry into the SWP without any genuine loyalty to the movement.

It is thus clear beyond all cavil that the "unity" drive of the WP constitutes not a change in the WP's policy of sustained and uncompromising hostility to our program and organization but only a change in the form of application of that policy. Having failed to bludgeon the movement from without, the WP has turned to an effort to capture it or split it from within.

It is impermissible and impossible, from any point of view, for the movement to permit itself to become the victim of such a policy. Although we permit the widest differences, political and theoretical, within our ranks, the only basis on which we can and do contain these differences is that of thoroughgoing loyalty to the organization. Without this, even lesser differences than those prevailing at present could not be contained within the organization without gravely hampering its activities if not paralyzing the organization entirely.

What then is our task? The balance sheet of eight years' experience points inexorably to one conclusion. The WP is at the present stage a politically hostile formation to the SWP and the International, and the impossibility of unity flows above all from the magnitude of the political differences. Not "unity" with the WP but its removal from the path of the proletarian party's progress is the task. Let this be understood not only by every section and member of our organization and movement, but also by those within the WP itself who wish to remain loyal to the movement. The SWP alone provides the framework for the further organized development of the Trotskyist movement in America.

April 26, 1948.

From the Arsenal of Marxism

SECOND DISCUSSION ON THE NEGRO QUESTION

A Negro Organization

In the May issue of our magazine we carried the first of three discussions which took place in April 1939 between Leon Trotsky and a group of comrades. These discussions occurred on the basis of a document "Preliminary Notes on the Negro Question," submitted by Comrade George. We continue publication of these April 1939 discussions, with a few minor omissions. The reader should bear in mind that the text is comprised of stenographic notes which remained uncorrected by any of the participants.—Ed.

April 5, 1939

Comrade George's manuscript read by the comrades prior to the meeting.

Trotsky: It is very important whether it is advisable and whether it is possible to create such an organization on our own initiative. Our movement is familiar with such forms as the party, the trade union, the educational organization, the cooperative; but this is a new type of organization which does not coincide with the traditional forms. We must consider the question from all sides as to whether it is advisable or not and what the form of our participation in this organization should be.

If another party had organized such a mass movement, we would surely participate as a fraction, providing that it included workers, poor petty bourgeois, poor farmers, and so on. We would enter to work for our party. But this is another thing. What is proposed here is that we take the initiative. Even without knowing the concrete situation in Negro circles in the United States, I believe we can admit that no one but our party is capable of forming such a movement on a realistic basis. Of course, the movements guided by the improvisatorial Negro leaders, as we saw them in the past, more or less expressed the unwillingness or the incapacity, the perfidy of all the existing parties.

None of the parties can assume such a task, because they are either pro-Roosevelt imperialists or anti-Roosevelt imperialists. Such an organization of the oppressed Negroes signifies to them the weakening of "democracy" and of Big Business. This is also true of the

Stalinists. Thus, the only party capable of beginning such an action is our own party.

But the question remains as to whether we can take upon ourselves the initiative of forming such an organization of Negroes as Negroes—not for the purpose of winning some elements to our party, but for the purpose of doing systematic educational work in order to elevate them politically. What should be the form—what the correct line of our policy? That is our question.

Carlos: As I have already said to Comrade George, the Communist Party organized the American Negro Labor Congress and the League of Struggle for Negro Rights. Neither one had great success. Both were very poorly organized. I personally think that such an organization should be organized, but I think it should be done carefully and only after a study of all the factors involved and also of the causes of the breakdown of the two organizations mentioned. We must be sure of a mass base. To create a shadow of ourselves would serve only to discredit the idea and would benefit no one.

Trotsky: Who were the leaders of these organizations?

Carlos: Fort-Whiteman, Owen, Hayward, Ford, Patterson; Bob Minor was the leader of the CP's Negro work.

Trotsky: Who are the leaders now?

Curtiss: Most of them are in the CP, so far as I know. Some have dropped out of the movement.

Owen: Comrade George seems to have the idea that there is a good chance of building such an organization in the immediate future. I would like to have him elaborate.

George: I think that it should be a success because I met great numbers of Negroes and spoke to many Negro organizations. I brought forward the point of view of the Fourth International particularly on the war question and in every case there was great applause and a very enthusiastic reception of the ideas. Great numbers of these Negroes hated the Communist Party. . . . Up to the last convention, 79% of the Negro membership of the CP in New York

State, 1,579 people, had left the CP. I met many of the representative ones and they were now willing to form a Negro organization but did not wish to join the Fourth International. I had come to the conclusion that there was this possibility of a Negro organization before I left New York, but waited until I had gone through various towns in the States and got into contact with the Negro population there. And I found that the impressions that I had gathered in New York corresponded to those that I found on the tour. . . .

Trotsky: I have not formed an opinion about the question because I do not have enough information. What Comrade George tells us now is very important. It shows that we can have some elements for cooperation in this field, but at the same time, this information limits the immediate perspective of the organization. Who are those elements? The majority are Negro intellectuals, former Stalinist functionaries and sympathizers. We know that now large strata of intellectuals are turning back to the Stalinists in every country. We have observed such people who were very sympathetic to us: Eastman, Solow, Hook, and others. They were very sympathetic to us insofar as they considered us an object for their protection. They abandoned the Stalinists and looked for a new field of action, especially during the Moscow Trials, and so for the period, they were our friends. Now, since we have begun a vigorous campaign, they are hostile to us.

Many of them are returning to all sorts of vague things—humanism, etc. In France, Plisnier, the famous author, went back to God as well as to democracy. But when the white intellectuals went back to Roosevelt and democracy, the disappointed Negro intellectuals looked for a new field on the basis of the Negro question. Of course we must utilize them, but they are not a basis for a large mass movement. They can be used only when there is a clear program and good slogans.

The real question is whether or not it is possible to organize a mass movement. You know for such disappointed elements we created FIARRI. It is not only for artists; anyone may enter. It is something of a moral or political "resort" for the disappointed intellectuals. . . . That is one thing; but you consider these Negro intellectuals for the directing of a mass movement.

Your project would create something like a pre-political school. What deter-

mines the necessity? Two fundamental facts: that the large masses of the Negroes are backward and oppressed and this oppression is so strong that they must feel it every moment; that they feel it as Negroes. We must find the possibility of giving this feeling a political organizational expression. You may say that in Germany or in England we do not organize such semi-political, semi-trade-union, or semi-cultural organizations; we reply that we must adapt ourselves to the genuine Negro masses in the United States.

I will give you another example. We are terribly against the French turn. We abandoned our independence in order to penetrate into a centrist organization. You see that this Negro woman writes that they will not adhere to a Trotskyist organization. It is the result of the disappointments that they have had from the Stalinist organizations and also the propaganda of the Stalinists against us. They say, "We are already persecuted, just because we are Negroes. Now if we adhere to the Trotskyists, we will be even more oppressed."

Why did we penetrate into the Socialist Party and into the PSOP? If we were not the left wing, subject to the most severe blows, our powers of attraction would be ten or a hundred times greater; the people would come to us. But now we must penetrate into other organizations, keeping our heads on our shoulders and telling them that we are not as bad as they say.

There is a certain analogy with the Negroes. They were enslaved by the whites. They were liberated by the whites (so-called liberation). They were led and misled by the whites and they did not have their own political independence. They were in need of a pre-political activity as Negroes. Theoretically it seems to me absolutely clear that a special organization should be created for a special situation. The danger is only that it will become a game for the intellectuals. This organization can justify itself only by winning workers, share-croppers, and so on. If it does not succeed, we will have to confess that it was a failure. If it does succeed, we will be very happy because we will have a mass organization of Negroes. In that case I fully agree with Comrade George, except of course with some reservations on the question of self-determination, as was stated in our other discussion.

The task is not one of simply passing

through the organization for a few weeks. It is a question of awakening the Negro masses. It does not exclude recruitment. I believe that success is quite possible; I am not sure. But it is clear for us all that our comrades in such an organization should be organized into a group. We should take the initiative. I believe it is necessary. This supposes the adaptation of our Transitional Program to the Negro problems in the States—a very carefully elaborated program with genuine civil rights, political rights, cultural interests, economic interests, and so on. It should be done.

I believe that there are two strata: the intellectuals and the masses. I believe that it is among the intellectuals that you find this opposition to self-determination. Why? Because they keep themselves separated from the masses, always with the desire to take on the Anglo-Saxon culture and of becoming an integral part of the Anglo-Saxon life. The majority are opportunists and reformists. Many of them continue to imagine that by the improve-

ment of the mentality, and so on, the discrimination will disappear. That is why they are against any kind of sharp slogan.

George: They will maintain an intellectual interest because the Marxist analysis of Negro history and the problems of the day will give them an insight into the development of the Negroes which nothing else can. Also they are very much isolated from the white bourgeoisie and the social discrimination makes them therefore less easily corrupted, as, for example, the Negro intellectuals in the West Indies. Furthermore, they are a very small section of the Negro population and on the whole are far less dangerous than the corresponding section of the petty bourgeoisie in any other group or community. Also what has happened to the Jews in Germany has made the Negro intellectuals think twice. They will raise enough money to start the thing off. After that we do not have to bother in particular. Some, however, would maintain an intellectual interest and continue to give money.

THIRD DISCUSSION ON THE NEGRO QUESTION

Plans for the Negro Organization

George: The suggestions for the party work are in the documents and there is no need to go over them. I propose that they should be considered by the Political Committee immediately, together with Comrade Trotsky's idea for a special number of the monthly magazine on the Negro question. Urgently needed is a pamphlet written by someone familiar with the dealings of the CP on the Negro question and relating these to the Communist International and its degeneration. This would be an indispensable theoretical preliminary to the organization of the Negro movement and the party's own work among the Negroes. What is not needed is a general pamphlet dealing in a general way with the difficulties of the Negro and stating that in general black and white must unite. It would be another of a long list.

The Negro Organization:

Theoretical:

1. The study of Negro history and historic propaganda should be:

(a) Emancipation of the Negroes in San Domingo linked with the French Revolution.

(b) Emancipation of the slaves in the British Empire linked with the British Reform Bill of 1832.

(c) Emancipation of the Negroes in the United States linked with the Civil War in America.

This leads easily up to the conclusion that the emancipation of the Negro in the United States and abroad is linked with the emancipation of the white working class.

(d) The economic roots of racial discrimination.

(e) Fascism.

(f) The necessity for self-determination for Negro peoples in Africa and a similar policy in China, India, etc.

NB: The party should produce a theoretical study of the permanent revolution and the Negro peoples. This should be very different in style from the pamphlet previously suggested. It should not be a controversy with the CP, but a positive economic and political analysis showing that socialism is the only way out and definitely treating the theory on a high level. This however should come from the party.

2. A scrupulous analysis and exposure of the economic situation of the poorest Negroes and the way this retards not only the Negroes themselves, but the whole community. This, the bringing to the Negroes themselves a formulated account of their own conditions by means

of simple diagrams, illustrations, charts, etc., is of the utmost importance. . . .

Carlos: About opening the discussion of socialism in the *Bulletin*, but excluding it, at least for a time, from the weekly paper: it seems to me that this is dangerous. This is falling into the idea that socialism is for intellectuals and the elite, but that the people on the bottom should be interested only in the common, day-to-day things. The method should be different in both places, but I think that there should at least be a drive in the direction of socialism in the weekly paper; not only from the point of view of daily matters, but also in what we call abstract discussion. It is a contradiction—the mass paper would have to take a clear position on the war question, but not on socialism. It is impossible to do the first without the second. It is a form of “economism.” The workers should interest themselves in the everyday affairs, but not in the “theories” of socialism.

George: I see the difficulties and the contradiction, but there is something else that I cannot quite see—if we want to build a mass movement we cannot plunge into a discussion of socialism, because I think that it would cause more confusion than it would gain support. The Negro is not interested in socialism. He can be brought to socialism on the basis of his concrete experiences. Otherwise we would have to form a Negro socialist organization. I think we must put forth a minimal, concrete program. I agree that we should not put socialism too far in the future, but I am trying to avoid lengthy discussions on Marxism, the Second International, the Third International, etc.

Larkin: Would this organization throw its doors open to all classes of Negroes?

George: Yes, on the basis of its program. The bourgeois Negro can come in to help, but only on the basis of the organization's program.

Larkin: I cannot see how the Negro bourgeoisie can help the Negro proletariat fight for its economic advancement?

George: In our movement some of us are petty bourgeois. If a bourgeois Negro is excluded from a university because of his color, this organization will probably mobilize the masses to fight for the rights of the bourgeois Negro student. Help for the organization will be mobilized on the basis of its program and we will not be able to exclude any Negro from it if he is willing to fight for that program.

Trotsky: I believe that the first question is the attitude of the Socialist Workers Party toward the Negroes. It is very disquieting to find that until now the party has done almost nothing in this field. It has not published a book, a pamphlet, leaflets, nor even any articles in the *New International*. Two comrades who compiled a book on the question, a serious work, remained isolated. That book is not published, nor are even quotations from it published. It is not a good sign. It is a bad sign. The characteristic thing about the American workers' parties, trade-union organizations, and so on, was their aristocratic character. It is the basis of opportunism. The skilled workers who feel set in the capitalist society help the bourgeois class to hold the Negroes and the unskilled workers down to a very low scale. Our party is not safe from degeneration if it remains a place for intellectuals, semi-intellectuals, skilled workers and Jewish workers who build a very close milieu which is almost isolated from the genuine masses. Under these conditions our party cannot develop—it will degenerate.

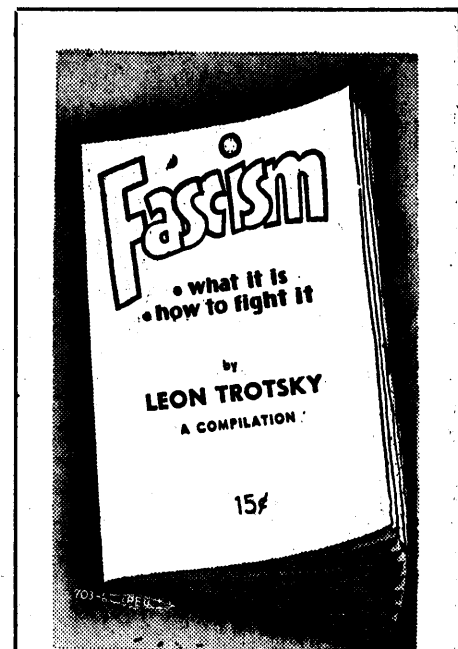
We must have this great danger before our eyes. Many times I have proposed that every member of the party, especially the intellectuals and semi-intellectuals, who, during a period of say six months, cannot each win a worker-member for the party, should be demoted to the position of sympathizer. We can say the same in the Negro question. The old organizations, beginning with the AFL, are the organizations of the workers' aristocracy. Our party is a part of the same milieu, not of the basic exploited masses of whom the Negroes are the most exploited. The fact that our party until now has not turned to the Negro question is a very disquieting symptom. If the workers' aristocracy is the basis of opportunism, one of the sources of adaptation to capitalist society, then the most oppressed and discriminated are the most dynamic milieu of the working class.

We must say to the conscious elements of the Negroes that they are convoked by the historic development to become a vanguard of the working class. What serves as the brake on the higher strata? It is the privileges, the comforts that hinder them from becoming revolutionists. It does not exist for the Negroes. What can transform a certain stratum, make it more capable of courage and sacrifice? It is concentrated in the Negroes. If it happens

that we in the SWP are not able to find the road to this stratum, then we are not worthy at all. The permanent revolution and all the rest would be only a lie.

In the States we now have various contests. Competition to see who will sell the most papers, and so on. That is very good. But we must also establish a more serious competition—the recruiting of workers and especially of Negro workers. To a certain degree that is independent of the creation of the special Negro organization. . . .

I believe the party should undertake for the next six months organizational and political work. A six months' program can be elaborated for the Negro question. . . . After a half year's work we have a base for the Negro movement and we have a serious nucleus of Negroes and whites working together on this plan. It is a question of the vitality of the party. It is an important question. It is a question of whether the party is to be transformed into a sect or if it is capable of finding its way to the most oppressed part of the working class. (To be continued.)



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