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INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST REVIEW

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Seven Year Plan**

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The Russian Revolution and The American Negro Movement



Three Wars In One

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Correspondence

A letter from Maxwell Armstrong of Toronto rated as the most gratifying response to our spring issue. The author has seen a lot of socialist publications. He was Vice-Chairman of the Workers party of Canada before it became the Labor Progressive party. He left it even before the Trotskyists were expelled in 1928, as he saw the party degenerate under the influence of Stalinism. He helped to form the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation, but got fed up with its reformism. Today he belongs to the Socialist Educational League.

"I have been a convinced Marxian socialist," he writes, "since 1912 when I graduated from the ranks of militant atheism. (I read the *Truthseeker* of New York.)

"Materialism gave me the key to the riddle: Why does religion still persist after what the eighteenth century Rationalists did to it? Marx made that clear.

"I have read nearly all the philosophers from Plato to Professor Joad and a considerable number of expositions of Marx. But I have never read a more splendid essay on the subject than the one in your last issue, 'Socialism and Humanism,' by William F. Warde. Any intelligent fourteen-year-old school boy could grasp its main propositions in one reading.

"Socialist Humanism is the true heir and the culmination of all Humanism from the Ionian school down to the rebels against Stalinism.

"I may add that all the other articles were excellent, particularly, 'The United Nations,' and 'How the Miners Won.' I am passing the issue on and will do what I can to get subscriptions. Keep up the good work."

In response to Theodore Edwards' article, 'The United Nations,' A. Binder of New York takes issue on several points:

"The article seems to me to represent squarely the confusion that comes from adherence to old dogmas.

"You state that Lenin and Stalin approached this question in opposite ways. This is quite true. But you have to take into account the changed international situation. It is ridiculous to repeat the old slogans at all times, in all places, under all circumstances.

"Stalin committed many crimes against socialism and even perverted many good deeds of his. This doesn't mean that *everything* he did was wrong and that in *principle* his decision to join the League of Nations at the time of the paramount Hitler danger was one of his crimes . . .

"You would be consistent (although wrong) if you applied the same attitude to the United Nations yourselves. But

this is not the case. Instead of sticking to the old Leninist definition that the League of Nations No. 2 (i.e., the United Nations) is a 'thieves kitchen' (which is to some extent true) and consequently advising any workers state to hold aloof from it, you say instead: 'any workers state has to engage in diplomatic relations with capitalist powers. It has the right, therefore, to send its representatives to such organizations as the United Nations.' This indicates that in principle you too are not against the participation of a workers state in the United Nations for diplomatic activities — which by no means are confined to propaganda only.

"You have anyhow some reservations about the attitude of the workers state even when it does participate in the United Nations; namely, 'it does not have the right to participate in sowing illusions about it.' Quite right. Unfortunately in another context you seem to sow even more illusions about the UN than the criticized Soviet bureaucracy.

"The leaders of the Soviet Union, even during the peak of the war-time 'big alliance,' understood the inherent danger of converting the United Nations into an instrument of other capitalist powers against the Soviet Union and therefore insisted (as other big powers) in a unanimous vote of the big powers in the Security Council. They acted, of course, not so much out of inherited and not always observed principles as out of the sense of self-preservation and realism. But here your sympathy seems to be on the side of the smaller states (exemplified by a quotation from Carlos Romulo of the Philippines!) against 'this domination of the great powers' and you even approvingly say that they were 'correctly denouncing it as a violation of the principles of democracy and sovereign equality.'

"How can you square your 'principled' position against sowing illusions about the UN with upholding the illusions of the small states, which are in most cases only pawns of the big powers?!

"You are correct in repeating the old truth that peace is a class question. But it seems to me that it is too doctrinaire to proclaim that 'as long as class society continues to exist, war is inevitable.' Maybe in the last instance you will be right. But to exclude in our time of the 'A' and the 'H' bomb even the possibility of averting the world catastrophe of nuclear war is as irresponsible a position as your opposition (from the left) to 'peaceful coexistence.'

"Maybe you do not sow illusions about the possibilities of avoiding war as long as capitalism exists but on the

other hand you sow the most dangerous 'disillusions' (i.e., despair and apathy) against the world movement for peace, which encompasses hundreds of millions in all countries.

"You can insist that 'no peace petitions will prevent war' but the mass movement for peace is a very important factor in preventing the war and it does not make sense for left wingers to scorn it and stand aside, occupied by 'pure,' 'revolutionary' propaganda (which will even less prevent the war).

"Please take these remarks not as malicious criticism but as sincere advice from an old friend to revise your old dogma (in Trotsky's language 'rearm') and adjust it to the new era full of dangers and prospects . . ."

Do you agree or disagree with this point of view? Send your opinion in early.

G.B., a British Columbia reader, describes how a trip to Poland in 1955 led him to entertain grave doubts about the Communist party in Britain after he saw the startling contrast between the way the bureaucrats and workers lived. The Hungarian revolution sickened him still more. He dropped out of the Communist party but still went along with its theories about how to achieve peace through some kind of deal with Western capitalism.

"Many other things troubled me, such as the question of my own position in the socialist movement. How could I remain a militant worker and revolutionary socialist and yet be outside an organization of socialists? But who were the socialists?"

He and his wife considered the Labor Progressive party, but decided it wasn't what they sought.

Trying to find the correct explanation for such things as the lack of democracy and the lack of equality in the Soviet Union, the couple read books by Isaac Deutscher. This led them to the works of Trotsky, where they found the answers they were seeking.

"The purpose of this letter is to show the importance of contact between socialists of all points of view, and of course the importance of literature in the campaign to win more doubting former members of the Communist party into the ranks of the revolutionary socialists."

G.B. adds that "your excellent magazine deserves an ever widening circle of subscribers."

Reading the winter issue, he "spent about six hours studying Arne Swabeck's article on inflation, production and profits. Very good material and just what is needed in the present fight for the shorter work week, higher wages and against unemployment. Although the article is excellent and the subject covered very adequately for a person who has a reasonable understanding of Marxist economics, I think it is probably a bit beyond the ken of people such as me."

Trotsky "Psychoanalyzed"

by Joseph Hansen

THE following item in the February 2 issue of *Publisher's Weekly*, a trade journal, may have tipped off quite a few book dealers to get their orders in without further delay:

"SCRIBNER has mailed to some 2500 molders of opinion — statesmen, book reviewers, newspapermen, college professors, etc., a reprint of Bernard Wolfe's author's notes for 'The Great Prince Died,'* the novel based on the assassination of Leon Trotsky, which will be published on March 30.

"Mr. Wolfe spent eight months as a member of Trotsky's secretarial staff in Mexico in 1937, three years before his murder. In his author's notes he explains in detail why he chose to write a novel instead of nonfiction and the departures from strict historical fact he has permitted himself. ('Torment has to be doled out in novels much more sparingly than it often is in real life'). He has, he says, based his picture of the revolutionary-in-exile on an 'informed guess' that Trotsky was haunted by the part he played in suppressing the Soviet sailors' revolt at Kronstadt. Mr. Wolfe believes 'there are certainly grounds for suspecting that something was operating in Trotsky that interfered with his will to live . . . He was lonely — and he was also a trapped and haunted man opening wide his arms to death.'"

Scribner's direct mail solicitation of 2,500 molders of opinion seems to have paid off not too badly. Despite the intimation about "departures from strict historical fact," reviewers praised the imaginative author for his factual accuracy. "The ring of authenticity in the pages of his book is unmistakable," Ernest S. Pisko declared in the *Christian Science Monitor*. William Henry Chamberlin told the readers of the *Chicago Sunday Tribune* that the book "is largely true history." Bertram D. Wolfe, reviewing the novel in the *New York Herald Tribune*, held that "as a readable historical account of a somber and illuminating event, the present work is of prime importance and deserves wide attention."

For Wolfe's political message likewise, the publisher's promotion department seems to have found a fairly live mailing list. In the *New Leader* Raymond Rosenthal was impressed by the "power of Bernard Wolfe's fantasia, his existential comic tragedy of the political life we have lived and will continue to live for an indefinite period." In the *Minneapolis Sunday Tribune* Joseph Thibault was struck by the "graphic and terrifying picture of what happens to people when they become so obsessed with political dogma, so caught up in a rigid ideology, that they become less than human." Selden Rodman felt inspired enough in the *New York Times* to contribute a strikingly apt and original ob-

servation: "Its message is one the free world will ignore at its peril."

A sales campaign off to such a flying start would indicate that some overtime could be expected in Scribner's shipping department. Yet most of the reviewers, despite their recognition of how vital it is to broadcast Wolfe's political message, indicated a certain embarrassment about the book as a novel.

Bertram D. Wolfe felt compelled to admit that "when it comes to Trotsky's thought and feelings, and those of his admiring guards, Mr. Wolfe's own disillusionment, his own political thesis, and his psychoanalytical technique, stand in the way of his making his characters live, think and talk in a fashion that compels belief."

Thibault in composing his encomium gave way a bit to the temptation to tell the truth, indicating that it takes "hardihood to complete the book . . ." Pisko gagged a little at the "awkward stylistic mannerisms and unnecessary coarseness of expression . . ."

Orville Prescott of the *New York Times* dutifully praised the book's message but regretted that it could not have been packaged in "a better novel." Something about the book apparently reminded him of the "wretchedly bad novels" previously turned out by the author. In this one, the attempt to explore the "darker recesses of the Communist mind . . . is tiresome." The "rearrangements of facts for fictional purposes" make the book "very confusing." Wolfe's Trotsky is "abstract and stiff." "Was Trotsky really like Rostov? Are these doubts, pangs of guilt and remorse really true to Trotsky's character?"

In Prescott's opinion, "This is a curiously uneven work, intermittently interesting, frequently dull. It is crowded with tedious conversations on the nature of revolutions and of revolutionists. Much of its dialogue is stiffly rhetorical. It is stained by several scenes of loathsome depravity."

Dawn Powell felt unhappy enough over the artistic side of the book to venture even further in the *New York Post*: "The psychological interlacing of motives and past records among the principals offered unlimited field for speculation. In fact, the task of transferring all this rich material into a novel must have seemed like a piece of cake. The trouble with the resulting book is that Mr. Wolfe's cake is almost indigestible, both for him and for the reader . . ."

"Wolfe appends extensive notes documenting the historical basis for his novel. Such and such a character is taken from life, such and such details were invented.

"It is a device Houdini would use to inspire confidence. Here are the handcuffs and rope with which he binds himself and here is the trap from which he magically escapes. Having tied and hamstrung himself with the facts, Mr. Wolfe recklessly jumps into his self-selected trap.

"Unlike Houdini, though, he cannot unshackle himself;

* THE GREAT PRINCE DIED, by Bernard Wolfe. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York. 1959. 398 pp. \$4.50.

author and reader both flounder hopelessly. If this isn't fact, then it must be fiction, but it isn't fiction because here are the documents being waved before us.

"In his sincere desire to clean up once and for all a dark page in revolutionary history, Mr. Wolfe has only stirred up the dust."

THE readiness of the reviewers to hail the political virtues of the novel, while remaining cautious about assessing its artistic merit, indicates how sensitive they are to the needs of the cold war. How differently they would have received such crude conversion of a tendentious political tract into a morality tale had it been done by a Soviet hack! The unhappy consequences of forcing art into a political strait jacket would have given us a year's supply of edifying sermons.

However, in the case of a "free world" grub, who converts a hackneyed theme of Social Democratic and capitalist propaganda into intolerably dull and wretched fiction, the exacting norms of bourgeois art aren't available for application. They haven't come back yet from the Bureau of Standards where the State Department sent them to be redesigned for compatibility with nuclear weapons.

Wolfe has got it right about Trotsky being murdered by an agent of Stalin's secret political police. He places the scene correctly in Mexico. Scattered details are almost accurate — when the author does not fix up the facts with such ingratiating touches as the rabbit he has "Rostov" patting at his work desk while he reads the manuscript which the assassin brought him the afternoon of August 20, 1940. There the coincidence with truth ends.

When Shakespeare stated the norm that came to be accepted by the modern artist, "To hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature," he was not addressing cynics such as Wolfe. Wolfe's purpose is to depict in pulp comic-book style a dishonest piece of propaganda: that Stalinism is the logical continuation of Leninism, a variety of "centralism," which is inherently bad in general. The bombastic and egoistic Trotsky, as "psychoanalyst" Wolfe pictures him, got a guilt complex because his acceptance of Lenin's position on the need for centralized leadership in a revolution led to his participation in the Kronstadt affair. This in turn brought him such mental anguish that in the end he welcomed assassination.

Analogously, with just as much reason, Wolfe could use Lincoln's assassination to prove that the President's acceptance of the need for centralized leadership of the North in the Civil War, which led to his participation in putting down the draft riots in New York in 1863, gave the bombastic and egoistic author of the Gettysburg address a guilt complex — such neurotic anxiety that in the end he welcomed the assassin's bullet as he was patting a pet chicken in Ford's theater.

The dogma of the professional Kronstadters inspires an odd pile of architecture. "Rostov," a founder of the Soviet Union exiled by Stalin, now maliciously intent on needling the "Georgian mud worm" with a biography, has run into a writer's block. That crucial chapter stops him, the one about — Kronstadt. He needs quotes and they can't be found! His guards are not very helpful. In fact, the pair display symptoms of a chronic moral dysentery, an unlovely group obsession about — Kronstadt. "Paul Teleki," head guard, protects the chief victim of the Moscow frame-up trials to engage him in daily bickering about — Kronstadt. "David Justin," an adolescent intellectual, who, like the author, became a guard through someone's error, with equal persistence nags the former head of the Red Army about — Kronstadt. The sole Mexican official permitted by Wolfe to visit the world-famous exile, has no choice but to assail him about — Kronstadt. After the pickaxe has been driven into Rostov's brain, the dying man's images are about — Kronstadt. At the death bed his wife, too, gets thinking about — Kronstadt. Finally, if you want to skip the novel, Wolfe boils his message down to an appendix entitled, "David Justin's Glosses on Kronstadt." Still unconvinced? Wolfe drops the mask of novelist and gives it to you with sectarian directness, "Author's Notes" about — Kronstadt. Get it? The subtle artist is suggesting that there's a lesson the free world cannot afford to ignore about — Kronstadt.

Pedagogues, priests and Madison Avenue pitchmen know that nothing beats repetition to imprint a formula, drive home a moral lesson or sell a cure for tired blood. But it can get monotonous. Psychologist Wolfe is especially sensitive to this hazard, and so he offers as enticement to the persevering reader a choice variety of sexy pictures.

For example, what sends Teleki more than anything else is a whore painted like a barber pole, while Rostov's girl secretary, a masochistic nymphomaniac, finds a touch of rape excellent to overcome frigidity. Even Rostov is served up with a dash of tabasco. He suffers from "voyeurism." Unable, like Teleki, to get down to a burlesque show where, according to our telescopic-eyed novelist, the grind begins bare, he expresses his illness by widening the crevice between two sandbags in the window of his study to stare down the resulting hole — at the street. His punishment is a stiff neck.

Thus dry-as-dust dogma generates its opposite, strident sensationalism. The principal characters are driven like zombies by sadism, masochism, murderous impulses, suicidal wishes, unresolved oedipus complexes and voyeurism. Why the author didn't think to add a werewolf is hard to fathom.

If we dismiss the playing around with sexual images, torture and bloodshed, which may have served a useful function in releasing some of the author's inner tensions, we are left with a picture of Trotsky that is curiously un-

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original. An egomaniac unable to work in a group, cursed with neurotic overevaluation of the power of words yet a brilliant manipulator of language, a poseur revelling in press conferences and similar stage appearances, suffering from venomous hatred of Stalin — what does this caricature resemble if not the stock figure to be found in the productions of Stalin's secret political police?

That a Stalinophobe like Wolfe should find himself using lurid poster colors on the guide lines provided by the GPU is not as paradoxical as may seem. He begins with the same political dogma as the GPU: that Stalinism is the continuation of Leninism. Like those who preceded him down this well-traveled highway, he accomplishes no more than to erase the Stalinist plus signs and replace them with Social Democratic minuses. Our pamphleteer novelist, bound by the logic of his meager formula, produces nothing but fresh proof — as if it were needed! — of the essential identity in the Stalinist and Social Democratic concepts of Leninism.

To both Stalinists and Social Democrats, the Leninist type of party structure is authoritarian; the one considers it benevolent, the other malevolent. The Social Democrats deny in theory that Leninism has any connection with democracy; the Stalinists deny it in practice.

Wolfe's fantasy is that Trotsky was the unconscious victim of "Leninism" as defined by the Social Democrats, and that Trotsky's self-punishment for denying the true character of this "Leninism" was to welcome its exercise in the shape of a pickaxe.

The logic of Wolfe's dogma is that Trotsky provoked the attack. As "Ortega," Wolfe's concocted Mexican official conceives it: "The sandbags were a provocation, the words coming from the typewriter were provocations, to make, no doubt, insulting headlines for tomorrow." If these were "provocations" then they were objectively unnecessary. Trotsky's struggle against Stalinism is thus seen as not being thought out correctly; he does not understand the real reasons driving him; his anti-Stalinism is really just the manifestation of an unconscious suicidal tendency. Ortega tells Teleki: ". . . he did not have to undertake a total struggle with Stalin!" In short, Wolfe falls into a *pro-Stalinist* position. A dialectic miracle! But one that occurs whenever Social Democrats unite with Stalinists in "People's Fronts" to shore up a capitalist position. The miracle has been performed, too, by capitalist statesmen when they thought the Kremlin was in position to deliver something of interest, especially the heads of revolutionaries.

To follow Wolfe a step further: Bringing the ingredients of his characters together according to the prescription needed to alert the free world to the dangers of "centralism" — as practiced by revolutionary socialists — he is forced to perpetrate a frame-up. He has his novelistic Trotsky offer "evidence" that the real-life Trotsky was guilty of a crime at Kronstadt. He continues logically down this course far enough to torture out of his Trotsky a "confession" of "guilt" (guilt-laden conscience, rationalizing arguments, actions seeking atonement through self-punishment). Isn't such character assassination quite in the tradition of those who organized the actual murder?

If we now appeal to psychoanalysis to help us uncover the reasons for the author's fixation on Kronstadtian dogmas, what do we find but unconscious sympathy for Trotsky's murderer? This is the one level in the novel that has the ring of conviction. The material placed before us reveals, like a tape recording from the psychoanalytic couch, depreciation and hatred of Trotsky, and an unconscious urge to participate in executing him. The assassin is Wolfe's tragic hero.

HAPPENED to be with Trotsky in Mexico when the attempt to revive Kronstadt was at its height. As one of the real members of the household — not a Kronstadtian projection of Wolfe's mind — I can offer my personal ob-

servation of the reaction of Trotsky, his guards and secretaries to the campaign.

First let me indicate Trotsky's actual main interests. His primary concern was the fate of mankind. His acceptance of Marxism put him in politics, and not as an observer but as an active participant. His chief interest at the time was thus naturally in the movement of capitalism toward another world war and in what could be done to hinder it and to find points of support to speed the advancement of socialism.

As the world's leading spokesman for revolutionary socialism he was the focus of attack from reaction of all kinds. If he singled out Stalinism, as he did, for special consideration it was solely because it represented the most formidable obstacle in the path of working-class mobilization against capitalism. I do not think he *enjoyed* the unpleasant chore of battling Stalinism. The downfall of the great revolutionary figures of Lenin's generation at the hands of the Kremlin moved him profoundly.

Of genuine personal satisfaction to him, however, was the work of constructing the Fourth International. This was his political love. The development of the Socialist Workers party just across the border absorbed him, as did everything about America where he foresaw that the fate of mankind would finally be forged. He took a leading part in working out problems of leadership in the Fourth International, participating in the internal discussions with some of his most searching contributions to socialist thought and theory.

Although committed not to intervene in domestic affairs, he was fascinated by Mexico's politics, as he was of the country as a whole. On every hand illustrations leaped out of the operation of the laws of uneven and combined development which he had done so much in earlier years to call attention to. For instance, a capitalist government expropriated the imperialist oil holdings and turned them over to workers management! From Mexico City, cultural capital of Latin America, he saw shadings of the class struggle in semi-colonial countries he had not previously noted.

He was working on a biography of Lenin, a work that really appealed to him. (The Stalin biography was distasteful, but the publishers insisted they weren't in the market for anything else; and his collaborators urged him to take it as an assignment in which he could really deal with a lot more than Stalin.) He planned a book on current world politics, his specialty. He projected a short work on logic. If he could be permitted to visit the United States, he thought of doing a comparative study of the American and Russian civil wars after touring the battlefields.

Friends visited him in increasing numbers due to the generosity of the Cardenas government which, with typical Mexican hospitality, made the conditions of political asylum easy for the persecuted exile. Latin-American followers reached Coyoacan from time to time. Socialist Workers party leaders arrived periodically for sessions that gave Trotsky the greatest satisfaction. Artists exchanged views with him on esthetics and the place of the artist in politics. André Breton came from France to see him. Trotsky hoped that André Gide could make the trip, too. Prominent public figures, not to mention top reporters sought his opinion on crucial world developments. As part of their studies, the guards and secretaries arranged lively discussions in which he participated. In the evenings classical music came over the Telefunken radio. Hegel's *Wissenschaft der Logik* was on a convenient shelf along with the works of Lenin, Engels and Marx. From the city's excellent bookstores someone was always bringing the latest novel from France, or something of unusual interest such as the final version of Freud's *Moses and Monotheism*. The Old Man's English was improving so much that he could enjoy Jack London's *The Iron Heel* in the original. His youthful guards, a cross section of the international revolutionary socialist movement, were continually stirring up something, the American contingent even inveigling him into outdoor hobbies to replace

his pacing back and forth as daily exercise. Occasional excursions were organized into primitive back country.

A big victory was scored when the Dewey commission dealt the decisive blow to the Moscow frame-up trials. On this, as other festive occasions, telegrams and letters came from all over the world and delegations of Mexican friends and sympathetic unionists showed up to celebrate. Each new publication of the Fourth International, each book and pamphlet in a new language, came as a heartening success. Correspondence from collaborators on every continent brought him the latest news, the difficulties and achievements, the thinking and proposals of the new generation of revolutionary socialist leaders in which Trotsky's keenest interest centered.

Despite such tragic blows as the murder of his oldest son, Leon Sedov, by the GPU, the world was really interesting from the view in Coyoacan.

(None of this is in Wolfe's book. The novelist makes Trotsky a neurotic, gnawing at his own mind, and replaces the vigorous staff of revolutionary socialists with two dreary windbags out of the Kronstadt album. This displacement of the truth by complete falsification was inevitable, since, as Wolfe well knows, the end determines the means, even if it doesn't always justify them.)¹

Trotsky followed the savage civil war in Spain with close attention, for it offered fresh current tests of major tendencies and their policies. Hitler and Mussolini were using the Spanish struggle as a testing ground for the coming imperialist conflict, and the Kremlin furnished for the instruction of the working class another colossal instance of the truly suicidal policy that was paving the way for the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union.

Stalinists, bourgeois democrats, Social Democrats, anarchists, came under Trotsky's fire. Their policies, he contended, spelled doom for the Spanish working class, ensured Franco's victory, would speed the outbreak of World War II. A socialist victory was fully possible, he maintained, given policies such as the Bolsheviks had applied. A success like the Russian October could reverse the current trend toward deepening reaction, undermine both Italian and German fascism, strengthen the defenses of the Soviet Union and bring socialism to all of Europe. The tragedy of Spain, as he saw it, was that the great opportunity for victory was being systematically destroyed by ignorance, incompetence, and conscious policies of betrayal among the tendencies holding leadership of the revolution.

His criticisms especially irked the anarchist champions of Kronstadt, who — contrary to all their avowed principles — helped succor the capitalist state in Spain when it could have been laid in its grave.

The rise of Spanish fascism had its repercussions in America. Roosevelt turned toward preparing the country's entry into the looming imperialist conflict. This affected an entire layer of intellectuals who had been attracted previously to revolutionary socialism. They began to worry about the "amoralism" of Leninism and to look to the possibilities of spiritual salvation in Roosevelt's war camp. "Trotskyism and Stalinism are one and the same," they argued. Seeking "evidence" of this, they explored the political mud buckets used by the anarchists and Social Democrats during the Russian Civil War. They found an item which they thought could be thrown by way of counteroffensive to Trotsky's criticisms: "What about Kronstadt!"

1. Among the mass of departures from "strict historical fact," Wolfe appoints "Emma," the girl friend of the assassin, to be Trotsky's personal secretary, although the real girl involved was never more than a visitor. How Wolfe's Chicago beauty solved the problem of getting Trotsky's Russian down in shorthand is not indicated. To further facilitate Kronstadttian political needs, Wolfe has Trotsky invite the assassin to become a full member of the household, serving as a "translator" of the press releases dictated to Emma. In contrast to this invitation, Wolfe has Trotsky fight "New York" suicidally on organizing a competent staff. As additional weakening of the defenses, he has Trotsky offering gratuitous insults to the Mexican head of police in charge of protecting him. Wolfe even maligns the Mexican police detail as a comic squad given, while on duty, to guzzling, guitar strumming, whoring, and squeezing the household for "cognac." A poverty-stricken neighbor, Wolfe's epitome of the peasantry in general and the revolutionary Mexican campesinos in particular, is pictured as an Australoid "not used to thinking in numbers larger than ten."

Wendelin Thomas, a member of the committee headed by John Dewey that was investigating the Moscow frame-up trials, demanded directly of Trotsky whether basic identity between Bolshevism and Stalinism wasn't indicated by Lenin's attitude toward opponents like the Mensheviks, the Kronstadt insurgents and the independent bands headed by Makhno in the Ukraine.

From Trotsky's reply to Thomas, the following paragraph may be of interest for what it reveals of the former Red Army commander's attitude on the question. It is relevant since it was written July 6, 1937, when Wolfe was presumably still in Coyoacan.

"Your evaluation of the *Kronstadt uprising* of 1921, is basically incorrect. The best, most sacrificing sailors were completely withdrawn from Kronstadt and played an important role at the fronts and in the local Soviets throughout the country. What remained was the gray mass with big pretensions ('We are from Kronstadt'), but without political education and unprepared for revolutionary sacrifice. The country was starving. The Kronstadters demanded privileges. The uprising was dictated by a desire to get privileged food rations. The sailors had cannon and battleships. All the reactionary elements in Russia as well as abroad, immediately seized upon this uprising. The white émigrés demanded aid for the insurrectionists. The victory of this uprising could bring nothing but a victory of counter-revolution, entirely independent of the ideas the sailors had in their heads. But the ideas themselves were deeply reactionary. They reflected the hostility of the backward peasantry to the worker, the conceit of the soldier or sailor in relation to the 'civilian' Petersburg, the hatred of the petty bourgeois for revolutionary discipline. The movement therefore had a counter-revolutionary character and since the insurgents took possession of the arms in the forts they could only be crushed with the aid of arms."

Trotsky understood very well that the Fourth International was not immune to the heavy pressures already mounting with the approach of World War II. What interest he took in the debate over Kronstadt was motivated to large extent by concern to block weak elements like Wolfe from utilizing Kronstadt as a rationalization to abandon the struggle for socialism.

John G. Wright, a close political collaborator, wrote a factual account of Kronstadt which Trotsky recommended.² (In his novel, Wolfe calls it a "particularly mindless attempt.") And in "Hue and Cry over Kronstadt," Trotsky analyzed with Marxist precision the class forces involved in the struggle.³ (Wolfe lists this among "Trotsky's meager and impatient reflections on Kronstadt.")

The subject came up in no prominent way at all in Coyoacan. It could not because everyone there recognized it for what it was, a diversionary move by opponents who wished to avoid discussing such subjects as certain political crimes in Spain and the real meaning of Roosevelt's war preparations.

The only occasion I can recall where Kronstadt figured significantly was on a trip to Patzcuaro. Several school-teachers made a neighborly call on Trotsky. Such visits were relatively frequent, sometimes including quite a few people, for Trotsky was a sympathetic figure to most Mexicans, rightly proud of their own revolutionary tradition.

Like other discussions of the kind, it was amiable and stimulating, for all Trotsky ever asked in return for his time was genuine interest, and his own inclinations were to share experiences. He enjoyed meeting ordinary honest people with their often fresh insights. One of the teachers brought up Kronstadt, not to bait Mexico's distinguished guest, but to learn first hand about the issue, and Trotsky repeated pretty much the explanation he had given Wendelin Thomas.

This led to a question about Trotsky's personal responsibility. The answer made an impression on me, for I

2. *New International*, February 1938.

3. *New International*, April 1938.

learned what to me was an extremely important general lesson in principled politics.

Trotsky said that he was not involved at all personally.

"Why then," asked the teacher with some surprise, "did you accept responsibility?"

Trotsky explained the difference between personal and political responsibility. Zinoviev was the leader of the new forces at Kronstadt. Zinoviev, backed by these replacements at the famous fortress, was in vigorous opposition to Trotsky. Because of this factional situation, it became Zinoviev's responsibility to handle the rebellion. He was in best position to head it off. Trotsky stayed away from Kronstadt. (Wolfe has him crossing the ice to participate with his own hands in the assault that recovered the fortress.)

Moreover, Trotsky had personally advocated policies a year earlier that might have avoided such dangerous episodes. He had proposed a general easing of tension through some means such as the New Economic Policy that was subsequently adopted. But Lenin erroneously opposed Trotsky's proposal. One of the consequences of Lenin's error was the explosive situation not only at Kronstadt but many other places. Both Czarist and world reaction sought to turn these difficulties to their own advantage. In face of the grave possible consequences, Trotsky felt that the correct political policy for a member of government was to share responsibility for whatever measures the government was compelled to take in its self-defense.

This was illuminating to me, for I could see that the alternative would have been a struggle against the regime. Under the circumstances this could only have aided the counter-revolution. The principle, too, had wide application in politics, much wider than this particular case might indicate.

Later I asked Trotsky why he had not included this explanation in his article "Hue and Cry over Kronstadt."

His response was that he did not want to provide any grounds whatsoever for the charge that he was seeking to evade the responsibility his position in the government carried with it.

I urged two reasons for modification of his policy after the passage of so much time. (1) The facts were important and should be made part of the record. (2) The Kronstadters were not making any distinction between political and personal responsibility but were accusing him of personal responsibility. They could make unjustified gains in this way among politically backward circles.

I could have added as a third point that it would be helpful when my Coyoacan predecessor, Bernard Wolfe, got around to writing *The Great Prince Died*, but I didn't think of it.

Perhaps we discussed it again although I rather doubt it, since Trotsky, the most receptive person I ever met, was usually quick to take suggestions of the kind. In any case within a few days he wrote the half dozen paragraphs I thought would prove useful for in-fighting with the Kronstadters. This was published as "More on the Suppression of Kronstadt."⁴ (Wolfe is well aware of this item, so devastating to his "informed guess" on Trotsky's feelings about Kronstadt, for he lists it among Trotsky's "meager and impatient reflections.")

This I hope is sufficient to establish as an objective, verifiable fact that the doubts, pangs of guilt and remorse over Kronstadt were not "self-harryings," as Wolfe puts it, but political harryings from palpable foes who aimed them at Trotsky. The record is quite emphatic on how effectively Trotsky turned these into counterthrusts, which he followed up in "Their Morals and Ours"⁵ by raising the fundamental questions involved — the class basis of ethics and morals and the ultimate decisiveness of logical method in reaching scientifically grounded answers.

Trotsky's moves proved so crushing, in fact, that a Kronstadter like Wolfe, after scouting for more than twenty

years, could find no better way of dealing with them than to insinuate his own position into Trotsky's household. The logic of this was to eliminate completely the counterposing position which the entire household actually held. Wolfe does not permit a single member of Trotsky's household, not one, to represent the genuine Trotskyist view on Kronstadt and the thesis that Stalinism is the continuation of Leninism. As for the morality of putting his own position — if watered down to "just" suicidal guilt — into Trotsky's skull, is that so far removed from the morality of driving an axe into it?

DAWN Powell, it will be recalled, said in reviewing *The Great Prince Died*, "If this isn't fact, then it must be fiction, but it isn't fiction because here are the documents being waved before us."

How dependable are the "documents" that Wolfe waves at us? He has guard "David Justin" engage in diligent research for "quotes" that "Rostov" must have, but can't find, to prove that the insurgents were counter-revolutionary. Everything that Justin digs up speaks against Rostov. So, says Justin, he "will have to make up his own quotes."

"One pertinent quote does exist," continues the pseudo guard. "From a memoir written by V.R. after the event." The "pertinent" quote is: "Simply because it had been guilty of a political error, simply because some of its less polished representatives may have blundered in dealing with the sailors, should the proletarian revolution really have committed suicide to punish itself?"

Then Justin's comment: "One of the most fantastic statements in the history of political struggle. There is a quote, if V.R. has such need of quotes. Apparently certain guilts can't be kept permanently under cover, even in such a brilliantly organized and disciplined ideologue as V.R. . . . I don't think he'll use this telltale quote that slipped out of his own depths. No man wants to confess twice . . ."

In a soap-opera sequence that truly stuns us, Teleki corners Rostov near a rabbit pen and declaims Justin's notes page after page at the former commander of the armed forces of the Soviet Union, who takes this rhetoric in guilty silence. At the words "confess twice," as the scene opens, Teleki closes the manuscript. The guard, his breath "coming in audible jerks" over discovery of the dread secret, says, "Now I'm through."

Rostov, "examining the head of lettuce in his hand" (Wolfe's rabbits sure have expensive tastes!), responds, "Definitively, irrevocably through. When will you be leaving my house?"

The scene is crucial in Wolfe's plot: the best guard quitting socialism on the day of the assassination (later to become a normal serape salesman); Rostov's suicidal impulse activated — all because of the fatal Kronstadterian quote echoing from the past.

Where did the quotation come from? Some "memoir" that by accident escaped being "expunged from the record," to be found by Wolfe after long painful years of sneezing among disintegrating Russian newspapers? The priceless discovery came easier than that. Wolfe found it in "Hue and Cry over Kronstadt," published, as we have just noted, in the April 1938 *New Internationalist*. Here is the paragraph from which it was lifted:

"In 1921 Lenin more than once openly acknowledged that the party's obstinate defense of the methods of military communism had become a great mistake. But does this change matters? Whatever the immediate or remote causes of the Kronstadt rebellion, it was in its very essence a mortal danger to the dictatorship of the proletariat. Simply because it had been guilty of a political error, should the proletarian revolution really have committed suicide to punish itself?" (Note Wolfe's artistic embellishment.)

Why did Wolfe tear this sentence, referring to Lenin not Trotsky, out of the context of Trotsky's 1938 article and put it in the context of his own falsified version of Kronstadt?

(Continued on page 95)

4. *New Internationalist*, August 1938.

5. Available from Pioneer Publishers.

Three Wars in One

Do the political patterns of World War II suggest lessons in the struggle for peace today? The record offers a way of testing some current issues in dispute

by Daniel Roberts

AMONG many people friendly to the Soviet Union the belief exists that the only practical hope for peace lies in Washington and Moscow reaching an agreement to give up war as an instrument of policy. As spokesmen of the Communist party often put it, all that is needed to end the cold war and the danger of nuclear conflict is to restore the alliance that existed between America and the Soviet Union during World War II.

They blame Truman for breaking off Roosevelt's alleged policy of friendship for the USSR. They blame Dulles for worsening the anti-Soviet trend.

Their program for rectifying this situation boils down to a simple prescription: work within the Democratic party. By helping Democrats to win office, they maintain, it is possible to influence the party in the direction of a "people's coalition" — such as existed in America under "FDR" during World War II — thus strengthening the "forces for peace."

Against this policy of class collaboration, the Socialist Workers party advocates following socialist principles in the struggle for peace. These begin with opposition to capitalist candidates, no matter what demagogic labels they may wear. The SWP favors doing everything possible to popularize socialism, including running socialist candidates for office. The SWP opposes company unionism in the political struggle as well as the wage struggle and supports the trends in both fields toward independence and militancy. The SWP seeks, as the alternative to war, a socialist America.

These views are attacked by CP leaders as "sectarian," "divisive," "utopian" and worse.

Who is right? The question is not unimportant, for it involves the struggle for peace and the road to socialism. The fate of tens of millions, in fact the fate of all mankind, hinges on coming up with a correct answer.

The CP's proposals hark back to an

earlier appraisal of the problems of war, peace, defense of the Soviet Union, and the struggle against reaction. This was their analysis of the character of World War II and their estimate of the Allied camp as a "democratic," "people's" coalition against fascism.

The present policy of the CP is an extension of that position, just as the SWP's policy today is an extension of the position it took during World War II. It can therefore prove useful to re-view the differences of that time, for it is possible to check them against what actually happened and thus see who

turned out to be right. Obviously this is highly relevant to the CP's insistence upon a return to the political patterns of World War II.

Even more important than who was right, however, study of the actual course of history in the light of prognosis can offer us better understanding of the class forces involved in World War II, how that colossal conflict affected them, and what direction they are moving in today. On that basis it should prove considerably easier to work out realistic political policies for the period before us.

Were They Imperialists?

ABASIC premise offered by Communist leaders under Stalin's influence was that the powers allied to the Soviet Union in World War II became historically progressive through their pact with the workers state. From September 1939 to June 1941 this proposition benefited the Axis powers. British, French and American war aims were denounced as imperialistic — which they certainly were; German war aims were presented as in the interests of national self-defense — which they certainly were not.¹

When Hitler attacked the Soviet Union and Stalin hastily concluded an alliance with Britain and the United States, signs were at once reversed. The Axis countries alone now pursued reac-

tionary imperialist objectives, whereas the American-British-Russian alliance pursued democratic, national-liberationist — in short, historically progressive — goals. This still remains the official CP version of the character of the second world war.

In order to justify such switches, Communist party leaders had to discard completely Lenin's conclusions about the nature of imperialism. They had to revive, in effect, the notorious position propounded by the Social Democratic theoretician Karl Kautsky during World War I; namely, that imperialism is but one of alternative policies that the major capitalist powers are free to follow, that it is not organic to the stage of big business rule. In World War I, German, French, British, Italian, Russian and American "socialists" utilized Kautsky's arguments to justify support for their respective governments. (Kautsky himself remained neutral.)

To refute Kautsky, Lenin showed by painstaking economic and historical analysis that "imperialism . . . represents a special stage in the development of capitalism"; i.e., imperialism is synonymous with Western capitalism since the turn of the twentieth century;

1. For instance, the *Sunday Worker*, Feb. 25, 1940, stated: "The Soviet Union's pacts with Germany rescued the German people from the worst of counter-revolutionary wars and ditched the predatory plans of the Allied warmakers against both the Soviet and the German peoples." The Comintern press spoke of the Anglo-French alliance as the "imperialist bloc against the German people." A main slogan of the American Communist party was, "The Yanks Are Not Coming!" Roosevelt was denounced as an imperialist warmonger, a characterization closer to the truth than his later designation as a champion of peace, democracy and American-Soviet friendship.

that it is, in fact, the last or highest stage of capitalism itself.²

According to Lenin, one of the features of imperialism is the rule of financial oligarchies (such as America's sixty wealthiest families) in the major capitalist countries. The foreign policy pursued by any of the major capitalist powers cannot be anything but imperialistic; that is, designed to exploit other countries. Wars between major capitalist powers are inevitably conflicts involving "redivision" of the world. They have no progressive content and can acquire none. Imperialism threatens civilization with total destruction. Its wars spread untold misery. Consequently, said Lenin, "Imperialism is the eve of the proletarian social revolution. This has been confirmed since 1917 on a world-wide scale."

At bottom the dispute over the war question between the Communist party and the Socialist Workers party — between Stalinism and Trotskyism — involved the validity of Lenin's characterization of imperialism. It is still involved in the dispute over how best to fight for peace. The Socialist Workers party has adhered to the Leninist criteria; the Communist party has abandoned them.³

It should be emphasized that whether or not workers ought to defend the Soviet Union from imperialist attack is not at issue. From the beginning, the Socialist Workers party has supported unconditional defense of the workers state, regardless of its leadership. Likewise not at issue is the right of the Soviet government to make military alliances with one group of imperialist powers against a different group — or to switch alliances if need be. What is in dispute is whether or not socialists should offer political support to the imperialist ally of the Soviet Union and whether or not they should help expose that ally's true war aims and oppose them.

In proposing that socialists give no political support to any of the major capitalist powers during the war, the Socialist Workers party held to Leninism, which taught in the first years of the Soviet Union's existence that while the workers state might be compelled to sign a temporary agreement with one or another imperialist power, this must not be permitted to alter socialist opposition to the imperialist government.

Some substantial facts in World War II spoke for the correctness of this position. In Britain, France and the United

2. V. I. Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, written January-July, 1916, with prefaces to new editions, April 20, 1917, and July 6, 1920.

3. The viewpoint of the Socialist Workers party is well expressed in a resolution adopted by the Tenth National Convention in October 1942. (In *The Workers and the Second World War*.) Another key document is the manifesto of the Fourth International, *Imperialist War and the Proletarian Revolution*. For a defense of the position under fire, *Socialism on Trial*, the official record of James P. Cannon's testimony in the first Smith Act trial, is recommended. These can be obtained from Pioneer Publishers, 116 University Pl., New York 3.

States, big business ruled as unquestionably as in Germany, Italy and Japan. In the three democracies, upon the outbreak of war, big business promptly introduced police-state measures that substantially narrowed the difference between fascist and bourgeois-democratic forms of rule. For instance, in the U.S. the Smith "Gag" Act was passed in 1940 and applied shortly thereafter against eighteen leading members of the Socialist Workers party and of the Minneapolis Truckdrivers Local 544-CIO.

In their colonies and semi-colonies, British, French and American imperialism ruled with totalitarian brutality. The U.S., for example, governed through military dictators in most of Latin America.

In each of the three democracies, big business was fascist-minded and had experimented with fascist movements. (Father Coughlin and Mayor Hague in the United States.) Furthermore, when military defeat loomed, the major section of the French capitalist class struck a bargain with Hitler and became "collaborationist" — thus using German fascism to crush working-class resistance at home.

Both the Axis and the British-French-American powers sought either to retain or to acquire colonies, markets, sources of raw material and areas of cheap labor where capital could be invested at a high rate of profit. This substantiated once again what Lenin had noted about the tendency to imperialist redivision of the world among the great powers.

As the vast slaughter unfolded, the SWP called attention to important additional facts. Each of the warring capitalist camps displayed in turn its mortal enmity to the land of the October 1917 Revolution. Thus in 1940, when the Soviet Union attacked Finland, the French, British and American imperialists prepared to intervene militarily in defense of their outpost. Later when the German armies penetrated deeply into the Soviet Union, the Allies appeared to be considering the advisability of slicing out chunks of territory for themselves rather than rushing material aid to the beleaguered country.⁴

Foreshadowing American postwar policy of "containing communism" within a network of military bases, Roosevelt's Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox declared that "the U.S. must police the world for the next hundred years." In anticipation of the type of rule they wished to impose in Europe, the Allies maintained a stable of kings, queens and capitalist politicians of every variety heading up "governments-in-exile." At the end of the war, the Allies foisted a number of them on European peoples against their will (for instance, in

4. *The Army and Navy Journal* of Sept. 27, 1941, reported possible moves by Gen. Wavell to send British troops into the Caucasus "so as to relieve the Soviets of the necessity of guarding that valuable oil region." At an Allied conference held the same time to plan aid to the USSR, nothing tangible resulted but talk.

Greece). Throughout the war, the Roosevelt administration maintained friendly relations with the totalitarian, pro-Axis Petain government of Vichy and with the fascist dictator Franco. After the Italian masses overthrew Mussolini, the Allies used their occupation troops to prop up the Italian monarchy and the fascist general Badoglio. In Japan, MacArthur carefully protected the divine Mikado from popular resentment. (That a former Nazi general currently commands NATO's European ground troops is not surprising; it is only another manifestation of the same reactionary foreign policy.)

But didn't the U.S. alliance with the Soviet Union mark a departure from imperialist policy? Didn't it reflect democratic forces in American government which came to recognize the menace of Nazism and to see the need for united action to defeat it?

Imperialist statesmen are quite capable of giving revolutionary forces a temporary assist if they calculate that it will serve their own ends. The Kaiser provided Lenin with a sealed train, let it be recalled; yet it never occurred to Lenin to regard this as evidence of a "democratic" ingredient in the Hohenzollern dynasty. When Lenin's government came to power, too, imperialist powers concluded temporary agreements with the workers state for the sake of advantages against imperialist rivals. (These, of course, also brought advantages to the Soviet Union.) The most famous of them in the early days of the Soviet republic was the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk which German imperialism decided would secure the release of armies from the Russian front for use in the western trenches. That was not taken as a reflection of "democratic" forces in the German General Staff. (Even Hitler signed a pact with Stalin that meant conceding considerable territory to the Soviet Union.)

In World War II, pursuing its goal of ultimate world domination, American imperialism had to decide whether it should seek to destroy the Soviet Union before or after reducing its rivals to the status of vassals. (Hitler was compelled to make a similar choice at the beginning of the war.)

American imperialism elected to defeat its imperialist rivals first, taking a chance on carving up the Soviet Union later.

Once the Axis had been defeated, American imperialism lost no time in regrouping its capitalist foes and allies alike in a world crusade against "communism." The cold war thus did not represent a reversion to imperialism but simply the succeeding phase of a policy aiming at exploitation of the entire globe. What other rational explanation can be offered for the rapidity with which America's rulers shifted in 1945 from alliance with the Soviet Union to construction of a military machine equipped with sufficient nuclear poi-

sons to "overkill" all mankind sixty or seventy times?

World War II was thus essentially imperialist in character. But interimperialist rivalries, while predominant, were far from exclusive in the sanguinary conflict. In this it differed from World War I except for the closing phase of that slaughter. Interlaced with the utterly reactionary fight among the imperialist wolves were two other wars of quite different character.

These two wars were the Soviet Union's defense against Germany and China's struggle for national liberation from Japan. That both the Soviet Union and China were allied with a reactionary imperialist bloc did not lessen the progressive character of their struggles just as it did not lessen the reactionary character of their allies.

In addition, a number of other essentially independent working-class and

independent colonial-freedom movements took shape or developed at heightened speeds during the second world war.

To take a correct position on these struggles, socialists had to separate them out and consider them on their own merits; that is, in relation to their class content and their effect on the world-wide movement for socialism. Otherwise well-meaning socialists could find themselves on the wrong side. This happened with such currents as the one headed by Max Shachtman, which ended up denying the progressive character of the struggles of both China and the Soviet Union.

Trotsky's followers, however, armed with a dialectical approach to these complex problems, found no great difficulty in reaching correct attitudes toward China and the Soviet Union while still consistently opposing imperialism.

to the British in accordance with the secret deal he had made at Yalta and Teheran with the imperialist statesmen Churchill and Roosevelt.

The impact of the Soviet victories decisively shaped the political evolution of the French resistance movement. The working class gained ascendancy within it, and the Communist party acquired effective leadership. In Italy, too, the Soviet victories spurred the revolutionary movement that toppled Mussolini in August 1943 and that continued to unfold against both the German occupation in the north and the Allied occupation in the south.

In Germany, the accumulation of military catastrophes broke the apathy that had settled upon the working class following Hitler's victory in 1933. The beginnings of a revolutionary movement appeared as the Nazi regime collapsed.

The Soviet victories were an element in the resurgence of socialist sentiment among the British workers. In 1945 they booted Churchill out of office and put the Labour party in power with a clear mandate to end British capitalism and institute a planned economy, a mandate which the Labour leaders, unfortunately, did not relish.

Clearly, socialist sentiment was even more powerful in Europe following World War II than it was at the end of World War I. How then explain the astonishing fact that socialism did not sweep the continent, toppling capitalism with its fascist barbarism and world wars?⁶

The answer to that question offers powerful testimony to the political correctness of revolutionary socialist opposition to Stalinism. Stalin and the Communist party leaders who made a cult of his personality did not agree with Trotsky that "The defense of the USSR coincides in principle with the preparation of the world proletarian revolution."

As a caste enjoying special privileges in the Soviet Union, the Stalinist bureaucracy feared that victorious socialist revolutions in Western Europe would inspire the Soviet workers to oust them from power. One of the reflections of this fear was the Stalinist theory that socialist aims had to be discarded in World War II, or indefinitely postponed, since the conflict—again according to Stalinist theory—was essentially a struggle between democracy and fascism. Therefore, to believe this leadership, the struggle for socialism could only play into the hands of the fascists.

This outlook received its most glaring expression in Stalin's chauvinistic manner of waging the war. All appeals to socialist sentiments were dropped. Russian patriotic traditions replaced them. Hatred for the German people

Defense of the Soviet Union

IT HAS been argued that Trotsky's position on the Soviet Union was emotionally motivated. One school of psychologists, who interpret his opposition to the Stalinist bureaucracy as synonymous with opposition to the Soviet Union as a whole, contends that his attitude derived from pique at being defeated by the "practical" Stalin. A more generous opinion is that the murder of Trotsky's children, collaborators and friends led him to unreasoning hatred. An opposite school, however, dissatisfied with Trotsky's firm defense of the Soviet Union under the most trying circumstances, thinks that his role in founding the first workers state blinded him to its defects—his emotions blocked him from any other course than defending his creation no matter what it had evolved into.

These amateur psychologists fail to understand Trotsky's politics, which were thoroughly rational.

Trotsky kept in sight the basic economic and social institutions that were established by the October Revolution—state monopoly of foreign trade, the planned economy, the anti-capitalist structure of government, the socialist outlook of the masses. No matter how deeply these had degenerated under Stalin's regime, Trotsky held that the Soviet institutions still added up to a workers state. From this it followed that the socialist opposition to Stalinism could in no way accede to imperialist intervention in Soviet affairs. It was the job of the Soviet working people—and no one else—to get rid of Stalinist tyranny and restore proletarian democracy. Those in socialist opposition to Stalinism, in fact, in order to advance the world-wide struggle for socialism, were duty-bound to serve as the best defenders of the Soviet Union.

In 1940, after the outbreak of World War II, Trotsky wrote: "Those who cannot defend old positions will never conquer new ones The defense of the USSR coincides in principle with the preparation of the world proletarian revolution."

Events have fully confirmed the view that the possibility of new revolutionary conquests was linked to the defense of "old positions." The heroic resistance of the Soviet workers and peasants saved the USSR after Stalin's policies had brought the workers state to the verge of catastrophic defeat.⁵ With the first Soviet victories, a resistance movement that had already begun to take shape in many parts of Europe against the Nazis and the collaborationist bourgeoisie gained revolutionary scope. Partisan forces began operating throughout Eastern Europe, reinforcing Soviet guerrillas behind the German lines.

In Yugoslavia, partisans, spearheaded by proletarian brigades, pinned down considerable German forces even before the Nazi invasion of the USSR. The Yugoslavs, under Tito's leadership, rendered valiant aid in the defense of the Soviet Union. But they too needed the further inspiration of Soviet victories to forge ahead to their own victory and the establishment of a workers state.

In Greece, another mass revolutionary movement—the ELAS partisans—in 1943 gained control of the entire country except for Athens, then lost it when the Greek Communist party leadership obeyed Stalin's orders to yield power

5. In his speech at the secret session of the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist party, Khrushchev referred to some of Stalin's crimes. His list included debilitation of the command of the armed forces in the blood purges of the 1930's and Stalin's refusal to believe reports that the Nazis were planning to attack. In 1941 the Trotskyist movement pointed to these as among the major reasons for the initial costly defeats suffered by the Soviet Union.

6. In an article on the current international crisis over Berlin, Joseph C. Harsch observed in the *Christian Science Monitor* (Feb. 18, 1959): "At that time [1945] Moscow possessed enormous and apparently expanding political power and influence. Communism was strong and emergent in every part of Europe. Germany, France, and Italy were all deeply infected."

was a dominant theme in Soviet propaganda, a policy that did much to reinforce the Nazi hold on the German masses.

Other equally reactionary consequences followed. Stalin's secret deals with Roosevelt and Churchill called for retaining capitalism in power throughout Europe, with the Soviet Union allotted the buffer zone which it had taken anyway in Eastern Europe for purposes of military defense.

Even in Bulgaria and Rumania, the USSR's immediate neighbors, decrees were issued as the Red Army marched across the border that "the existing social structure" was not to be altered, although the working people were organizing strikes, dividing up landlords' estates and getting rid of the fascist officials.

Defense of China

THE third war, intermingled with the imperialist conflict between the Allies and the Axis, was China's struggle against Japan. This was highly complex. At first sight it might seem impossible for revolutionary socialists to do anything but abstain or say, like Mercutio, "A plague o' both your houses!"

The Chinese ruling class was as rotted a combination of capitalist-landlord compradores as existed in the world. These venal servants of imperialism and exploiters of the Chinese workers and peasants were headed by the brutal dictatorship of Chiang Kai-shek, the butcher of the working-class revolution of 1925-27. Moreover China was the ally and recipient of aid from the world's most powerful imperialist power, the United States. Where could anything progressive be found in a capitalist country headed by a government manifesting such reactionary characteristics?

As in the case of the Soviet Union, the Shachtmanites couldn't see anything defensible in China and they argued against the Trotskyist position, which was to support China against Japan.

What was progressive was China's place in relationship to Japan. Japanese capitalism had reached the imperialist stage. China was a semi-colony that had yet to achieve the stage of an integrated nation. Lenin long ago pointed out that the working class in the imperialist centers had everything to gain from making common cause with the colonial bourgeoisie in such struggles while retaining political independence due to the limitations inherent in a bourgeois nationalist leadership. Applying this concept, the Trotskyists remained in political opposition to the Chiang dictatorship but subordinated this opposition to the defense of China.

How well the Trotskyist estimate corresponded to the objective course of this war can be seen in retrospect. The

Only after American imperialism — with the help of the Communist parties — had stabilized capitalist rule in Western Europe to some degree, had launched the cold war, was testing atomic bombs in the Pacific and stockpiling nuclear weapons, did the Kremlin reluctantly take the defensive measure of abolishing capitalist rule in Eastern Europe by bureaucratic-military means.

Thus the Soviet victory in World War II had dual consequences. On the one hand it served as a mighty stimulus to working-class militancy and socialist aspirations everywhere; on the other hand, the Stalinist component served to derail these promising developments. In its main lines the reality turned out pretty much as the Trotskyists had foreseen it at the beginning of the war.

Chinese people sought from 1931 to resist the encroachments of Japanese imperialism, and, by shaking off the Japanese yoke, to win national liberation from all imperialist powers, including the U.S. Chiang's incredibly corrupt regime repeatedly sought compromise with Japanese imperialism but the costly concessions did not halt the Japanese advance. It was only the revolutionary resistance of the Chinese people that prevented Japan from consolidating its conquests and overrunning all of China.

The Kuomintang's do-nothing record, its outrageous exactions from the peasants, its looting and plundering, and its increasingly abject dependence on American imperialism lost it any measure of acquiescence it might have enjoyed among the masses during the war. With China's victory, the people set out to get rid of this hated government.

In accordance with the Kremlin's characterization of World War II, the Chinese followers of Stalin did not steer toward socialist aims. They did everything possible to bolster Chiang Kai-shek despite repeated brush-offs from the dictator. China in their opinion was not ripe for an economic and social overturn. Chinese capitalism still had a historic mission to accomplish and they were willing to do what they could to maintain it.

When the Chinese people took the road of economic and social revolution, however, the Communist party found itself propelled into leadership. As in the case of Tito in Yugoslavia, Mao disregarded Stalin's directives. (At the outset of the civil war, Stalin recognized Chiang Kai-shek's regime as the legitimate Chinese government and urged Mao Tse-tung to make a deal with the dictator.) Mao also disregarded his own theories. The alternative was to be flattened by the revolutionary steamroller.

Thus China — coveted prize of both Japanese and American imperialism — continuing the struggle begun against Japan, underwent a profound social and economic revolution, escaped all would-be imperialist overlords and emerged as an independent power, a result Roosevelt had not anticipated when he included China in his wartime alliance.⁷ But Trotskyist theory did foresee this consequence and the Trotskyist political position aimed at facilitating it.

In view of the final victory of the Chinese Communist party did a correct theory and a correct political position prove meaningless? In this situation, at enormous unnecessary cost, a quarter of the human race proved capable of establishing its will on the main questions — the defeat of imperialism and its national agents and the displacement of capitalism, by planned economy. The case of India, however, should also be taken into account to gain a more balanced appreciation of the role of theory and political positions in the colonial world during the war.

In August 1942 when mass strikes and demonstrations swept India, and the Congress party of the Indian capitalists called for a civil-disobedience campaign to win independence from England, the Trotskyists supported the struggle. The Indian Communist party leadership, while paying lip service to India's *objective* of independence, opposed the actual struggle. In common with Churchill, the U.S. State Department and the British Labour party brass, the CP declared that the Indian people's rising interfered with the Allied war effort and thus offered objective aid to Japanese imperialism.

This prognosis turned out to be somewhat inaccurate. The August 1942 strikes did not help the Japanese at all, but they did aid the cause of Indian freedom and the revolutionary struggle to liquidate imperialism in general. By 1945 the British were compelled to grant India her independence or face a

7. For a vivid account of how China's struggle, thrown on its own resources, developed stage by stage to the profoundest overturn since the October 1917 Revolution in Czarist Russia, the reader is referred to Jack Belden's *China Shakes the World*.

STALIN

An Appraisal of the Man
and His Influence
by Leon Trotsky

Cloth, \$3.50; paperback, \$1.95.
Canada: \$4 and \$2.50

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116 University Place
New York 3, N. Y.

revolutionary movement far more powerful and determined than even the August 1942 uprising.

But the Communist party was so discredited by its wartime position in India that it lost its opportunity to become a leading force. Still worse, it brought discredit on communism itself. The result was that the Congress party filled

the vacuum and won domination of Indian politics. The Indian bourgeoisie was able to arrest the logical course of the revolutionary ferment, preserve the capitalist structure, and survive as a ruling class. India is paying for this today with abysmal poverty, the constant threat of famine, and economic stagnation.

Were the Miners Right?

BESIDES the three wars already considered, it will prove instructive to bring into sharper focus still another conflict — the class struggle in America during World War II.

The capitalists did not forget their class interests during the war. On the contrary, as always, they utilized the bloodbath to advance their interests, beginning with those that could be added up in bank accounts in the form of profits. Through Roosevelt in the White House and through the Democratic-Republican coalition in Congress they sought to "contain" the labor movement under threat of massive retaliation.

The Socialist Workers party called attention to this elementary fact again and again, and, in the fighting socialist tradition of Eugene V. Debs, advocated that the working people should defend their interests despite the war. This was the positive content of socialist opposition to the imperialist conflict. It was that simple in essence.

The American workers were resolutely against fascism anywhere, any time, at home, in Italy, in Germany, in Spain. They tended to support the war in the mistaken belief that Roosevelt was telling the truth about fighting for democracy and for "four freedoms."

But the fraud of Roosevelt's "equality of sacrifice" program, which froze wages in the face of inflation while profit-taking reached astronomical heights; revelations of how the giant corporations honored their lucrative cartel obligations with German firms while German and American workers were killing one another; the evident intentions of the employers, operating from the vantage point of government boards, to rob workers of their union gains — all these prompted the American working people to look to their own interests.

The miners led the resistance. In an epic series of coal-mine strikes in 1943, the United Mine Workers stood up to the combined pressure of the employers, the Roosevelt administration, the courts, the big business press, lynch-minded professional patriots and the AFL and CIO bureaucracy.⁸

(John L. Lewis, it is worth noting, never broke from capitalist politics. A

Roosevelt supporter, he switched to the Republicans when he became disillusioned with the Democrats. Moreover, he was an ardent anti-Communist and not averse to bureaucratic practices. The Socialist Workers party called attention to these negative factors in the outlook of the head of the United Mine Workers, but offered its unconditional support to the union in its strike struggles.)

Organized labor in America owes its existence today to the success of the wartime mine workers strikes. Emboldened by what the miners had gained through militant struggle, rank-and-file unionists everywhere pressed for similar concessions from the employers and their government. The postwar union-busting schemes of the monopolies were drowned in the great strike wave of 1946 when almost two million workers walked the picket lines at one time.

The class struggles touched off by the mine strikes paid off in another direction as well. They inspired the "Get Us Home" demonstrations of American troops in the European and Pacific theaters following V-J Day. Big business had different plans for the servicemen. It wanted the GI's to police the world and ready themselves to march against the Soviet Union. The draftees, led by union men in the ranks, frustrated these plans. The brass hats had to accede to the servicemen's demands. The War Department was forced to curtail the size of its armed forces abroad and to replace the veterans with unseasoned drafted youths. That slowed down American imperialism's timetable for World War III, a fortunate occurrence from which we benefit to this day.

In contrast to the revolutionary socialist course of supporting such militant struggles, the Communist party leadership joined in making a cult of Roosevelt and of outvying the professional patriots in broadcasting the Churchill-Roosevelt-Stalin propaganda about a war for democracy and "four freedoms." The Communist party became notorious in the labor movement for its "win-the-war" zeal.

They backed the Nazi-like "relocation" of Japanese-Americans in concentration camps because of their color and ancestry; they told the Negro people that under no circumstances must the struggle for equality be pressed during wartime; they frothed at the mouth over

the coal miners daring to go out on strike; they shouted hooray for the conviction of the SWP leaders under the Smith Act and urged even stiffer sentences; they took the lead in promoting the no-strike pledge and proposed to extend it after the war; they cheered for the bombs that Truman dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki; they fought every manifestation of sentiment for building a labor party. In brief, under the slogan of fighting a war for "democracy," they opposed the democratic right of the working people to defend their standard of living, their union organizations, and their political interests in wartime.

What this cost the Communist party in political influence is now apparent to all. When the postwar witch-hunt began, the unfortunate Communist party victims found themselves without a friend in the labor movement. The wartime record of Stalinism on civil liberties, civil rights, labor solidarity, defense of the working-class standard of living, and defense of the trade unions against employer attack contributed mightily to the catastrophic collapse of the party.⁹

'Yes, But—'

EVEN at this late date, in face of this eloquent record, one still hears the argument, "But wasn't it necessary to place the defeat of fascism in the front rank of socialist objectives?"

The answer is, "Yes, it was necessary. The problem was *how* to defeat fascism."

The Socialist Workers party held that the only effective course is through development of struggles of the working class and its allies. The beginning point is militant defense of democratic conquests that are suffering erosion at the hands of a capitalist class inclined in its old age to resort to fascism. Some of the key issues involve civil liberties, civil rights, the equality of minorities, democracy in the armed forces, freedom of the trade unions from government control, participation of labor in politics in defense of its own interests and through its own political party.

The key is to strengthen the labor movement and this includes defending it from bureaucratic abuses and violations of the democratic process in the unions themselves. The construction of

⁹ In Atlanta penitentiary as a victim of the Smith Act, John Gates, a top leader of the Communist party, read how Debs, who had been sentenced to the same prison as a witch-hunt victim in World War I, had been able to run an effective campaign for President from behind bars and had been eventually freed by a huge mass movement in his behalf. In painful contrast to this, Gates observed, there was an "almost complete absence of popular concern over our imprisonment." (*The Story of an American Communist*, Thomas Nelson & Sons, New York.) Gates failed to note that Debs followed a policy of socialist opposition to World War I.

⁸ See the excellent account by Art Prels, "How the Miners Won," in the spring issue of *International Socialist Review*.

a powerful labor movement able to represent the political interests of the poorest levels of the population, including farmers and small businessmen, prepares the way for socialism—the only enduring guarantee against reaction, fascist or otherwise.

The Communist party took the opposite course—to utilize the anti-fascist sentiments of the working class to instill trust in “liberal” capitalists in general and the Democratic party in particular.

To farm out the fight against fascism is to court disaster. In democratic France, for instance, the capitalist class invited the Nazis to discipline the working class in 1940. After the war ended, the same French capitalists turned once again in the direction of fascism, installing De Gaulle’s bonapartist regime as an anticipatory move. Had the French workers possessed control over the armed forces in 1940, they might have succeeded in continuing the struggle against the Nazis as they moved toward replacing the capitalist government with a workers and farmers government. And if the Communist party or Social Democratic leaders had followed a socialist course, France in all likelihood would be enjoying the benefits of a planned economy and a humane socialist government right now instead of facing the threat of fascism and nuclear war.¹⁰

Still another argument is to admit that American entry into World War II was motivated by imperialist aims; but to maintain that despite these aims the net effect was to smash fascism in Europe and Asia and facilitate the advance of the world revolutionary movement.

This appears difficult to answer; yet the implication that it was correct to support American imperialism in World War II indicates a flaw in the reasoning.

Wars have often proved the mother of revolutions, but that should not lead us to advocate war, should it? It is not the war that *causes* the revolution. It simply speeds up economic, social and political forces that were headed in that direction anyway.

Behind the argument lurks the assumption, one is inclined to believe, that American capitalism was superior to German, Italian or Japanese capitalism and that its democracy tended to rub off onto others if close enough contact were made. Two striking instances will indicate the reality. In the case of Spain, American capitalism under both Democrats and Republicans, has followed a policy for more than twenty years of deliberately *bolstering* fascism.

10. For an excellent analysis of the Trotskyist wartime program against fascism, the reader is referred to B. Farnborough’s letter in the April-May 1959 issue of *Labour Review*, theoretical publication of Britain’s Socialist Labour League. Farnborough’s letter supplements “Marxists in the Second World War” by William Hunter, an article that I also recommended highly. It appeared in the December 1958 issue of *Labour Review*. These issues of the British magazine may be obtained through *International Socialist Review*.

In China, American capitalism took the side of Chiang’s dictatorship against all the democratic aspirations of the Chinese people and in violation of all the wartime promises of “four freedoms.” In hope of obtaining revolutionary consequences should socialists have offered support to the State Department in these cases?

If it be argued, in reply, that these cases indicate imperialist *aims* rather than the objectively revolutionary *consequences* of American intervention, let us consider the case of Korea. American involvement in that civil war had the objective consequence of vastly speeding revolutionary developments in China. From that did it follow that socialists should have supported the American role in Korea instead of condemning and opposing it as they did?

Back comes the answer, “In none of these cases was America fighting fascism. Aside from Korea, objectively revolutionary consequences can be expected only where America is in war against a reactionary regime like Hitler’s.”

Actually, a review of how the revolutionary movement unfolded during World War II shows that its advance was facilitated not just by Allied victories but by the *alternation* of Axis and Allied victories. This was more clearly evident in Asia than in Europe, but it applied to Europe, too.

Japan’s victories in the Far East, by forcing China on its own resources, began a revolutionary process that concluded in social overturn. True enough, the revolutionary process took another big step forward when Japan was defeated by the Allies. But as we have already noted—and we should note it well!—the revolution had to defeat American imperialism to consolidate its final victory.

In Southeast Asia, Japan’s victories disrupted the established patterns of imperialist rule, and this spurred anti-imperialist sentiment greatly. It happens to be a fact that Japanese imperialism shrewdly permitted the Southeast Asians more self-rule than they had enjoyed under Holland, Britain or France. When Japanese military power was smashed, these colonial peoples felt strong enough to make a bid for independence. But to win it—let this again be noted—they had to defeat the “democratic” imperialists of Western Europe backed by American military supplies.

In Europe, the German victories exposed the reactionary character of the capitalist classes throughout the continent, for they turned collaborationist in the main upon the entry of the occupation troops. The victories thereby sharpened class divisions and generated a resistance movement that tended to take a working-class direction. When the German victories were then followed by *Soviet* victories, the resistance movements took on mass scope. With the shipwreck of German imperialism, these forces surged toward government power,

confronting Anglo-American imperialism with the problem of pushing them back. (They succeeded in doing this, but, as we have observed, only with the help of the Communist parties.)

If revolutionary socialists had attempted to base their positions in World War II upon the objectively revolutionary consequences possibly arising from the most reactionary forces in motion, they would have had to support first the Axis, then the Allies, and finally—if and when they appeared, in view of such a policy—the insurgent forces. That would not have been very practical. (What came from supporting first the Axis and then the Allies was tested by the Communist party, as we have seen.)

Furthermore, it would have missed the most important revolutionary consequence of all—the growth of socialist consciousness in general, the growth of working-class realization that what is basically wrong is capitalism itself; not just in Germany, Italy, France, Britain, America but in the world as a whole. Since the *Communist Manifesto*, revolutionary socialists have considered it their duty to represent this general working-class outlook which rises above national borders and narrow spans of time.

To recapitulate: It is not true that sectarian considerations motivated the Socialist Workers position in World War II. Opposition to the imperialist conflict derived from general revolutionary socialist principles tested for more than a century. They were applied, moreover, with careful consideration to the complex intertwining of three wars involving highly contradictory forces. Experience verified the correctness of supporting the Soviet Union, the colonial countries and the struggles of the American workers in wartime; and of opposing with utmost resoluteness the imperialist powers that ventured to plunge mankind into this fearful carnage.

The positions taken in World War II retain their importance today for the insight they offer to current attitudes in the struggle for peace and as a guide for correct ways of opposing the cold war. Militant workers have much to gain from studying them as they consider how to avert the nuclear conflict which American imperialism began preparing as a direct consequence of its victory in World War II.

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The Russian Revolution and the American Negro Movement

by James P. Cannon

ALL through the first ten years of American communism, the party was preoccupied with the Negro question, and gradually arrived at a policy different and superior to that of traditional American radicalism. Yet in my published recollections of this period, the Negro question does not appear anywhere as the subject of internal controversy between the major factions. The reason for this was that none of the American leaders came up with any new ideas on this explosive problem on their own account; and none of the factions, as such, sponsored any of the changes in approach, attitude and policy which were gradually effected by the time the party finished its first decade.

The main discussions on the Negro question took place in Moscow, and the new approach to the problem was elaborated there. As early as the Second Congress of the Comintern in 1920, "The Negroes in America" was a point on the agenda, and a preliminary discussion of the question took place. Historical research will prove conclusively that CP policy on the Negro question got its initial impulse from Moscow, and also that all further elaborations of this policy, up to and including the adoption of the "self-determination" slogan in 1928, came from Moscow.

Under constant prodding and pressure from the Russians in the Comintern, the party made a beginning with Negro work in its first ten years; but it recruited very few Negroes and its influence in the Negro community didn't amount to much. From this it is easy to draw the pragmatic conclusion that all the talk

and bother about policy in that decade, from New York to Moscow, was much ado about nothing, and that the results of Russian intervention were completely negative.

That is, perhaps, the conventional assessment in these days of the cold war when aversion to all things Russian is the conventional substitute for considered opinion. But it is not true history — not by a long shot. The first ten years of American communism are too short a period for definitive judgment of the results of the new approach to the Negro question imposed on the American party by the Comintern.

Historical treatment of Communist party policy and action on the Negro question, and of Russian influence in shaping it in the first ten years of the party's existence, however exhaustive and detailed, cannot be adequate unless the inquiry is projected into the next decade. It took the first ten years for the young party to get fairly started in this previously unexplored field. The spectacular achievements in the thirties cannot be understood without reference to this earlier decade of change and re-orientation. That's where the later actions came from.

* * *

A serious analysis of the whole complex process has to begin with recognition that the American communists in the early twenties, like all other radical organizations of that and earlier times, had nothing to start with on the Negro question but an inadequate *theory*, a false or indifferent *attitude* and the adherence of a few individual Negroes of radical or revolutionary bent.

The earlier socialist movement, out of which the Communist party was formed, never recognized any need

for a special program on the Negro question. It was considered purely and simply as an economic problem, part of the struggle between the workers and the capitalists; nothing could be done about the special problems of discrimination and inequality this side of socialism.

The best of the earlier socialists were represented by Debs, who was friendly to all races and purely free from prejudice. But the limitedness of the great agitator's view on this far from simple problem was expressed in his statement: "We have nothing special to offer the Negro, and we cannot make separate appeals to all the races. The Socialist Party is the party of the whole working class, regardless of color — the whole working class of the whole world." (Ray Ginger: *The Bending Cross*.) That was considered a very advanced position at the time, but it made no provision for active support of the Negro's special claim for a little equality here and now, or in the foreseeable future, on the road to socialism.

And even Debs, with his general formula that missed the main point — the burning issue of ever-present discrimination against the Negroes every way they turned — was far superior in this regard, as in all others, to Victor Berger, who was an outspoken white supremacist. Here is a summary pronouncement from a Berger editorial in his Milwaukee paper, the *Social Democratic Herald*: "There can be no doubt that the Negroes and mulattoes constitute a lower race." That was "Milwaukee socialism" on the Negro question, as expounded by its ignorant and impudent leader-boss. A harried and hounded Negro couldn't mix that very well with his beer, even if he

This is a chapter of a forthcoming book by the author about the first ten years of American communism.

had a nickel and could find a white man's saloon where he could drink a glass of beer — at the back end of the bar.

Berger's undisguised chauvinism was never the official position of the party. There were other socialists, like William English Walling who was an advocate of equal rights for the Negroes, and one of the founders of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in 1909. But such individuals were a small minority among the socialists and radicals before the first World War and the Russian revolution.

The inadequacy of traditional socialist policy on the Negro question is amply documented by the historians of the movement, Ira Kipnis and David Shannon. The general and prevailing attitude of the Socialist party toward the Negroes is summed up by Shannon as follows:

"They were not important in the party, the party made no special effort to attract Negro members, and the party was generally disinterested in, if not actually hostile to, the effort of Negroes to improve their position in American capitalist society." And further: "The party held that the sole salvation of the Negro was the same as the sole salvation of the white: 'Socialism.'"

In the meantime, nothing could be done about the Negro question as such, and the less said about it the better. Sweep it under the rug.

Such was the traditional position inherited by the early Communist party from the preceding socialist movement out of which it had come. The policy and practice of the trade-union movement was even worse. The I.W.W. barred nobody from membership because of "race, color or creed." But the predominant AFL unions, with only a few exceptions, were lily-white job trusts. They also had nothing special to offer the Negroes; nothing at all, in fact.

* * *

The difference — and it was a *profound* difference — between the Communist party of the twenties and its socialist and radical ancestors, was signified by its break with this tradition. The American communists in the early days, under the influence and pressure of the Russians in the

Comintern, were slowly and painfully learning to change their *attitude*; to assimilate the new theory of the Negro question as a *special* question of doubly exploited second-class citizens, requiring a program of special demands as part of the over-all program — and to start doing something about it.

The true importance of this profound change, in all its dimensions, cannot be adequately measured by the results in the twenties. The first ten years have to be considered chiefly as the preliminary period of reconsideration and discussion, and change of attitude and policy on the Negro question — in preparation for future activity in this field.

The effects of this change and preparation in the twenties, brought about by the Russian intervention, were to manifest themselves explosively in the next decade. The ripe and favorable conditions for radical agitation and organization among the Negroes, produced by the great depression, found the Communist party ready to move in this field as no other radical organization in this country had ever done before.

* * *

Everything new and progressive on the Negro question came from Moscow, after the revolution of 1917, and as a result of the revolution — not only for the American communists who responded directly, but for all others concerned with the question.

By themselves, the American communists never thought of anything new or different from the traditional position of American radicalism on the Negro question. That, as the above quotations from Kipnis' and Shannon's histories show, was pretty weak in theory and still weaker in practice. The simplistic formula that the Negro problem was merely economic, a part of the capital-labor problem, never struck fire among the Negroes — who knew better even if they didn't say so; they had to live with brutal discrimination every day and every hour.

There was nothing subtle or concealed about this discrimination. Everybody knew that the Negro was getting the worst of it at every turn, but hardly anybody cared about it or

wanted to do anything to try to moderate or change it. The ninety per cent white majority of American society, including its working-class sector, North as well as South, was saturated with prejudice against the Negro; and the socialist movement reflected this prejudice to a considerable extent — even though, in deference to the ideal of human brotherhood, the socialist attitude was muted and took the form of evasion. The old theory of American radicalism turned out in practice to be a formula for inaction on the Negro front, and — incidentally — a convenient shield for the dormant racial prejudices of the white radicals themselves.

The Russian intervention changed all that, and changed it drastically, and for the better. Even before the first World War and the Russian Revolution, Lenin and the Bolsheviks were distinguished from all other tendencies in the international socialist and labor movement by concern with the problems of oppressed nations and national minorities, and affirmative support of their struggles for freedom, independence and the right of self-determination. The Bolsheviks gave this support to all "people without equal rights" sincerely and earnestly, but there was nothing philanthropic about it. They also recognized the great revolutionary potential in the situation of oppressed peoples and nations and saw them as important allies of the working class in the revolutionary struggle against capitalism.

After November, 1917, this new doctrine — with special emphasis on the Negroes — began to be transmitted to the American communist movement with the authority of the Russian Revolution behind it. The Russians in the Comintern started on the American communists with the harsh, insistent demand that they shake off their own unspoken prejudices, pay attention to the special problems and grievances of the American Negroes, go to work among them and champion their cause in the white community.

It took time for the Americans, raised in a different tradition, to assimilate the new Leninist doctrine. But the Russians followed up year

after year, piling up the arguments and increasing the pressure on the American communists until they finally learned and changed, and went to work in earnest. And the change in the attitude of the American communists, gradually effected in the twenties, was to exert a profound influence *in far wider circles* in the later years.

* * *

The Communist party's break with the traditional position of American radicalism on the Negro question coincided with profound changes which had been taking place among the Negroes themselves. The large-scale migration from the agricultural regions of the South to the industrial centers of the North was greatly accelerated during the first World War, and continued in the succeeding years. This brought some improvement in their conditions of life over what they had known in the Deep South, but not enough to compensate for the disappointment of being herded into ghettos and still subjected to discrimination on every side.

The Negro movement, such as it was at the time, patriotically supported the first World War "to make the world safe for democracy"; and 400,000 Negroes served in the armed forces. They came home looking for a little democratic pay-off for themselves, but couldn't find much anywhere. Their new spirit of self-assertion was answered by a mounting score of lynchings and a string of race riots across the country, North as well as South.

All this taken together — the hopes and the disappointments, the new spirit of self-assertion and the savage reprisals — contributed to the emergence of a new Negro movement in the making. Breaking sharply with the Booker T. Washington tradition of accommodation to a position of inferiority in a white man's world, a new generation of Negroes began to press their demand for equality.

* * *

What the emerging new movement of the American Negroes — a ten per cent minority — needed most, and lacked almost entirely, was effective support in the white community in general and in the labor movement,

its necessary ally, in particular. The Communist party, aggressively championing the cause of the Negroes and calling for an alliance of the Negro people and the militant labor movement, came into the new situation as a catalytic agent at the right time.

It was the Communist party, and no other, that made the Herndon and Scottsboro cases national and worldwide issues, and put the Dixiecrat legal-lynch mobs on the defensive — for the first time since the collapse of Reconstruction. Party activists led the fights and demonstrations to gain fair consideration for unemployed Negroes at the relief offices, and to put the furniture of evicted Negroes back into their empty apartments. It was the Communist party that demonstratively nominated a Negro for Vice-President in 1932 — something no other radical or socialist party had ever thought about doing.

By such and similar actions and agitation in the thirties, the party shook up all more or less liberal and progressive circles of the white majority, and began to bring about a radical change of attitude on the Negro question. At the same time, the party became a real factor among the Negroes, and the Negroes themselves advanced in status and self-confidence — *partly as a result of the Communist party's aggressive agitation on the issue.*

The facts are not disposed of by saying: The communists had their own ax to grind. All agitation for Negro rights is grist to the mill of the Negro movement; and the agitation of the communists was more energetic and more effective than any other at that time — by far.

These new developments appear to contain a contradictory twist which, as far as I know, has never been confronted or explained. The expansion of communist influence in the Negro movement in the thirties happened despite the fact that *one* of the new slogans imposed on the party by the Comintern — the slogan of "self-determination" — about which the most to-do was made and the most theses and resolutions were written, and which was even touted as the main slogan, never seemed to fit the

actual situation. The slogan of "self-determination" found little or no acceptance in the Negro community; after the collapse of the separatist movement led by Garvey, their trend was mainly toward integration with equal rights.

In practice the CP jumped over this contradiction. When the party adopted the slogan of "self-determination," it did not drop its aggressive agitation for *Negro equality and Negro rights on every front*. On the contrary, it intensified and extended this agitation. That's what the Negroes wanted to hear, and that's what made the difference. It was the CP's agitation and action under the *latter* slogan that brought the results, without the help, and probably despite the unpopular self-determination slogan and all the theses written to justify it.

* * *

The communists turned Stalinists, in the "Third Period" of ultra-radicalism, carried out their activity in the Negro field with all the crooked demagogy, exaggerations and distortions which are peculiar to them and inseparable from them. But in spite of that the main appeal to equal rights came through and found an echo in the Negro community. For the first time since the abolitionists, the Negroes saw an aggressive, militant, dynamic group of white people championing their cause. Not a few philanthropists and pallid liberals this time, but the hard-driving Stalinists of the thirties, at the head of a big, upsurging radical movement generated by the depression. There was power in their drive in those days, and it was felt in many areas of American life.

The first response of many Negroes was favorable; and the party's reputation as a revolutionary organization identified with the Soviet Union, was probably more a help than a hindrance. The Negro upper crust, seeking respectability, tended to shy away from anything radical; but the rank and file, the poorest of the poor who had nothing to lose, were not afraid. The party recruited thousands of Negro members in the thirties and became, for a time, a real force in the Negro community. The compelling reason was their pol-

icy on the issue of equal rights and their general *attitude*, which they had learned from the Russians, and their activity on the new line.

* * *

In the thirties, Communist party influence and action were not restricted to the issue of "civil rights" in general. They also operated powerfully to reshape the labor movement and help the Negro workers gain a place in it which had previously been denied. The Negro workers themselves, who had done their share in the great struggles to create the new unions, were pressing their own claims more aggressively than ever before. But they needed help, they needed allies.

The Communist party militants stepped into this role at the critical point in the formative days of the new unions. The policy and agitation of the Communist party at that time did more, ten times over, than any other to help the Negro workers to rise to a new status of at least semi-citizenship in the new labor movement created in the thirties under the banner of the CIO.

* * *

It is customary to attribute the progress of the Negro movement, and the shift of public opinion in favor of its claims, to the changes brought about by the first World War. But the biggest thing that came out of the first World War, the event that changed everything, including the prospects of the American Negro, was the Russian Revolution. The influence of Lenin and the Russian Revolution, even debased and distorted as it later was by Stalin, and then filtered through the activities of the Communist party in the United States, contributed *more than any other influence from any source* to the recognition, and more or less general acceptance, of the Negro question as a *special* problem of American society — a problem which cannot be simply subsumed under the general heading of the conflict between capital and labor, as it was in the pre-communist radical movement.

It adds something, but not much, to say that the Socialist party, the liberals and the more or less progres-

sive labor leaders went along with the new definition, and gave some support to the claims of the Negroes. That's just what they did; they went along. They had no independent, worked-out theory and policy of their own; where would they get it — out of their own heads? Hardly. They all followed in the wake of the CP on this question in the thirties.

The Trotskyists and other dissident radical groups — who also had learned from the Russians — contributed what they could to the fight for Negro rights; but the Stalinists, dominating the radical movement, dominated the new developments in the Negro field too.

* * *

Everything new on the Negro question came from Moscow — after the Russian Revolution began to thunder its demand throughout the world for freedom and equality for all national minorities, all subject peoples and all races — for all the despised and rejected of the earth. This thunder is still rolling, louder than ever, as the daily headlines testify.

The American communists responded first, and most emphatically to the new doctrine from Russia. But the *Negro people*, and *substantial segments of American white society*, responded indirectly, and are still responding — whether they recognize it or not.

The present official leaders of the "civil rights" movement of the American Negroes, more than a little surprised at its expanding militancy, and the support it is getting in the white population of the country, scarcely suspect how much the upsurging movement owes to the Russian Revolution which they all patriotically disavow.

The Reverend Martin Luther King did remark, at the time of the Montgomery boycott battle, that their movement was part of the worldwide struggle of the colored peoples for independence and equality. He should have added that the colonial revolutions, which are indeed a powerful ally of the Negro movement in America, got their starting impulse from the Russian Revolution — and are stimulated and strengthened from day to day by the continuing ex-

istence of this revolution in the shape of the Soviet Union and the new China, which white imperialism suddenly "lost."

* * *

Indirectly, but all the more convincingly, the most rabid anti-Sovietees, among them the liberal politicians and the official labor leaders, testify to this when they say: The Little Rock scandal and things like that shouldn't happen because it helps communist propaganda among the dark-skinned colonial people. Their fear of "communist propaganda," like some other people's fear of the Lord, makes them virtuous.

It is now conventional for labor leaders and liberals — in the North — to sympathize with the Negro struggle for a few elementary rights as human beings. It is the Right Thing to Do, the mark of civilized intelligence. Even the ex-radicals, turned into anti-communist "liberals" of a sort — a very poor sort — are all now pridefully "correct" in their formal support of "civil rights" and their opposition to Negro segregation and other forms of discrimination. But how did they all get that way?

It never occurs to the present-day liberals to wonder why their similars of a previous generation — with notable individual exceptions — never thought of this new and more enlightened attitude toward the Negroes before Lenin and the Russian Revolution upset the apple cart of the old-well-established and complacently accepted separate-but-unequal doctrine. The American anti-communist liberals and labor officials don't know it, but some of the Russian influence they hate and fear so much even rubbed off on them.

* * *

Of course, as everybody knows, the American Stalinists eventually fouled up the Negro question, as they fouled up every other question. They sold out the struggle for Negro rights during the second World War, in the service of Stalin's foreign policy — as they sold out striking American workers, and rotted for the prosecution in the first Smith Act trial at Minneapolis, for the same basic reason.

Everybody knows that now. The

chickens finally came home to roost, and the Stalinists themselves have felt impelled to make public confessions of some of their treachery and some of their shame. But nothing, neither professed repentance for crimes that can't be concealed, nor boasts of former virtues that others are unwilling to remember, seem to do them any good. The Communist party, or rather what is left of it, is so discredited and despised that it gets little or no recognition and credit today for its work in the Negro field in those earlier days — when it had far-reaching and, in the main, progressive consequences.

It is not my duty or my purpose to help them out. The sole aim of this condensed review is to set straight a few facts about the early days of American communism — for the benefit of inquiring students of a new generation who want to know the whole truth, however the chips may fall, and to learn something from it.

The new policy on the Negro question, learned from the Russians in the first ten years of American communism, enabled the Communist party in the thirties to advance the cause of the Negro people; and to expand its own influence among them on a scale never approached by any radical movement before that time. These are facts of history; not only of the history of American communism, but of the history of the Negro struggle for emancipation too.

* * *

For those who look to the future these facts are important; an anticipation of things to come. By their militant activity in earlier years, the Stalinists gave a great impetus to the new Negro movement. Then, their betrayal of the Negro cause in the second World War cleared the way for the inch-at-a-time gradualists who have been leading the movement unchallenged ever since.

The policy of gradualism, of promising to free the Negro within the framework of the social system that subordinates and degrades him, is not working out. It does not go to the root of the problem. The aspirations of the Negro people are great and so are the energies and emotions expended in their struggle. But the

concrete gains of their struggle up to date are pitifully meager. They have gained a few inches, but the goal of real equality is miles and miles away.

The right to occupy a vacant seat on a bus; the token integration of a handful of Negro children in a few public schools; a few places open for individual Negroes in public office and some professions; fair employment rights on the books, but not in practice; the formally and legally recognized right to equality which is denied in practice at every turn — that's the way it is today, ninety-six years after the Emancipation Proclamation.

There has been a big change in the outlook and demands of the Negroes' movement since the days of Booker T. Washington, but no fundamental change in their actual situation. This contradiction is building up to another explosion and another change of policy and leadership. In the next stage of its development, the American Negro movement will be compelled to turn to a more militant policy than gradualism, and to look for more reliable allies than capitalist politicians in the North who are themselves allied with the Dixiecrats of the South. The Negroes, more than

any others in this country, have reason and right to be revolutionary.

An honest workers' party of the new generation will recognize this revolutionary potential of the Negro struggle, and call for a fighting alliance of the Negro people and the labor movement in a common revolutionary struggle against the present social system.

Reforms and concessions, far more important and significant than any yet attained, will be by-products of this revolutionary alliance. They will be fought for and attained at every stage of the struggle. But the new movement will not stop with reforms, nor be satisfied with concessions. The movement of the Negro people and the movement of militant labor, united and coordinated by a revolutionary party, will solve the Negro problem in the only way it can be solved — by a social revolution.

The first efforts of the Communist party along these lines a generation ago will be recognized and appropriated. Not even the experience of the Stalinist betrayal will be wasted. The memory of this betrayal will be one of the reasons why the Stalinists will not be the leaders next time.

Los Angeles
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Socialist Equality by 1965?

What is the significance of the goals announced by Khrushchev at the Twenty-First Congress? Study of the Seven Year Plan provides illuminating data

by Tom Kemp

THE targets adopted at the Twenty-First Congress of the Communist party of the Soviet Union are claimed not only to mark the entry into the last leg of the race to catch up and outstrip the advanced capitalist countries in per capita output but also to lead to the threshold of communism. These claims need to be appraised carefully and realistically on the basis of the present and potential capacity of the Soviet economy, their relationship to the balance of social forces inside the USSR and their consequences for international political developments in the coming fifteen years.

Industrial Growth

The economic tasks are defined by Khrushchev as entailing "the all-round development of the productive forces" while conserving the priority development of heavy industry.¹ Indeed, capital investments provide the limiting factor in the rate of growth of the economy and the attainment of figures in the plan turns upon their full realization. The scope and nature of the investments comprised in the seven-year target figures give a fairly full guide to the way in which the economy will have to be redirected to take advantage of what has been achieved in past plans, as well as to make good, as rapidly as possible, the lags and deficiencies which still hold back the Soviet economy. Without overcoming these weaknesses it is idle to talk of "balanced development."

The range and abundance of minerals to be found in that part of the earth's surface within the USSR apparently ensures that the physical possibility for the achievement of the target figures is sound enough. However, it will be necessary to bring about considerable shifts in the relative importance of the various areas in total output of iron ore, petroleum and other minerals. This

1. Most quotations, unless otherwise stated, are from Khrushchev's "Theses of Report on the Targets of the Seven-Year Plan," Nov., 1958, his report on "Target Figures for the Economic Development of the Soviet Union, 1959-65" given at the Congress on Jan. 27, 1959, or from the reports of other speakers.

means further rapid development in Central Asia, the Urals and Siberia and will involve the urbanization of new areas and the recruitment of workers for the new enterprises from the countryside or perhaps from Western Russia. Although there may be disadvantages in this, it will be possible for the new productive units to be built on an optimum scale, making use of the latest in technology.

At the same time technical efficiency now imposes wider use of alloys, especially in developing branches of industry such as electronics. Nonferrous metal production therefore takes prominent place in the plan. In chemicals the Soviet leadership has been expressing dissatisfaction with output, especially of artificial and synthetic fibres and plastics. Output of the former is to grow four times, that of the latter to be stepped up over sevenfold. In addition, though not mentioned by Khrushchev at the Congress, production is to be greatly increased in East Germany and Czechoslovakia and machinery is to be obtained from those countries. It will be recalled that machinery for building up this lagging sector of industry was one of the items which Khrushchev sought for purchase from the U.S.A. in his letter to Eisenhower in the summer of 1958.

Special attention is being paid to the power base, and significant changes in the relative importance of different fuels is involved. The share of oil and gas is to rise from 31% to 51% and that of coal to decline correspondingly. This follows a trend already marked in the U.S.A. and Western Europe. In the case of electric power the need for speed has clearly dictated the preference for thermal over hydroelectric stations. The figures announced for electric power output will bring Soviet per capita consumption in 1965 up to only 73% of the American level for 1957, a sobering thought which prompted Academician Strumlin in an article published last December to query the adequacy of the plan in this direction.² He

2. Several criticisms were embedded in the general approval given to the plan. *Soviet News* (London), No. 3967, Dec. 10, 1958.

also proposed the completion of the Krasnoyarsk hydroelectric station. It is difficult to tell whether his criticisms carried any weight in the adopted target. Khrushchev did, however, have to explain that to keep the existing proportions between thermal and hydroelectric station construction would either involve a cut in the planned capacities in operation or greatly increased investments.

This underlines the inevitable limiting role of investment as well as the heavy burden of "catching up." What it means is that the period of planning has to be confined within a time-span which cramps the rational allocation of resources and which threatens to provoke waste, if not disproportions. Thus Lenin's ideas on electrification are being deformed to suit the specifications of "socialism in one country."

The great distances of Russia and the spacing out of natural resources and fertile and populated areas has always given the transport system a key place in economic development. All advance hinges upon the transport system which, if it lags behind, spreads high costs and disorganization far and wide. The pressure on the transport system has always been immense and it has barely kept pace with the demands imposed upon it. Inevitably, therefore, considerable funds have to be provided for the modernization of the railways and the extension and improvement of the road system. The railways, again following in the wake of the advanced countries, will be turned over to diesel and electric propulsion, while traffic capacity is planned to double.

As for the road system, that has always trailed behind. For a country of such distances and with such a large and scattered rural population the number of motor vehicles is remarkably small; an index of the still considerable weight of inherited backwardness.³

3. The production target for all motor vehicles in 1965 will be 750,000 to 856,000. Current output in three West European countries — Federal Germany, France and Britain — runs at over one million a year. U.S. productive capacity for commercial vehicles is well over one million and actual production near this level (nearly one and a half million in 1951).

Likewise many of the roads are incapable of coping with the speeds and loads of modern vehicle traffic. "Motor roads will be built with a durable cement and concrete surface," Khrushchev says, implying that too many still have the rough dirt track of the days of the peasant cart.

Both roads and houses consume immense quantities of concrete and cement. The clear lag here makes necessary a gigantic target: an increase in the next seven years equal to the present output of the U.S.A.

All the constructional industries will be subjected to heavy strains to attain such targets. Nor is it any longer merely the comparatively crude task of adopting and assimilating a ready-made technique from the more advanced capitalist countries. The tasks now being set are far more delicate and difficult, involving the carrying forward of the all-round level of technology to a higher level and fitting it to the requirements of a planned economy. At least one element in the reorganization of economic areas carried out in 1957 was precisely determined by the changing level of the Soviet economy.

Realization of the new difficulties likely to be encountered has evidently prompted the setting of a lower rate of growth than that attained in the earlier five-year plans, a point which has been seized on by most hostile critics. Khrushchev's own words are no doubt true enough when he states that the plan "is being drawn up in such a way that it can be carried out without overstrain" and in order to make it easier to avoid disproportions, the great nightmare of Soviet planners.

In other words, it might be said that a slackening growth rate is, among other things, a precautionary step. The current planners and their regime cannot in fact release all the energies inherent in a planned and nationalized economy. They are constantly launching broadsides against waste, neglect and mismanagement — to no apparent avail. They are constantly exhorting one or another section of the population to work harder and better. In words, at any rate, they pay respects to the need for the support and active participation of the masses. But it is clear, if only from these repeated pleadings and warnings that they do not have, and cannot attain to this situation.

The Promises of More and Better

Nevertheless it is undeniable that the fruits of past economic development are now being reaped, if still laboriously — and if still unequally distributed. The expansion in production means that, even with no change in the proportionate production of consumer goods, there is more to distribute in absolute terms. The growing availability of many goods which until recent years could not be

found even in the Moscow shops is attested to by all visitors to the Soviet Union. It is true that they mostly tell about the capital, where per capita retail sales may be as high as three or more times those in the provinces. Even so, improvement has been taking place, and the insistence of the Russian workers and peasants upon more and better consumer goods of all kinds means that there can be no turning back. Not only that but it is evident from the words and deeds of the Soviet tops in the past few years that, even while defending their privileges and the prevailing inequality in the receipt of the good things of life, they are increasingly sensitive to criticism. To defend their order it is no longer enough to distort Marx, it is also necessary to deliver the goods.

Their ability to do this, greater than before because they now handle an economy at a higher level of industrialization, is still limited by many factors. Their own incomes and perquisites obviously constitute one barrier. A closed book in the official record, for obvious reasons, unequal distribution of the "good things of life" is itself admitted. When Khrushchev states, however, in reply to the unmentioned off-stage critics with whom he frequently debates, that what he calls "equalitarian Communism"⁴ "would only eat up our stockpiles, make extended reproduction impossible and block successful expansion of the economy" he says precisely nothing about the point at issue.

He seems to be trying to say that more equal distribution would mean reduced production, but that is not necessarily so. Once a certain volume of consumer goods production has been planned the problem is how it shall be distributed — and that can have nothing to do with eating up stockpiles, preventing extended reproduction or blocking economic expansion. Perhaps the wrong things are being produced for a more equitable distribution — too many limousines and not enough washing machines — just because incomes are unequal — that is what happens in capitalist countries; there is no doubt that it occurs in the USSR as well.

In order to defend the privileges of the bureaucracy, for that is what it amounts to, there has to be constant insistence that the actual distribution of income follow the socialist principle of "from each according to his abilities, to each according to his work." The incomes of the ruling stratum are thus assimilated to their "labor contribution," which it is implied, is greater than that of other members of society. Let us leave aside here the theoretical difficulties of reconciling this view with the claim that the USSR is in sight of communism, and consider how Khrushchev faces up to the critics.

4. "The wage policy of the Socialist State involves a struggle against petty bourgeois equalising tendencies." Eng. Ed., p. 603.

He refers, for example, to "some scientific workers" who alleged that "distribution according to work signifies application of bourgeois law to Socialist society." He wriggles round this charge by asserting that inequality of shares are inevitable in "the first phase of Communist society" and has nothing to do with "bourgeois law." Either the "scientific workers," out of discretion, perhaps, did not state their case very well, or, which is more probably the case, Khrushchev has distorted it as wilfully as he distorts Marxism. Certainly, and that is the important thing, the bourgeois norms of distribution penetrate everywhere into Soviet society hidden behind such expressions as "payment according to work performed" and "material incentives." The bad faith, bluster and apologetics of the spokesmen of the ruling group bear witness to their bad consciences and their sensitivity to criticism.

In fact it is constantly necessary to refute what the *Political Economy Textbook* called the "petty bourgeois doctrine of the equality of wages." Doubtless no one has put forward such a demand, but the strong current of opinion rising against special privileges and glaring inequalities can be inferred from the space devoted in Soviet publications to an oblique, but increasingly sophisticated defense of them. Not long ago, for example, the same Professor Ostrovityanov who was editor-in-chief of the textbook showed signs of some second thoughts. "As we advance to communism," he wrote, "the gulf between maximum and minimum wages will be reduced by further raising the wages of the lower paid workers, which will be brought about by the growth of production, the lowering of production costs, the cutting of the staff apparatus and the reduction of the excessively high incomes of various groups."⁵ (My emphasis.)

It is not often that reference is made to "excessively high incomes" and Khrushchev did not feel called upon, at the Congress, to ask for any sacrifices from the assembled functionaries and members of the staff apparatus.⁶ Even the members of the "anti-party group" were not given the severe punishment of having their emoluments reduced to the level of the lower-paid workers.

Definite promises have been made, however, to raise the wage levels of the lower-paid grades, and what has been said about them points to the existence of a submerged fifth of the working population still on the standard of bare necessities. Thus it is promised that workers paid from 270 to 350 rubles a month will be raised to 500-600 rubles over the seven-year period. In other

5. In a communication to the Academy of Sciences entitled "Theoretical Problems of Building Communism in the USSR."

6. On the contrary, the tax cuts announced were a gift to the recipients of big incomes.

words there are many workers whose day's wages can buy no more than a quart of milk, a meter of cotton cloth or twelve pounds of potatoes. Where there is talk of an increase in real incomes of 40% note must be taken of the actual level of consumption prevailing among the working class. Even a skilled worker, taking home about 1,000 rubles a month, is not able to buy the quantity or variety of goods available to the employed worker of comparable skill in the advanced capitalist countries. For example, he will need about 150 rubles for a pair of shoes (not of very good quality) and over half a month's pay to acquire a bicycle.⁷ No doubt he will be adequately fed, with the help of cheap meals in the factory, but his standards are still creeping up rather slowly — and far from fast enough to satisfy his aspirations.

To counter this, Khrushchev has to emphasize the importance of "social income" not included in the wage and maintain the dogma of an actual increasing pauperization of workers and peasants under capitalism. In fact income levels so far attained, or even to be reached in seven years, if all goes according to plan, hardly make good the claim to have built "socialism," let alone to be on the threshold of communism. Abundance has not yet come for the Soviet working class, nor is it around the corner as long as inequalities of an unjustifiable kind exist and the bureaucracy itself, through its domestic and foreign policies, stands in the way of a more rational utilization of resources.

Consumption has risen, and will rise, there is no doubt about that. Continued advance will have a particularly great impression, as in the past, on the peoples of the underdeveloped countries, there is no doubt about that either. Nevertheless, as the working class in the Soviet Union imposes an improvement in its living conditions, as it grows in skill and self-confidence, so it will desire more and faster improvement, an end to bureaucratic privileges and an actual, not a nominal, place as the leading force in the state and in society.

Even the realization of the promises on consumption could not forestall this deep-running social process, but only speed it up. Moreover, the antagonism between accumulation and consumption continues to have profound consequences for Soviet economic development and social relations.

In relation to consumption a word needs to be said about housing. Despite the pace of new construction — which opens up further possibilities for inequality in the distribution of "the good things of life" — there is still a chronic shortage of house space. In many towns the actual level of overcrowding is hardly less than in 1928 and the further

7. Applying Moscow prices as reported in the pro-Soviet review *Economie et Politique*, Nov.-Dec., 1957. Prices given in other sources seem to tally.

expansion of the economy, requiring movement into the towns, as well as prospective increases in population, mean that a good deal of new housing construction will be needed actually just to keep pace with demand.

The target figure set is "to bring about a change in housing distribution, that of providing a separate flat for each family," and not on a very lavish scale either. No wonder that Soviet citizens, to escape the squalor and overcrowding of their home life, spend a good deal of their recreational time on the streets or in other public places.⁸ How much better off they will be in respect to housing in seven years largely remains to be seen, but it is doubtful whether what is achieved will measure up, in respect to quantity and quality of living space for the ordinary family, to the demands of socialism.⁹ In any case housing and its corollary, the furniture and domestic equipment industries, will absorb considerable resources, and consequently limit the expansion possible in other sectors. It will certainly be impossible to cut back on the housing program without raising the ire of the Soviet people.

The Peasantry and the Plan

Since the slashing exposure of the defects of Soviet agriculture which he made in the stocktaking that followed Stalin's death in 1953, Khrushchev has been associated with a succession of spectacular policy changes. The virgin lands campaign, the planting of corn, the promises about meat and milk production, the sale of machinery by the Machine Tractor Stations to the collective farms, new policies on purchasing and on prices — these represent so many gambles designed to extricate agriculture from its stagnation, increase urban food supplies and win the good will of the peasantry. Khrushchev's personal reputation is more closely tied up with these than perhaps with any other part of government policy of recent years and his clash with the Malenkov-Molotov faction seems to have been a result in large part of their doubts about such innovations.

To draw up a full balance sheet of Khrushchev's policies will be possible only at the end of the Seven Year Plan. Results in agriculture take time to prove themselves, especially when they concern measures of such immense scope. It can be taken that the main lines of approach to agriculture have been established for the next few years and will only be disturbed by an untoward event or by their failure to do what is expected of them.

8. It contributes, too, to the scourge of alcoholism.

9. The indications are that it will still be below the current level in Western Europe. Immense disparities exist, of course, between those in the new flats and other families in old tenements and wooden cottages. There is more honesty about such things in official propaganda than there once was.

So far Khrushchev has been favored by the context within which he is operating. In 1953 agriculture was in a serious impasse. The peasantry was resentful, food shortage endemic and bad harvests could still spell disaster. According to Khrushchev, Malenkov was responsible for a gross overestimation of grain production and Beria for the sorry state of livestock production. As compared with 1910-14, the period 1949-53 showed scarcely any increase in sown areas, crop fields and grain returns "though," Khrushchev asserts, "in numerical strength the population, and especially that of the industrial centers and cities, had considerably increased, and the state's grain requirements were immeasurably greater than those of Czarist Russia."

No doubt to shed contempt on his predecessors — the great culprit, after all, being Joseph Stalin, who was said never to have visited a collective farm — Khrushchev overcolors the picture and depicts his own retrieval of the situation as all the greater by comparison.¹⁰ There has been no miracle, but by dint of great efforts — including much time and energy on his own part — the peasant has been cajoled and encouraged into producing more.

Khrushchev is able to claim big increases in output over the past five years, part of which is attributable to a measure of luck.¹¹ But big concessions have had to be made to the peasants. Furthermore, as far as grain production is concerned, a considerable contribution has been made by the once virgin lands. Not only has the supply of such areas diminished, but those in cultivation are subject to lower yields and the risks of drought.¹² In other words, it is from the collective farms that the great additions to output necessary to fulfill the Seven Year Plan must largely come, by higher yields per acre and by increasing the number and improving the quality of farm animals. This involves immense new investments in agriculture, an increase in the supply of agron-

10. Khrushchev's report, "Results of the Development of Agriculture in the Past Five Years," made to the plenum of the Central Committee, Dec. 15, 1958. This is an attempt to vindicate his policies through reference to increases in crop areas, farm animals and yields. The "anti-party group" is accused of having opposed all these policies, of not understanding agriculture and of having had "a wrong attitude to the peasantry, regarding it as a force resisting the building of socialism."

11. But perhaps not. When a representative from the Stavropol region claimed a two and one-half increase in maize production in 1958 as compared with 1953 before the Central Committee, Khrushchev intervened. "In 1958," he said, "you sowed part of the maize on top of winter grain which had perished, and you got a good crop. One might say that you would not have been lucky, if bad luck hadn't helped. So God helped you."

12. The *Economic Survey of Europe, 1957* mentioned as disadvantages of the virgin lands the need for more fertilizers (this links up clearly with the strain on the chemical industry), heavy ancillary investment and the patchy nature of the soil, giving stalks of uneven length and reducing the efficiency of combine harvesting. Khrushchev claims a big success not only because they have been decisive in increasing grain production but also since they have been "a major source of state accumulation."

omists and technicians and improvements in farm management and cost controls.

Emphasis on technique and organization will be inadequate unless the peasants can be won for complete confidence in, and co-operation with, the ruling power. But the collective farm peasantry has a will of its own. Besides, the twenty million or so peasant households by no means form a homogeneous group. There are rich peasants, such as the cotton farmers of Central Asia with their cars and good frame houses; and poor peasants, even around Moscow, who prefer to migrate to the cities.¹³ Differences in income and influence run through the collective farms as well. Concessions to the strong peasants may not suit those on the poorer farms, and so on.¹⁴

A big problem is that of the collective farmers' private plots. These plots were conceded after the first mass collectivization drive of the 1930's had fanned revolt in the villages. Since the war they have diminished in size but still provide an important addition to the family income of the peasants, as well as some office and factory workers. Peasant individualism, still strong because of mistrust of the regime, plus the general low level of living has caused the private plots to be worked to the utmost, while the work on the collective farms has been half-hearted. The peasants' own plots and animals continue to provide an important addition to the food supply, and wistful gazes are cast at the contrasts between the intensity of work put in them compared with that in the collective. On the one hand the plots are necessary, and at least have to be recognized — the market for private produce has now been made completely free; i.e., no more obligatory deliveries. At the same time, no occasion is lost to point out that it is really to the advantage of the peasants (the peasant women in particular) to merge their fields and animals with the resources of the collective farms.

As part of the progress towards communism, it is argued, not only the private plots but also the collective farms themselves must be merged into an integral form of state property.¹⁵ To speed up matters, some officials, who earned the appropriate rebukes, have put pres-

13. During his election speech in Moscow, March 1958, Khrushchev spoke of industrial executives who recruited workers for "rough" work from other areas, presumably the surrounding countryside.

14. Differences between the income of peasants on different farms can hardly fail to increase since the farms took over (or rather bought) the machinery formerly held by the Machine Tractor Stations.

15. Production on the state farms is cheaper than that on the collectives; hence (a) the emphasis on increasing productivity in the latter, and (b) the suggestion that collective and state property should be merged. Khrushchev says this is "historically inevitable" — thus squaring himself with theory and trying to satisfy those who believe he is leaning too far towards the peasants. In the meantime, to win the peasants to increase yields, he has to take practical steps tending in the opposite direction. He steers a tricky course.

sure on the peasants to surrender their private plots. For the moment the problem still remains on the agenda. The peasantry as a whole appears to take the concessions offered it with both hands, but to be reluctant to accept changes which might mean a weakening of its position. It understands what Khrushchev means by material incentives, because the bureaucracy itself — including that on the farms — enjoys these in full measure and it wants to do likewise. When it comes to Khrushchev's theoretical propositions it is not so interested — unless they can be linked with real improvements too; and there is obviously still plenty of skepticism. But this represents not only the legacy of Stalinism in the village, it also flies in the face of the claim to have built socialism. The peasant question in Russia has still not been solved; and this fact makes problematical the achievement of the target figures set for agricultural production.

It is, however, more than a question of increasing the food supply — much as that is imperative to meet the expectations of urban consumers — it is also one of social and political power relations. Relatively, too, the proportion of the population engaged in agriculture in the USSR is excessive; it represents a factor of backwardness which bears down upon the per capita income figures of the population as a whole. It means, further, that the peasantry remains a powerful social force. It has to be reckoned with, maneuvered this way and that and used, where necessary, as a counterweight to the working class.

The bureaucracy, despite Khrushchev's muddled theoretical effusions, remains quite empirical in its approach to the peasant. It makes sweeping concessions at the same time that it reminds the peasants of the leading role of the working class (your "elder brother," Khrushchev recently told the peasants of Ryazan, completely reversing the sequence of class development). Behind the abstraction "the working class" lurks the will of the bureaucracy intimating to the peasants, "Play ball with me and I'll play ball with you; if not, concessions may shrink."

The Challenge to Capitalism

What remains when the layer of propagandistic exaggeration and theoretical distortion surrounding the record and future prospects of the Soviet economy is stripped off is a testimony to the capacity of planning to transform a backward country into an industrial giant. During the 1970's — if targets are reached — per capita output will begin to overhaul that of the United States, and the Soviet Union will have become the foremost industrial country. Economists and politicians in the capitalist countries, while casting doubt on this or

that portion of the plan targets, are still digesting the significance of this prospect.

The current appears to be flowing swiftly in favor of Khrushchev and Company. But the deep undertow which the rate and extent of the changes taking place in the USSR generate in fact makes it ever more difficult for them to keep their feet. They cannot master the forces which they have unleashed; behind their confidence is an acute awareness of storms and stresses in prospect both at home and abroad as a result of Soviet successes. Hesitation and switches in policy, wide divergences of interest and outlook within the ruling group and the main themes of propaganda and policy indicate such awareness.

"The Soviet Union is no longer in capitalist encirclement," announces Khrushchev, the theoretician. "We shall be able to repel any attack by any enemy," proclaims Khrushchev, the practical man. "The triumph of socialism is not only complete but final," the theoretician goes on; "the question of building Socialism is one country has been decided by the course of the historical development of society." "As long as capitalism exists there may always be people who, contrary to common sense, will want to launch out on a hopeless venture" (i.e., war against the Soviet Union), says the man-in-charge.

Such confusion of thought, like the attribution to Lenin of the theory of "socialism in one country," is only to be expected from one who is primarily concerned with protecting the position of the caste he represents and who selects bits and pieces from Marxism as occasion demands.

The facts show that the nature of Soviet society is still transitional. The targets set for the next seven years are a clear refutation of the claim to have built socialism. The "abundance" of which Khrushchev speaks is still ahead and looks suspiciously like an output per head no greater than in advanced capitalist countries today. For the present it is still a "socialism" that can guarantee materially little more than the necessary minimum for the mass of the people, and with the minimum in some spheres low indeed.

On the political side the claim is no better grounded. To the question, "Who rules?" the official doctrine replies with a tissue of sophistries. The working class is promised benefits, told to be inspired by the economic achievements of the USSR and to give active participation in carrying out plans; that it has entered into its heritage and now rules the state no one can believe. The elaborate pretense of nationwide discussions of these sent down from the Central Committee of the CPSU enables the popular pulse to be felt and minor changes to be made. In practice firm and narrow limits are set to dissidence — imposed by the antagonisms inherent

in a society in which indefensible disparities in income and power still exist. In short, decisions are made at the top, there is no real democracy in the sense of responsibility from the top to the bottom.

Of course, since 1953, and more rapidly since 1956, there has been a rationalization of procedures made necessary by social forces and made possible by economic improvement. The arbitrary repression of the Stalin era would now be intolerable. The old strict curbs on consumption by the masses can now to some extent be dispensed with. Life is easier, tension has relaxed. The coercive apparatus is no longer a blind power, striking into the ranks of the bureaucracy itself. It is now a conscious force, subdued and less obtrusive ("socialist legality"). Nevertheless, tense conflicts are still fought out behind closed doors, revealed as and when the victor deems expedient and in such a way as to leave the defeated no possibility of stating their case. The "anti-party group" then provides a convenient scapegoat for anything which has been going wrong and members of the lower echelons of party and state hasten to add their obloquy to that already heaped on once powerful figures.

The ways of "liberalization" are indeed mysterious to behold — but not impossible to explain, once it is understood that there has been no real shift in power, only a change in the balance of forces. The ruling bureaucracy retains power through all mutations and has no intention of relinquishing it or sharing it. But the very economic expansion which it is obliged to promote strengthens the hand of the working class and undermines its own position.

The external policy of the Soviet leadership is composed of a complex combination of strength and weakness, of bluster and caution, of desire for peace and fear of war, of a special theory of capitalist "collapse" with anxiety for a deal with the capitalist states.

Completely missing is any reliance on the working-class movement in the capitalist countries to overcome capitalism and take power. The Seven Year Plan is spoken of as "a powerful moral support for the international workers' and Communist movement." At the same time the "socialist" and capitalist systems are to expose their warps and the peoples are to "choose." How and under what conditions is not made clear. If the statements of Mikoyan are to be taken at their face value a new version of "Marxism" has been adopted in which the capitalists are going to improve the lot of their workers in order to prevent them from wishing to emulate the USSR. Fresh from his American trip, Mikoyan went on the Congress platform to say that improving living standards would increase the power of attraction of "the land of Soviets" and, he added, this "will be indirectly instrumental in improving the condition

of the working people in the capitalist countries, for it will inspire them to still more effective struggle against their exploiters and will make it easier for them to wage this struggle as it will compel the capitalists to make concessions to the working class and to the peasantry and to do something to improve their lot."

A little more crass than the platitudes of Khrushchev, and perhaps closer to the real nature of Soviet international policy, Foreign Minister Gromyko, for instance, considered that the continued economic advance of the USSR "changes the correlation of world forces and puts the policy of peaceful coexistence on a new and still firmer foundation." Nevertheless, he went on to speak of the new military treaties directed against the USSR, the feverish efforts to increase the number of nuclear and missile bases aimed at the USSR and the unwillingness of the Western powers to reach an agreement on nuclear weapons and the use of outer space. He described this as representing the hopes of "certain influential circles" that "it may somehow be possible to turn back the wheel of history . . ." Gromyko was confident, however, that "the ground was slipping away from under their feet" and realization of the need for peaceful coexistence was growing and such trends would be met halfway by the Soviet government.

Such is the overt policy of the USSR. It can only mean a willingness to reach an understanding with capitalism which, in fact, would entail its indefinite existence. "Peace-loving" capitalists are to be supported against warmongers. Agreements are to be reached on nuclear disarmament and other matters. Trade between the "world socialist system" and capitalist countries will be welcomed, in accordance with the reinstated principle of the international division of labor.¹⁶ It is a reasonable deduction that working-class initiative to overthrow capitalism is not favored, for that would rear up powerful social and political forces which the bureaucracy could not control and which would reverberate throughout Eastern Europe, the USSR and China.

If the latter possibility throws up innumerable undesirable possibilities, a deal with capitalism, brought about by a measured mixture of flexibility, firmness and bluff, can only have advantages, the bureaucrats reason.

Above all, diminution of the foreign threat would enable full concentration on economic tasks and would bring considerable prestige to the ruling group itself. Reduction of armaments would be a positive advantage of great importance to the USSR, though not to

16. "The Soviet Union is in favor of an international division of labor, not only between the countries of the world socialist system, but also between socialists and all other countries, including the West." A. Mikoyan at the Twenty-First Congress. "The experience of history . . . shows that the higher the industrial standard of a country, the greater is its need and possibility for extensive foreign trade." *Idem*.

the capitalist countries. More resources would become available which could then be deployed as circumstances warrant between investment, consumption and aid to underdeveloped countries. This would also mean fewer risks of strain as the plan proceeds.

Likewise, there can be no doubt that a political understanding with the main capitalist states would permit fuller participation in the international division of labor. The USSR would thus be able to obtain equipment for which otherwise heavy investment will have to be made and from which results, in the shape of consumer goods adequate to satisfy the appetite of the population, might not otherwise be forthcoming for six or seven years. While it is true that the USSR demonstrates mastery of the most advanced techniques in some spheres, in others there is still backwardness — freer intercourse with the capitalist states could help here too. Likewise, it might be expedient to import some consumer goods directly from the manufacturers in the capitalist world who possess many advantages in efficiency and price, not to speak of quality.

Such is the attractive vista which peaceful coexistence presents. Meanwhile, it is hoped, the balance of advantage will tilt steadily in the direction of the USSR and its allies of the "socialist camp."

There are, however, a number of omissions from this estimate of future prospects. Even Khrushchev and Gromyko know full well that there are, in the West, sections of the ruling class who would prefer to see an attack on the USSR despite the frightful risks and undoubted heavy costs of a nuclear war. There is no guarantee that "the peace-loving forces" will win — if it is left to the capitalists. That goes likewise for the Communist parties — in the U.S.A. a discredited fragment, in Western Europe a declining force for a whole decade.

The growing challenge of Soviet economic strength is just as likely to increase hostility in the capitalist ruling classes as to impress them with the need for a deal; and if they make a deal they, in turn, will require concessions . . .

The effect, too, of the changing relationship of world forces will, as Khrushchev suggests, stimulate the colonial liberation movement. Eventually, and perhaps the time is not distant, the colonial revolution will pass beyond the control of the national bourgeoisies, so far largely supported by the Moscow bureaucracy. At the same time, the all-round weakening of capitalism which can be expected, and to which the growth of the Soviet economy contributes, provides the basis for the intervention of the working class outside, and against, the control of the official Communist parties. The repercussions this would have within the USSR have already been indicated.

Jefferson, Lincoln and Dewey

American democracy gave us the Declaration of Independence and the Emancipation Proclamation. Has John Dewey's liberal version of democracy superseded this revolutionary tradition?

by William F. Warde

THE Fourth of July, which celebrates the Declaration of Independence, is an appropriate occasion for discussing the question of democracy and revolution. Every section of public opinion from the extreme right to the far left tries to find in this birth of our nation sanction for their present positions and policies. Where it cannot be found in the events and personalities involved, many of them will extort it by twisting the facts to suit their political needs.

No one is more insistent in claiming the spirit of the Fourth of July for their own than our present-day liberals, who seek to annex American democracy to their own territory and exclude the revolutionary socialists from any share of its heritage. They base their claim to a monopoly of our democratic tradition by tracing a direct and unbroken line of succession from Jefferson through Lincoln to themselves. They represent themselves as the sole heirs and legitimate continuators of these illustrious creators and champions of American democracy.

John Dewey, the noted instrumentalist philosopher, was the outstanding theoretician of this viewpoint which he expounded in many works on sociology, politics and ethics. In *Freedom And Culture*, published in 1939, he polemicized in defense of democratic liberalism against the capitalist reactionaries on the one side and the revolutionary Marxists on the other in the name of the distinctively American democratic tradition originating with Jefferson. Jefferson "was the first modern to state in human terms the prin-

ciples of democracy," he wrote. "... I believe that only one who was attached to American soil and who took a consciously alert part in the struggles of the country to attain its independence, could possibly have stated as thoroughly and intimately as did Jefferson the aims embodied in the American tradition: 'the definitions and axioms of a free government' as Lincoln called them." (p. 155)

This conception of a straight line of descent of democracy from Jeffersonism to Deweyism has a serious flaw. It leaves out of account the role of revolution, which separates the democratic movements of Jefferson and Lincoln from the liberalism of Dewey, and makes them two essentially different stages in the evolution of bourgeois democracy. The dividing line between these two schools was drawn precisely at that point where liberalism takes issue with Marxism: the use of revolutionary methods to secure the rights of the people.

Jefferson and Lincoln incarnated one tradition in this respect; Dewey another, though all were democrats. Jefferson in the First American Revolution and Lincoln in the Civil War led movements which were not only progressive in their aims and democratic in their program, but revolutionary in their methods and achievements. Although they were not so consistently militant as Sam Adams or Wendell Phillips, both belonged in the same camp of *revolutionary* democracy.

Dewey belonged to a later tendency which grew up after the Civil War in the form of various Populist-

Progressive movements. These were democratic and plebeian but not revolutionary in temper. They were liberalistic, aiming to modify the established economic and political structure by gradual reform. Whereas the older tradition created, protected and promoted American democracy by revolutionary resistance against the hosts of reaction, the Progressives sought to defend and extend democracy against the plutocracy by gradualist means and measures. The two are not the same.

The root of the differences in these two phases of bourgeois democracy is to be found in the place they occupied in the development of American capitalism. Jefferson and Lincoln headed mass movements which had to engage in revolution and civil war in order to clear away the obstacles thwarting the expansion of our national capitalism, which was in their times the mightiest accelerator of economic progress. The revolutionary democrats of the eighteenth century abolished British domination and Tory feudalism; their nineteenth century descendants overthrew the slavocracy.

Dewey and his fellow Progressives of the twentieth century had no pre-capitalist forces to combat. They confronted the tyranny of the capitalist class itself. But they did not seek to abolish the capitalist system or dispossess its beneficiaries. They tried to improve the conditions of life and protect the liberties of the people without injuring a capitalism which had become monopolistic, imperialistic, parasitic and increasingly reactionary. Their means were not suited to realizing their ends.

The liberalism of the Dewey school occupied the center of the political stage after the bourgeois-democratic revolution had already been consummated in the United States and before the revolutionary working-class movement had come forth on the arena. Although Dewey's childhood had been lit by the flames of the Civil War (he was born in 1859), he felt, like most of his contemporaries, that the United States had forever left its era of revolutions behind and outgrown such antiquated methods of social and political change. The rest of his long adult lifetime seemed to bear out this conclusion. Although the capitalist system was somewhat shaken from time to time, there were no radical upsets in established class relations. This highly stable national environment conditioned Dewey's social and political thinking far more than he and his admirers knew, if indeed they were at all aware of its influence.

He would never admit that revolutions have any lawful or necessary place in the development of class society, although they have erupted whenever and wherever long-standing social antagonisms have reached the breaking point. This happened twice in our nation's history.

In his arguments on the avoidability of revolutionary actions Dewey did not bother to analyze the causes of the two great revolutions in his own country. In reply to his critics in *The Philosophy of John Dewey*, for example, he referred to the France of 1789 and the Russia of 1917 but not to the North America of 1776 and 1861. However, these revolutionary periods of our own national development deserve primary attention, not only from any theoretician of social conflict, but also from any supporter of democracy. For the democracy which he worked so hard to uphold was the offspring of these revolutions.

Such gaps in his thought, which it is tempting to psychoanalyze, are characteristic. While he extolled and analyzed Jefferson's conceptions of democracy at length in *Freedom and Culture*, he said nothing about Jefferson's forthright defense of the popular right to revolution. "I hold that a little rebellion now and then

is a good thing, and as necessary in the political world as storms in the physical," Jefferson wrote to Madison from Paris on January 30, 1787.

Jefferson here sounds more like a Marxist than a Deweyan. Indeed, there is a world of difference between the two types of democrats. Jefferson was the spokesman for a *revolutionary* democracy. Dewey was the philosopher of a *liberal* democracy that abhorred revolution. The Virginian proclaimed and led a revolution. The man from Vermont sought to persuade his countrymen that revolutions were completely outmoded. To Jefferson periodic revolution, "at least once every 20 years," was "a medicine necessary for the sound health of government." To Dewey revolution was poisonous to the "body politic," even though that capitalist body has entered into decay.

The same distinction can be made between Lincoln and Dewey. Although by temperament and training a moderate Republican, Lincoln did not hesitate to uphold the right of revolution in general and to lead one in particular when he found it necessary. Dewey, on the other hand argued that revolution as such was wrong. He carried forward the *democratic* tradition of Jefferson and Lincoln but discarded their *revolutionary* positions.

Dewey assigned to philosophy the duty of "auditing of past experiences and programs of values." In his own audit of our national experience he failed to give any positive value to revolutions. This led him into an inadequate assessment of American history, and especially the main-springs of American democracy itself.

On page 162 of *Freedom and Culture* Dewey wrote that "the source of the American democratic tradition is moral." This is an extremely shallow observation. The real source of democracy in the United States was the revolutionary struggles of its people. In 1776 and 1861, when the further growth of the nation required a new road and the forces of reaction barred the way and tried to curb and crush the oncoming progressive classes, the revolutionary democrats took up the challenge.

They armed the people, conquered the upholders of the old order in battle, and created a new social and political regime. The distinctive ideas, demands, institutions and customs of democracy were forged in these revolutionary furnaces.

Dewey gratefully accepted the results of these revolutions, from the democratic republic to free public education, and did his best to improve upon them. But he failed to understand the necessity for the ways and means by which these gains were actually secured. What an awkward theoretical position for an instrumentalist philosopher whose cardinal principle asserted that the end and the means had to be interdependent and inseparable!

Dewey did not, of course, deny that past revolutions had beneficial consequences. What he contended was that the subsequent advance of science, technology, education, and a superior understanding of method had rendered such barbaric upheavals unsuitable or unnecessary in democratic countries like the United States.

In this denial of the need for any further revolutionary action the liberal philosopher unexpectedly found himself in the company of extreme conservatives who had the same idea. They were willing to use the agencies of their government to suppress the mere expression of revolutionary ideas. Dewey protested whenever they did so. This did honor to his concern for democracy, though it did not testify to the validity of his views.

Moreover, by adhering so rigidly to his anti-revolutionary doctrine, Dewey actually violated the spirit of his own instrumentalism which taught that no means to an end was to be ruled out in advance of the consummation of the process. Although he did not ban resort to revolution under all circumstances, for all practical purposes — and that is what counts in reality as well as in pragmatic theory — he did not give it any weight as a means of progressive social action in the future of American life.

WHAT basis is there for this liberalistic prejudice against revolution? Let us acknowledge that revolution is an unusual method for

purging the social organism of poisonous elements. Such convulsions do not happen every decade in the life of a great nation. In the United States they have come along only once a century.

But these extraordinary events do not occur without sufficient reason. Their underlying causes are lodged in economic developments which sharpen the conflicts among opposing classes.

No people takes the road to revolution when easier and more conventional ways of remedying their ills and reaching their objectives appear available to them. Jefferson correctly pointed out in the Declaration of Independence: "All experience has shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed." So long as they can, they try to confine their contests and solve their problems within the bounds of the established order.

Revolutions and counter-revolutions erupt only when the burning issues at stake between the contending classes can no longer be adjudicated by conciliation. Tom Paine recognized this early in 1776 when he proclaimed that after Concord and Lexington the issues between the Patriots and the Crown had to be referred "from arguments to arms." Senator Seward of New York recognized this after the Dred Scot decision in 1857 when he spoke of "the irrepressible conflict" developing between the slaveholders and the North. These radicals were far more realistic than the liberalistic Dewey whose general argument was that social disputes must invariably be subject to negotiation and compromise.

The American people have twice been compelled to embark upon revolution after they had already tried the methods of conciliation many times and found that they failed to work. They were pushed to the point where they had either to submit to outright tyranny by a minority or adopt the most radical measures to ensure that the will of the majority prevailed. Both times they undertook the revolutionary way in order, as Jefferson wrote in the Declaration of Independence, to "throw off

absolute despotism" and "provide new guards for their future security."

When Dewey recommended the adjustment of grievances by mutual compromise as a panacea to cure the revolutionary itch, he overlooked the fact that a revolutionary crisis comes about precisely because the methods of compromise have become played out. Peoples approach the road to revolution hesitantly, by way of successive approximations. They do not adopt the most militant forms of action until the most advanced among them have become convinced by considerable experience that their urgent interests cannot otherwise be safeguarded.

Our forefathers were no less peace-loving, intelligent and inclined to moderation than the American people of today. They did not want or expect revolution, nor did they welcome civil strife. Is it reasonable to believe that they finally embraced that alternative without sufficient reason?

In fact, they were driven to take up arms by historical circumstances beyond their control and independent of the good, or ill, will of the participants on either side. The propelling factor in both cases was the initiative of the counter-revolution. When King George's troops occupied and blockaded Boston and threatened other provinces with similar treatment, when the Confederacy split the Union, fired on Fort Sumter, and ran up the black flag of proslave rebellion, the American people saw there was no room left for retreat or compromise. It was "liberty — or death!"

The masses of our nation twice became revolutionized, not by preconception, by desire, or by accident, but through the harsh necessities of their class struggles. They made the transition from the stage of conciliation to that of intransigent battle under the whiplash of reaction. They arrived empirically at the conclusion that they had to defend their rights and their future by revolutionary means because the aggressors of the old order were using the most desperate and deadly means to hold on to their privileged positions. This pragmatic course of development of all great revolutions, including our own, provides the most telling refu-

tation of the dogmatic warnings of the pragmatic liberal philosophers against recourse to revolution.

The revolutions which appear to obtuse conciliators as aberrations in the course of our national development find their logical and scientific explanation in this dynamic of the class struggle. However irrational the climactic phase of the class struggle may seem to the liberal mind, it was nevertheless the inescapable outcome of long-simmering social antagonisms which finally reached the boiling point and exploded. Revolutionary action became the only reasonable and realistic alternative to the threat of enslavement and national retrogression.

ALL this may be true of the past; but whatever their previous connection, democracy and revolution have nothing more to do with each other in this country, insist the liberals. Indeed, the specter of a workers revolution would imperil our democracy because it might provoke a counter-revolutionary dictatorship by the more powerful capitalist class. The future of democracy depends upon diminishing class differences, class feelings, class actions, not upon developing them. How this can be done without abolishing class relations in our society, the liberals do not tell us.

They look to "all people of good will," regardless of their class positions and interests, to unite against attacks upon democracy from any quarter. The Marxists do not deny that constant pressure has to be exerted upon the capitalist regime to protect the liberties and improve the conditions of the people. But they propose to promote this aim by different agencies and methods. They call upon the organized working class to take the lead in the fight for democracy on all issues in alliance with the oppressed minorities and progressive middle-class elements. Through the successive stages of such a militant and independent movement on the economic and political arena, the masses will in the end come to the conclusion that their rights cannot be secured without the replacement of capitalist rule by their own workers and farmers government.

This line of revolutionary class struggle is utterly fantastic, say the liberals. Revolution may have happened in the past, but there are no compelling reasons why that pattern has to be repeated in the nation's future. We now have enough scientific knowledge, intelligence, maturity and good will to settle conflicts of social interest by more reasonable means and to advance step by step toward a better life.

This liberal position and outlook hinges upon two big assumptions about the prospects of American capitalism. One is that the American people will receive an increasing measure of peace, security, liberty and material benefits from capitalism. It must be admitted that the urge for revolutionary change would be minimal in that case.

On top of this, the liberals pile an even greater assumption. Even if serious social crises do occur, they expect the financial magnates to be sensible and self-sacrificing enough to renounce their power and privileges and permit the people to come into their own. In that event the methods of social action and political reform advocated by the liberals would have to be acknowledged as correct.

However, these hypotheses rest upon shaky foundations. Capitalism is no longer expanding and progressive. It is a retreating and increasingly reactionary social system on a world-historical scale. Sooner or later, even its highly favored American sector will be hit by the accumulated effects of this decline.

When the shocks administered by these crises set the workers in motion, will the American monopolists, who have so much to lose, prove to be more enduringly wedded to democracy than to the defense of their own profits and privileges? Such a presumption can find no precedent either in our national past or in the conduct of capitalist rulers elsewhere. The British overlords and the Tory landed proprietors of the eighteenth century, and the Southern slaveholders of the nineteenth century, furiously resisted the loss of their sovereignty and property. And when the capitalists of other countries have been threatened with dispossession in

the twentieth century, they have invariably resorted to military or fascist dictatorships or engaged in imperialist military adventures.

The capitalist class have always subordinated concern for the rights of the people to the protection of their material interests — and in any clash between the two democracy is sacrificed. Yet the liberals count on them to respect the institutions and claims of democracy when their entire existence is at stake!

The liberals are blind to the fact that the ties between capitalism and democracy have grown weaker and not stronger in the epoch of imperialism. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the revolutions which gave national supremacy to the capitalists propelled democracy forward at the same time. From the Declaration of Independence to the Emancipation Proclamation the ascendancy of capitalism was compatible with the progress of democracy.

As the monopolists have concentrated political, economic and social power in their hands, democracy has suffered. From the 1880's onward, the forces of Progressivism captained by liberal reformers of one kind or another have waged many battles to protect democracy against the plutocracy. Despite all they have done over these seventy years, American democracy is insecure and its future overcast.

Why did the last war "for the four freedoms" usher in instead a still unfinished rampage of reaction at home? The liberals interpret the witch-hunt as a result of the cold war. But it is not the product of international conditions alone; it also has deep roots in class tensions at home. The restrictions upon freedom are the reflexes of a militarized monopolist regime which is unsure of the whole-hearted allegiance of its own citizens. They are symptoms of an organic trend toward despotism among the ruling class.

Why does Big Business fear the people so much even though it dominates the mental environment through control of the agencies of mass information and entertainment and dominates the government through its control of the two major parties? Because its dollar democracy

is far from being as democratic as it is advertised.

The workers who produce the wealth have no decisive voice in operating the economy. They do not have the most elementary of all rights — democratic control over their means of livelihood. Five and a half million unemployed testify that the profits of property owners take precedence over the economic welfare of the workers who are the majority of the American people.

Truman's decision to invade Korea without consulting Congress, let alone the American public, proved that the war-making powers of life and death are beyond the control of the people. A single chief executive and his military advisers can unloose the H-Bomb at any time without notice.

And it is no secret that Negroes have far less democratic rights than other parts of the population.

This erosion of democracy is not a passing phenomenon; it indicates that democracy and capitalism, which once went hand in hand, are more and more at odds with each other. The republic of Jefferson and Lincoln was the guardian of democracy. The imperialism of Truman and Eisenhower is the gravedigger of the democracy they created.

The big property owners were not the chief custodians of democracy even in the most progressive days of U.S. capitalism. They tolerated the institutions of democracy while manipulating and restricting them to their advantage. The backbone of democracy was constituted by the middle and lower classes of the population.

Nowadays the middle classes have receded in social importance, leaving only one social force strong enough to defend democracy against "the clear and present danger" of Big Business reaction. That is the working class allied with the Negro minority.

In order to salvage, strengthen and reshape American democracy, a new social-economic foundation is required, backed up by a system of political rule really representing the majority of the people. The democracy of the past was tied up with the advancement of capitalism. Now that its achievements are threatened by

the retrogression of capitalism, the democracy of the future is necessarily bound up with the progress of labor and the program of the socialist movement.

It took two revolutions to make the United States democratic and keep it that way. It will take a third to make our country thoroughly and securely democratic. Just as the establishment of democracy in the United States involved the abolition of foreign domination and of feudal and slave property, so the preservation and extension of democracy demands the removal of the equally outmoded power and property of the financial and industrial magnates. Bourgeois democracy has to be supplanted by the higher form of workers' democracy.

It is all very well to say that democracy has to be transferred from a capitalist to a socialist basis, reply the liberals. But how do you socialists expect such a change to be accomplished when not only the capitalists oppose it but the American people, including most of the workers and Negroes, do not accept your proposition and program, or even know about them? Wouldn't it be more realistic to try to expand democracy without overstepping the existing economic and political framework?

That is precisely what the American people will try to do for an extended period of indeterminate duration. The question is: what will be the outcome of their efforts to enforce their claims and obtain their just rights by exerting pressure upon the capitalist regime?

The liberals stake their position upon the capacities of capitalism to satisfy the demands of the people. The Marxists have no such confidence. They predict that the harder the masses press and the more concessions they exact, the more obdurate and tyrannical the financial oligarchy will become. The sharpening of their struggles will ultimately force a showdown on the issue of democracy and revolution as it did in 1776 and 1861.

But the alignment of social forces and the objectives of the struggle will be quite different. The people will not combine with the progressive capitalists against the upholders

of the old order but against the capitalist attempts to impose their naked despotism upon the nation. The workers and their allies will discover in the course of their defensive actions that, in order to bring about "a new birth of freedom" in a broader democracy and smash the dictatorship of Big Business, socialist measures will have to be taken.

The consciousness of the new fighters for freedom will be transformed as the struggles between capital and labor proceed from one stage to the next. Regardless of their mutual relations at any given stage, the mass of workers will approach and appraise a maturing revolutionary crisis in a different way than the socialist vanguard. By virtue of their scientific insight into the necessary development of capitalism, the socialists are able to connect the beginnings of the conflict between capital and labor with its culmination. In each successive phase of their collisions, they foresee the growth and maturing of their irreconcilable antagonisms and consciously prepare themselves for the showdown.

The masses, on the other hand, move along from one landmark to the next, testing their strength, improving their positions, increasing their understanding without as yet grasping the whole line of development and its goal. The basic revolutionary significance of their movement becomes disclosed to them only at its denouement, when it crashes down upon them in full force.

The empirical conclusions they embrace at this decisive turning point then coincide with the theoretical and programmatic positions previously formulated by the Marxists — and repudiate in practice the conservatism of the short-sighted liberals.

This conception of the development of the class struggle is vehemently denied by liberalism and Deweyism, its characteristic philosophical expression. Although some of its most radical exponents see that capitalism is more and more hostile to the perpetuation of democracy and may even have to give way to socialism at some time and in some way, they all agree that revolution is not — and should not — be that way. They forbid the contest for national su-

premacy between capital and labor to go beyond the limits they prescribe. But the essence of all forward social movements in history is that they break through the limits of action laid down in the past.

The present-day liberals who contend that tyranny may be combatted up to the point of revolution, but not beyond, part company with the militant democrats of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and repudiate the most precious part of their democratic heritage. Jefferson and Lincoln did not shrink from proclaiming the right to revolution as the ultimate guarantee of all other democratic rights and from following through in action with the Declaration of Independence and the Emancipation Proclamation.

That is where the Marxists clasp hands with Jefferson and Lincoln. Although these great Americans were for capitalism and we are for socialism, all of us stand upon common ground in recognizing the organic link between democracy and revolution. They were the revolutionary democrats of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The Marxists are the genuine revolutionary democrats of the twentieth century.

Many liberals refused to speak out for the Japanese-American deportees during the Second World War or for the Communist victims of the Smith Act today. The Marxists have consistently defended the rights of all victims of persecution, whether they were Jehovah's Witnesses, pacifists, Communists, Negroes, Puerto Ricans or Japanese-Americans. We have opposed all forms of discriminatory legislation from the Taft-Hartley Act to the restrictions upon minority parties. While combatting every attack upon the democratic rights of any section of the American people, we have pointed out that the salvation of American freedom depends upon organizing an independent labor and socialist movement able to remove the capitalist breeders and beneficiaries of reaction from power.

Thus the tradition of the militant defense and expansion of democracy is continued, not by the liberal pretenders who have turned their back upon the next American revolution, but by the Marxists who are faced toward it.

A Home For the Wades



by Constance F. Weissman

THE WALL BETWEEN, by Anne Braden. Monthly Review Press, New York, 1958. 306 pp. \$5.

Anne Braden comes from the upper stratum of white Southern society. Her family background is that of the "old virtues" — not, however, the decadent gentility described by Tennessee Williams and the younger Southern writers. Her book *The Wall Between* is an autobiography of a young woman's evolution from the safe background of a good position in white society to that of a fighter for Negro equality. It describes in forthright fashion the agonizing events which followed the Bradens' purchase of a house for Anthony and Charlotte Wade, a middle-class Negro couple.

The story is fascinating and reads like a novel. In fact, *The Wall Between* although about a very controversial subject, is such good reading that it was a leading contender for the 1959 National Book Award. The tension builds up gradually, as it did in reality, from the time the Bradens bought the house in an almost matter-of-fact way.

They had no idea that Louisville, Kentucky, would go mad with hysteria and hatred against them. The white citizens of the city were infuriated by the implication that Louisville Negroes were not perfectly content with segregation. So when the prosecution centered the case around the issue of Communism (for example, in the closing argument quoting Benjamin Gitlow that "the Negro problem was founded in Moscow itself") even the local civil libertarians breathed a sigh of relief: The honor of their community was saved, there was no Negro problem; there was only a Communist plot.

Anne Braden went to prison, had a miscarriage, lived in constant fear for the safety of her two young children. Her husband, Carl, was given a fifteen-year sentence of which he served forty-

one days in solitary confinement. He was in prison for seven months before the appeal bond could be raised. Only once did Anne Braden waver in this ordeal that would have given a weaker person a nervous breakdown.

A unique feature of this book is that the author takes up all the charges and criticisms levelled against her and her husband for buying the house for their Negro friends. Calmly she gives the pros and cons, carefully analyzing the motivations behind them and candidly admitting to those which have any merit. For instance, she says she may be "neurotic" on the Negro struggle, that her heroic fight beyond the call of duty may be "compulsive." But she makes very clear that the problem itself is a neurotic one in the South, a sore festering in the soul of every white Southerner. When the covering is ripped off, it provokes a vicious reaction. The author listened to her opponents with interest; she describes very fairly their point of view. This patient analysis of the motivation of her opponents is based on her conviction that in order to fight effectively, you have to understand your adversary.

Even those few liberals who deplored the violations of civil liberties in the Braden case did not think that the Wades had a right to buy a house in a white development. The author admits that the purchase of the house for the Wades provoked violence. But she points out that violence has always existed for Negroes in the South. It is only with the protest of the Negroes themselves in recent years that national and international publicity has illuminated the degradation and horror surrounding the daily lives of colored United States citizens in what one Southern Negro leader recently described as "that social jungle called Dixie."

An encouraging aspect of the Braden case was the help received from Southern white lawyers. It was by no means

easy for a lawyer in Louisville in 1954 to come to the Braden's defense. One of them later wrote: "The wonderful thing about the Braden case is that the abuse of civil liberties occurred to people . . . vocal enough to fight back." But it was also wonderful that a local lawyer would withstand community pressure and take such a case.

The Wall Between is dispassionate in tone and modest to the point of being self-critical. It is the best case history of a witch-hunt persecution and trial of the McCarthyite era yet written. In spite of the luridness of the events which it depicts, every statement is fully substantiated with background detail and citations from the press and court records. It is also the best book on the subject of integration written since the Supreme Court decision. The only aspect that is not gone into is the economic base of segregation. But in telling so honestly and bravely of the fight within herself to overcome her own conditioning as a privileged white Southerner, the author illuminates even this aspect indirectly.

Algerian Realities?

by Lillian Kiezel

ALGERIA — *THE REALITIES*, by Germaine Tillion. Alfred A. Knopf, New York. 1958. 115 pp. \$2.50.

What can be done to achieve a sane solution to the war between France and Algeria?

Germaine Tillion recognizes that "we have finally got it into our heads that the colonial formula is as dead as a doornail now, and that a continuance of the *status quo* is no longer possible."

Is some other formula workable that

offers Algeria some improvements but keeps the country in subjection? "I do not think so, for our presence in our overseas possessions has had a profoundly disturbing effect on them, politically, socially, and economically."

What, then, about granting Algeria her freedom? The trouble with that, in the opinion of this sociologist, is that with a population of ten million, Algeria is capable of feeding only two million.

So, to make sure that Algeria "has enough to eat," she advocates "unity" with France. Her program would provide continuation of the right of Algerians to seek work in the French labor market, provision of 300,000 additional jobs through industrialization of Algeria, universal education and at least some reforms in agrarian relations.

She estimates that the program would cost France about 2,000 billion francs. Spread over four or five years, this "would come to approximately 400 bil-

lion francs a year, just about what the war is costing us now."

This blueprint has some flaws. Since penetrating Algeria in 1830, France has never taken a philanthropic interest in the colony. What is there in the soul of the French banker today that would cause him to seek to bring Algeria up to the industrial level that, according to Germaine Tillion's criteria, would entitle Algeria to be free?

And what about the aspirations of the Algerian people, who want to be free now?

The author's sympathy with the oppressed is to her credit but she is naive in believing that the master-slave relationship can be ended by persuading the master to set his slave up in business — some years from now.

And she is not in touch with the realities of Algeria in thinking that people who have already made such heroic efforts to win freedom will forego independence in return for a "unity" that excludes self-rule.

acter of the future Reich and the eminent role to be played by the two big Churches. They came out for complete freedom of belief and conscience and for the restitution of confiscated property to the Jews; but it is not certain that the Jews would have enjoyed political equality under their projected regime.

As for economic reform, the conspirators wanted to nationalize the key industries, dissolve monopolies and encourage an "orderly competition to be supervised by the state." Close co-operation between plant owners and workers, "co-determination" and "profit-sharing" were to exist in the factories.

To save bourgeois rule a utopian reform of German capitalism was thus envisaged; but the structure of industry alone was to be modified, not the structure of agriculture. Although Count von Moltke turned over a large part of his lands to the peasants, the Kreisau Group as a whole were anxious not to offend the big landlord families.

The plotters firmly believed they were serving not their class alone but the entire German nation. And who can deny that Count von Stauffenberg, General Oster, other officers like von Tresckow, aristocratic intellectuals like von Moltke, even the narrow-minded, foolhardy Goerdeler showed genuine courage and were ready to risk their lives? Most of the conspirators died; in fact, after horrible tortures by Hitler's Gestapo and SS.

The culmination of the plot was no last-minute enterprise. Only fringe conspirators came in toward the end of the war: Marshal Rommel (who also paid with his life), General Speidel, his chief-of-staff and today the head of the West German Army.

Army leaders like Field Marshal von Manstein cowardly pretended to be bound by oath sworn to Hitler but would have joined the plotters in case of success. Von Rundstedt preferred to await what would happen. Von Kluge was torn between awareness of Germany's defeat, veneration for Hitler, and fear.

Oster, von Tresckow, and Count von Stauffenberg planned and staged several attempts to kill the Fuhrer. Plans for action had already been considered in 1939-40. These were stepped up after the beginning of the Russian campaign. Owing to the Gestapo's vigilance and especially to Hitler's luck all the attempts failed. In March 1943, in Smolensk, von Tresckow and his companions came close to success, but the dictator escaped almost miraculously: the bomb on his plane did not explode. And on the fateful July 20, at the Fuhrer's headquarters in Rastenburg (East Prussia), von Stauffenberg's bomb, despite the experiments and calculations, did not kill Hitler when it went off.

"Operation Valkyrie," the officers' revolt of July 20, was the last and decisive attempt. Count von Stauffen-

Plot to Kill Hitler

by Trent Hutter

OFFICERS PLOT TO KILL HITLER by Constantine FitzGibbon. Avon Publications, New York. 222 pp. (Abridged.) 35 cents.

This pocket edition of Constantine FitzGibbon's book (*July 20*) about the memorable 1944 plot that failed is useful for its compilation of facts. But it should be read critically: the author's ideology resembles that of the conspirators, who were bourgeois conservative in outlook. Like them she holds to the notion that the Nazi regime could be toppled by army commanders and other key officials without the active intervention of the masses.

The plot was no last-minute attempt by opportunists faced with Germany's defeat. It started as early as 1938, before the outbreak of World War II. General Beck, former chief of the general staff, was one of its main inspirers. All were conservatives, afraid of a second World War "bound to result in the destruction of Europe" and from which "Bolshevism alone would profit," as Beck told French General Gamelin in July 1937. Generals Beck, von Witzleben, Karl Heinrich von Stulpnagel, Hammerstein and Hoepner were in alliance with the former mayor of Leipzig, Dr. Karl Goerdeler, an ultra-conservative puritan disgusted with Nazi economic policy, corruption and extremism.

While Goerdeler rejected concessions to the working class, some of the most important conspirators favored class collaboration with "structural" social reforms. In case of success, Goerdeler was

to have become Chancellor of the Reich; but reform-minded intellectuals would also have been represented in the government coalition, and their political ideas dominated the conspiracy because it seemed obvious that the old conservative concepts needed face-lifting if social revolution were to be prevented. In the last resort it was precisely the prevention of "Bolshevism," the maintenance of bourgeois rule, that the plotters had in mind. In this they were like the leaders of bourgeois resistance organizations in the occupied countries.

It is not surprising that the so-called Kreisau Group which shaped the conspiracy's political, economic and social outlook consisted not only of bourgeois intellectuals, landowners, Protestant clergymen, Jesuits, right-wing politicians, diplomats, but also of several Social-Democratic reformists: Reichwein, Mierendorff, Haubach, and Leber. Once again, the reformists functioned as "leftist" cover for bourgeois policies. They were needed to keep the workers quiet; for the conspirators dreaded a mass upheaval.

The appeals prepared for the "revolution from above" reveal that the German bourgeois resistance was somewhat to the right of the bourgeois resistance in occupied Europe. The Reichstag would have been elected by the state parliaments, not directly by the people. Civil rights were to be restored, the concentration camps abolished, political prisoners freed, war criminals punished. The conspirators condemned the Nazis' anti-Semitic measures; yet they insisted on the "Christian" char-

berg's plan, involving the use of the Home Army, was ingenious, but it had some flaws, too.

The plotters never set up any cells in key factories and the public services. They never used their reformist allies Leuschner, Leber, and Reichwein to prepare appeals to the working class. Everything was entrusted to the Wehrmacht. Everything hinged on Hitler's assassination. But the Wehrmacht's commanders, learning that Hitler was alive, refused to revolt and repudiated the conspirators.

Constantine FitzGibbon claims it would have been impossible to mobilize the working class under the Gestapo's nose. In her opinion, the "revolution

from above" was the only realistic possibility under the circumstances. No one denies that it was extremely difficult and dangerous to organize any labor resistance in the Third Reich. But it proved to be just as difficult and dangerous to carry out a "revolution from above." And it failed. The author says it failed because Hitler was not killed and because of the conspirators' blunders in Berlin. But it does not occur to her that the very fact that these two factors could cause failure points to something much bigger.

The German bourgeoisie realized by 1944 that Germany had lost the war, but apathetically accepted useless slaughter and terror rather than back

up the plotters. Intent on barring any working-class action, the military conspirators and the Kreisau Group entrusted the Germany bourgeoisie with a mission it was unable to fulfill.

If the plot had succeeded, the war would probably have been shortened by Germany's earlier surrender. The many thousands of human beings who were to perish in the concentration camps, on the battlefields, and in the massive bombing of German cities in 1944-45 would have been saved, the near-atomization of the German working class in 1945 avoided. But history is concerned with what happened and why rather than with what might have been if . . .

Trotsky "Psychoanalyzed"

(Continued from page 71)

Well, it's a kind of documentation, isn't it? Besides the word "suicide" is needed to kick off that suicidal impulse which Wolfe requires in Trotsky to arouse the free world about the peril of ignoring Kronstadt. The original article indicates no suicidal impulse? So what? Have the Kronstaders got anything that fits better? Besides, how many readers of *The Great Prince Died* will ever check the references? Didn't *The Great Conspiracy*, a book circulated by the Communist party in the millions as a kind of bible justifying the Moscow trials, even include references to works by Trotsky and his followers exposing the frame-ups? How many readers of that book checked those references?⁶

FUTURE generations will, I imagine, find Trotsky a most attractive figure among the heroes who helped lead mankind in the painful struggle out of class society into the socialist order. What was he really like? Fortunately, they will not have to depend on novels like this miserable pot-boiler to form an opinion. Among Trotsky's own writings sufficient material is available to indicate a great deal.

A prime example is his *Diary in Exile — 1935* recently published by Harvard University Press. A review of this book, which appeared in the spring 1959 issue of *Dissent*, is of more than ordinary interest since the author is the well-known Erich Fromm.

I doubt that the former disciple of Sigmund Freud ever met Trotsky or that he has read much of his writings. In world outlook Fromm is closer to the utopians than the Marxists; but many of his observations are remarkably acute. Here is his judgment after reading the *Diary*:

"The general habit of considering Stalinism and present-day Communism as identical with, or at least as a continuation of revolutionary Marxism, has also led to an increasing misunderstanding of the personalities of the great revolutionary figures: Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky. Just as their theories are seen as related to those of Stalin and Khrushchev, the picture of the 'revolutionary fanatic' is applied to them as it is to the vengeful killer Stalin and to the opportunistic conservative Khrushchev. This distortion is a real loss for the present and the future. In whatever way one may disagree with Marx, Engels, Lenin, Trotsky, there can be no doubt that as persons they represent a flowering of Western humanity.

"They were men with an uncompromising sense of truth, penetrating to the very essence of reality, and never taken

in by the deceptive surface; of an unquenchable courage and integrity; of deep concern and devotion to man and his future; unselfish and with little vanity or lust for power. They were always stimulating, always alive, always themselves, and whatever they touched became alive. They represented the Western tradition in its best features: its faith in reason and in the progress of man. Their errors and mistakes are the very ones which also follow from Western thinking; rationalism and the Western over-estimation of the efficacy of force which underlies the great middle-class revolutions of the last few centuries."

Fromm notes that we know little of the personal lives of these men. "They did not take themselves as important; they did not write about themselves, nor speculate about their motivations." Thus the unusual value of Trotsky's diary.

"No doubt Trotsky as an individual was as different from Marx, Engels and Lenin as they were among themselves and yet in being permitted to have an intimate glimpse of the personal life of Trotsky, one is struck by all that he has in common with these productive personalities. Whether he writes about political events, or Emma Goldman's autobiography, or Edgar Wallace's detective stories, his reaction goes to the roots, is penetrating, alive and productive. Whether he writes about his barber, the French police officials or Mr. Henri Spaak, his judgment is profound and to the point . . . In the midst of insecure exile, illness, cruel Stalinist persecution of his family, there is never a note of self-pity or even despair. There is objectivity and courage and humility. This is a modest man; proud of his cause, proud of the truth he discovers, but not vain or self-centered. The words of admiration and concern in which he expresses himself about his wife are deeply moving. Just as was the case with Marx, here was the concern, understanding and sharing of a deeply loving man which shines through Trotsky's diary. He loved life and its beauty. One version of his testament he ends with the following words: 'I can see the bright green strip of grass beneath the wall, and the clear blue sky above the wall, and sunlight everywhere. Life is beautiful. Let the future generations cleanse it of all evil, oppression and vileness, and enjoy it to the full.'"

In the rest of the review, Fromm defends Trotsky from Harvard's advertisements which claim that the diary reveals the author's anguish, loneliness, "underlying fanaticism and selfishness . . ." Fromm, protesting, holds that "The only thing it lays bare is exactly the opposite."

Fromm's remarks were not offered in praise of Trotsky but as an estimate of his basic character. Such expert testimony, one must believe, will make its way. He spoke on the side of truth, and truth has a way of catching up.

6. Any student interested in seeing how the Stalinist school of falsification operates will find it enlightening to compare the quotations in Chapter I of *The Great Conspiracy*, which are ascribed to Raymond Robins, with the original source in *Raymond Robins' Own Story*. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1920.)

NOTEBOOK of an Agitator

Do you ever feel like going out and agitating people about things you read in the press? Do some items make you burn with anger, or laugh outright, or feel like crying? Do you run across stories that restore your confidence in human nature and get you to thinking that maybe it's possible to build a better world after all? Then thumb through "Notebook of an Agitator" by James P. Cannon. This collection of observations of the America we live in was written for you. It will give you a better idea of the way a socialist leader looks at the world than any other book we can think of. And here's a special offer for your consideration: Through an arrangement with Pioneer Publishers we can send you a paperback copy of this 362-page book and give you a two-year subscription to International Socialist Review for only \$4. Clip the coupon while you're thinking about it.

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