

**THE NEW**

# **INTERNATIONAL**

**A MONTHLY ORGAN OF REVOLUTIONARY MARXISM**

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**The New Line-Up in Europe and  
The Soviet Union** By the Editors

**Prospects for the Development  
Of a Labor Party** By James Burnham

**The Crisis and the Bankruptcy  
Of the Liberals** By David Cowles

**Discussion with the Anarchists  
On Tactics in the Spanish War**

**Class Relations in the Chinese  
Revolution** By Leon Trotsky

**The Model Democratic Republic  
Of Czechoslovakia** By W. Keller

Book Reviews:

**Lundberg, Dos Passos, Jellinek,  
Hemingway, Snow, Gannes,  
Williams**

**M A R C H 1 9 3 8**  
**T W E N T Y C E N T S**

# At Home

YOU'LL pardon us, we're sure, if we open with a few words from other lands: South Africa speaks first. . . . P.K., Capetown, "Enclosed is a draft for Modern Books and, in future, for \$25.00. Please open an account send 30 copies. . . . Naturally, THE NEW INTERNATIONAL is excellent and this is as it should be." Johannesburg follows up Capetown with an order too. . . . Australia: Sydney book shop places order for 18 copies and Workers Party branch for 30 copies. . . . But these Englishmen! Margaret Johns, London, "It is certainly very useful to have THE NEW INTERNATIONAL appearing again. We missed it very much when it closed down. . . . For the next issue, please send six dozen (72) direct to the Socialist Book Shop, 35 St. Bride Street, and five dozen (60) direct to me. I hope to get further orders. . . ." Fitzroy of Battersea, "Enclosed please find \$2.00 for additional 13 copies of January issue (total 25); please send as quickly as possible." Follow-up letter from Fitzroy: "Enclosed please find cash for February issue of N.I. We were very favorably impressed by the first." . . . Leeds, England: "Congratulations on the N.I. It is enormously valuable to us, both for propaganda and for educating our younger and less experienced comrades, and we have already sold out all we got." Liverpool, Book Shop: "We have placed orders for a supply of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL with London. . . . We can assure you that all possible will be done to spread the circulation of the journal."

Vancouver, B.C., has increased its order to 40 copies. Newsstands are selling the magazine despite Stalinist threats. "They keep telling the newsmen," writes our comrade, "to take them off, but he only laughs at them. The N.I. is highly praised and we consider the articles of a very high order. We impatiently await the next issue."

Los Angeles, Cal., took the biggest forward stride. Comrades write that it "is wonderful to have the N.I. with us again." And comrade Fishler concretizes this interest by asking us "to increase our order to 200 copies instead of the previous 100 copies". E. Ryan of Oakland says that "literature sales are slowly but steadily mounting, and we hope to be able to increase our bundle order again. In the meantime 40 copies will be sufficient". From the Campus at Berkeley, Haskell states that they "have found it possible to dispose of more copies of the N.I. Increase our order from 10 to 20 copies. We are delighted to find such interest in the publication and feel that in a University town such as Berkeley, it can probably do a tremendous amount of valuable educational work."

C. Martell, Akron, Ohio, writes that he is "happy to confirm the bundle order of 40 N.I.'s every month. I feel sure that we can easily dispose of that many here. I am hoping we

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shortly shall be increasing our order". Cleveland, says J.M.C., is endeavoring to get more subscriptions. Toledo increases its order from 5 to 20 copies, and Youngstown, Ohio, from 10 to 15. New Haven, Conn. doubles from 10 to 20; Lynn, Mass. twice orders extra bundles of the January issue. St. Louis, Mo., sends in a batch of subscriptions, and Boston, Mass., writes Leonard, is now following up all contacts on mailing lists. Paul McCormick, Denver, Colo., declares that: "A very fine spirit exists among the comrades. I am convinced that within a short while we'll begin to show progress and become effective in the labor movement. . . . Be sure that we are strong for THE NEW INTERNATIONAL and will do all we can to promote it."

Chicago continues to set the pace. Karl Shier, ably directing literature distribution and sales in Chicago, and given especially fine support by the Chicago Y.P.S.L. members, and the Party too, says: "The Chicago membership meetings of the Party and the Y.P.S.L. convention took up literature quite seriously. . . . I have good literature agents to work with. . . . The distribution of the February issue is swell. The consensus of opinion is that the second issue is better than the first." The Chicago comrades got out a very fine 4-page advertising folder for the N.I., which was distributed at their pre-convention mass meeting. Numerous book shops are handling the magazine. The Chicago University Y.P.S.L. Circle sold out

its bundle quickly and ordered an extra 20 copies.

In greater New York, the N.I. is circulating well, but with more systematic effort much more can be accomplished. The S.W.P. branches, which is contrary to the case everywhere else, are doing much better than the Y.P.S.L. circles. Robert Gorman, district literature agent of the New York Y.P.S.L., is working very hard to develop N.I. circulation, but to date the New York Yipsels have yet to accomplish what they are capable of. Come on, New York Youth! The N.I. belongs to and serves you as no one else. Morris Miller does excellent work in covering the New York newsstands. The Labor Book Shop disposes of 150 copies. Subscriptions are coming in slowly as yet from New York, and elsewhere, too. The Upper West Side, Manhattan, branch, took a forward step by having its entire membership subscribe to the N.I. A deed that helps the members and N.I. handily.

There is a need now for the Party and Y.P.S.L. branches to undertake organized subscription drives for the magazine. Numerous contacts and sympathizers lists can be canvassed with good effect, we are sure. Publishing THE NEW INTERNATIONAL is a costly enterprise. The cost of production exceeds our wholesale selling rates.

The job is up to our supporters. Read and circulate the N.I. Subscribe! Send Contributions. For a better and larger NEW INTERNATIONAL!

THE MANAGER

# Notes

THE TRUTH of the matter is that the 32-page size in which we are now printing THE NEW INTERNATIONAL, is inadequate for the material we have on hand in increased quantities. Really to deal properly with all the important events and problems of our time, we would require a 48-page magazine. But however inadequate 32 pages may be to our purposes, they are still better than no pages at all, and we endorse, consequently, the appeal of the Manager to our left for financial aid to our review and aid in increasing the already gratifying circulation.

We feel apologetic about the material on hand which did not manage to get into this issue, even though we planned and promised some of it last month. It is so often a toss-up between one article and another, that like as not a perfectly necessary and important item will be nosed out. That proved to be the fate of the articles on the new Brandler-Thalheimer position on the Soviet Union; on the relations between Rosa Luxemburg and Lenin on the organizational question and the attitude towards the pre-war centrists; and others. We do pledge ourselves to make them available to our readers at the speediest possible rate.

At the very last moment comes the good news that we may look forward to a couple of new studies by Leon Trotsky for early issues of our review. One of them deals again with the question of Kronstadt, which will be of interest especially to those who have followed our discussion with the anarchists, part of which may be found in the current issue. And speaking of discussions and symposiums, we should like to hear from our readers on these subjects, and to get suggestions from them on points of dispute and debate.

As may be seen from this issue, we are giving an increased amount of space to our book reviews. In future issues, it is planned to reduce the size of the average review and increase the number of important books commented on. It is not our intention to confine the reviews to purely political, economic and historical works, but rather to cover the broader field of letters without, of course, losing sight of the main objective of our periodical. We think we can assure our readers of a book review of considerable value in view of the number of revolutionary critics with whom we have discussed systematic collaboration and who have pledged to contribute.

The last issue's "Review of the Month" was favorably received and we intend to continue its publication. The title of the section has been changed, however, since the old one seemed to promise too comprehensive a survey, whereas the editors have in mind a more modest scope, confined to selected items of comparative importance. THE EDITORS

# The Editor's Comments

THE COLLAPSE OF A PERNICIOUS MYTH—THE “DEMOCRACIES” ACQUIESCE IN SCHUSCHNIGG’S CAPITULATION TO HITLER—THE VERSAILLES SYSTEM AT THE END OF ITS ROPE—TOWARDS A FOUR-POWER PACT OF THE “PEACE-LOVING” AND “WAR-LOVING” NATIONS—A FREE HAND FOR HITLER IN THE EAST AND FOR ENGLAND IN THE FAR-EAST—RUSSIA’S ISOLATION—STALIN’S LETTER: A CONFESION OF BANKRUPTCY—ROOSEVELT AS A HOME-BUILDER—THE DEATH OF LEON SEDOFF

THE EVENTS SURROUNDING AND following the capitulation of the Schuschnigg régime to Hitler, mark the collapse of the most ludicrous and pernicious of contemporary myths. Ever since 1935, the Third International, like the Second before it and along with it, cultivated the notion that the world is divided between peace-loving democracies, representing the principles of Good, and the war-loving fascisms, representing the principle of Evil. England, France, the United States and the latest convert to democracy, the Soviet Union, fell into the first category and constituted the bulwark defending the world from an assault upon peace and democracy by Germany, Italy and Japan which, of course, fell into the second. In addition to the two main tasks which the first group was guaranteed to perform, it would also defend the Soviet Union from invasion and preserve the national integrity of the little countries menaced by fascist absorption. The criteria of the class struggle, of class interests, were relegated to the museum of horse-and-buggy socialism.

The degree of faith which the Austrian clerico-fascist leaders put in this myth is not known, but their efforts to test its validity proved even less fruitful than those made for twenty months by the Spanish Loyalist government. The repeated rhetorical flourishes of the democratic statesmen must, however, have left some impression upon Schuschnigg, for, before bending the knee to Hitler and consenting to the virtual annexation of Austria by Germany, he made perfervid appeals for assistance to Downing Street and the Quai d’Orsay. But since the self-confessed democracies are not yet militarily or politically prepared for that war which is the only means of seriously challenging Hitler’s advances, they again made a virtue of their peace-loving pretensions and ruefully counselled their not-very-democratic but now sadder and wiser Austrian protégé to accept the Berchtesgaden ultimatum.

The dismayed outrage expressed by the associated Stalinist, social-democratic and liberal press at what they regard as the perfidious passivity of their democratic idols, simply adds up to disappointment over the fact that the “peace-loving” nations failed to go to war—as yet.

The same pathetic consternation is being voiced over the fact that Neville Chamberlain has dropped his pilot, Anthony Eden, in midstream. From the liberal-Stalinist canonization of the British ex-Foreign Secretary as a martyr to the cause of the League of Nations, peace and democracy, one would never conclude that he was and is the sworn defender of British imperialist might. The debate in the House of Commons following Eden’s resignation, showed that there was a purely practical and not a principled difference between the former Foreign Secretary and the Prime Minister.. Neither Eden nor Chamberlain expressed any concern over the abstract principle of democracy in disputing the method of arriving at an agreement with Italy. As for the question of peace, Chamberlain’s argument for immediate negotiations with

Rome put him, formally at least, in a less bellicose position than Eden. Certainly from the standpoint of the People’s Fronters, Chamberlain would have to be designated as a greater “peace-lover” than his former aide. In any case, the discussion revolved entirely around the question of which approach was better calculated to fortify the waning power of the British Empire.

The reaction to the events of the other democratic paladin across the Channel was not essentially different. While England has a Conservative government, her closest ally now has what the French, with their irrepressible sense of humor, continue to call a government of the People’s Front. On any number of occasions since the famous Curtius plan of several years ago for an economic union between Germany and Austria, France has proclaimed its determination to preserve the territorial integrity and independence of Austria, with armed force if need be; which merely meant that Austria had to remain under Anglo-French tutelage, and that Germany would be well advised not to attempt to draw her neighbor into her sphere of influence. Now, however, that Hitler has actually taken the step from which Curtius was forced to recoil by the merest gesture from Paris, the French government has not even taken formal cognizance of the “incident”. Without British support, French imperialism is little more than helpless.

The recent events have only underlined the fact that the political relationships established by the victors of the last World War—the Versailles system and the League of Nations that was to police it—are broken beyond repair. Not even the desperate efforts of Soviet diplomacy and the Third International to preserve the Versailles set-up, have been of any avail. Brought into existence as an instrument for Anglo-French domination of the continent, its death reflects the declining power of the two Versailles victors. Eden’s heroic efforts could not keep it alive; Delbos, another of the League’s pillars, is scheduled to go the way of Eden; Chamberlain, whose party came to power after the 1935 elections on the basis of its League advocacy, disavowed it bluntly in the Commons debate. Stalin-Litvinov alone remain with the corpse, and even they will not stay long. Meanwhile, new and significant realignments are being prepared in Europe to take the place of those which have been discarded because they could not be maintained.

## Towards a Four-Power Pact

UP TO YESTERDAY, THE political division in Europe seemed to align France, England and the Soviet Union against Germany and Italy. To one degree or another, the former group made common cause against Italy when she invaded Ethiopia and against both fascist powers when they intervened on the side of Franco in Spain. A series of fortuitous circumstances thus strengthened the illusion that England and France were actuated

by a concern for democracy and the integrity of the small nations and that France in particular, having signed the Franco-Soviet pact, was a defender of the Soviet Union from fascist assault. These circumstances also seemed to lend some plausibility to the main line of policy—the People's Front—of the Stalintern.

In reality, of course, both England and France were impelled in their course by purely imperialist considerations. During the conquest of Ethiopia, the murderous rulers of the Indian Raj were not at all interested in defending the principle of independence of small nations, but in preserving British imperialist interests in Africa and along the Red Sea from the rival imperialist interests of Italy. In Spain, neither England nor France gave a fig for "democracy"; London feared the strengthening of Italy in the Mediterranean and France looked with apprehension upon the likelihood of her Roman rival establishing a solid base on the other side of the Pyrenees, which would be especially dangerous to French domination of the continent in light of the progress made by both Italy and Germany in recent years in weakening the hold of France in Central and Southern Europe.

If England and France failed to intervene directly and forcibly against Germany and Italy during the Spanish civil war, or before that against Italy during the war upon Ethiopia, it was not because they were insufficiently firm in adhering to the principles of democracy—such abstractions play no real part whatsoever in determining imperialist policy—but because they were not in a sure enough military position to challenge their rivals.

Europe today is not the Europe of fifteen years ago. Especially since Hitler's advent to power, Germany has recovered a great deal of her former strength; she has re-armed at a frenzied pace, broken through her isolated and subjugated position and strengthened her alliances to the East and the South. Italy, although she still remains a second-class power with first-class pretensions, has grown powerful enough to challenge England, a first-class power with a second-class future. Both Germany and Italy have very little more in common than the fact that each wants a larger share of the world market, which can be obtained only at the expense of England and France. Therein they are in the same position as Japan. These considerations—and not a "common fascist ideology"—have produced the Berlin-Rome-Tokyo alliance.

Few imperialist alliances, however, have ever been of such a precarious and transient nature. The hostility between Germany and Italy, momentarily muted, is a notorious reality. How minor a partner Italy is in the alliance and how high a price she must pay for it, is attested by the silent surrender to Hitler of her Austrian protectorate, for which she mobilized her troops at Brenner Pass only a few years ago, when Dolfuss was assassinated and it seemed that Germany would attempt to do what she finally did without let or hindrance early in 1938. As for the Far East, neither Italy nor Germany has any pressing interests there, and if they both consent for the time to give Japan a free hand in China, it is mainly for the purpose of keeping England occupied and helpless on two fronts while they extort greater concessions from her.

Hitler's real concern is not with Asia and not even with Africa. Even if he should prevail upon England to restore the former German colonies of the Cameroons and Togoland, that would not begin to satisfy the expansionist aspirations of the Third Reich. Germany's main interest is concentrated upon the East, specifically upon the Soviet Union, and more specifically upon Soviet Ukraine.

England and France, especially the former, face two choices: Either an inter-imperialist war against Germany, Italy, Japan and their allies, for a re-division of the world, a war of uncertain outcome and certainly entailing many risks and losses of position gained in the last World War; or, a few minor concessions to Italy, a free hand for Germany against the Soviet Union, actions which would wean these two British rivals away from Tokyo and

make it possible for Britain to concentrate her attention upon substantial resistance to Japanese encroachments upon China.

In the political resolution adopted at the New Year's founding convention of the Socialist Workers Party, and written early in December of last year, the trend of development was summed up in the following words:

If the inevitable World War has not yet broken out, this is due to the large elements of uncertainty represented by the dense criss-crossing network of conflicts, rivalries and contradictions among all the powers of the world. The deliberately simplified Stalino-reformist division of contending forces into "democracies" and "dictatorships", does not seriously correspond to any reality save that of the need to prepare the working masses to act enthusiastically as cannon-fodder for "democratic" imperialism. The rivalry of the two great imperialist monsters, the United States and Britain, continues to be deep-going, in spite of the recent mitigation of its sharpness by momentarily coinciding interests (opposition to Japanese expansion). The British conflict with Japan over the domination of China and, prospectively, of India, is presently sharper than the antagonism between Japan and the United States for the hegemony of the Pacific. However, the conflict between England and Italy for control of the Mediterranean, is of secondary importance and does not necessarily signify the occupation of opposite sides by these two countries in the coming war, any more than it did in the last war.

It would be erroneous, also, to conclude that because England and Germany were opposed in the last war, they will inevitably be opposed in the next. The bonds making for an alliance between these two powers are far stronger than, for example, the bonds making for an alliance between France and the Soviet Union. It is inconceivable, practically speaking, that France would engage in a large-scale war without the assured and direct support of Great Britain, for whom all her present allies of the small "democratic" countries (Poland! Rumania!) can scarcely substitute from the standpoint of strength or importance. . . .

The Soviet Union occupies a singular position in the present world situation. The fragility of its alliances with the capitalist powers (France, etc.), is only a reflection of the still existing irreconcilability between the world of imperialism on the one side, and the yet remaining achievements of the Bolshevik revolution on the other. It is conceivable, of course, that for a given period the conflict between the two imperialist camps may become so sharp as to cause one side to enter into a real military alliance with the Soviet Union. But it is no less likely that the rival imperialist camps will find it more expedient to postpone a settlement of the conflicts among themselves, involving not only the risk of the defeat of one set of imperialists by the other and their reduction to a secondary status by the victory, but also the defeat of all of them by the proletarian revolution.

A postponement of the inter-imperialist war for a re-division of the capitalist world market is conceivable only in the form of a joint imperialist struggle to destroy the Soviet Union and to divide it among themselves as colonies, spheres of influence and protectorates. The imperialist "haves" would thereby not only preserve their present forces in the world market (colonies, etc.) from being snatched up by victorious "have-nots", but, in the event of a defeat of the Soviet Union, would even extend their powers along with their present threatening rivals. It would therefore be the greatest blindness to imagine that the plans of Germany and Japan, which are ready to forego for the time being their demands for a larger share of the world market of the other imperialist powers if the latter consent to a partitioning of the Soviet Union, are unacceptable to countries like France and England because of their adherence to the renowned principles of democracy. It is not at all out of the question that the imperialist powers may seek to compose their own differences at a feast over the body of the Soviet Union.

Chamberlain's announcement that he will strive to bring about a Four-Power pact among England, France, Germany and Italy—which, it is a foregone conclusion, Poland would join—shows that the second choice is being made and bears out the forecast of our political resolution. Looking towards the Four-Power pact, Chamberlain would like to speed a reconciliation with Italy even before a settlement with Germany, if England can assure herself in advance that she will not be faced, in the quadruple alliance, by a solid front of the two fascist countries; if her former friendship with Italy can be established by weaning Mussolini from Hitler; then, England hopes, she will dominate the new alliance as she dominated the Anglo-French bloc in the past. The recognition of the Ethiopian conquest plus a few other trifles, would be a cheap price to pay for such a combination. As for Germany, an alliance with her would give Hitler a free hand in Central Europe and above all against the Soviet Union; but it would leave England

free from acute troubles in Europe and the Mediterranean, for a time at least, and would enable her to defend her empire in the Far East, which is being so hard-pressed by Japan, which, significantly, is not included among the pact powers.

In a word, while the Four-Power pact would postpone the outbreak of an inter-imperialist conflict in Europe, it would speed such a conflict in the Far East. All it would alter would be the scene, not the danger, of war.

It is precisely in the Far East that the war danger is most acute for the American working class. The talk about a firmer "isolation" policy of the United States as a result of the latest events in Europe, is so much nonsense. It is not against Germany that the huge armaments program of American imperialism was directed, and not even, primarily, against England. Japan is still the main immediate enemy of the United States, for it threatens to corner the whole Chinese market which, as Mr. William Phillip Simms put it, is still America's "best bet" of tomorrow. An England which is in a position to bring its full armed might into play in the Far East is the best possible ally for the United States in the given circumstances. The war danger in the Far East has not been diminished by the latest European trends; it has, actually, been heightened.

As for the Soviet Union, it has not only been manoeuvred into a greater isolation than it has been in for more than fifteen years, but the threat of war against it has become acute in the highest degree. It is reaping the fruits of the disastrous diplomatic policy of Stalin-Litvinov and the no less fatal course of the Communist International.

## The Stalin-Ivanov Correspondence

THE UTTER COLLAPSE OF SOVIET foreign diplomacy and the People's Front line of the Communist parties, is only emphasized by the letter written by Stalin to the young communist from Kursk, Ivan Philipovich Ivanov. One of Ivanov's local elders, Urozhenko, declared that "We have now the final victory of socialism and the full guarantee against intervention and the restoration of capitalism"; to which Stalin replies that "comrade Urozhenko's assertion can be explained only by his failure to understand the surrounding reality and his ignorance of the elementary propositions of Leninism, or by the empty boastfulness of a conceited young bureaucrat" (*Daily Worker*, Feb. 17, 1938).

Yet it is precisely this "failure to understand", and "ignorance", and "empty boastfulness" that characterized the official dogma laid down in the articles of faith of the Seventh Congress of the Communist International in 1935, which claimed that socialism had triumphed in the Soviet Union "*finally and irrevocably*". The Stalin letter contains a complete turn-about-face on this by no means trivial point, even though it continues to reiterate the traditional Stalinist doctrine of "socialism in a single country".

It would, however, be a mistake to regard the Stalin letter as nothing more than an excursion into the fine and dubious distinction between the "victory" of socialism, "in the main" (as Stalin now puts it), that is, the establishment of a classless socialist society, and the "final victory" of this socialism. The letter represents much more than this, both by what it says and by what it leaves unmentioned.

For the first time in years, Stalin goes out of his way to emphasize the fact that "political assistance [?!] of the working class in the bourgeois countries for the working class of our country must be organized in the event of a military attack on our country"; that the "final victory" is possibly "only by combining the serious efforts [?!] of the international proletariat with the still more serious efforts of the whole of our Soviet people". It is true that he nowhere declares that these "serious efforts" must be directed at overthrowing capitalism by means of

the proletarian revolution, for, after all, he continues to regard the rôle of the international working class as limited to a border patrol for the Soviet Union—nothing more. But the implicit recognition of the working class of the bourgeois countries as a force by itself, and not merely as an indistinguishable component of the "people", or of the "People's Front", or of the "forces of democracy", is something new in the Stalinist literature of the past few years.

The omissions are far more revealing. A declaration by Stalin is not only worth a dozen by the Communist International, but determines those of the latter. For three years, the course of all the communist parties has been steered along the line of those policies inseparably associated with the "People's Front". Yet, there is neither syllable nor hint in Stalin's letter about the "united front of the democratic powers", or the "peace-loving countries", or the League of Nations, or the People's Front itself. Not a single word! What has happened to all these great forces and institutions heralded for years as the bulwark of peace, democracy and the Soviet Union? The answer is simply that the illusions sown about them by the Stalinists, have collapsed under the impact of imperialist realities. With them have collapsed the Stalin-Litvinov diplomacy and the Comintern's People's Front line. The sacrificing of the interests of the proletariat in the capitalist countries—indeed, the active combatting of the proletarian revolution, as in Spain—was justified by the Stalinists in more candid moments with the argument that everything had to be subordinated to the defense of the Soviet Union. We repeated a thousand times that the only real defense of the Soviet Union lay in the organization and advancement of an independent proletarian revolutionary movement pursuing the policy of the class struggle; that the People's Front policy of abandoning the latter in the alleged interests of the former, would bring incalculable harm both to the workers under capitalism and to the Soviet Union itself. Even the purblind should be able to see the truth of this today.

Does the Stalin letter signalize a turn in policy to world revolution? Not in the least. A genuinely revolutionary and internationalist course is impossible on the basis of the reactionary national-socialist theory to which Stalinism continues to cling. Apprehensive at the turn of events in European politics, totally unforeseen by the Kremlin bureaucracy, Stalin is attempting a perfectly futile bluff with England and France: If you turn to an alliance with Germany, I may become "radical" again. But because it is a little more than splutter and wind, it is not calculated to influence Russia's whilom "democratic" friends, who are subject to far more weighty pressures than any wordy manifesto which Stalin's clerks in the Comintern may write.

At the same time, it is not excluded that, in desperation over the menace of growing isolation, the Comintern may be ordered to issue a new edition—revised in the direction of moderateness—of the late, unlamented "Third Period" policy. But the spurious and essentially literary radicalism of that policy would have even less success today than it did seven, six and five years ago, when it was crowned with the fascist victory in Germany. By sheer administrative force, it was possible to dragoon the communist parties into dropping the raucous ultra-leftism of the "Third Period" and accepting the traditional policy of the Second International, namely, class collaboration and social patriotism. Indeed, more often than not the communist leaders were only too glad to discard the unpopular policy of self-isolation and to adopt a more attractive and respectable course. But while it is not difficult to convert a Browder into a mixture of Roosevelt Democrat, Nebraska Populist tub-thumper and Fourth of July yokel-catcher, it is not so easy to visualize his People's Front allies of yesterday—Farmer-Labor politicians from Minnesota, sheltered editors of *The Nation* and *New Republic*, rabbis and ministers of various denominations, the Hollywood élite, etc., etc.—

joining him in hand to hand combat with the police for "the capture of the streets", and denouncing Roosevelt as the spearhead of fascism and Congress as the fascist Grand Council, as was the weekly custom during the "Third Period". The first serious attempt to trade-in the People's Front line for the wild-eyed "radicalism" of yesterday, would automatically bring with it the loss of the great bulk of the present Communist party support—here, in France or in Spain. It would be like depriving a Tolstoyan colony of parsnips and prunes and trying to force it on a diet of raw elephant steaks.

The defense of the Soviet Union is an elementary duty of every worker. Stalinist policy, bankrupt through and through, has gravely imperilled this defense. The greater, then, is the need of redressing the ranks of the dispersed and disoriented proletariat along the line of revolutionary class action, and under the banner of the Fourth International.

### Roosevelt as Home Builder

FEW SOCIAL PROBLEMS OF OUR time are more urgent than the problem of housing, and few concern more directly the everyday lives of the people. It is conservatively estimated that a third of the population of this country is inadequately housed to a degree not merely unpleasant in terms of comfort but gravely injurious to health. Millions of families live in homes and tenements deprived of the most elementary and primitive necessities.

At the same time every technical means for solving within a comparatively short period the whole problem of housing is here in abundance. Scientific knowledge, wonderful new building materials developed by inventive genius, the factories and mills, trained and able workers, the beginnings of a splendid new architecture, all are present. From a technical point of view, mass production methods could be widely applied to building without any sacrifice of architectural or general æsthetic values. There is no romantic ballyhoo in saying these things: it is literally and exactly true that the adequate technical means are present now to enable every family to live in comfortable, convenient, and beautiful surroundings. Those unacquainted with the new architecture, in fact, will have difficulty even in imagining how admirable these surroundings might be.

In the light both of the urgency of the problem and of the technical possibility of solving it, there are few acts of the New Deal more shameful and degrading in their demagoguery than the recently passed Housing Bill. It is a gratuitous, deliberate insult to those tens of millions to whom the propaganda surrounding the bill is designed to appeal.

The new bill is palmed off as a "\$3,000,000,000 housing program". The truth is that it not merely provides for no housing whatever, but does not even allot any government money for housing subsidies. It is simply a financing bill, and only a very little enquiry is needed to discover for whose benefit it is drawn.

There is nothing in the bill which can aid those who need homes or apartments, nothing which can to any appreciable extent lower their rent and give them better places in which to live. The bill merely provides that new mortgages on homes and apartments will, under certain stipulated conditions, be guaranteed by a government corporation. In this way, it offers an iron-clad insurance to the banks for the credit which they lend on housing. Besides an insurance to the banks, it is also a banking subsidy, since the banks collect heavy special charges and 5½% interest on the mortgages, whereas the government can borrow money at about half the rate.

In addition, the bill gives real estate operators and speculators the chance to make big deals and profits, and to continue to erect inadequate, badly planned housing projects, with scarcely any risk—the risk being borne by the government and home dweller or tenant. And through the bill it is also hoped to revive the badly sickened construction industries.

During its passage through Congress, an amendment calling for the payment of the highest prevailing wages on all projects coming under the bill's provisions was stricken out under Administration pressure. This act made clear that the bill will be used as part of the attempt to lower wages in the building trades, and through them in industry generally.

In all probability, this housing measure will have very little effect of any kind. It cannot do anything of importance in meeting the actual needs of cheap and adequate housing. It is one more striking and concrete demonstration of the complete inability of a declining capitalism even to utilize the productive resources and possibilities which capitalism itself has constructed.

### Leon Sedoff, 1905-1938

ON FEBRUARY 15, 1938, LEON SEDOFF, son of Leon Trotsky, died in a hospital in Paris, as the aftermath of a surgical operation. Of Trotsky's four children, Nina died of tuberculosis in Moscow on June 9, 1928, after her husband had been arrested as an oppositionist and she had been deprived of the possibility of adequate treatment; her sister, Zinaida, was driven to suicide in Berlin on January 5, 1933, after having been deprived arbitrarily of her Soviet citizenship by the Stalin régime; their brother Sergey, who had not participated at all in political activity but confined himself to purely scholastic and technical work, was arrested and disappeared right after the Radek-Pyatakoff trial early last year, charged with planning the mass poisoning of the workers in his plant, and it is not known definitely if he is alive today. Leon was the last of Trotsky's children.

Although the investigation into the circumstances of his death has not been completed as this is written, enough is already known to evoke the gravest suspicion. It is a matter of record that Leon Sedoff was under the most perilous surveillance of the G.P.U. The examination of Stalin's agents apprehended by the Swiss and French police in connection with the murder of Ignace Reiss near Lausanne, showed that plans were already being carried out to assassinate Trotsky's son in France. Like his father's activities, his had become a thorn in the side of the counter-revolutionary bureaucracy in the Kremlin, and there can be no doubt that it was determined to remove him at all costs. The findings of the autopsy will disclose whether or not the hand of death was the hand of Stalin.

Closest collaborator of his father, especially since their banishment from Moscow in 1928, he was a qualified Marxist in his own right. He was the managing editor of the *Bulletin of the Opposition* in Berlin and later in Paris, and contributed several excellent studies to its pages, under the pseudonym of N. Markin.

Leon Sedoff was, so to speak, born into the revolutionary movement and he never weakened for a moment in his ardent devotion to the great cause of labor. Half his young life he spent in the difficult struggle of the Bolshevik-Leninists in the Soviet Union and, later, in Turkey, Germany and France. The ignoble campaign of the bureaucracy against him and his father, only served to temper his revolutionary intransigence and to reveal more plainly a capacity for sacrifice, courage and inflexibility in principle which endeared him to the world movement of the Fourth International and made him a model for the revolutionary generation of today and tomorrow.

We share the grief of his bereaved parents, upon whose heads has descended one blow after another, struck in the dark by a perfidious foe.

We lower our flag at the grave of Leon Sedoff, fearless soldier, deathless friend, exemplary comrade-in-arms. His name is carved on the bronze tablets of the Fourth International.

# The Labor Party: 1938

THE PRESENT POLITICAL developments in this country which are vaguely and somewhat inaccurately referred to as the "labor party movement" are by no means uniform in character. The existing forms include: the Farmer-Labor Party of Minnesota; the Farmer-Labor Progressive Federation of Wisconsin; the American Labor Party of New York; Labors' Non-Partisan League, in some localities still remaining as an informal committee carried over from the 1936 campaign, in others more elaborately and solidly organized, with local clubs and dues-paying members; and a few local attempts to run candidates on a "trade union ticket".

These existing forms differ among themselves. The Farmer-Labor Progressive Federation is a loose coalition tagging along after the liberal, purely bourgeois third party of the LaFollettes, which itself dates back to 1924. The Minnesota party goes back formally to 1918, and even before that to its roots in Arthur C. Townley's Non-Partisan League. The only independent party organization of this new period is the American Labor Party, though it is interesting to notice that the Minnesota Farmer-Labor Party has been undergoing an evolution bringing it closer in political content and social composition to the American Labor Party. All of the various forms are, of course, in rapid transition.

We sometimes forget that Labor, Farmer-Labor, and third parties have a long history in the United States. The first labor party was briefly established more than a century ago, in Philadelphia in 1828—not merely before Marxism came to the United States but before it came to Marx. Every decade since then has seen some sort of attempt to initiate one or another kind of "progressive" party, sometimes a party professedly of labor, more often of workers and farmers, always a party aiming to get the votes of workers and farmers even when it made few pretenses about its class character.

The present movement, however, differs in decisive respects from all of the earlier movements:

In the first place, the present movement takes place against the background of a far more mature capitalism; indeed, a capitalism which has entered its stage of decay. The earlier movements had no deep social roots. The possibilities for capitalist advance and the comparative fluidity of class relationships were a firm foundation only for the traditional capitalist politics; or, at an earlier time, the capitalist-slaveholder politics. The earlier movements flickered briefly, and went out. Now, however, the two-party system is palpably outworn, a fact recognized by every commentator of every camp, and attested daily by political events. It is outworn both from the point of view of the workers, who are beginning to see through it, and also from the point of view of the bourgeoisie who can no longer utilize it to solve efficiently either their general class problems or their internecine conflicts.

Second, it is observable that in this new movement the influence of the farmers is far less than in any of the previous movements. The farmers often, indeed usually, dominated the earlier movements, in terms both of organizational control and of program. Platforms always featured farmers' planks: cheap money, debt relief, free coinage, lower transportation rates, lower tariffs on manufactured goods, etc. Today this is no longer the case. Even in, for example, the Farmer-Labor Party of Minnesota, which at its start was dominated both in composition and program by the farmers, the influence of the farmers in recent years has continuously lessened. The change in the relative position of the farmers reflects, of course, the general shift which has reduced the importance of the farmers in the United States, in terms both of relative number and more especially of weight in the national economy.

Third, and of crucial significance, the present movement is taking shape in a United States where the workers are to an unprecedented extent beginning to consolidate as a class. It must always be remembered that though Marxism defines a class economically through the relations of groups of men to the instruments of production, a class does not assume a specific functional rôle politically until its members reach at least some degree of class consciousness. It is only in recent years in the United States, with the ever decreasing social fluidity, the spread of mass production technique, the heavy impact of the 1929 crisis, and the drawing of the mass production workers into the organized trade union movement, that the extension and deepening of class consciousness has been making gigantic headway. The really enormous importance of this factor cannot be too much underlined; it marks a change in the whole character of American society. It is amusingly and strikingly revealed in, for example, changes in the verbal habits of those sensitive weather-cocks, the journalists and intellectuals. Ten or even five years ago, many "radical" intellectuals used to say that Marxism would never take in the United States because American workers refused to think of themselves as "workers". They were "as good as the next man", and all potential executives or at least chief clerks—in their own minds. "Worker" was a word seldom found in the news columns, and "proletarian" never; a more polite substitute, such as "employee", was almost always used. Today the argument and the practise have changed. The workers know that they are workers, and most of them know that they are always going to remain workers; and more and more they know that they have certain common problems and interests as workers, as a class. This class consciousness is as yet primitive, it is true. It extends much further under its economic than under its political aspect. Politically most workers still feel that they are free citizens in a democracy, and therefore the equal of anyone else, even while they understand that economically there is an absolute gulf between them and the bosses.

These differences I have mentioned between the movement now as compared with previous movements are not episodic. History will not unreel; the differences will increase and will deepen. What they indicate is that the present movement is far more serious, goes much further down, than any of its predecessors. Nevertheless, it would be an error to conclude that there stretches before the United States a long period of social-reformism and the perspective of a slowly, "normally" evolving American version of the British Labour Party as its chief carrier. The paradox is that the American labor movement is first seriously entering its reformist stage at the same time that reformism is losing its basis for existence in the general decline and crisis of international capitalism; and this is a derivative of the further paradox of the emergence of the United States into maturity and dominance among the capitalist nations at the same time that capitalism internationally is in permanent crisis and decline. In the older nations the reformist labor parties took the field against the traditional bourgeois parties. In this country the reformist labor political movement will in a very short time find that its chief rivals are not the old bourgeois parties in their old form, but on the one side the fascist, on the other the revolutionary, movements.

## 2.

What does this vague, amorphous, developing "labor party movement" represent? Let us answer this question from three diverse points of view:

(1) From the point of view of the workers themselves, this movement must be understood as a groping but nonetheless genuine advance toward fuller class consciousness. With a far greater

*economic* class consciousness than ever before in its history, the American working class is herein taking steps toward *political* class consciousness. Having felt something of the power and the limitations of its chances on the economic field, it reaches out to test ways and means for discovering what it can do on the political field. The political consciousness is as yet elementary, embryonic even. It is threaded with an infinite multitude of illusions. There is scarcely any awareness of the actual meaning of independent class political action. But in spite of the primitiveness and the illusions, the movement from this point of view, from the point of view of the mass of the workers, is unequivocally *progressive*.

(2) From the point of view of the labor bureaucrats—that is, of the agents of the bourgeoisie within the organized working class—this movement is both a threat and a promise. The labor bureaucrats are whole-heartedly devoted to capitalism; their position and leadership depends upon the maintenance of democratic capitalism, which in turn depends upon the dominance of a policy of class collaboration over the minds of the workers; and therefore any movement which contains the potentialities of independent class activity—no matter how undeveloped these potentialities may be—is an ominous threat to the bureaucrats. But this movement is also a promise to the bureaucrats: for, they believe, if they can hold its leadership, sweep it in every respect behind them, and confine it to a safe reformist course within the framework of capitalism, they will be able to use it as a bargaining instrument to increase their own share of the available plums of power and privilege.

The rôle, aims, and interests of the bureaucrats in this movement are, therefore, *reactionary*.

After a brief test period during the past two years, the tentative plans of the bureaucrats are becoming clearer. In general, they aim to catch up the movements within the boundaries of Labors' Non-Partisan League. Labors' Non-Partisan League will function as an independent organization, with members, clubs, dues, constitution, but not as an independent party. It will, as a rule, try to act as a balance of power between the two old parties, getting as much as it can in the way of naming candidates (to run on old party tickets) and influencing policy. Superficial observers say that this is merely the old Gompers neutrality policy, dressed up. This view is entirely wrong. A radical departure from the neutrality policy, it is one form of organized labor political action, intermediate between the neutrality policy and a clear-cut reformist labor party.

The plans of the bureaucrats do not exclude independent parties—as distinguished from L.N.-P.L.—on a local or State scale, where these are required to solve some special problem. In New York there is already the American Labor Party, an independent party though as yet running only a few candidates entirely of its own. This step was needed partly because of the large number of politically advanced workers in New York, partly because the workers accustomed to vote communist or socialist would not have been satisfied with L.N.-P.L. and partly perhaps as an experiment.

Many experiences of the past few months (New Jersey is an outstanding instance) show that the workers really want an independent (reformist) labor party, and that the plan of the bureaucrats to herd them into L.N.-P.L. is a definite setback to their actual sentiments. They have as yet, however, too much confidence in the bureaucrats and too little skill in fighting them to be able so far to resist effectively.

(3) From the point of view of the bourgeoisie, in particular of the liberal bourgeoisie, this movement is also a threat and a promise: a threat for much the same reason that it is a threat to the bureaucrats; and a promise provided that the liberals hop aboard at the right time for exploiting it to their own ends. The

aims, interests, and rôle of the liberals within this movement, are also, it goes without saying, *reactionary*.

It should be remarked that though the bureaucrats and the liberals have very much the same political programs and the same devotion to capitalism, their rôles in this movement are not wholly identical. This follows because of the difference in their social base. Conflicts and struggles between the bureaucrats and liberals are not, consequently, excluded; and have already appeared where, as in Minnesota and New York, the movement is organized and active. For example, the bureaucrats, in order to preserve their own positions, need to keep the trade unions organizationally ascendant, whereas the liberals wish to subordinate the unions. It may be remarked that in such conflicts nowadays the Stalinists are ordinarily found with the liberals.

However, the similarity in the fundamental policies of the liberals and bureaucrats tends to drive them together. Thus, the dominance in the movement of the bureaucrats and liberals as against the workers tends in the direction of People's Frontism rather than in that of a more orthodox labor party.

### 3.

I do not propose herein to deal with the probable outcome of this present "labor party movement". I have discussed it briefly elsewhere, and shall find occasion to do so more at length. A plausible view is given by Arne Swaback in this issue of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL. There is a danger in attaching too much importance to the precise form that developments may take. There is no type of Labor party or People's Front which Marxists regard as capable of solving the problems of the workers. The attitude of revolutionary socialists toward the movement is determined by the real social forces actually functioning in it, and not by the particular variety of reformism in which it eventuates. Moreover, the outbreak of the war would overturn all speculation.

In general, the task of revolutionary socialists with respect to this movement is to strengthen and extend its progressive component, and to fight against its reactionary components. This means, in other words, to act alongside the workers in such a way as to develop and advance their political consciousness through meeting the genuine concrete problems and issues which arise; and to fight against the bureaucrats and liberals, not merely in general, but in particular to block their concrete reactionary moves.

The liquidation of the revolutionary organization into this reformist movement is clearly excluded. The revolutionists are not the originators or initiators of any labor or any other kind of reformist party; they not merely give no guarantees or false hopes for such a party but, on the contrary, warn against the illusion that such a party can solve any major problem of the working class. The central task in the period ahead remains the building of the revolutionary party itself; it must at all times put forward its full program and concentrate on recruiting directly into its own ranks.

However, the reformist movement exists, is growing, and is drawing toward it wider sections of the workers. It cannot be ignored; and, through the trade unions and in part through the local clubs, the revolutionists must sympathetically and critically go through this experience with the workers in order to realize to the maximum its progressive potentialities and minimize so far as possible those that are reactionary.

From this it follows, for example, that where the Labor party already exists (as in Minnesota or New York), the revolutionists will demand independent candidates and no endorsement of old party candidates. The revolutionary party as such can legitimately give critical support to independent candidates, but not to candidates also on old party tickets. In the latter case, where possible, the revolutionary party can run candidates of its own against the coalition candidates, as is being done by the Socialist



Workers Party in the coming St. Paul mayoralty campaign (whereas the party is giving critical support to the independent Farmer-Labor candidates in the same election).

Where the labor party or Labors' Non-Partisan League is up for consideration in the trade unions, the job of the revolutionists will be to press for a provision against all support of old party candidates as a condition for adherence, and to continue such pressure if the union joins without such a condition. Similarly, it is most important to demand a broad democratic organizational setup and to fight against the purely bureaucratic type of organization desired by the union officials and the liberals.

Under some circumstances, such as for instance occurred recently in California, it would be correct to support sentiment for a "trade union candidate" in a local election as against union support for an old party candidate or L.N.-P.L. endorsement of an old party candidate. Whatever form the labor party developments take in given localities, revolutionists and militants generally will find it necessary to fight against reactionary planks in the election platform; and, though it would be incorrect for

revolutionists to interest themselves in the "general program" of a reformist party, they can well push for specific progressive planks on such questions as war, labor legislation and other social measures. Similarly, militants should preserve the right within the given labor party setup for criticism of the acts of elected candidates, and should demand repudiation by the labor party or the L.N.-P.L. of anti-labor acts of its own candidates, or candidates endorsed by it. Again, it is necessary to press within the labor party movement for the extension of activities to the non-parliamentary field: demonstrations, boycotts, support of strikes, and the like. This will further a better understanding of the real meaning of independent working class activity; and at the same time will act as a severe critique of the bureaucrats who wish to confine the movement to deals and jockeying on the parliamentary front. Finally, however small the chance of success in this, the militants must try to maintain the ascendancy of the trade unions within the movement and resist each step to turn it over to the liberals and a full-blown People's Front.

James BURNHAM

# A Frame-Up That Failed

THE MOSCOW TRIALS and the murder of the Bolshevik generation that prepared and made the October Revolution revealed to serious workers throughout the world that the Comintern was in its death throes. In its final agonies, however, the counter-revolutionary terror of Stalin does not confine itself within the borders of the Soviet Union but becomes a commodity of export in return for which the Kremlin receives the good-will of world capitalism.

Now the G.P.U. has transferred its operations to America—and has met a defeat that is all the more impressive and valuable because it was administered by tens of thousands of organized workers. Before the workers of Minnesota and their brothers two thousand miles away on the West Coast, the attempted frame-ups of the G.P.U. centering around the Corcoran case have been exposed and vigorously driven into the ground.

Minneapolis is today the best organized city in the country. Chiefly responsible for the growth and consolidation of unionism in this city are the drivers' unions. But the drivers happen to be led by "Trotskyists". So, ever since 1934, the Stalinists have fought these unions and attempted to "get" the leaders. The assassination of Pat Corcoran, secretary-treasurer of the Teamsters' Joint Council, on November 17, 1937, presented them with what they thought was their big chance. They immediately went to work and consciously sought to frame officials of General Drivers' Local 544 for the murder of Pat Corcoran. When their job in Minneapolis bogged down, they extended it to the West Coast and from Seattle accused Minneapolis labor leaders of plotting the death of Harry Bridges.

That the Minneapolis drivers have inspired and aided workers all over the Northwest to organize, and fight for and win higher wages, didn't mean a thing to the Stalinists. The drivers are led by "Trotskyists" and these leaders must be exterminated even if it means the return of the Open Shop to this section. To this end, the agents of the G.P.U. resorted to fraudulent documents, forged names, amalgams, phoney committees, affidavits of irresponsible people, lied on the grand scale—resorted to all the tricks they've learned from their master in the Kremlin. And they failed. Their black record is available for all to see. They can never live down the fact that they fought side by side with the employers to discredit and undermine organized labor.

Corcoran's body was not yet in the grave when the mortal enemies of unionism sought to use the assassination against the labor movement, and specifically against the drivers' unions.

They were blunt enough about it. As the St. Paul *Daily News* wrote, the day before the funeral: "It is apparent that the truck drivers' union is strategically the most effective labor weapon in this or any other community." In the summer of 1937 the St. Paul Drivers' Union, backed by its sister union in Minneapolis, had given the St. Paul employers a good walloping. So the *News* spoke of "labor gangsterism", referred to "labor czars, levying tribute through gangsterism", initiated a campaign against "labor terrorism", sought to imply that Pat Corcoran was murdered by his fellow unionists in a quarrel over the division of booty garnered from the "labor racket".

The daily press of every city within the orbit of the North Central District Drivers Council—of Chicago, Duluth, Fargo, Sioux Falls, Omaha, Kansas City—had ONE line on the Corcoran case: to use the assassination to smear labor, to discredit unionism, to blame "labor racketeering" for the murder. It was a foregone conclusion that this would be the employers' attitude. While the anti-labor campaign was growing each day in intensity, was beginning to agitate openly for vigilante action against the drivers' unions, the Communist Party dressed ranks with the bosses. Building upon the bosses' slander campaign, the Stalinists carried it to new heights, gave lessons to the employers on how to smear labor, spent thousands of dollars to "call the cops" on the union movement.

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How did they develop the frame-up?

1. Their first step was to advertise a "Volunteer Committee for Driving Gangsterism out of the Minneapolis Trade Union Movement".

The Stalinist "Volunteer Committee" was exposed as a fraud and a forgery by the coroner's jury which the unions had forced into action to investigate Corcoran's murder. One after another, eleven officials of the A.F.of.L. whose names had been appended to a "Committee" leaflet testified they had never been approached for authorization of their signatures.

2. By written innuendo and spoken slander, the Stalinists launched a campaign of slander against "the Dunnes".

The drivers were able to mobilize the entire trade union movement of Minneapolis against the Stalinists' campaign. Never before was such unanimity of action achieved. One hundred and fifty officials of the Minneapolis union movement met and adopted a resolution that tore at the heart of the frame-up machine. Said the resolution in part:

WHEREAS, The brutal murder of Patrick J. Corcoran, Secretary Treasurer of the Teamsters' Joint Council, was a blow at the labor movement of Minneapolis, obviously inspired by the enemies of organized labor, and

WHEREAS, The Teamsters' Joint Council has offered \$10,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the assassins, and

WHEREAS, In order to protect the labor movement and its chosen leaders from a terroristic murder campaign, the most relentless efforts must be made to bring the assassins to deserved punishment, and

WHEREAS, Every attempt to attribute the murder of Corcoran to forces inside the labor movement, and to besmirch the trade unions with the accusation that "gangsterism and racketeering" inside labor's ranks is responsible for the murder, constitutes a foul slander on the *bona fide* labor movement and its martyred officer, and shields the real murderers and the dark forces behind them, and

WHEREAS, The daily press controlled by the employers, and the *Daily Worker* published by the Communist Party have joined in a campaign to smear and discredit the martyred Corcoran and the trade union movement, with the charge that his assassination was caused by "racketeering and gangsterism" in the trade unions. . . .

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED . . . We condemn the mass meeting [called by the "Volunteer Committee", that is, the Stalinists] as in no way representative of the attitude of organized labor, as being an aid to the mortal enemies of organized labor, and further evidence of an unscrupulous campaign by irresponsible elements to discredit and split the labor movement of Minneapolis."

3. The G.P.U. sought to create an amalgam between Trotskyists and persons who were not Trotskyists. Specifically, they sought to link Ed and Al Firotto and Joe Bellini with the Dunne brothers, charging the former were "Local 544 organizers and part of the Trotskyist machine".

The *Northwest Organizer*, weekly organ of the Minneapolis Teamsters' Joint Council, informed a large section of the American labor movement of what every worker in Minneapolis knew: that the Firottos and Bellini were among the Local 500 officials who came over to the present Local 544 in June 1936, that they didn't last even a year in the merged union, that by unanimous decision of the union's executive board these men had long ago been discharged for insubordination.

4. In Minneapolis the Stalinists control the C.I.O., which they use to fight "Trotskyism", to split established unions, to weaken labor as an independent force, and to build the People's Front. Striving frantically to pin the Corcoran murder on the Dunnes, the Stalinists published for the occasion a special paper, the *C.I.O. Industrial Unionist*. There you can read that Corcoran's assassination "was the logical outcome of the gangsterism and racketeering fostered in the Minneapolis labor movement by the Dunne-Brown-Dobbs leadership". There one learns that there are all sorts of tie-ups between the Dunnes, fascism, the election of reactionary Mayor Leach, the sabotage of the Farmer-Labor party, disruption in the labor movement, etc.

The bosses ate it up. Said the *St. Paul Pioneer Press* of December 4: ". . . for an exposition of hoodlumism and gangsterism and Trotskyism in the A.F.L. ranks it is necessary to look in the C.I.O. organ, the new *Industrial Unionist*". And the *Press* "looked". And so did every other boss paper.

Ever more hysterical became the tone content of the Stalinist slander. They didn't hesitate to call for a special police investigation to pry into the records of the drivers' unions, nor to call for a Minnesota "Dewey" to "cleanse" labor.

The more the employers applauded, the more the workers gaged. Sections of the Minneapolis union movement which had hitherto stood aloof from the "Stalin-Trotsky squabble" were galvanized into action and formed a mighty bulwark around the drivers and their leaders. Thoroughly alarmed at the anger of the workers, George Cole, regional C.I.O. director, denied all knowledge of the contents and refused to accept responsibility for the Stalinist *C.I.O. Industrial Unionist*. From a section of the C.I.O., the Minnesota State Council of Packinghouse Workers, came a thunderous denunciation of the Stalinists for their vile attempts to "dishonor the memory of Pat Corcoran" and for their actions "which could only destroy *bona fide* unionism".

5. To float the frame-up, the Stalinists published scurrilous leaflets, called meetings, made blocs with "church, social and civic organizations" and "public-spirited persons" like the well-known scab-herding preacher, Mecklenberg, used the *People's Press*, published special editions of the *Daily Worker*, etc.

To all the old lies, this special edition contained two new ones: that the Dunnes were linked to the Northern States Power company, and that "all was not peace between the Trotskyists and Corcoran".

The bottom was jerked from under these lies by the *Northwest Organizer*, which published (1) a statement from the business representative of the Electricians' Local pointing out that "when the workers in the Northern States Power Co. went on strike, they received the fullest coöperation from the Drivers' unions. The very fact that Local 292, representing the Northern States Power Co. workers, shares the building with the Drivers, indicates the friendship and coöperation existing between the two labor organizations . . ."; and (2) a statement from the business representative of the Milk Drivers' Union that "as one who has associated for over a decade with Pat Corcoran in the Milk Drivers' Union, I want to nail the lying story that Pat was preparing to 'challenge the power of the Dunnes'. . . Pat and I and all the other officials of the Milk Drivers have had the most harmonious relations with the officials of Local 544. . . ."

6. When the unions had them on the run in Minneapolis, the Stalinists took a wild chance. Calling their final play of the game, they cooked up an affidavit from one Robert Bell, erstwhile member of the Minneapolis General Drivers' Union, testifying that he was hired by a Minneapolis A.F.ofL. representative to proceed to the West Coast and murder Harry Bridges, Stalinist tool. This was a double-barrelled job, aimed at the Minneapolis progressive unions, and at the militant Sailors' Union of the Pacific, the stoutest enemy of the Stalinist machine on the West Coast.

Completely demolishing the Bell affidavit, labor brought the frame-up machine crashing to the ground. The *Northwest Organizer* published the full story of the relations between Local 544 and Robert Bell, who is a mental case. In a public statement, a local A.F.ofL. representative pointed out the lies and contradictions in Bell's story. Cole, who had read the affidavit before a public meeting, shamelessly confessed before the coroner's jury that he knew all the time that "the party mentioned was unreliable and no good", and that he had so warned the Seattle C.I.O. director.

Finally, Mrs. Bell, wife of the man alleged to have been hired to kill Bridges, presented an affidavit which revealed the lengths to which the Stalinists had gone to frame progressive unionists. Says her affidavit: "I have read the alleged affidavit dated November 17, 1937 from Seattle, Washington, supposedly signed by my husband and made public in Minneapolis by George Cole, regional director of the C.I.O. . . . I can state, as a matter of personal knowledge, that the alleged facts contained in that affidavit concerning events in Minneapolis, are deliberate lies. . . ." One by one, Mrs. Bell refutes the itemized statements in her husband's story, tells of his terrible war wounds which make him subject to irresponsible actions, and so exposes the whole flimsy plot that the Communist Party *has not even dared to mention the affair since*. With the demolition of the Bell charges, the G.P.U.'s frame-up collapsed. In its first offensive on American soil, it had met defeat.

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The true measure of the success with which the frame-up has been smashed is seen in the resolutions of condemnation against the Communist Party for their use of frame-up methods, which have been passed by the A.F.ofL. Central Labor Council of San Francisco, the Central Labor Assembly of Albert Lea, Minneapolis, and scores of individual unions throughout the Northwest. Recent Minneapolis events are yet more revealing. In the middle

of December, Local 544 won a complete victory in the four-days grocery strike. This test of strength, the first since Pat's death, showed that despite the torrents of slander directed against it, the union was stronger than ever.

On January 8 balloting for the 1938 executive board was concluded in Local 544. All officers were returned to their previous posts. The following day the first anniversary meeting of the North Central District Drivers' Council drew 135 delegates from 46 drivers' unions in 8 states—a reflection of the formidable growth of unionism in this part of the country.

Finally, on January 14 the Minneapolis Teamsters' Joint Council held its election. Miles Dunne was unanimously chosen for the post of secretary-treasury, to fill the vacancy left by the murder of Pat Corcoran.

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The Minneapolis labor movement, through a lengthy acquaintance with Stalinist treachery, was too alert for the frame-up. Every last lie was branded on the forehead of the liar. The Communist

Party has been isolated from the mass movement as never before. And yet a warning note must be sounded. As John Dewey has stated, in speaking of the Corcoran frame-up: "This is a fresh example of the way that what went on in Russia is used to disrupt the ranks of labor in this country. *It won't be the last time.*"

Day by day, the poison disseminated by the Stalinist machine throughout the world becomes more venomous. With a recklessness born of despair, the Comintern police carry their bureaucratic machinations to ever new heights. The closer become the state relations between the United States and Russia, the more intense will become the G.P.U. attacks on militant American workers. The reverberations of the Minneapolis frame-up had not ceased before the "Robinson-Rubens" case was launched. New plots, new frame-ups involving the progressive labor movement in many parts of the United States, are unquestionably already in the making, waiting to be sprung. Only pitiless publicity and constant vigilance can protect American labor from the bloody terror of the G.P.U.

Carlos HUDSON

# The Crisis and the Liberals

THE CURRENT ECONOMIC decline chisels in bold relief two conclusions for all to see: first, the crises of American capitalism are increasingly sharper and more disastrous; second, capitalist economists can neither understand nor explain them.

That crises are getting sharper is easily proven. During the five months following the crash of 1929, the *New York Times* index of business activity fell eleven points. During the five months following the decline of 1937 it fell thirty-three points. The magnitude of the current decline is three times as great. No less important is the rate of fall. The rate for the five months' period of 1929 was 9.5%, but that of 1937 was 30%. The rate of fall for the current decline is *more* than three times as great. The fall in steel production is even more impressive proof that crises are getting sharper. It took more than three years for steel production to fall to less than 20% of capacity after the crash of 1929. It crashed to this low in less than five months after the current decline set in.

To call such disastrous falls a "recession" is mere playing with words. The fact is that the current "recession" is deeper than the major depression of 1921-1922 and is one of the deepest in American economic history. There is no good reason for expecting any economic recovery within the next few months. As the National City Bank's economic bulletin admits: "The trend is plainly downward but has farther to go, and this will limit the improvement in the primary industries during the next two or three months." It is just as likely that the current decline will continue into a depression that will make the last depression look like a little recession by comparison. For American capitalism is on the decline, its recessions are greater than its former depressions, and its future is one of depressed prosperity, worse crises, and worse suffering.

That capitalist economists can neither understand nor explain these crises is even more easily proved. They admit it in words and they substantiate their words in their own actions. The associate financial editor of an outstanding capitalist newspaper, the *Herald-Tribune*, opened his review of financial events of 1937 with the frank admission that: "It is doubtful if professional economic forecasters—and there are more today than at any time previously in our history—ever failed so conspicuously to recognize a bear market and a business depression as they did in 1937."

He also confessed that he was himself one of those who had "failed so conspicuously". In January of 1937 he had predicted that the country was "well advanced on what may be described as

the third, and easily the most convincing wave of recovery since the bottom of the depression was reached, in 1932". In this he differed not at all from the rest of the most prominent capitalist economists and financial experts. And the current disastrous declines have proven him as short-sighted and as futile as they.

The double bankruptcy of capitalist economy and capitalist economic theory poses only two alternatives: Either affirmation of faith in capitalism, despite its failures, and acceptance of its economic theories, despite their failure; or repudiation of both capitalism and its economic theories as bankrupt accompanied by the conscious substitution of an economic system and an economic theory that succeeds where the other fails—by the conscious substitution of socialism and Marxism.

It is typical of liberals that they shun both alternatives. With words of bitter criticism some attack the sterility of capitalist economic theory, others attack the evils of capitalism itself. But both, at the same time, repudiate Marxism; and neither consciously substitutes an economic theory that is more fruitful or an economic system that works. There have been two recent examples of both types of attack by popular economic writers. We would do well to analyze their articles that we might judge the fruitfulness of liberal economic theory and the direction of liberalism in action.

To repudiate capitalist economic theory without consciously substituting an alternative theory is as dangerous for theory as it is for practise. This type begins with an attack on the wrong theories of capitalism and then launches out into an attack on all theory. Having decided that one set of principles is wrong, it decides that all principles are wrong. It substitutes anti-rationalism for poor rationalism. However the solution for wrong theories is not the abandonment of all theory but the substitution of correct theory. The solution for a lack of rationalism is not less but more rationalism. The solution for bad principles is not the abandonment of all principles but the substitution of good principles. This type substitutes its own irrationalism for the irrationalism of capitalism.

Stuart Chase shows the fundamental irrationalism of this type of liberal in his recent article in the December issue of *Harper's*, called "Word Trouble Among the Economists". Here he lashes out indiscriminately against the economic theories of the right and the left in the name of an "operational" method whose mystic powers he never quite makes clear. His own formula for action, however, he does make clear. "What then are citizens to do? I

modestly suggest that we divest our minds of immutable principles and march after tangible results. Use the ballot, social legislation, collective bargaining . . . if, as, and when the context of the situation, after study, gives promise for any advance. An advance to what? To make Adam I and his family more comfortable and more secure."

The flight from principle to particularism is quite evident here. But he does not abandon all principle, although he makes a great show of doing so. Rational, principled thinking cannot be abolished by fiat, not even by that of Stuart Chase. He may "suggest that we divest our minds of immutable principles" but actually he is suggesting that we divest our minds of all immutable principles except two of which Stuart Chase approves: his distorted conception of the principle of the "operational" method, and the principle that unprincipled action in politics, *i.e.*, opportunism, is the most beneficial course of conduct to follow if we are to "march after tangible results".

Whatever changes may have occurred in physics, among human beings the principle has remained the same—nature abhors a vacuum, even if it is Stuart Chase's head. The choice in fact is not between principle and no principle, but between good principle and bad principle.

What is it that Chase's principles involve? First, that we draw no general conclusions from any problem. Every problem should be judged by itself, each preceded by a research job. On each problem we should start with Chase's *tabula rasa*. Such an approach emphasizes the dissimilarities between problems, rather than their similarities. Without similarities there can be no science, and without science there can be no prediction. By assuming that there are no basic identities in social life, he precludes any social or economic science. In which case, decision on any subject must await a trial. Fascism has not benefitted the Italian workers and peasants. But we have not tried it here. Maybe it would succeed here? Our unprincipled disciple would give it a trial here before he passed judgment on its merits.

The result of raising unprincipledness into a principle is to make Chase subject to every wind of doctrine and information—and to the capitalism which dominates both. The outcome is that he supports capitalism and its solutions, whose "tangible results" are economic decline and lowered living standards. This is inevitable. In a conflict between the irrationalism of the capitalist system and that of Chase, capitalism will always win. It has all the weapons of persuasion at its disposal—force and propaganda. All the social controls are in its hands.

The second type of liberal economist attacks the evils of capitalism but substitutes no alternative economic system. In practise it is to accept capitalism. This type is well represented by John T. Flynn of the *New Republic*. He realizes full well that accepting capitalism and its economic theories means more than simply that. It means also accepting economic decline, of falling standards of living for the American people, of increasingly widespread and grinding poverty for more and more millions of American workers and middle class. In pleading for a realistic approach to the current economic decline, he demands above all that "there should be an end of the half-mad cults of abundance. The day of the promisers—the destroyers of poverty and the makers of abundance, Republican and Democratic—ought to be closed. Perhaps one day we shall know how to achieve this miracle within the framework of the capitalist system. It is a very real sober world of facts that we must now face".

This, indeed, shows the plight of "liberal" economic theory in a world of monopoly capitalism. Even in its progressive youth, in the period of *laissez faire* capitalism, the fulfillment of the promise of abundance inherent in capitalist production was far from realized. Nevertheless there was partial delivery, and the promise of greater abundance to come had a basis in reality. But today, the very liberal economic theory which was first to promise

abundance is the one openly to abandon it. For the propaganda of abundance is too patently false. While capitalism itself is convulsed in crises that are increasingly more severe, only "half-mad cults" could continue to expect it to fulfill its promise of abundance. Abundance under capitalism would be a "miracle". In fact, it is impossible. The ideal of abundance has no legitimate place in capitalism, least of all when capitalism is in crisis. Mr. Flynn wants the ideal abandoned, the promisers of abundance silenced and all people to face the "sober world of facts".

"If there is a possible disaster ahead, it can be averted only by understanding it," says Mr. Flynn at the outset of his article on "This Setback in Business" in *Harper's* of January 1938. There is another alternative: one can understand and accept disaster. Mr. Flynn accepts disaster for abundance and the workers in order to avert disaster for capitalism.

Flynn is willing to abandon abundance to save capitalism. How does he propose to do it? His solution for keeping capitalism from crashing into depression is in the best traditions of *laissez faire* capitalism. The government should not subsidize agriculture—it should encourage free competition. The government should make war on trusts in industry. In the building construction field it should attack "the whole structure of monopoly controls in it by labor and contractors". These measures and others that he proposes are all part of the attack on prices because "The one hope of escape now is an attack on the price structure".

It requires only the most casual reflection to realize the sheer naïveté of Mr. Flynn personally, and *laissez faire* economists generally. Substantially, what he and they propose is to introduce competition into a world of monopoly capitalism, to stop government subsidies because they undermine competition. However, agriculture is depressed and more than one-third of the farms are mortgaged. To stop subsidies to the farmers would bankrupt them and take down in their wake insurance companies and banks that hold farm mortgages. To enforce competition among corporations—even if it could be enforced—would cause a glut on a market that is contracting, would slash prices, slash profits, and bankrupt corporations. These might easily bankrupt as well banks and trusts whose income and assets depend upon them. Mr. Flynn may say blithely: "Railroads and other corporations which are bankrupt in fact should be allowed to secure for themselves the benefit of bankruptcy and the revival of their investment functions," but the widespread bankruptcies of railroads, banks, *etc.*, might well cause such reverberations as to drag down with them the capitalist system itself.

The underlying theory is that if bankrupt capital is destroyed, the rate of profit for the remaining capital will increase. There will be an impetus to private investment in new capital goods under the spur of high profits. This will stimulate the capital goods industries whose output sustains business recovery. The theory leaves out of consideration the fact that the bankrupt capital may represent so large a proportion of the capital that there might be precipitated a far greater crisis than Mr. Flynn imagines. Furthermore, recovery from the lower level could not reach as high as the present. It would be a depressed recovery, with a contracting market. The field for capital investment would be narrowed, capital goods output would be restricted, a worse depression would occur, and the down-spiral would continue.

It is this prospect of decline that impels him to abandon the ideal of abundance. However, he is willing to accept the hazards of future, worse depressions, providing that the government accept this solution for the present one. But he makes his plans in a vacuum. He reckons without the class-economic forces that are intertwined with all this capital that he would destroy. The owners of this capital are not interested in just general economic activity but in their own profitable activity. Their pressures on the government far outweigh those of *laissez faire* economists. The solution is unreal. It is of the past, not of the present.

If the solution for saving capitalism is unreal economics, the proposal to abandon the myth of abundance is foolhardy politics. As a revulsion against the blatantly false propaganda of abundance, it is praiseworthy, but it shows no real insight into the politics needed to maintain capitalism.

The capitalism of the past had a double base: one, its ability to distribute some share of increasing plenty to workers, middle class and farmers; and two, its ability to inspire faith in those sharing inadequately that the development of capitalism would extend the magic circle of abundance to include them.

Conditions have changed. Today there is a decreasing production and a decreasing proportion of what is produced is distributed. Meanwhile the population grows. The potential plenty of large-scale industry is frustrated by profits. The ideal of abundance has become a myth contradicted by the reality. It becomes more than ever necessary to broadcast nation-wide the myth of abundance in order to hide the harsh reality that American capitalism is on the decline.

For it to continue, capitalism must retain the faith of workers and middle class; it must spread the impression that it still can work. The propaganda of abundance is a narcotic which lulls them to subservience. The day when they recognize that so long as capitalism exists they are doomed to degradation and poverty amidst the greatest potential in the world—that day will have seen the dawn of social revolution and the overthrow of capitalism.

The dilemma of *laissez faire* economic theory and John T. Flynn comes to this: They would abandon the ideal of abundance to save capitalism—but capitalism qualified, *laissez faire* capitalism. The alternatives of *laissez faire* capitalism or monopoly capitalism are posed as if they were real. Actually there is no such choice. The introduction of competition into modern monopoly production, amidst contracting markets, would so glut the market, so slash prices and profits, beget so great a torrent of bankruptcies, as to cause an economic decline unprecedented in American history. It would threaten capitalism itself.

It is to "avert this disaster" that capitalism turns to monopoly, destroys *laissez faire*, and confronts the liberal economists with the dilemma: If they want *laissez faire*, they must repudiate capitalism because it is predominantly monopoly capitalism. If they support capitalism, they must repudiate *laissez faire*. A compromise between monopoly capitalism and *laissez faire* can be made only on the basis that the phrases of *laissez faire* be used to cover the actions of monopoly.

Roosevelt's cohorts may indulge in attacks on monopolies, and he himself make brave speeches about trust busting. These are only the words of *laissez faire* meant to retain the flagging faith of workers and middle class. The actions are those of monopoly capitalism. The aid to prices in agriculture continues and is expanded. The T.V.A., intended to compel the utilities to reduce the price of electric service, is being limited. The road is being paved for another session of government legalization of trusts under a new N.R.A. The emphasis is on keeping prices up and profits "reasonable". Under such circumstances, to believe that a return to *laissez faire* is probable is to delude oneself as well as others. For economic systems, even as for humans, there is no fountain of youth. There are only offspring.

There is an easy transition between *laissez faire* economic theory and that of monopoly capitalism. Both accept private ownership of the means of production, operation for profit, and distribution of the products by exchange, *i.e.*, capitalism, as the basic data of their thinking. Both abandon the ideal of abundance in order to keep the reality of capitalism. As the increasing severity of economic crises threaten the destruction of capitalism, both propose measures to save it. But since monopoly capitalism dominates the scene, any measure to strengthen capitalism means, in practise, to strengthen monopoly capitalism. And strengthening capitalism means to increase its profits.

Thus, to aid recovery, Mr. Flynn asks for a war in the construction industry on "the whole structure of monopoly control in it by labor and contractors". And it is highly significant that Roosevelt, the most conscious defender of monopoly capitalism, asks the same action in the same name of recovery. In such a war the contractors would not suffer nearly as much as the unions. For the whole institutional weight of monopoly capitalism would bear down on labor, forcing it to take in wage-cuts more than what the contractors lost in price-cuts.

To break labor's monopoly in building construction means to smash the strength of these strategically located unions, weaken their bargaining power and lower their wages. Unionism, here as elsewhere, means essentially that workers' organizations have monopoly control of the labor supply, and by virtue of this control they can dictate to the contractors wages, hours, conditions of work. Flynn's proposed war on monopoly includes an attack on those controls exercised by labor. The phrases are those of *laissez faire* but the actions are identical with anti-union drives in all periods of capitalism.

However, whatever distinctions between liberal and monopoly economists remain will be hammered beyond recognition beneath the blows of history. The weight of declining capitalism is breaking through the propaganda of abundance, crushing beneath it faith in capitalism. In periods of crisis such as now, falling production and profits impel corporations to cut wages and employment. The flagging of faith in capitalism becomes more widespread. As the falling rate of profit falls still faster, employers try to cut costs by further wage cuts. The workers' opposition becomes more militant. They find that they must either strangle themselves in declining capitalism or overthrow it. The flood of propaganda for overthrowing capitalism finds ready hearers. Conditions are ripe for revolution.

Amid these prospects, the National Association of Manufacturers met at the Waldorf-Astoria on December 8, 1937. The *New York Times* reported that "The assembled manufacturers were told by Virgil Jordan, president of the National Industrial Conference Board, their research organization, that 'it is extremely unlikely that prosperity can be restored soon enough to prevent the destruction of the economic and political system of which you are a part'. Mr. Jordan said . . . that within five years the only question would be whether the new American system was to be fascism or communism".

Quite right. In the struggle to keep up profits, capitalism must smash the workers' "monopoly controls", the trade unions and the independent working class political parties. It must keep them smashed and incapable of reforming for further conflict. It does this by establishing a permanent state apparatus of suppression—fascism. The only alternative solution of any permanence is communism. Only thus can the workers escape the strangulation of falling wages amidst declining profits. Only here, with the profit system removed, can they find abundance.

In the face of this basic conflict, "liberal" and monopoly economists will slough off their differences and unite on their common platform: the maintenance of capitalism. But in such a crisis the only instrument to save capitalism is fascism. The liberal economists of today, accepting capitalism and its theories, must remain futile or support the only instrument of its preservation tomorrow—fascism. John T. Flynn and his fellow *New Republicans* are no exceptions. They had better consider again, whether they are for capitalism—and fascism; or whether they are for labor—and communism. And when they consider, let them remember Flynn's warning that "The statesman who seeks the approval of his contemporaries at this juncture is a fool. There is but one verdict now worth having—the verdict of history".

The warning applies equally to liberals and liberal economists. History awaits to judge their verdict—fascism or communism?

David COWLES

# The Trade Unions in Politics

**D**URING THE LAST few years the trade union movement has experienced changes of the most deep-going nature which have affected vitally its whole structure and altered its outlook in many important respects. Its objective position in relation to other social forces within present-day capitalist society has been strengthened immensely by these recent changes. It is possible to say that these last few years represent a special and a very significant chapter in American labor history. Of first-rate importance are the facts that the superiority of industrial unionism has been verified, outstanding mass production industries have been organized, and the union membership has emerged more than doubly reënforced. Of equal if not of greater importance is the corresponding transformation of quantity into quality. Simultaneously, however, these changes have also laid the basis for a new course of no less significance.

Of course, the trade union movement is conditioned in its development by the economic and political framework within which it exists. Even its own internal dynamics do not operate independently of these conditions. Proceeding from this point it is important to note, in the first place, that the unions now embrace a much larger and a much more decisive section of the working class. Therefore they can no longer confine themselves purely and simply to the economic struggles. By virtue of their strengthened position they have become a much more potent political factor. Already they have been drawn much more into the vortex of the political life of the nation. Primarily, this is the case so far with the C.I.O. unions, but the A.F.ofL. must of necessity follow suit. It is therefore not unnatural that the trade union movement, as a result of this, is now turning its attention much more actively and much more decisively in a political direction.

There are no indications as yet that this will assume the character of independent working class activity. On the contrary, for in this respect also the conditioning factors of the general national economic and political framework are in operation. And the actual indications are, unfortunately, that this new development will assume dangerously negative features. For instance, the first steps that have so far been taken into the political arena bear the unmistakable earmarks of People's Frontism, expressed in a special American form of collaboration between the unions and the so-called liberal political representatives of the bourgeoisie. In some cases it has taken on the form of common political movements, either including within its ranks or having the support of the Stalinists and the social reformists. The unions have already become a part of the several tendencies toward a political realignment that are now apparent on every hand. What we witness in actuality is the early beginnings of a People's Front movement in the United States, for which the trade unions (the C.I.O. alone or a united federation) will furnish the basis. Probably it will not function formally under this general title. It may not take on final shape as a result of a pact formally entered into by all of its participants; but it is sure nevertheless to assume all its fundamental characteristics of class collaboration.

Today this particular aspect of the trade union movement overshadows all others. From the long range perspective it is more important in its consequence than the immediate question of the conflict between the A.F.ofL. and the C.I.O., because of the fact that any extensive and positive class collaboration in the political field will inevitably put its own indelible imprint upon the movement. The ensuing political considerations will influence decisively its whole course in the next period.

There need be no doubt that we shall witness from higher official trade union quarters much more determined efforts to clamp down the lid on any militant economic struggle, accompanied

with illusory promises that greater gains can be accomplished more effectively in politics through this political movement. Incidentally this particular political aspect will itself have a rather direct bearing upon the solution of the A.F. of L. and C.I.O. conflict. Paradoxical as it may seem, while its immediate effect might very likely be a sharpening of the conflict, it must in the end serve as a compelling factor for unification. For example, the A.F. of L. local unions have been ordered to withdraw from Labor's Non-Partisan League because it is a C.I.O. instrument. This is the formal reason given. But it is a well-known fact that the hard-boiled reactionary A.F. of L. bureaucrats have no use for politics except in its strictly bourgeois sense. They look upon Labor's Non-Partisan League as the beginning of a political movement separate and apart from the old parties; to them this means partisan politics which they resist. So while the C.I.O. leadership can very well utilize the more direct entry into political parliamentary activities as a strategic manoeuvre against the A.F. of L., the widespread support that it is bound to receive from the masses of organized workers in both camps must necessarily also become added pressure for unification.

It is perfectly true that in methods as well as in motivating considerations these developments of the trade union movement represent something different in nature from the traditional A.F. of L. political policy. The formal objective of that policy was political neutrality. The direction of the new development is formally partisan politics. In both instances class collaboration constitutes the basis. But while formal political neutrality is essentially negative in nature inasmuch as the existing bourgeois parties remain the sole political expression, the new development becomes positive in the sense that it will bring the unions into active and direct participation in the struggles on the political arena. To this extent it is progressive. However, the whole question involves the old problem of American capitalism and its lieutenants of labor, the problem of maintaining a balanced equilibrium of capital and labor relations that will ensure the continuity of capitalist property relations.

While the A.F. of L. craft unions of skilled trades existed practically exclusively this problem was relatively simple. Economic concessions given to these crafts and to their corrupted leaders served to keep the large masses unorganized and to keep them on a lower wage level. The concessions given returned a certain compensation. But from the point of the last crisis things began to change and capitalism was compelled to accept organization of its large plants; it had to accept the labor reforms of the Roosevelt administration. This itself set new forces into motion. The organized labor movement advanced in amazing strides due to its new-found militancy. It is beginning now to feel itself a separate entity in society, conscious that a minimum of economic security belongs to it by right, and making its own demands accordingly which cannot simply be ignored. Thus the problem of maintaining the much wanted equilibrium and preventing the working masses from entering the road of independent class activity is now a much more complex one. It can no longer be solved by the old and primitive methods. New methods are necessary.

In this lies the real reason for the fact that the bourgeoisie finds itself divided in the face of this problem. Its progressive section wants capitalism reformed, and promotes deliberately and demagogically a political realignment as its way of heading off the much feared independent class development. But in the period of capitalist decline and deep-going crises, these empirical intentions are one thing; the objective consequences in so far as the mass movement is concerned is something else. Direct participation in political activity, through the unions, even in a vaguely

defined political movement, and regardless of the alliance with a section of the bourgeoisie, will tend inevitably to affect the masses in a further progressive direction by the development of their political consciousness.

Such a perspective naturally carries the implication that the American working class will pass through a social reformist stage, even though this is also most likely to occur in a special American form and at a truly American rate of speed. As a matter of fact the reformist stage has already begun, only in its initial appearance it is called the New Deal. Nevertheless the whole period of the Roosevelt régime, of governmental intervention in industry and in finance, and of special labor reform measures, represent a departure from the past and the beginning of a reformist stage—a unique departure, accomplished in a unique fashion in order to repair the dislocated capitalist system and make it endure. This, however, is not what makes it unique or exceptional. Its particular distinguishing feature lies in its appearance without the existence of a well developed, influential, social reformist party. The birth of a reformist stage took place without the assistance of a social-democratic midwife. The Stalinists later aspired to become the hired nursemaid and raised the cry: Defeat Landon at all costs! But the aspiring nursemaid was not considered worthy of her hire. In the absence of the midwife, the burden of this performance had to rest on the old party system, and this has already taxed the Democratic party to the breaking point.

The trade union movement today must be viewed essentially as a part of and as influenced by these special conditions. The American working class as a whole is not yet politically conscious. It does not yet act as an independent class. While in recent economic struggles it would literally storm the fortresses of capitalist production and demolish, without restraint and without compunction, the time-honored barriers against the unions, the movement thus organized is itself endeavoring to catch up politically with the social reformist stage. It started out from the low point of unblemished faith in Roosevelt's reform program and supported his reelection almost to the last man.

It goes without saying that reformist illusions among the masses have been developed very assiduously, and not least of all by the trade union leaders. In regard to this a very good example is furnished by the recent strike in Little Steel. One of the big reasons for its misfortune was undoubtedly the fact that the leaders, who were seconded by the Stalinists, spent most of their time in building up faith in the alleged benevolent attitude of the public officials and in the support that they expected to come from this direction right up to the rude awakening and the resentment over the strikebreaking done by the Ohio militia and the massacre by the Chicago police. But it would be rash to conclude from experiences such as these—and there have been many of the same nature—that the reformist illusions have disappeared. In political life the trade union movement has not yet succeeded in establishing any real independence. The leadership always maintained a firm but informal alliance with the bourgeoisie; the C.I.O. contingent makes it specifically, but more directly, with its "liberal" section. That the Stalinists aspire to become recognized partners of this alliance does not make the immediate outlook any more promising. They only attempt to give the theoretical justification for the fatal illusion that this section of the bourgeoisie can be utilized as genuine allies of the working class against the openly reactionary section. And when Lewis makes open declarations, as he has done, favoring a political realignment, or when the miners' union and the S.W.O.C. criticize publicly the Roosevelt administration, as they have done, this does not mean that the Lewis camp is working toward an open break with the Rooseveltians. Matters stand more likely the other way around. This criticism represents rather an effort to put pressure upon the genuine New Dealers in an attempt to drive the wedge deeper between them and the openly reactionary Democrats.

Under these conditions it would be difficult to anticipate a Labor Party development of the chemically pure type which miscellaneous sentimental radicals wish for so fervently and await so patiently, without ever succeeding in making clear to themselves or to others what this imaginary purity really means. It is far more logical to assume that the trade unions, which in any case would have to be the basis for a Labor Party, will enter actively into the political field still tied to the liberal section of the bourgeoisie.

Examples from actual life will bear this out. We need only recall the most outstanding cases of labor participation in last year's elections. In Detroit, where the organized auto workers had good grounds for resentment against actions of city public officials, Labor's Non-Partisan League initiated a so-called labor ticket. It was headed by a Democratic politician and it had sufficient symptoms to mark it out as a People's Front endeavor. More typical yet, in this sense, were the New York City elections. LaGuardia owed his success at the polls to the supporting combination of the "liberal" Republicans and Democrats, the Labor Party and the trade unions, together with the no less "liberal" Stalinists and so-called socialists from Waldman to Thomas and Altman. Both of these instances represent the new trends, and that is why they deserve special attention. But even in much less cosmopolitan Wisconsin, a People's Front movement wins elections cheerfully under the parental tutelage of the LaFollette Republicans and Milwaukee's "socialist" Mayor, Dan Hoan.

Of course a People's Front movement can come into existence and assume significant proportions only at a certain political conjuncture of capitalist development. Only under certain conditions can it have a service to perform for capitalism, for it can, in the final analysis, serve no other interests. Under the conditions of capitalist decline, class antagonisms naturally increase more swiftly; it becomes ever more difficult to hold the masses in subjection by the methods of the past. The middle classes are affected by these conditions. The traditional bourgeois parties alone appear no longer sufficient as the means of operation in politics to keep the rising class antagonisms within safe bounds. The workers, who have suffered their disappointments from these parties begin themselves quite naturally to press for other means of political expression: means which they believe to be their own. The ruling bourgeoisie has no intention of relinquishing its rule, or any part thereof. This is not yet in danger, and before it needs to resort to the desperate means of fascism, it will find a far more pleasant perspective in permitting a People's Front movement—at least for a time—to maintain the reformist illusions among the masses.

This explains why the New York banking fraternity could well afford to look benevolently upon the LaGuardia People's Front combination. Thousands of organized workers were captivated by it. Their reformist illusions were momentarily strengthened. Profits, with interest, would continue to roll safely into the coffers of the banking fraternity. It is true that this New York combination included also the Stalinists together with an assortment of social-democratic tripe—still a cause for suspicion to respectable bankers. Neither carried great mass influence, but even if they did it would be far more safe to have them just there, for respectable bankers could not fail to see in this the great assistance given toward disorganizing and paralyzing actual revolutionary potentialities.

It is precisely this point which is of the very greatest significance to the bourgeois rulers of America. For some time they have viewed with alarm the growing unionization of the mighty corporation plants. Large scale sit-down strikes threw fear into their hearts and foreshadowed dangers of insurrectionary methods. In a more immediate sense they fear, as do the trade union bureaucrats, that the rank and file may get out of control of its present leadership and advance on the road to independent class activity.

With elements of capitalist crisis increasing, and with production and profits dropping to lower levels, they feel it to be an imperative need to seek compensation by beating down the working class standard of living. If, under such conditions, a People's Front movement actually develops seriously on a national scale, accompanied, inevitably, by its disorienting and paralyzing effect on the masses, the powerful capitalist corporations will have their hands more free, expect less resistance to wage cuts, and not hesitate for a moment to utilize further the advantage. Neither the working class nor the trade unions can possibly gain genuine strength from such a development. Objectively it must mean new illusions and new betrayals.

Arne SWABECK

## DISCUSSION

### Anarchist Tactics in Spain

Guy A. Aldred

[In anti-parliamentarian movement since 1906; founder of Bakunin Press in London; author of several anarcho-communist pamphlets; arrested for sedition for first time in 1909; editor of *Herald of Revolt*, *Spur*, and other journals; now member of United Socialist Movement, whose secretary, Ethel MacDonald, was in Barcelona for eleven months as radio propagandist and editor of English edition of C.N.T. Bulletin; formerly associated with Spanish anarchists, but broke with them and contacted radical sections of Dutch and French anarchists. We print below the important excerpts from Aldred's contribution to the discussion.]

THERE WAS NO STRATEGY in the C.N.T. leadership. It shut itself up from the world of struggle, a bureaucracy hidden in a big building in Barcelona, and was prepared to pay any price for place and position, miscalled power. It had no strategy. Had the C.N.T. pursued anarchist strategy, the onus of responsibility for the struggle against fascism would have been thrown on the shoulders of the world proletariat. In Barcelona, after July 19, the C.N.T. had the opportunity to socialize life; to destroy all bourgeois credit; to make war on the alien capitalist exploiter; and to render impossible of existence the petty property groups that became the backbone of the Stalinist counter-revolution. It is true to say that the C.N.T. is responsible for this counter-revolution. It lacked revolutionary moral courage, despite the barricade heroism of Durruti, Ascaso, etc. Its foreign leadership rejoiced in the idea of power. Emma Goldman spoke to the *Manchester Guardian* as the representative of the Barcelona and Valencia governments and defended Montseny's position. Ethel MacDonald was told that, on July 20, 1936, the C.N.T. Committee secretly met, and declared that the time was not ripe for the revolutionary struggle. Stevens asserted this in the Dutch syndicalist press and challenged contradiction.

The C.N.T. leadership cannot be defended. This does not indict anarchism and even less anti-parliamentarism. It does not indict the rank and file of the C.N.T. or the Friends of Durruti. It indicts the C.N.T. leadership for its departure from, and betrayal of, anarchism. The anarchist leadership in Spain is tending to forget the crimes of Stalinism by a growing flirting with this monstrous evil of Red fascism. This fact does not justify Trotskyism. And it does not mean the bankruptcy of anarchism; only of reformism as opposed to social revolution.

*Anarchism and class collaboration.* When Rocker explains the anarchist failure to take power in May 1937, or at least, to resist the Stalinist aggression, by stating that the anarchists "were opposed to any dictatorship from whichever side it proceeded", he betrays his ignorance of the class issue involved. To be so opposed to dictatorship that you surrender to dictatorship is obviously

confusion. Actually, of course, the anarchists surrendered to the anti-fascist or Popular Front government.

When Felix Morrow deduces from this conduct of the anarchists, inspired by various motives, some good, some bad, that anarchism, *per se*, stands for class collaboration in the period of social revolution, he is writing nonsense. If he is arguing from fact, one can deduce from the events of the Russian Revolution that Trotskyism and Leninism stand equally for class collaboration. Actually, anarchism does not stand for class collaboration but for the conquest of bread and freedom by the working class; for the liquidation of political into industrial or use-value society.

Felix Morrow is quite right when he declares that there exists in Spain today a corrupt, degenerate Spanish bureaucracy. It is quite true to aver that Rudolf Rocker defends that bureaucracy. Emma Goldman does the same. On that account, when she came to Britain, she set to work to destroy the anti-parliamentary movement here and to establish a controlled, dictated anarchist bureau, defended by capitalists and on all fours with the Stalinist bureaus of murder apology. But this is not anarchism any more than Stalinism is communism or socialism.

Felix Morrow denies that Kronstadt is a burning question. At least it is a key issue. Surely Trotsky's attitude towards the imprisonment and murder of anarchists in the Soviet Republic, the question of the legitimate revolutionary demands of Kronstadt that were drowned in blood, the reactions of Zinoviev and others, since murdered themselves, Trotsky's falsehood about Makhno, are historical matters worthy of consideration. If the Stalinists are wrong to believe that history begins and ends with Stalin, what right has Morrow to assume that it begins and ends with Trotsky?

Trotsky's falsehood—"The Makhno movement was a kulak movement"—may not be in the same category as the rewriting of John Reed's *Ten Days That Shook the World*, the producing of films of the revolution that leave out Trotsky, the re-telling of Lenin's hiding until Stalin overshadows Lenin; but the earlier, simple falsehood, contains the seeds of the later gigantic crop of lies and slanders. Falsehood is falsehood; and one cannot play at error without expecting ambition to improve on one's prentice and amateurish beginnings. To my mind, the genius of Trotsky notwithstanding, Trotskyism did pioneer Stalinism. I do not think it would be difficult to develop this point in debate; and personally, I would like to debate it on the public platform. I would be glad of an opportunity of defending the anarchist case against Trotskyism as well as against Stalinism. This is not to defend the Rockers, the Goldmans, or the foreign service of the corrupt, bureaucratic Spanish C.N.T.

GLASGOW, Dec. 29, 1937

Guy A. ALDRED

### T. H. Bell

[Anarchist for almost fifty years; personal friend of Kropotkin, Malatesta, Tarrida del Marmol, Tucker, Goldman, Rocker; introduced first Spanish anarchist literature in Mexico in 1891; host in England of released survivors of Montjuich tortures; declares that Rudolf Rocker "will tell you if you ask him that no one in his opinion has any better title than I have to speak for that English-speaking anarchist movement which your article attacked"; frequent contributor to American and English anarchist journals. Below are printed the most relevant excerpts from Bell's contribution to the discussion.]

BUT ALTHOUGH I admit that some of your criticisms are amply justified, I laugh at your notion that because of the errors it has committed in Spain the anarchist movement is to be dismissed from the scene. It is just coming on to it. For even if the C.N.T.-F.A.I., and the other radical workers of Spain are to be crushed completely by the Franco-Hitler-Mussolini combination they have already accomplished one great historic feat of the highest importance. For, crushed or victorious, they have stopped that triumphant march of fascism which seemed about to trample on all Europe. You remember how at one time the workers in Northern Italy had seized the factories and we thought the social revo-



lution just on the edge. Alas! they looked for leadership to the men of their political party. These men were lawyers, doctors, journalists, politicians, everything but producers; they felt their own incompetence in matters of production; so they advised the workers to give the factories back; matters would be adjusted by political means. Just then too it became evident to the Italian workers that the *affaire* in Russia had resulted not in a free society, but in a fresh tyranny. They were discouraged and bewildered for the moment. And Mussolini, inspired and taught by the example of Lenin, saw his opportunity and took it. Later in Germany seven millions of social democrats, disheartened, stood patiently to have fetters fitted on their feet; five million communists, "left without orders", obediently held out their hands for the handcuffs.

The fascists and the Nazis therefore seemed fully justified in their claim that they represented daring and energy; anyhow they marched in triumph onward and onward—till at Barcelona the men of the C.N.T.-F.A.I., the anarcho-syndicalists, met them—with bare hands and heroic hearts—and stopped them dead. The overblown balloon of fascist reputation went off there with a pop.

The anarcho-syndicalists of Spain have put a stop not only to the triumphant march of fascism; they have put a stop to the westward march of "communism". You people of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL are behind the times on the Spanish news. It is true that the Stalinists did seize power in the Spanish revolution; but they were not able to hold it. The indignation of the Spanish people arose to such a degree, and the increased moral influence of the C.N.T. became so apparent—in spite of the blunders of some leaders and the imprisonment or murder of others—that Stalinist Russia has finally recognized its inevitable defeat and quit the scene. Even if the anarcho-syndicalists in the long run are trampled into the mire by the overwhelming forces of the fascist enemy, in the next rising in Europe the workers will begin just where they left off.

In one other important matter the anarcho-syndicalists of Spain have vindicated their doctrine with extraordinary success. Many of your readers are probably aware now that the workers in Russia when they themselves ran the workshops at first—before the communists put in their commissars—organized production with more ability than has been generally conceded to them. Their difficulties lay in the region of exchange rather than that of production. Given a little experience and made to feel the responsibility, they could soon have obtained a considerable degree of efficiency. But the tale of their failure, "necessitating communist control", has been told so often that those who tell it really take it to be true. It has even affected some of us who ought to have known better. I make my confession here that I was not myself over-optimistic about the immediate success of the workers in organizing industry in Spain, though I knew that a good deal of study had been given to it. It is evident that they have really had magnificent success, a success that should stop once for all the old notion that things can be run at first only by a superior class, a Samurai or a Bolshevik party. The Catalonian workers are not only producing with greater efficiency than ever before the necessities of life, they have developed in an incredibly short time a production of arms and ammunitions which enables them now to face the enemy on something more approaching an equal footing. The anarchist doctrine of the creative ability of a free people has been vindicated nobly.

Let me point out that when the anarchists in Spain have blundered and have failed, it has been not when they attempted to apply anarchist doctrines but when they abandoned them. They did quite right not to seize power—and begin another tyranny; though I confess they seem to me to have been too slow to accept responsibility and leadership. (I say, "it seems to me", because their difficulties were certainly enormous.) One would have expected them to set off with heads up and banners flying direct to

their own goal, instead of negotiating and compromising with governmentalists as they did. But, you know, they could not fight the fascists for long with their bare fists; arms had to be obtained somehow or other; the government at Madrid, if it did not possess the arms, possessed at least the sinews of war. He who pays the piper can insist generally on calling the tune. That excuse, I admit, does not cover the utterly wretched weakness of some of these leaders, such as that praise to Stalin to which you refer. It is evident that when anarchists abandon the methods of anarchism they can make a most deplorable mess of it.

LOS ANGELES, Jan. 1938.

T. H. BELL

## The Editors

IN ADDITION TO THE contributions of Guy A. Aldred and T. H. Bell, the February 1938 issue of *Vanguard*, which eagerly seeks to capitalize upon the prominence of its sister-movement in Spain by advertizing itself as the only organ that "presents the authentic position of the C.N.T.-F.A.I.", devotes almost one-third of its pages to a reply to the article by Felix Morrow on "Anarchism in Spain" in the January issue of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL. The article, as readers will recall, ended with an invitation by the editors to anarchist spokesmen to participate in a public discussion in our columns of the criticisms made by the author. The three replies made, two of which are printed in their germane essentials above, require only some brief comments.

1. Reference to the indubitable militancy, bravery and revolutionary spirit which animates every fibre of the masses of Spanish anarchist workers, is, when not demagogic, beside the point under discussion. These qualities of the masses no more justify the treacherous course of the Spanish anarchist leadership than the heroism of the Austrian workers in February 1934 could cover up the perfidy of the social-democratic bureaucracy. The point under discussion is the philosophy and practise of the anarchist leadership as recorded in life by the class struggle in Spain.

2. Notwithstanding all of *Vanguard's* hoarse denials of the existence and growth of an anarcho-syndicalist *bureaucracy* in Spain, the disagreeable fact is too plain and big to be concealed any longer. Guy Aldred, well aware of the facts, does not seek to contest them. Nor can any informed person who knows of the arbitrary and wretched manner in which the C.N.T.-F.A.I. pontiffs excommunicated the Friends of Durruti and left wingers of the Libertarian Youth when they rebelled against the policy of the petty bourgeois cabinet ministers who were the official spokesmen of anarchism in Spain—Mesdames and Messieurs Montseny, Garcia Oliver and consorts. *Vanguard* says smugly that "a critical evaluation of this [the Spanish anarcho-syndicalist] policy in the light of the accumulated experience of the last sixteen months, is on the order of the day". But you will look in vain for such a "critical evaluation". Is it to be made later, perhaps when it is . . . too late? The international anarchist congress in London found not a word of criticism to make; instead it gave an unqualified endorsement to the line of the Spanish anarchist bureaucracy. At the congress of the *Union Anarchiste* in France towards the end of last year a motion was adopted prohibiting any criticism of the leaders of the C.N.T.-F.A.I. even if uttered in the ranks of the organization! The Stalinist parties have such a motion in practise, but even they have not been brazen enough to adopt it formally.

3. The *main* point in Morrow's indictment of anarchist policy in Spain dealt with class collaboration and participation in a bourgeois coalition government. Aldred joins him in condemnation. Bell seeks to make a halting explanation. But in the almost five pages of reply by *Vanguard*, which discourses on almost everything and everybody, there is not a word—not one single word!—devoted to discussing this most vital point. It is hard to believe, but it is true. The anarchists—anti-authoritarian, anti-stateist, anti-governmentalist—for decades derided and castigated

the social democrats for entering bourgeois coalition governments even when the argument of "emergency situation" or "need of unity against reaction" was made. Suddenly they too find themselves confronted with an "emergency situation" (i.e., the intensification of the class struggle) in the only country where they are a powerful mass movement and—they become Ministers of State (yes, of the State which is the source of all evil!), ministers of a bourgeois coalition government. And even after they are unceremoniously kicked out, after the May Days in Barcelona when the anarchist workers were massacred by the same government, they whimper and plead for the right to reënter it: "The participation of the C.N.T. in the government is considered [by the "liberal and democratic powers of Europe"] as the strong guarantee of the independence of Spain." (Augustin Souchy, *Solidaridad Obrera*, Aug. 28, 1937.)

When these little details are pointed out, the mouth of the *Vanguard* writer suddenly fills up with water. He does not even mention anarchist participation in a bourgeois coalition government, but in a shamefaced manner makes an implicit defense of it by reference—to whom?—to Lenin! "As is known, the revolutionary elements (Bolsheviks included) made a united front with the petty bourgeois elements of the so-called Kerensky democracy." Quite so, in the struggle against Kornilov. Only, the Bolsheviks never entered the bourgeois government of Kerensky; the Mensheviks and Social-Revolutionists did. Therein lies the difference.

4. It is not anarchism that is bankrupt; the collapse is due to the abandonment of anarchism. Thus argue Aldred and Bell. We cannot agree. The source of the failure in Spain is to be found in the very heart of anarchist philosophy itself. Anarchism is not a proletarian class doctrine. It is based upon a petty bourgeois *idealistic* conception of the state. The bourgeoisie admonishes the workers: Don't take power, it is corrupting by its very nature. The anarchists echo this warning. The state is not a class organ to them; it is, *per se*, Evil Incarnate, regardless of what class is in power. They do not, therefore, counterpose the proletarian state to the bourgeois state. It is not surprising, then, that when the concrete "emergencies" of real life jerk the anarchists out of the blue sky of abstraction; when, as a mass movement imminently imperilled by fascism, they find themselves forced to employ all the weapons of power they can lay hands on, including the most concentrated weapon of power, namely, the machinery of state—

they do not try to create such a political weapon in a new (proletarian) form but simply fall back upon it in its existing (bourgeois) form. Why? Because in their doctrinaire narrowness, they consider a proletarian state no different from—and therefore an unnecessary duplication of—the bourgeois state. That is why the Spanish anarchists did not develop the embryonic organs of proletarian power, but simply capitulated to the democratic bourgeois state of Azaña-Companys-Caballero-Negrin-Diaz. That is the essence of the matter.

How significant it is that in the face of so monstrous a disavowal of the basic traditional anarchist principle, not one of the bishops of the anarchist movement has cried out against the C.N.T. bureaucracy in the tone and spirit of Lenin, when he called for a break with the Second International for its war betrayal. The Goldmans, Rockers, Souchys, Frémonts, Santillans—to say nothing of the lesser novices of *Vanguard*—take anarcho-bourgeois coalitionism in their stride as though it were a bagatelle. When it is referred to at all, it is justified on the ground of "emergency", as if, in Trotsky's words, anarchist principles were a raincoat that is good on sunny days but, alas! leaks badly on those "emergency" days when it rains.

5. As for the sempiternal question of Kronstadt and Makhno, we again refer our readers to John G. Wright's article in our last issue and to an article by Leon Trotsky on the same subject in our next issue. The present-day anarchist pother about Kronstadt is usually calculated to becloud the burning question of their policy in Spain. It is more than a little hypocritical for the anarchists to thunder about the "Kronstadt massare", when their leaders covered up the murder of Durruti by the Stalinists for the sake of ministerial unity with the latter; when they sat in one government with the Stalinists while the latter censored and suppressed their papers and imprisoned or assassinated scores of anarchist and other revolutionary militants; when, for the sake of governmental unity with the Stalinists, their leaders sing the praises of Stalin; when the same leaders, who could not reconcile themselves to Leninism or the Bolshevik revolution, officially join in Barcelona with the Friends of the Soviet Union (read: Friends of the G.P.U.) to celebrate the triumph of the Stalinist counter-revolution on November 7, 1937. Kronstadt may have been a great historical tragedy of 1921. But it is not, after all, a paint brush to be used on any and all occasions to whitewash the bankrupt anarchist bureaucracy of 1938. For that job, there is no brush big enough.

## Czechoslovakia and Its "Democracy"

TROTSKY ONCE called the Weimar Republic an ebb between two waves of revolution. If after the war the proletariat proved to be too weak to storm the fortress of capitalism, the prostrate German bourgeoisie for its part was incapable of leading its counter-revolutionary victory to its final conclusions. The "democratic" counter-revolution of Noske and Scheidemann, that characteristic method of the Central European bourgeoisie after the war (Masaryk called it "the struggle against Bolshevism through reforms"), was only a partial victory which threw the proletariat backwards but did not deprive it of its political existence. Thus it could be only a transitory stage, an ebb in the conflict between proletarian revolution and totalitarian counter-revolution.

The outcome of this struggle necessarily determined the decision as to war and peace. The victory of the German revolu-

tion would have made impossible the strangling fetters on the productive forces in Europe's Balkanized state boundaries, and the national lacerations within. The scrofulous peace of Versailles was nourished not only by the collapse of the Central powers and their humiliation at the hands of the competing imperialist camp, but also by the series of defeats of the European revolution. The ebb between two revolutions was also an ebb between two imperialist wars. And the victory of the totalitarian counter-revolution over the German working class could not but present Europe with the alternative of a new world war.

In this situation, as in 1914, "democracy" again became the great slogan for the Versailles imperialist camp and its vassals. They are looking for a new Belgium, whose protection would justify their holy war for the defense of human rights. And

it seems that this time the Czechoslovakian republic, that buffer state of French imperialism, is destined to kindle the fire of the democratic crusaders.

It is therefore worth our while to look more closely at this episodic state between two great chapters of war and revolution.

The little Czech nation, deprived of its political independence since the Thirty Years' War, limped through the senile revolution of '48 far behind the Austrian and Hungarian bourgeoisies. In the main a people of artisans, peasants and provincial intellectuals, with no roots in modern capitalist relations of production, it became, in its petty-bourgeois national romanticism, an instrument of Habsburg reaction. Marx and Engels heaped their searing sarcasm upon these reliable gendarmes of the monarchy.

Wilson's proclamation of the right of "self-determination" of the peoples gave

political freedom to the Czech bourgeoisie, which in the interim had succeeded in creating a kind of national capitalism through the tenacious two-penny accumulation of petty men, making it at the same time satrap over five other gagged nations.

This bourgeoisie, disregarded by history over three centuries, attained, mainly through colonial exploitation of its national minorities, a belated flowering, interrupted spasmodically by crises and war danger. We say "belated", for it is the tragedy of the Czech capitalist stragglers that they knew their rise when proletarian revolution, capitalist decay, imperialist war, daily call their social and national existence into question.

The warrant of state independence by the Entente could not at all secure the class domination of the Czech bourgeoisie. The Czech workers who, under the monarchy, had suffered under the double pressure of economic exploitation and national oppression, belonged to the radical wing of the Austrian labor movement. The first blows from the homecomers after the war, many of them influenced by the Russian revolution, were directed, understandably enough, against Vienna and the remnants of its power. Without a Marxian leadership, which would have tied up the bourgeois and the socialist tasks of the revolution, the Czech proletariat was harnessed to its national bourgeoisie. But soon the struggle for the distribution of the fruits of victory was to begin. In mighty battles the workers tried, from 1919 to 1921, to reconquer their lost positions. A communist party embracing half a million members but lacking a communist leadership, fights out the dramatic "July days" of the Czech proletariat in bloody local insurrections.

In these years Czech finance capital, trembling for its life, creates the myth of the "Father of Victory". Indeed, Masaryk's imperishable merit consists not so much in having wheedled the Czech puppet state in the anti-chambers of the Entente chancelleries, as in becoming the father of a democratic revolution in the post-war years. Nobody was better fit for this rôle than this "man of the people" who surrounded himself with a nimbus of impartiality. The new president came down among the people. In factories and mines he painted for the workers the rosy picture of radical but peaceful social reforms, while outside the Czech Noskes carried out their bloody work.

A broad land reform at the expense of the Austrian-Hungarian nobles (giving soil to 600,000 peasants), sinecures in the new state apparatus for thousands of legionnaires from the ranks of the workers and the middle classes, the creation of a Czech workers' aristocracy—this was the social basis of operation for the crushing of the revolutionary proletarian offensive. Having managed the affairs of feudalism in 1848, the national bourgeoisie and its reformist lackeys now carried out their counter-revolutionary handiwork for their own sake.

This was not the only puzzle which his-

tory presented to this lagging bourgeoisie. As against six million Czechs, there were in the new state 2¼ million Slovaks, 500,000 Ruthenians, 80,000 Poles, 700,000 Hungarians, 3½ million Germans, over whom the Czech bourgeoisie had to wield state supremacy in the name of the Wilsonian rights of the people. It approached its tasks with a combination of Machiavellian trickery and brutal violence. The case of the Germans and Hungarians was simple: these former usufructs of the monarchy, now defenseless after the war defeat, were, in the spirit of Versailles, forced to the same level of pariahs which had aroused the wild hatred of the Czechs in old Austria.

Thus it remained to regulate the relations with the "Slovak brothers". Slovaks and Ruthenians had been separated by a thousand years of slavery under the Hungarian feudal yoke from the Czechs thrown in the Western zone. The secular misery and dark illiteracy of these two primitive peasant peoples were poor soil for a real movement of national independence. This movement originated mainly among the Slovakian and Ruthenian emigrants who had found wealth in the United States and were received with open arms as unexpected allies by Masaryk's Mafia. The Pittsburgh treaty of May 1918, drawn up by Masaryk, guaranteed to the Slovaks full language and administrative autonomy in the new state. But these federative dreams of the first enthusiastic hours soon vanished before the sober necessity for the Czech bourgeois minority to assure its hegemony in the new state. Benes found the philosopher's stone. On the basis of his "scientifically" documented memorandum, the peace treaty of St. Germain declared Czechs and Slovaks to be a "Czechoslovakian" national unit, thus confirming the "democratic" claims of Czech imperialism to state rule. The protests of the duped Slovaks against Masaryk's open treachery met with dignified silence from the ethical humanist.

The peace treaty gave the right of autonomy to the Ruthenians. To incorporate this far off Ukrainian population into the "state-nation" would have been too crude. As a sort of convict settlement for the rubbish of the Czech official staff, this Siberia of Prague lives under the knout of a governor named by the Czech center, with a régime of enlightened absolutism indulgently called "gradual autonomy".

An army of Czech functionaries, grocers, business-man, manufacturers, land-owners and worker-aristocrats flooded the non-Czech regions, making its way with robust elbow thrusts. The pomposity and greediness of these *nouveaux riches* could not but furnish constant impetus to the national chauvinism of the *Irredenta* (separatists), especially since there was no revolutionary force to guide it into the stream of class struggle.

Social and national tensions were heightened by the inevitable economic disproportions within this artificial state formation.

Here (above all in the German districts), the main industry of the monarchy was concentrated. Here were located its richest granaries, next to those in Hungary. Against a background of declining capitalist economy, Czech protectionism, caught in the scissors of chronic industrial and agricultural over-production, fought a life-and-death struggle with German export industry and Slovak agriculture. Attempts of parts of the non-Czech bourgeoisie (and, naturally, their inevitable social-democratic servants) to find relief through participation in the government, brought political profit to the Czech bourgeoisie but only meager advantages to themselves.

Thus this offspring of Versailles has in its bones all the hereditary diseases of the Habsburg nationality-state, augmented by the contradictions of modern imperialism. The abolition of national oppression, the Slovak and Ruthenian agrarian revolution against the new Czech gentry, continue to raise themselves as the urgent tasks of the proletarian revolution. Its failure has led to the epidemic spread of Henlein's Sudetic German National Socialism and to the rise of semi-fascist clerical nationalism in the Eastern provinces.

To this abundance of inner contradictions there was added from the very beginning the constant insecurity of foreign relations. Even during the height of French predominance on the Continent, Prague lived under the constant shadow of death, threatened by the Hungarian restoration (which gave rise to the languishing Little Entente), surrounded by expansion-seeking Poland (courted by the Slovak autonomists) and a Germany preparing for ruthless revenge. There was no need for her present hopeless isolation to goad this vassal of French imperialism into maintaining an army far exceeding the resources of the country, in which an arch-reactionary officers' corps, hunting for the heretical ghost of the good Soldier Schweik, wrestles to keep together the exploited of six centrifugal nations.

The regeneration of German imperialism has pushed the barbarism of Czech "national liberation" in the Versailles style to its extreme point. In a mighty hostile encirclement, the Czech bourgeoisie desperately prepares for an unequal fight to preserve its short-lived imperialist hegemony, thus exhausting the last reserves of the country and even now installing a régime of military dictatorship in the non-Czech regions. Even the dutiful Stalinists did not dare to vote for the last fantastic armament program. They confined themselves to the symbolic gesture of voting for the budgetary appropriations for the President of the Republic.

One would think that this labyrinth of contradictions cries out for mastery by a totalitarian dictatorship. As a matter of fact, fascism has not only blossomed forth in varicolored species among the national *Irredenta*, but has also made repeated advances in the Czech camp. As the result of a long year of moulting, there has surged

forward the fascist "National Union", a bloc between the adventurer-general of the Czech legions in Russia, Gayda, a former party comrade of Benes, Stribny, owner of a powerful chain of tabloids and expert in social demagogy, and Kramarsch, industrial magnate and desperate rival of Masaryk. This group has unofficial but strong support in the influential right wing of the leading governmental party, the Czech Agrarians, which seeks to eliminate the overhead expenses of the bourgeois-socialist coalition existing since 1929 through a transition to a "moderate" corporative ideology in the spirit of the Austrian Christian Socialists.

Nevertheless Czech fascism up to the present has not passed the stage of molecular growth. The reason lies not only in the still-existing privileges of the Czech middle classes. What is more important, the Czech bourgeoisie understands very well that the fascist surgical knife can not cut through a single one of the intertwined social, national, economic and foreign contradictions without tearing all the others more cruelly.

A corporative *coup d'état* against the labor movement would deprive the bourgeoisie of the precious patriotic services of reformism (and Stalinism)—whether in the government or in loyal opposition—in the maintenance of its imperial hegemony.

An alliance, for example, with Slovak reaction or even with Henlein for the establishment of a totalitarian dictatorship would be wrecked by the irreconcilable demands for autonomy. Autonomy, if ever granted, would rather be the last "trump" of the Czech bourgeoisie to be played in wartime under the unifying saber of military dictatorship.

Too weak as a class and as a nation to carry out its domination with undisguised totalitarianism, the bourgeoisie is at the same time incapable of conceding to its oppositions the rules of the democratic game. Kept in tension by the constant wavering of its destiny between the Scylla of the revolution and the Charybdis of war for revenge, torn from within by uninterrupted struggles for the division of the new power, it had recourse from its first days to the preventive method of *Bonapartism with a parliamentary mask*.

A "Law for the Protection of the Republic" turns over the actual distribution of democratic rights to the state bureaucracy: freedom of speech, assembly and organization is regulated through preventive press censorship, authorization or prohibition of newspapers, meetings and demonstrations, censorship of speeches, bloody limitation of strikes and picketing, etc., accompanied by Draconic political trials. In the critical years of 1921 and 1926, the government was taken over by the "impartial" bureaucracy. The economic crisis and the war danger were accompanied by a substantial enlargement of the full powers of the bureaucracy. In 1931 the government was granted almost exclusive legislative power to rule by decree, thus making the plebis-

citary character of the parliamentary majority all the more manifest. Each year since 1933, the same majority gives the government and the state bureaucracy full authority to padlock by simple decree any organization which it considers "hostile to the state", to confiscate its property, to sentence its members by ordinary police jurisdiction, and even to create political concentration camps. By mere decree it also can invalidate the parliamentary mandates of such organizations, thereby assuring, if necessary, its endangered parliamentary majority.

This threat to "defend democracy by dictatorship", as Masaryk described the law, characterizes in the crudest possible fashion the Bonapartist mechanics of power of the Czech "disciplined democracy". It maintains the forms of the parliamentary constitution while progressively hollowing them of their democratic content.

In passing, we may note that a supplementary law of full power for national defense has allowed the government to declare in the vast non-Czech districts, especially near its lengthy borders, an actual state of emergency under military rule, thus giving the peoples an advance taste of its way of defending democracy.

Thus the Czech bourgeoisie has put forward as a tamer of the toiling masses and an arbiter for its own inner frictions an impersonal Bonaparte in the form of an almighty state, police and military bureaucracy, an immobile pole in the flux of coalition governments and, at the same time, in itself an object of the perpetual struggle for power among the government parties. Indeed, the Agrarian party, maintaining two million peasant-electors in economic dependency through monopolistically controlled coöperatives, and thus having become the unchanging axis of every government, has succeeded in merging almost completely with the state apparatus. For this support of the Bonapartist machinery by a relatively stable political following, the Agrarians are paid by the other bourgeois factions, especially by the industrialists, with heavy economic concessions, which in turn enlarge their "mass base". In this strictly political sense one might speak of a Czech "agrarian-Bonapartism", which—composed in large measure of repressed fascists—strives to grind out the maximum of totalitarianism under the guise of parliamentary rule. It is complemented by the purely representative "left" Masaryk-Benes presidential top, which has to provide it with a democratic halo and restrain excesses toward the right.

The need for maintaining as long as possible the parliamentary variant of Bonapartism is further emphasized by the approaching war catastrophe. The split of the German camp into Nazis and anti-fascists (similar processes are also at work among the other nationalities) allows the Czech bourgeoisie to put on the airs of a champion of liberty and tolerance for both internal and external admiration. As a matter of fact this posing is only a means of

transforming the liberals, reformists and Stalinists into voluntary police troops of Czech imperialism. While pushing the toiling masses further and further into the hands of the fascists, these groups still provisionally strengthen Prague's Bonapartist equilibrium.

We have also mentioned the Stalinists. To be exact, we must say that the Czech bourgeoisie uses them only indirectly. Through the political stability of its agrarian basis and the rehabilitation of reformism thanks to Stalin's Third and People's Front Periods, the Bonapartist régime can dispense with the direct support of the Stalinists. This policy is followed all the more willingly because the bourgeoisie—including Benes—keeps in reserve the *coup de theatre* of an agreement with Germany at the expense of Russia. Strong and courageous only with the weak, its whole policy is directed toward siding with the most favored imperialist alignment. Should England give Germany a free hand in the East (and her recent sacrifice of Austria to Hitler shows her readiness in this respect), should Poland (as well as Rumania and Yugoslavia) turn her back to France, no one need be surprised to see the Czech bourgeoisie, faithful to its counter-revolutionary traditions, become the sword-bearer of the German super-Wrangel.

Whatever may be the position of this Versailles parasite in the next war, the Bolshevik-Leninists refuse to link their fate with it. Under the dictatorship of the Czech satraps or under the military heel of the Third Reich, they will fight relentlessly for a free, United States of Europe.

W. KELLER

### Lenin on Socialism

"As I just passed through your hall, I observed a placard with the inscription: 'The realm of the workers and peasants will never end!' After I had read this remarkable placard, which did not, it is true, hang on the wall in the usual manner but stood in a corner, perhaps because it occurred to someone that the inscription had not been happily chosen and he therefore put it on the side—when I had read this remarkable placard, I was forced to think: So, there still prevail among us misunderstandings and false conceptions about those most elementary and most fundamental things! If the realm of the workers and peasants were really never to end, this would mean that there would never be socialism, for socialism is the abolition of all classes; but so long as there are workers and peasants, then there are different classes, and complete socialism would be for that reason impossible. And when I reflected that, three and a half years after the October revolution, there can be among us such remarkable placards, even if pushed somewhat to the side, it occurred to me that it is possible for the greatest misunderstandings to prevail even about the most widely disseminated and widely used watchwords."—Lenin, Speech at the All-Russian Conference of Transport Workers, Moscow, March 1921.

# The Class Struggle in Mexico

CAPITALISM IN ITS imperialist stage has created a world economy. In so doing, it threw the more backward countries, the colonies and semi-colonial countries, into the orbit of capitalism, thus carrying the class struggle into the most remote corners of the globe. In Mexico, under the direct influence of Yankee and English imperialist penetration, the industrial development of the country was begun, starting with the extractive industries and railroads and extending very soon even to local provisions. The effect has been that the manufacturing industries have been deformed since their very birth by this imperialist penetration. In 1910, the urban and rural petty bourgeoisie under the protection of Yankee imperialism (vitaly interested in the fall of the Porfirist\* aristocracy, the protector of English imperialist penetration) began the bourgeois-democratic revolution. They as well as imperialism needed and need to convert a part of the millions of peasants, half-enslaved by the soil, into day laborers and salaried workers who, as producers of surplus value, would make possible the existence of an internal market and cheap labor, with the consequent development of industry. They must further create in the country a social base of small landowners to lean upon, thus imitating the mirage of agrarian reform which became the safety valve for providing a release to the desire for land by the peasantry, who participated in the revolution under the banner of "Land and Liberty".

In the year 1910, 2% of the rural population possessed 80 per cent of the land. In 1930, 3,915 people, or one-fourth of one per cent of the 1,621,110 agrarian landowners possessed 65% of the land while 65% of the rural population owned nothing. Such is the work of 27 years of bourgeois revolution.

## THE CLASSES IN THE COUNTRY

*Large Absentee Landowners:* 297 own estates with a value greater than 700,000 pesos [1 peso=ap. \$.28] and a total value of 445.5 million pesos, i.e., 18% of the total value of rural land.

Among them there are 26 estates with a value of 40 million dollars each, which are not being farmed. If one takes into account the fact that in the majority of cases land is very cheap it will be seen why almost all of these estates are larger than 10,000 hectares and all together constitute about 77 million of the 121 million hectares [1 hectare=2.471 acres] counted in the census.

*Rich Peasants and Landlords:* They own 6,544 estates, valued at from 50,000 to 700,000 pesos and with a total value of 983,258,249 pesos or 37% of the total value of all agrarian land, consisting of 20 million hectares.

*The Middle Peasants:* They own 35,129

farms with a value of 5,000 to 500,000 pesos and a total value of 513 million pesos.

*Small Landowners:* There are 56,042 whose lands are worth not more than 5,000 pesos and have a total value of 313,185,679 pesos.

*The Poor Peasants:* 244,108 own farms of less than a hectare. As the parcels of these extremely hungry and miserable peasants are less than a hectare in size, the income of each one of these is about 63.17 pesos and 17% of the crop is generally lost.

*Day Laborers:* 2,780,260 day laborers form the core of the proletariat which the proletarian revolution will have to awaken and activate as the shock brigade of the class struggle in this country. To them may be added the numerous *ejidatarios* [petty land grant owners] and small landowners who combine the cultivation of their parcels with their salaried jobs.

## THE AGRARIAN MOVEMENT

The native bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie have performed a great piece of deception in the problem of handing over the land to the peasantry. The fact is that while 3,915 landlords own 65% of the soil, millions of peasants only possess their misery and ignorance. The bourgeoisie, desirous of forming a social base for itself in the country, has created a cloak of small landowners to whom they have handed over some of the land (*ejidatarios*). The results obtained are miserable; only 896,152 peasants have received land with a total area of 12 million hectares of which hardly 4 million have soil which can be cultivated. Of these, one-half are not tilled for lack of economic and technical aid and because of the high cost of adequate soil preparation. At the rate followed in the years 1935-1937, they may perhaps in a hundred years reach the point of dividing the land (supposing the bourgeoisie were capable of doing so). The native bourgeoisie is incapable of accomplishing the agrarian revolution. Like its state apparatus and imperialism, it finds itself bound to agrarian land as closely as the finger-nail to the flesh; and it cannot change the situation beyond the limits in which it has already acted without affecting itself at the same time. For this reason, the possibilities of agrarian reform may be considered as practically terminated. The lands which were distributed recently in Laguna belonged mostly to Spaniards and natives and the division was accomplished precisely at the time when intervention by the Spanish government was impossible. In addition, imperialism, principally the Yankee brand, has profited by the measures adopted in Laguna and Yucatan since cotton and henequen, which constitute the chief vegetable exports of Mexico, are the principal products of these lands. The incorporation of these lands into intensive and industrial-

ized cultivation improves the export business for imperialism.

The division of the land divides the gains obtained between the native bourgeoisie and the foreign investment financiers. The banks, in compensating the *ejidatarios*, became the beneficiaries of the profits which previously belonged to the Spaniards. The division of Laguna permitted the government to de-proletarianize the workers who constituted a menace, a menace which disappeared upon their being converted into small landowners attached to the umbilical cord of the national and foreign bankers.

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF AGRICULTURE

The development of agriculture is being carried on almost exclusively in the interests of export trade and imperialism. Capital flies from the section producing food materials for the masses of the country and is concentrated in the exportable vegetable products henequen, cotton, ixtle, etc.). This phenomenon is of first and foremost importance in explaining the rise in the price of prime necessities.

The agrarian problem is the motivating force which impels the proletariat to power.

The native bourgeoisie has been and continues to be incapable of solving the agrarian problem. Millions of day-workers and an imposing mass of poor small landowning peasants and *ejidatarios* expect the revolution to solve their problems. The non-existence of a revolutionary party capable of leading these peasants in struggle has made it possible for the *Partido Nacional Revolucionario* [National Revolutionary Party] and Cárdenism to capitalize on the peasantry's discontent and desire for land, utilizing it at the same time as political food for the proletariat.

The whole development of the Mexican revolution with its stages of Zapata and other agrarian leaders confirms the fact that the peasants constitute an enormous revolutionary force, but are incapable of crystallizing their own policies and their own party. For 27 years, they have marched in the rear of the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie. The future of the Mexican revolution depends for the most part on the changing of this situation.

Only the power of the dictatorship of the proletariat will give all the land to those who have futilely awaited it. The backwardness of the millions of peasants, their desire for land, their hunger and misery, in a word, the gigantic proportions of the agrarian problem sharpened to the extreme by imperialism, together with the backwardness of the country and its semi-colonial character are the motive force for the inevitable workers' and peasants' alliance which will raise the proletariat to power. The Stalin-Lombardist policy, which abandons the peasants in the hands of the bourgeoisie and its present party, the P.N.R., is a policy of sabotage and

\* Group of landowners headed by Porfirio Díaz, who maintained power during the last decades of the past century until the year 1910 when he was overthrown by the revolution.

betrayal of the revolution. It divorces the proletariat from the forces capable of raising it to power. In the face of this policy, there can be only one correct policy, *i.e.*, to work untiringly for the revolutionary alliance of the proletariat with and at the head of the peasants; the irreconcilable struggle to snatch them from the claws of the bourgeoisie, the P.N.R. and imperialism.

### INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

The capital invested by industry has jumped in the five-year period of 1930-1935 from 979.5 million to 1,822.8 million pesos, that is, an increase of 83%. The value of production increased still further since, from 900.3 million in 1930, it reached 1,718.6 million pesos in 1935, increasing by 90%. In contrast, the sum total of wages rose from 181 million to 212.9 million or an increase of only 14.76%. Within the same time, exports increased from 458.6 million to 775 million pesos and the imports from 180.9 million in 1932 to 465.1 million in 1936, an increase of 156%.

Superficially, these figures seem to prove the Menshevik theory of the consolidation of a national bourgeoisie, born in the growth of industry and internal and foreign trade and a commercial balance which will increase the nation's "riches", the theoretical basis for the policies of the Stalinist party and of the reformist of the Lombardo type. Support of the national bourgeoisie whom the growth and consolidation of the "national" economy dialectically force to collide with imperialism, becoming therefore revolutionary and anti-imperialist and grouping the proletariat as a simple force and opposition in support of the national bourgeoisie. From this, also follows the theory of economic democracy which deduces from the increase of investments, production, exports, *etc.*, an uninterrupted and progressive increase in the workers' standard of living with a tendency towards stabilization.

Such things are false. Since its birth, the bourgeoisie was a product of the transformation initiated by imperialism with its investments of capital in mines and railroads. Recent data prove that the United States is day by day reënforsing its hegemony in this country and show that its investments are concentrated in the petroleum, mining and transportation industry. The rôle of English imperialism is equally enormous. The investments of the United States jumped from 185 million in 1900 to 1,325 million dollars in 1931.

The greatest portion of capital is devoted to extractive industries. Of the 1,872.8 million invested, 1,036 million are devoted to them. All of them are in the hands of Yankee and English capitalists and their progressive growth proves that Mexico is being converted more and more into a country producing raw material, into a semi-colonial country.

Petroleum and its derivatives, silver, gold, lead and other minerals, constitute 73% of the exports. The growth of the extractive industries, which go to make up

almost the whole of exportable materials (93%), forms the basis for the actual prosperity of the country. On this is based the Cárdenist "democracy" and the illusions of the progressivism of the faction in power. This growth means nothing less than the increase of imperialist penetration and the daily increasing oppression of the country by the imperialists.

At the same time sections of small industry are developing which furnish the basis for petty bourgeois illusions in a struggle of the native bourgeoisie against imperialism; but actually despite this incipient development) it is imperialism which is being consolidated.

### THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROLETARIAT

Imperialism cannot develop industry without developing the proletariat. The growth of small industry also contributes to its growth and the population is thus displaced from the country to the city. In 1921 the rural population was 9,869,276; in 1930, 11,012,091 with a definite increase of 1,142,815. The urban was respectively 4,465,504 (1921) and 5,540,631 (1931), with a definite increase of 1,075,127. The urban population grew by 24.2%.

These growths demonstrate that the development is toward the strengthening of the position of the proletariat. In the Federal District [Mexico City and vicinity], there are located the vital organs of the country. Its population has tripled in 30 years (341,516 in 1900 and 1,229,575 in 1930) and is today 6.3% of the total population of the country. If, in the Mexican revolution begun in 1910, matters were decided in the country, in the future, the cities, and among them the Federal District, with its 165,355 industrial proletarians (1930), calculated for 1937 at more than 200,000, will play a decisive rôle and the peasants will effect the consolidation of the results gained. The Federal District will be for Mexico what Petrograd was for Russia in 1917.

The army of the revolution grows. In the year 1921, the industrial proletariat numbered 620,000 and in 1930, 850,000 with a definite increase of 230,000 (37% in 9 years) and constitutes 16.46% of the economically active population. More than 300,000 proletarians work in small industries whose production does not exceed 10,000 pesos annually. It can definitely be stated that the proletariat exceeds a million. On the side of the toiling masses are to be found 5,390,908 domestic workers, semi-proletarians and an urban petty bourgeoisie which in 1930 reached a figure of 479,878.

Industrial development in recent years has assembled the proletariat in those places which are vital for the economic system. This localization enormously facilitates its rôle as the great future leader of millions of day-workers, poor peasants and small landowners and the millions of domestic workers (semi-proletarians) in the country and the city who constitute a powerful mass which the proletariat must and will be able to mobilize for the revolution.

In the last three years, there has been an awakening of the working class movement. In some cases and despite the betrayal by the leadership, the workers unwittingly have been the mainspring of mass action in the country (Laguna). At present all the workers of the extractive industries, transportation and almost all the important manufacturing industries are unionized.

In the federal industries, the organized workers exceed 300,000 and the effective total of union members can be calculated as more than 650,000 workers. The principal unions are: the *Confederación de Trabajadores de México* [Confederation of Workers of Mexico], led by Lombardo Toledano and plagued by Stalinists, controls the majority of the Mexican proletariat and can count on more than 400,000 workers; the *Confederación General de Trabajadores* [General Confederation of Workers] and the *Confederación Regional Obrera de México* [Regional Labor Confederation of Mexico].

### ANTI-IMPERIALIST CHARACTER OF THE STRUGGLE

The struggle in Mexico since its origin has been anti-imperialist. With the leadership of the principal labor unions in the hands of native bourgeoisie, agents of imperialism and without the existence of a revolutionary workers' party to lead the struggle, it stagnated and could not go forward. The only revolutionary road is the struggle for the elimination of the reformists and treacherous leadership in the C.T.M., of the masked fascists in the case of the C.R.O.M., or of the unmasked reactionaries in the C.G.T. The C.T.M. is in the hands of the Cárdenist faction. The C.R.O.M. is led by Morones and was the reactionary instrument of Calles when his chimerical attempts of June and December 1935 failed. The C.G.T., officially "anarchist", actually vacillates between Callesism and Cárdenism. It is impossible to wage this struggle victoriously without the formation of the revolutionary workers' party of the masses of Mexico, which will gather up the heritage of revolutionary Marxism and lead them.

### FASCISM

For the time being, Yankee and English imperialism are satisfied with the present Bonapartist dictatorship, covered with the mantle of democracy. For the time being, they do not favor fascism in Mexico. On the other hand, Germany, Italy and Japan finance, at a daily increasing rate, the formation of fascist groups (Middle Class Confederation, Veterans of the Revolution, Anti-Communist United Fronts, *etc.*). For this purpose, they collect the refuse which the movements have dropped since 1910, thieves without luck, fanatic Catholics encouraged by priests. Some reactionary sections of the bourgeoisie follow in their footsteps, since they see in the action of Hitler and Mussolini the remote but only possibility of growth and consolidation which Yankee imperialism never will permit them.

Native fascism is an expression of im-

perialist reaction. In the absence of a big bourgeoisie, imperialism exists. In place of a big urban bourgeoisie, there are the peasants, who, hungry and hopeless, are already tired of the "democracy" which does not accomplish an agrarian revolution and who only wait for someone who might guide them in their struggle. As a

consequence they can become a fascist mass, if the proletariat does not know how to attract them to itself. For want of democratic parties, with the tradition and active political life of the petty bourgeoisie and proletarian masses and of a traditional democratic state, fascism can come to power as it did in Brazil through the me-

dium of the same Bonapartist state which was transformed into totalitarianism. The anti-fascist struggle here as in all of Latin America is to a great extent a struggle for agrarian concessions, is the struggle for the construction of the party of the Fourth International.

MEXICO, D.F., January, 1938.

## Archives of the Revolution

DOCUMENTS of the HISTORY and THEORY of the WORKING CLASS MOVEMENT

### Class Relations in the Chinese Revolution

ISSUE 11 of the *Communist International* (March 18, 1927) printed as an editorial an article on the Fifth Congress of the Chinese C.P. and the Kuomintang which is in every way an exceptional mockery of the basic elements of Marxian theory and Bolshevik politics. This article cannot be characterized otherwise than as the worst expression of right Menshevism on questions of revolution.

As its starting point the article takes the proposition that "the problem of problems of the Chinese revolution at the present moment is the position of the Kuomintang, the further development of the Kuomintang as a party at the head of the South China state" (p. 4). Thus the problem of problems is not the awakening and the unification of millions of workers under the leadership of trade unions and the communist party, nor the drawing of poor peasants and artisans into the main stream of the movement, nor the deepening of the struggle of the C.P. to win over the proletariat, nor of the struggle of the proletariat for influence over the many-millioned masses of the disinherited—no, "the problem of problems" (!) is the position of the Kuomintang, *i.e.*, a party organization which embraces, according to official figures, some 300,000 members—students, intellectuals, liberal merchants in general, and in part peasants and workers. "For a political party," declares the article, "300,000 members is quite a considerable number." A paltry parliamentary appraisal! If these 300,000 had emanated from the experiences of past class struggles, and the experience of leading proletarian strikes and peasant movements, then, naturally, even a smaller number of members could successfully assume the leadership of the revolution on its new and broader mass stage. But these 300,000 represent in their majority the result of individual recruitment among the tops. We have here the unification of nationalist-liberals or Cadets with right S.R.'s, with an admixture of young communists who are compelled in the period of their political training to submit to the discipline and even the ideology of a bourgeois-nationalist organization.

"The development of the Kuomintang," continues the article, "reveals alarming [!]

This article by Trotsky, written on April 3, 1927, was succeeded one week later by the counter-revolutionary Shanghai *coup* of Chiang Kai-shek and the Kuomintang. By his analysis of the class struggle in the Chinese revolution, Trotsky then sought to warn Communist International against a policy in China such as guaranteed the inevitable defeat of the tempestuous upsurge of the workers and peasants and the triumph of the bourgeois nationalist reaction. Stalin-Bukharin had, however, then reached the point at which they could no longer tolerate a Bolshevik criticism of their course in China and they therefore suppressed the article of Trotsky, prohibiting its publication, although the author was still a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and of the Executive Committee of the Communist International. We print it now for the first time in any language especially in light of the latest Comintern course in China which is, if anything, an exaggerated repetition of the 1925-1927 "bloc of four classes" in the form of a "national united front" but, fundamentally, the same attempt to subordinate the proletariat and peasantry to the bourgeoisie and its political machine. In this sense, the essay possesses both an historical and a topical importance—ED.

symptoms from the standpoint of the interests of the Chinese revolution." (P. 4.) And what is the nature of these "alarming" symptoms? Apparently it is this, that the power is in the hands of the center of the Kuomintang, and "the center has in the recent period gravitated in most instances definitely to the right". It should be noted that all political definitions in this article are of a formal, parliamentary and ceremonial character, emptied of all class content. What is the meaning of this gravitation—to the right? What kind of Kuomintang "center" is this? It consists of the tops of the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia, middle-ranking functionaries and so on. Like all petty bourgeois, this center is incapable of carrying out an independent policy, especially in the period when millions of workers and peasants have entered the arena. This petty-bourgeois center can produce an ally for the proletariat only on the condition that the proletariat carries out an independent policy. But there cannot even be talk of such a policy in China in the absence of an independent class party there. Communists do not simply

"join" the Kuomintang but they submit to its discipline and even obligate themselves not to criticize Sun Yat Senism. In these conditions, the petty-bourgeois intellectual center can only trail behind the nationalist-liberal bourgeoisie, which is bound up by imperceptible gradations with the comprador, *i.e.*, overt imperialist bourgeoisie; and, in proportion as the struggle of the masses sharpens, go over openly to its side. Thus the Kuomintang is a party apparatus adapted for the political subjection of the mass movement through the medium of a top intellectual center to an out-and-out right, *i.e.*, manifestly bourgeois leadership, which in these conditions unflinchingly subjects the National government to itself, and will continue to do so. The article cites the fact that "lefts" predominate in conferences, congresses and the Executive Committee of the Kuomintang, but that this solacing circumstance is "not reflected in the composition and politics of the national government". How astonishing! But, after all, the left petty bourgeoisie exists only to display its radicalism in articles, and at conferences and banquets, while handing the power over to the middle and big bourgeoisie.

Thus the "alarming" symptoms in the Kuomintang consist in this, that the Kuomintang does not personify the pure idea of a national-liberationist revolution, which the author of the article sucked out of his thumb, but rather reflects the class mechanics of the Chinese revolution. The author finds "alarming" the fact that the history of the Chinese people is unfolding in the form of a class struggle, proving thereby no exception to the history of all mankind. The article further informs us that the "Kuomintang and the national government are seriously concerned [a remarkable expression!] about the growth of the labor movement". What does this mean? It only means that the intellectual petty bourgeoisie has become scared by fear of the bourgeoisie before the awakening of the working masses. In proportion as the revolution extends and deepens its base, radicalizes its methods, sharpens its slogans, groups and layers of proprietors and intellectual burghers bound up with them will inevitably split from it at the

top. One part of the national government is joined with blood-ties to the bourgeoisie, and another part, fearful of breaking with it, becomes "concerned" about the growth of the labor movement, and seeks to harness the latter. By this delicate expression, "concerned", as previously by the words "alarming symptoms", the article refers to the sharpening of class relations, and to the attempts of the nationalist-liberal bourgeoisie, by using the Kuomintang as a tool and by issuing orders through it to the national government, to place a halter on the proletariat. When and where have we ever appraised class relations as is done by the leading article in the *Communist International*? Whence come these ideas? What is their source?

What methods are proposed in the article to overcome these "alarming symptoms"? On these questions the article polemizes against the June (1926) Plenum of the Central Committee of the Chinese C.P. which adopted the position that it was necessary for the C.P. as an independent organization to conclude a bloc with the Kuomintang. The article rejects this idea. It also rejects the proposal to organize a left faction in the Kuomintang as an ally of the C.P. No, the task—it teaches—consists in "assuring a firm left orientation to the whole Kuomintang". The question is solved easily. What is needed at the new stage of development, at a time when the workers are engaging in strikes against the capitalists, when the peasant are seeking, against the opposition of the National government, to drive out the landlords—what is needed at this new stage is to assure "a firm left orientation" to the Kuomintang, which represents the unification of a section of the bourgeoisie suffering from the strikes, a section of the landed intelligentsia suffering from the agrarian movement, the urban petty bourgeois intellectuals who are fearful of "repelling" the bourgeoisie to the side of reaction, and finally the communist party that is bound hand and foot. It is this Kuomintang which must acquire "a firm left orientation". Nobody knows what class line this "firm left orientation" must express. And how is it to be attained? Very simply: It is necessary "to saturate it [the Kuomintang] with revolutionary worker and peasant elements" (p. 6). Saturate the Kuomintang with workers and peasants? But the whole trouble is that workers and peasants, unacquainted with the pure idea of national revolution, are trying to utilize the revolution in order to "saturate" themselves a little before they saturate the Kuomintang with themselves. To this end they are engaging in strikes and agrarian uprisings. But these unpleasant manifestations of class mechanics hinder the Kuomintang from acquiring "a firm left orientation". To call a striking worker to join the Kuomintang is to run up against his objection: Why should I join a party which crushes strikes through the government appointed by it? The resourceful author of the article would probably reply to him: By joining a common party with

the bourgeoisie, you will be able to push it to the left, you will eliminate "alarming symptoms" and dispell the clouds of its "concern". In answer to this, the Shanghai striker will say that workers can exert pressure on their government and even achieve a change in government not through individual pressure on the bourgeoisie within the framework of a common party, but through an independent class party. Incidentally, it may well be that the Shanghai striker, who has already given evidence of advanced maturity, would not even continue to discuss any further, but shrug his shoulders, and give up his interlocutor as hopeless.

The article goes on to quote one of the leading communists who stated at the December 1926 party conference that the Kuomintang was dead and decomposing and that the communists have no reason for hanging on to a stinking corpse. In this connection the article says: "This comrade obviously [!] had in mind the fact that recently the National government and especially government organs in the provinces have come out on a number of occasions against the development of the revolutionary struggle of the working class and peasantry." (P. 7.) The penetration of the author of this article is truly astounding. When a Chinese communist says that the bourgeois-nationalist tops are dead so far as the revolution is concerned, he "obviously" has in mind the fact that the National government has been shooting strikers on a small scale. "Obviously"! Of course, "alarming symptoms" are in evidence, but "this danger may be averted, if we do not look upon the Kuomintang as a stinking corpse" (p. 7). The whole thing depends, it seems, on how one looks upon the Kuomintang. Classes and their parties depend on how we view them. The Kuomintang is not a corpse, it is only ailing. What of? Of a lack of blood of revolutionary workers and peasants. It is necessary for the Communist party to "assist in the influx of this blood", etc. In short, what is needed is to perform the very-popular-of-late operation of blood transfusion not on an individual but already on a class scale. But, after all, the gist of the matter is that the bourgeoisie has begun to transfuse blood in its own way, by shooting, or helping to shoot, or winking its eyes at shootings of strikers and revolutionary peasants.\* In short, while fulfilling this splendid prescription we run up against one and the same difficulty, to wit, the class struggle. The gist of the entire article is in its desire to have the Chinese revolution make a detour of the class struggle, by taking an economic, rational and expedient road. In a word, by using the method of the Mensheviks, and therewith, in the periods of their greatest backsliding. And this article appears in the theoretical organ of the Communist International which was founded on an irreconcilable break with the Second International!

The article upbraids the Chinese com-

\*Written prior to the Shanghai massacre.

munists for not participating in the National government and its local organs. They would be able there to push the government to the left from within, guard it against false actions towards the masses, etc., etc. The entire experience of the past, and above all the experience of the Russian revolution has been scrapped. The authority of the leadership of the revolution is handed completely over to the Kuomintang, the responsibility for violence over the workers must be assumed by the communists. Bound hand and foot within the Kuomintang, the communists are powerless to offer the many-millioned masses an independent line in the field of foreign and domestic politics. But the workers are justified in charging the communists, especially if they participate in the National government, with complicity in all anti-proletarian and anti-people's actions of the nationalist bourgeoisie. The entire experience of our revolution has been scrapped.

If the communists, despite the mass labor movement, despite the powerful growth of the trade unions and the revolutionary agrarian movement in the villages, are obliged as hitherto to constitute a subordinate section of a bourgeois party, and enter as an impotent appendage into a national government formed by this bourgeois party, then it must be flatly stated that the time has not yet come for the formation of the communist party of China. For it is far better not to build a communist party at all than to compromise it in the epoch of revolution, i.e., precisely at the time when the ties between the party and the working masses are sealed with blood, and when great traditions are created which exert their influence for decades.

Developing a scintillating program in the spirit of right Menshevism in its period of decline, the article refurbishes it in the modest modern spirit by consoling China with the fact that she possesses objective pre-conditions for "skipping over the capitalist stage of development". Not a word is said in this connection to the effect that the anti-capitalist perspective of China's development is unconditionally and directly dependent upon the general course of the world proletarian revolution. Only the proletariat of the most advanced capitalist countries—with the organized assistance of the Chinese proletariat—will be able to take in tow the four hundred-million mass of atomized, pauperized, backward peasant economy, and through a series of intermediate stages lead it to socialism, on the basis of a world-wide exchange of commodities, and direct technical and organizational assistance from the outside. To believe that without the victory of the proletariat in the most advanced capitalist countries, and prior to this victory, China is capable with her own forces of "skipping over the capitalist stage of development" is to trample under foot the A B C of Marxism. This does not concern our author. He simply promises China a



# BOOKS

## A Liberal in China

RED STAR OVER CHINA. By EDGAR SNOW. 474 pp. *Illus.* New York. Random House. \$3.00.

WHEN CHINA UNITES. By HARRY GANNES. 293 pp. New York. Alfred A. Knopf. \$2.00.

The specter of "Soviet China", the designation given by the Stalinists to rural parts of Old Cathay which have been controlled by peasant governments under Communist party leadership, has haunted the pages of bourgeois journalism for a full decade and more. Taking time out from their routine task of covering the China scene, foreign newspaper correspondents on the pay-rolls of the great metropolitan dailies have milled out books dealing with or bearing upon the subject. Sentimental radicals, handicapped by poverty of understanding and with but few authenticated facts to go upon, have essayed the telling of the story of Soviet China, or fragments of it, and have endeavored to interpret the phenomenon to Western readers. The Stalinists and their hangers-on have, of course, been active in the same field.

Victor A. Yakhontoff, a former Czarist general doing penance for old political sins at the altar of Stalinist "liberalism", paid a flying visit to Shanghai five years ago, talked with a few foreign newspaper correspondents, then returned to America and published a book entitled *The Chinese Soviets*. It contained much misinformation and told the world exactly nothing that was not known before. But the Stalinists hailed it as "authoritative."

Then came Agnes Smedley, the sob-sister of the Chinese revolution, with her *China's Red Army Marches*. This lady, who in recent years has developed into a vicious vilifier of the Fourth Internationalists (the time of her development along this line coincided with a visit to Moscow, where she lived happily for about a year as a pensioner of the State Publishing House), gathered all the material for her book in her foreign-style apartment in Shanghai during the course of conversations with a functionary of the Communist party and the Red army. It represented only a slight improvement on Yakhontoff. Neatly inserted into it, of course, were the usual slanderous diatribes against the Trotskyists, whom, in accordance with what her informant told her and without any effort to check, she labelled as spies and *provocateurs*—the "A.B. [anti-Bolshevik] Group".

Now comes Edgar Snow, the first foreigner to enter the Soviet districts of China and emerge with a story gathered on the spot. The author is chief correspondent in the Far East of the London *Daily Herald*. His *Red Star Over China* is the first really factual piece of writing about the Chinese Soviets. As such it merits attention. Unlike Yakhontoff and Agnes Smedley, conscious Stalinist propagandists who strain at no falsehood big or small, Snow regards him-

self as a detached observer, an impartial investigator, who stands upon the Olympian heights of verifiable truth. He is a liberal anxious to maintain his liberal reputation. Thus his book starts out: "During my seven years in China hundreds of questions have been asked about the Chinese Red army, the Soviets, and the communist movement. Eager partisans could supply you with a stock of ready answers, but these remained highly unsatisfactory. How did they *know*? They had never been to Red China."

Journeying to Northern Shensi in the summer of 1936, Snow spent several months in Soviet territory. He travelled extensively as a guest of the Chinese Soviet government (since become a special Kuomintang administrative district), studied social and economic conditions, visited institutions, conversed with peasants, artisans, students, laborers, took many photographs (some of which are included in this volume), and was accorded lengthy interviews with such Soviet leaders as Chu Teh, Chou En-lai, P'eng Teh-huai and Mao Tse-tung, who, incidentally, laughed heartily when told of earlier Comintern reports that the Chinese Soviets had embraced 80,000,000 people; 9,000,000 was nearer the mark, Mao revealed. It was during these interviews that Snow gathered all the information which he retails as the history of the Chinese Soviets from their early beginnings in 1927 until the summer and autumn of 1936. This in itself is a stirring narrative of revolution, of the peasant struggle for the land, which well repays reading.

By the time of Snow's arrival in Yanan, the Soviet capital, the entire movement was embarking on the wide class-collaborationist road of the "People's Anti-Japanese United Front". The Soviet leaders, following out the policies adopted in August 1935 at the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International, had publicly announced their abandonment of the land confiscation program and were entering upon their new rôle as the guardians of private property in order to secure a "united front" with Chiang Kai-shek against Japan.

No congress of the Soviets was held either to consider the change before it was made or to ratify it afterwards. The abandonment of the agrarian revolution in favor of People's Frontism took place in thoroughly typical Stalinist fashion. It was decreed from above. Had Snow remained longer in Soviet territory, he might have had some interesting revelations to make regarding the real attitude of the Red army peasant soldiers toward the switch, their reaction to the discovery that the Kuomintang, the landlords and the bourgeoisie, against whom they had been engaged in bitter warfare for a decade, had suddenly become their friends.

Despite his journalistic detachment, the

non-capitalist path—obviously in recompense for injuries she has borne, and also for the dependent character of the proletarian movement, and especially the degraded, disfranchised position of the Chinese C.P.

How can and must the question of the capitalist and socialist paths of China's development be posed in reality?

Above all it must be made clear to the vanguard of the Chinese proletariat that China has no pre-requisites whatever economically for an *independent* transition to socialism; that the revolution now unfolding under the leadership of the Kuomintang is a bourgeois national revolution; that it can have as its consequence, even in the event of complete victory, only the further development of productive forces on the basis of capitalism. But it is necessary to develop no less forcefully before the Chinese proletariat the converse side of the question as well: The belated bourgeois national revolution is unfolding in China in conditions of the imperialist decay of capitalism. As Russian experience has already shown—in contrast, say, to the English—politics does not at all develop in parity with economics. China's further development must be taken in an international perspective. Despite the backwardness of Chinese economy, and in part precisely due to this backwardness, the Chinese revolution is wholly capable of bringing to political power an alliance of workers and peasants, under the leadership of the proletariat. This régime will be China's political link with the world revolution. In the course of the transitional period, the Chinese revolution will have a genuinely democratic, worker-and-peasant character. In its economic life, commodity-capitalist relations will inevitably predominate. The political régime will be primarily directed to secure the masses as great a share as possible in the fruits of the development of the productive forces and, at the same time, in the political and cultural utilization of the resources of the state. The further development of this perspective—the possibility of the democratic revolution growing over into the socialist revolution—depends completely and exclusively on the course of the world revolution, and on the economic and political successes of the Soviet Union, as an integral part of this world revolution. If the Chinese revolution were to triumph under its present bourgeois nationalist leadership, it would very quickly go to the right, demonstrate its good intentions to the capitalist countries, soon gain recognition on their part, offer them concessions on new bases, obtain loans, in a word, enter into the system of capitalist states as a less degraded, less colonial, but still profoundly dependent entity. Furthermore, the Chinese republic would hold in relation to the Soviet Union *in the best variant* the same position as the present Turkish republic.

(CONCLUDED IN NEXT ISSUE)

Leon TROTSKY

author has found no difficulty in subscribing to the view that "continued revolutionary war, in the face of a foreign menace which promised extinction for the entire nation, would further weaken not only the national strength of resistance, but with it perhaps bury the potential forces of the revolution itself". Snow sees no difference between *cessation of armed hostility against the Kuomintang* in order to create a united front against Japan, and *political capitulation to the Kuomintang*. In his view, this capitulation was a necessary condition for the creation of such a united front. And he would doubtless argue that apart from such capitulation no means existed for forcing the Kuomintang into a united front. Which, of course, is the veriest nonsense. Had the communists unfurled the banner of united struggle against imperialism, retaining intact their own independent program, they could have aroused a movement of mass pressure so powerful that it would either have forced the Kuomintang into a united front, or—more favorable variant—resulted in the overthrow of the Kuomintang and its replacement by a revolutionary government. Being in great haste—Stalin was pressing from Moscow—the Communist party leaders chose the ignominious and traitorous road of political self-renunciation. There exists in China today no such thing as a united front. There is only the political abasement of the Stalinists.

Snow, a non-Marxist, has no understanding of the real necessities of the anti-imperialist struggle. His opinions and conclusions are nowhere illumined by scientific understanding or analysis. He is just a dull empiricist. And therefore emerges—a People's Fronter.

In a chapter entitled "Chinese Communism and the Comintern," Snow discusses the tragedy of the Chinese revolution in 1927 with all the superficiality so characteristic of the liberal. The Comintern, he says, "may be held responsible for serious reverses suffered by the Chinese communists in the anguish of their growth." Why? Because "the policies of the Chinese communists, like communists in every other country, have had to fall in line with, and usually subordinate themselves to, the broad strategic requirements of Soviet Russia, under the dictatorship of Stalin". Then follows a statement virtually cancelling out this attachment of blame. Says Snow: "There is, however, abundant reason to believe that had the Opposition's objection [to Stalin's opportunism] been made the basis of an early Jacobin policy in China [meaning an independent revolutionary policy based on the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat] the tragedy would have been even more severe. Trotsky's theoretical criticisms were, as usual, brilliant, and his advice had some connection with the actual peculiarities of the situation. But not, as often, very much. Trotsky's line clearly suggests that the only alternative he had to offer to the Comintern policy, which ended in catastrophe, was a

policy which would have ended in a much earlier and more complete catastrophe."

Does Snow have a third policy that would insure revolutionary success? He does not. Indeed, he goes on to say: "It is tedious here to enter further into Stalin-Trotsky polemics. The important thing is that Stalin won, and his policy dominated the future activities of the Comintern in China." This is the crowning gem of Snow's thought. He finds it "tedious" to wrestle with a vital political problem. That is the measure of his intellectual stature.

Where actual facts are concerned, Snow's objectivity is not employed with any evenhandedness as between the Stalinists and the revolutionary opposition. He seems to consider that his conversion to People's Frontism gives him license to slander wilfully the Chinese section of the Fourth International. The Chinese "Trotskyites", he writes, "earned a very bad stigma as spies and traitors—many of them were led by the logic of their position to join the Blue-shirts [Chiang Kai-shek's secret gangster organization] and betray former comrades to the police". Where did Snow get this piece of slander? From the Stalinist leaders whom he interviewed, from persons who at this writing are carrying on, in Shanghai and elsewhere, a most vicious campaign of provocative vilification against the Chinese Trotskyites, charging them with being paid agents of the Japanese imperialists. To this reviewer's knowledge, Snow has never had as much as a one-minute conversation with a single member of the Communist League of China. But, then, to Snow our comrades are too unimportant to be asked to deny or confirm what the Stalinist character-assassins and falsifiers spread abroad concerning them. "The important thing is that Stalin won. . . ."

It is unfortunately true that in the ranks of the Chinese Bolshevik-Leninists there were several who turned traitor—not "many" as Snow asserts. The Chinese organization never defended them or attempted to conceal their crimes, but openly denounced them as traitors. In the ranks of the Communist party, however, especially between 1931 and 1936, traitors were numbered by scores and hundreds. The functionaries of the C.P. turned over to the Kuomintang and sent numbers of their own comrades (ours as well) to torture and death in the dungeons of the ruling class. The bureaux of the Kuomintang police department were packed with these loathsome creatures. And there was the Red army general, who a few short months after he was fulsomely eulogized by Agnes Smedley and others as a revolutionary hero, joined Chiang Kai-shek's military headquarters to map military campaigns against his former comrades-in-arms. Why is Snow silent about these facts, so widely known in China?

What logic was it that caused such numerous outright betrayals in the Stalinist ranks? And what is the logical explanation for the fact that today the Stalinists have revealed themselves before the whole world as the gendarmes of the bourgeoisie,

guardians of private property against the revolutionary masses in China and in all other countries? Moreover, since a few defections from the Trotskyist ranks in China flowed from the "logic of a position", how explain the fact that the overwhelming majority of the Chinese Trotskyists remained and still remain loyal to the revolution? As we see, Snow's own "logic" is sadly deficient. The objective, impartial, truth-seeking liberal stands stripped of his objectivity, his impartiality and—his journalistic probity.

Of Harry Gannes' most recent literary effort, *When China Unites*, it is sufficient to say that it is the product of a one hundred per cent Stalinist. It adds nothing new to our store of knowledge regarding China's struggle for national liberation, or the struggle of the Chinese masses for their social emancipation. Taken as a whole, it is simply a brief to justify the long record of Stalinist treachery in the Chinese revolution, a defense of People's Frontism, padded out with all the historical falsification needed to bolster a counter-revolutionary course.

P.S. Snow's efforts to be "impartial" and to deliver some of his blows at the Stalinists, while reserving most of them for the Fourth Internationalists, has earned him no gratitude in Stalinist circles. Since he has committed the deadly sin of impugning Stalin's course in China in 1925-1927 (notwithstanding his endorsement of an even more disastrously treacherous course today), the Stalinists have placed his book on their growingly ponderous *index expurgatorius*. Try to buy a copy at the Workers Bookshop!

Li FU-JEN

## Dos Passos' America

U.S.A. (THE 42nd PARALLEL. NINETEEN NINETEEN. THE BIG MONEY.) By JOHN DOS PASSOS. 1,452 pp. New York. Harcourt, Brace and Co. \$3.00.

The young man walks by himself, fast but not fast enough, far but not far enough (faces slide out of sight, talk trails into tattered scraps, footsteps tap faster in alleys); he must catch the last subway, the streetcar, the bus, run up the gangplanks of all the steamboats, register at all the hotels, work in the cities, answer the wantads, learn the trades, take up the jobs, live in all the boardinghouses, sleep in all the beds. One bed is not enough, one job is not enough, one life is not enough. . . .

The young man in Dos Passos' introduction to his trilogy is anonymous; he is the symbol, perhaps, of American youth, bedraggled, dirty and filled with great hunger and discontent, impatient to see and feel and smell every part of the vast land in which he lives. But he is Dos Passos too. For the author of this magnificent volume has, to an extent unique in American letters, managed to set down on paper the parlance and thoughts and hopes and frustrations of the nameless little people who pack the subways, fill the park benches and sleep in the flophouses. It is Dos Passos himself who has roved through the country, jotting down in enduring prose the speech

and the idiosyncrasies of the people, etching their personal tragedies against the frenzied social background of the U.S.A. Dos Passos' desire to cut through the surface and get at the heart of America—to dissect the U.S.A., which is his real hero and his real love, ruthlessly, relentlessly, without sentiment or bias—has at times seemed to be an obsession. Now that his major surgical operation has been summed up in one volume, it becomes clear how devastating the dissection has been.

"But mostly," Dos Passos says, "U.S.A. is the speech of the people." The speech is a large and fascinating part of it, to be sure, and Dos Passos has captured its lilt and swing with consummate skill. He has managed to pack more than just color into his record of the racy, pungent jargon of the post-war period; in his novels the very language of the characters, like their thoughts, their gestures and their actions, become symbols of the frothy stream of emotions which courses beneath them, vocalized summaries of a whole group-inspired mode of thought and action. As in the narrative itself, the flashbacks through the roaming "Newsreel" pick up trick phrases, snatches of songs and clippings from the papers which convey a stark sense of the times, recapture the dynamisms and confusions of early twentieth-century America.

Seen in their full continuity, Dos Passos' literary devices and innovations take on new force, with the possible exception of the "Camera Eye", whose deeply personal content clogs the avenues of communication. The whole narrative style, replete with informal punctuation and fluid word-combination, appears clearly as admirably suited to the materials involved, rather than as an impediment to understanding. Dos Passos stands on his own two feet as a literary path-breaker; far from being a slavish imitator of Joyce, he has taken the best of the Joycean technique and shaped it to his own needs. The result is a rich and hard-hitting prose which has appreciably affected American literature.

But much more than the language of the U.S.A. has gone into Dos Passos' major work. There have been many efforts to sandwich a chunk of the American scene between the covers of a book, to slice the life of the U.S.A. into palatable literary sections. The results have, for the most part, been singularly unsuccessful, particularly among the ardent littérateurs of the left, whose undigested fragments of the social scene, piled in pell-mell and without purpose or selection (because without *understanding*), were heavily overlaid by special pleading. With Dos Passos the effect is all the more telling because the moral, if you insist upon one, is implicit, unpointed, inherent in the very subject-matter of the book rather than artificially interjected by party propagandists. The U.S.A. is really got at here; not the spurious figment of popular-fronting imaginations, intent on making a case for a preconceived party conviction, but the genuine article which

you get in the fields, factories, mines and big-business circles. What you want to do with it is your own concern. But if you read Dos Passos carefully, the narrowing possibilities of what *can* be done, short of socialism, stare you in the face. It is Dos Passos' permanent merit as an *artist* that he has proved the case for socialism to the hilt without once stating it pontifically, as the omniscient overseer and party line-fixer.

Dos Passos digs into the America he knows through a host of now-familiar characters picked from various social strata—Charley Anderson, Eleanor Stoddard, J. Ward Morehouse, Margo Dowling, and all the others, interlacing their destinies, making their ambitions and frustrations part of the social fabric. He has been accused by the comrades of the *New Masses* and *International Literature*, in past literary seasons, of taking the *atomic* view, of being unable to grasp his characters in relation to one another and to the social life which swirls around them. But a *literate* reading of the trilogy shows how uniquely successful Dos Passos has been in getting the larger social canvas in; the characters take on life, go through their motions, live and breathe against that stark background. It is just this panoramic quality which is the book's lasting merit. The rises and declines of the power-driven restless people who roam through the trilogy, their lives paralleled by the memorably etched careers of Ford, Debs, Wilson, Jack Reed, Hearst, and other significant Americans, are, in Dos Passos' hands, among the most brutal and crushing commentaries ever penned on contemporary U.S.A. Joyce and Tolstoy have been evoked in over-easy comparisons; but it is to men of such stature that one must look to find the equivalent of what Dos Passos has done for his own native land.

Bernard WOLFE

## Pluperfect Plutocracy

AMERICA'S 60 FAMILIES. By FERDINAND LUNDBERG. xxii+544 pp. New York. Vanguard Press. \$3.75.

In his *History of the Great American Fortunes*, published in 1909, Gustavus Myers laid bare the foundations of the fortunes that were even then the envy and wonder of the capitalist world. In *America's 60 Families* Ferdinand Lundberg measures the heights these moneybags have since attained. The riches of today's multimillionaires tower above these earlier accumulations as Rockefeller Center outsoars the primitive skyscrapers of that period. They are the greatest in history.

The United States, we are told, is a democracy, blessed with a government of, for, and by the people. Let us, however, listen to Mr. Lundberg. "The United States is owned and administered today by a hierarchy of its sixty richest families, buttressed by no more than ninety families of lesser wealth. . . . These families are the living center of the modern industrial oligarchy which dominates the United States,

functioning discreetly under a *de jure* democratic form of government behind which a *de facto* government, absolutist and plutocratic in its lineaments, has gradually taken form since the Civil War. This *de facto* government is actually the government of the United States—informal, invisible, shadowy. It is the government of money in a dollar democracy."

Mr. Lundberg sets out to prove this thesis in his book. With bloodhound pertinacity this sociological sleuth tracks down the carefully concealed movements of the monied masters and their minions through the traces their complex operations have left over the past fifty years. He shows the plutocracy at work and at play, in Washington and Wall Street, at home and abroad. He exposes the mechanisms of their control over the economic and political system of the United States, over its cultural institutions, over the lives of the people. The irrefutable facts and figures amassed in his investigations contain material evidence enough to convince any unprejudiced person that the real rulers of America are not the masses of its citizens but the financial oligarchy of its richest families.

Mr. Lundberg's detailed description of monopoly capital in its purest incarnation is a notable contribution to social science. It illustrates how, in its latest and final phase of development, contemporary capitalism approaches more and more in its typical features a perfected feudal hierarchy. The resemblances are both striking and significant. They demonstrate from living reality that, in every society based upon private property, the means of production and the mass of wealth irresistibly tend to become the monopoly of a ruling clique, which grows ever more exclusive, arrogant, rigid and parasitic until it is absolutely separated and opposed to the producing masses of the population.

Just as the old landed aristocracy preserved its property through entail and primogeniture, so the plutocratic caste maintains its fortunes through the transmission of inherited wealth by trust down to the fourth generation. Its power is reinforced by intra-family and dynastic alliances, including excursions into European royalty. "The wealthiest Americans, with few exceptions, are already joined by a multiplicity of family ties, just as they are joined by interlocking directorates and mutual participation in economic and social undertakings."

The princely houses of Rockefeller, Morgan, Mellon, Du Pont head this modern American nobility. "The big fortunes are mobilized in protective phalanxes that recall feudal dynastic alignments wherein many small but powerful families pledged allegiance to one dominant family of more than average strength, courage, daring, and intelligence, and obtained mutual benefits. The Morgans may be likened to American Bourbons who have slowly, remorselessly, broken down the power of scores that refused to bend the knee, surrounding them-

selves with a host that accepts Morgan leadership. The Rockefellers may be likened to the Hapsburgs; the Mellons to the Hohenzollerns; the Du Ponts to the Romanovs, etc. Whereas the titled dynasties of feudal Europe divided the continent territorially, their untitled American capitalist counterparts have divided their continent by industries."

These principals act as executive directors for the lesser fortunes under their hegemony. Their command of vast financial resources gives them control of the big banks and trust companies, insurance institutions, and mammoth industrial corporations, which they use to protect and build up their wealth at the expense of the inferior orders of the people.

The royal families and their agents exercise a no less decisive control over the political life of the nation. The working alliance between Washington and Wall Street is cemented by campaign contributions, strategic placement of key men, personal connections. The strings of monopoly capital reach into the White House through the back door and sometimes through the front. Lundberg reveals how every president from Grant to Roosevelt, Democratic or Republican, has, to a greater or lesser degree, been manipulated by the omnipotent plutocracy.

Lundberg ruthlessly strips off the camouflages with which the plutocracy is usually painted in order to give it a useful, healthy, and sanctified appearance. Freedom of the press? "The journalism of the United States, from top to bottom, is the personal affair—bought and paid for—of the wealthy families. . . . The press lords of America are actually to be found among the multimillionaire families." Philanthropy? Lundberg's statistics prove that the munificence of the millionaires is grossly exaggerated and takes only a small slice of their incomes. The foundations and museums, so benevolently bestowed upon the public, are simply devices for evading taxes, retaining family control of huge fortunes, and for gulling the people. Morality? Lundberg's picture of the monstrous extravagance and criminal wastefulness of the rich in the face of mass destitution makes provincial purlings of the imperial Romans. Social usefulness? Hundreds of men with stupendous incomes have never worked a day in their lives. They are nothing but social pensioners on rich relief, as the W.P.A.'ers are state pensioners on poor relief.

America's ruling caste is corrupt, parasitic, reactionary to the core.

The final chapter on the New Deal is the weakest in the book. It reveals Mr. Lundberg as a shrewd, but superficial and indulgent, critic of the reigning political agency of the plutocracy. Although he is not deceived by the most blatant claims of the Roosevelt administration and perceives its conservative capitalist character, he does not grasp the profoundly social-reactionary nature of its major policies. Just as light industry which, in his opinion, the New

Deal directly represents, must submit to the burdensome exploitation of heavy industry dominated by finance capital, so the Roosevelt régime must yield and has yielded on all vital questions to the dictates and pressures of the monopolists.

Lundberg criticizes monopoly capital and its Democratic hand-maiden from the standpoint of a left liberal. Forbearing to dig down into the social subsoil in which they are rooted, he fails to see that the plutocracy is the necessary crown and completion of capitalist evolution, and that the process of concentration of wealth and power in their hands must continue as long as capitalism endures. His suggestions for drawing the teeth of the plutocracy by means of tax reforms appear futile even in the light of his own disclosures. His account of the domestic activities of the monopolists needs to be supplemented by a similar exposure of the imperialist rôle of American finance capital, which he barely touches. These shortcomings, however, hardly impair the value of his work or the soundness of his main conclusions.

Although the New Deal demagogues have taken the title of *America's 60 Families* as a slogan in their sham battle with the unabashed reactionaries, the materials inside the book will prove most useful to the revolutionary Marxists. Here is enough dynamite to blow to bits half a hundred democratic illusions and social myths by which the real rulers of America bamboozle the people. *America's 60 Families* ought to be studied by every militant in our movement.

George NOVACK

## Incompleat Angler

TO HAVE AND HAVE NOT. By ERNEST HEMINGWAY. 262 pp. New York. Charles Scribner's Sons. \$2.50.

No creative writer can be without ideals or values, and the critical commonplace which has called Hemingway's work "purely negative" is thoroughly mistaken. All of Hemingway's novels and stories seem to have asserted with unusual consistency two chief ideals: to fight, in strict accordance with the rules, alone; and to be able to take it. These are apparent in the very earliest of his short stories, summed up in the figure of the fisherman, who appears and reappears throughout his writing. The fisherman fights the trout alone, with the lightest possible rod and the lightest possible line (what heresy it would be to imagine a Hemingway fisherman using a heavy rod and a worm!); and he shows not the smallest trace of emotion at the heavy disappointments which come to all fishermen.

It sounds rather silly, particularly when the figure of the fisherman is lifted out of the admirable prose which describes the stream and the cast and the strike and the sunlight and shadows. But the fisherman is no accident. He undergoes constant metamorphosis. Here he is again as the bull-fighter, alone with the bull, executing the delicate steps as prescribed by the immemorial rules, never giving way, allowing the horns just to brush across his belly. Or

he searches for big game in Africa—and eternal woe to the Philistine who would shoot from the auto (even his wife, as in one story, will have to shoot *him*). Sometimes he simply gets beaten unconscious, or shot, or dies, without a murmur. Or he is in a hospital, in terrible and silent pain, recovering from an immeasurably cruel wound or operation. Or he is perhaps a gangster—a movie gangster, really, as the movies have bodied him forth. And like all fishermen, he talks little, and he often kills.

In themselves, these two ideals are not necessarily either despicable or absurd. To fight alone, and in strict accordance with the rules: this is not so distant from the conscious adherence to principle which is at the root of moral integrity. To be able to take it: this is at least the negative half of heroism. The trouble is that in Hemingway's work these ideals have been divorced from an adequate context, from a completing set of values; and, by themselves, they stand stark and lame and often foolish. By themselves, they suggest praise for lack of intelligence, for inarticulateness, for insensitivity and brutality. And this is what we find in Hemingway's novels and stories. Intelligence is hypocrisy or clap-trap; sensitivity or deep feeling is sentimentality. The "realism" turns into the cult of the sub-normal.

In *To Have and Have Not* these same two ideals continue, but they have begun a certain change. Harry Morgan, the protagonist is again the fisherman and the bull-fighter; he fights alone, and he can take it, take more than perhaps anyone Hemingway ever before wrote about. But, though Harry fights, alone and according to the rules (his rules), part at least of his fight is—to make a living, for himself and his family. This is altogether unprecedented. The notion that people do things in order to make a living, and that authors write about such people, lands us in what is almost another universe. This, then, is the first change in *To Have and Have Not*. Along with it goes a greater impersonalization. Hemingway seems to be trying to create a character and a situation which are not reflections of his own moods and personal experiences, as the characters and situations of his earlier writings ordinarily are. He is, that is to say, trying to write a very different and more important kind of book than those he has written up to now.

Until *To Have and Have Not*, almost all that Hemingway wrote was about the aftermath of the last War. The War was his source and focus. What the War did to those who fought in it, and to their friends and mistresses; how it exploded their moral universe; how they have ever since been plunging around, trying to discover some new pole of integration;—this is what Hemingway has been writing of for nearly twenty years. Now, in *To Have and Have Not*, the focus at last shifts. The War is still there (obviously enough in the American Legionnaires), but it is only a background remnant. Hemingway has finished fighting the War of 1914-1918. In part, perhaps, he seems to be realizing that the War was not in and by itself the domi-

nating and controlling event, but rather takes its normal place in the pattern of our time.

The reviewers have been telling us that *To Have and Have Not* is Hemingway's first "socially significant" writing, and have been allotting praise and blame on that basis. This is not, however, strictly the case. Many of his novels and stories have been of very considerable social significance. *The Sun Also Rises*, for example, is no doubt the most thorough expression of the mood of an important section of a whole generation. But there, of course, the "social interest" is entirely implicit. In the latter part of *To Have and Have Not*, "social interest" is dragged in by the hair, above all in the scenes describing life on the yachts as Harry is brought into the harbor, or in Harry's dying words. These, far from marking any sort of advance, are as banal and unconvincing from the point of view of social criticism as they are disastrous to the structure of the novel. Fresh social interests, if properly and successfully integrated, can add to Hemingway's writing a new and absorbing dimension. Since he has already proved himself, in many technical respects, as able as any contemporary American writer, this is a result very much to be hoped for. But it will not be achieved by transplanting lessons from *New Masses*, which is what the yacht scenes read like. "Social significance" is not a decoration to be purchased from a political warehouse and tacked on to a novel. It must—as *Man's Fate* or *When the Looms Are Silent* or *Fontamara* teach (or, for that matter, all great novels)—be simply the organic relevance of the novel both internally and to its own time.

*To Have and Have Not* is thus in many key respects a transitional book. Whether Hemingway can complete the transition which this novel confusedly aims toward, the next few years will doubtless show. If he does not, he will either slip back into a rewarmed version of his past, which can be now nothing but stale and vapid; or he will—it is not excluded—turn into a superior People's Front hack. If he does, his chief work is still ahead of him.

James BURNHAM

## Paris Commune

THE PARIS COMMUNE OF 1871. By FRANK JELLINEK. 447 pp. New York, Oxford University Press. \$3.00.

Every student of Marxism recognizes the Paris Commune first of all as the great historical laboratory from which Marx and Engels, and later, Lenin and Trotsky, drew the lessons which have since become foundation stones of Marxist theory. While most of them assume that they have mastered the conclusions based upon the experiences of the Commune, they reveal their lack of understanding of the Commune itself in the use they make of it in analogies with current phenomena.

The appearance of Jellinek's *The Paris Commune of 1871* is a most valuable contribution to a study of the real nature of the Commune. As informative and compre-

hensive material, ably presented, it surpasses anything yet written on the subject. It does not, however, nor did the author intend it to, fill the vital need of a work that examines the class relations that gave rise to the Commune and the class nature of the Commune itself. Jellinek prudently sets himself the following task:

"It is the aim of the present study to revive these facts, to restore, as it were, the background to *The Civil War in France* and to Lenin's elaboration of it, *The State and Revolution*. There is no intention to draw conclusions, simply to state what exactly it was that Marx was studying and how it came about. At the same time, as it was naturally quite impossible, especially when writing for English readers not conversant with French nineteenth-century history, to display every single aspect of so complex and so chaotic a period, it was necessary to concentrate almost entirely on the one which most struck Marx and Lenin, simply because this aspect is the only one which has had a contemporary and concrete importance. This is the mutations of the state-form during this embryo of the proletarian dictatorship."

In one respect, Jellinek's work cannot be improved upon—the fine style that makes the reader re-live the exciting and inspiring events that took place on the streets of Paris. One is captivated by this scrupulously accurate narrative as by few novels. The reader exults with the triumphant Parisian workers of March 18, fumes over their naïveté, grits his teeth over the unbelievable confusion and disorganization, swells with pride at their heroic defense, and writhes with the death agony of the Commune. Jellinek's handling of this great drama of history surpasses even Lissagaray's eye-witness account in ability to stir and move the reader.

The great personalities of the Commune come to life again in the pages of this book, not as mere historical names, but as real men. An understanding of the character of the most important actors gives one an insight into certain aspects of the event that cannot be understood in any other way. And the actors form as bizarre a company as ever played an important rôle in history—leaders of trade unions and leaders of Free Masonry, veterans of 1848, confirmed Jacobins, and members of the First International, exiled Polish revolutionists and mercenary soldier-adventurers, Marxists, anarchists, Blanquists, and Proudhonists.

The boastful, eloquent coward, Pyat, and the heroic, calm, aged veteran, Delescluze; the cigar-smoking, lazy, yet capable, adventurer, Cluseret, and the cold, stern disciplinarian, Rossel; the vigorous, romantic, histrionic Blanquist, Rigault, aspiring to play the rôle of Chaumette, the prosecutor in the Terror of 1792-1794, and the sentimental, confused idealist, Miot, objecting to infringements on the rights of enemies of the Commune—all these symbolized the chaos and confusion, both ideological and organizational, that defied any solution from the very beginning to the bitter end.

Jellinek also presents very valuable ma-

terial on the measures the Commune was forced to take to defend itself against internal enemies. The Commune suppressed no less than forty newspapers in the few months of its existence. Among them were two papers edited by members of the Council of the Commune. And yet, both the social-democrats and anarchists point to the Commune as an example of a revolutionary régime that refrained from using dictatorial methods against its internal enemies in contrast with the evil Bolsheviks who were only interested in suppressing critics!

The Bolsheviks permitted even the bourgeois press its freedom for a longer period than the Commune existed.

Billioray, one of the members of the Commune gave the correct answer to the problem when he said:

"In principle, I am for the suppression not only of solitary confinement, but of all preventive detention. All of us here have had a taste of solitary confinement. There is no need for us, therefore, to make a profession of mere Liberalism; but it would be strange if we broke what weapons we have. Of two things one: either you will be victorious and will then be able to abolish solitary confinement and all other arbitrary measures, or you will be defeated through lack of precautions and they will use against you the system you will have abolished."

Another interesting problem comes to light with a reading of Jellinek's book—one that might well serve as the starting point in an attempt to probe the real class character of the Commune. The rivalry between the Council of the Commune, histrionic imitation of the Commune of 1792-1793, and the Central Committee of the National Guard, the manoeuvres and even intrigues they carried out against one another, are noted by nearly every student of the Commune. But it is usually regarded as an unfortunate conflict that arose from the ambitions of rival leaders. From the material presented by Jellinek it appears that the conflict had a much deeper basis.

The Commune was elected by universal suffrage. This resulted in the election of political leaders who had made a name for themselves in the past. The majority of them were the leaders in the 1848 uprising. Journalists, lawyers, and other petty bourgeois revolutionists who were still pursuing the illusory Jacobin ideal of a "Republic of Liberty, Fraternity, and Equality" based upon bourgeois property relations. Whether they were Blanquists or Proudhonists or, as some were, adherents of the First International, they had their eyes turned back upon the unrealized and unrealizable programs of the revolutions of the past. They could not give conscious leadership to the working class and their election to the Hôtel de Ville removed them from the districts where they were subject to the pressure of the workers acting on their class instinct.

The Central Committee of the National Guard, on the other hand, was elected by the men from the ranks by a Soviet system of election. Those elected were not the

prominent political leaders of the day but local figures who had distinguished themselves in the leadership of National Guard units. Since the National Guard was overwhelmingly proletarian in composition, the Central Committee was much more responsive to the moods of the working class than the Council of the Commune. Would the Central Committee have emerged as a dual power, seeking to displace the Commune, had the struggle been more prolonged? The only proclamation of the Central Committee following the election of the Commune quoted by Jellinek speaks a real proletarian language:

"Workers, do not be deceived; it is the great struggle; parasitism and labour, exploitation and production are at death-grips. If you are sick of vegetating in ignorance and squatting in the muck; if you want your children to be men gaining the reward of their labour, not a sort of animal trained for the workshop and for war, fertilizing with their sweat the fortune of an exploiter or pouring out their blood for a despot; . . . etc."

The above stands in sharp contrast to the vague social idealism of the Commune's proclamations and its protestations that it was not absorbing any governmental functions beyond the rights of a municipality.

The above question, however, can only be finally answered as the result of a much more thorough study of the Commune than even Jellinek's work presents. His research and compilations, however, make that task much easier.

Ernest ERBER

## White Sahibs

THE WHITE SAHIBS OF INDIA. By REGINALD REYNOLDS. xiii+410 pp. New York. Reynals and Hitchcock. \$3.00.

The overwhelming bulk of books on India are pæans to the glorious and civilizing virtues of British rule. For this reason Marxists can especially welcome a book containing a serious analysis of British imperialism—particularly when it is written by an Englishman. This is just such a book.

Reynolds, not merely a theoretical opponent of the British "Raj", but one whose personal experiences in India itself have made him its bitter enemy, gives an account of the subjection of India by the British, from the earliest days down to the new "Slave" Constitution. There is an excellent historical background, bolstered with quotations (invariably from official sources), describing the conquest of India. Here Reynolds gives a rounded picture of how Britain's needs in India have largely dominated England's foreign policy for 150 years, including present "life-line" politics. There are revealing chapters on Indian Criminal Law as transplanted to supersede the "barbaric" Hindu law; the employment of forms of perpetual martial law against nationalists; the complicated and miraculous debt system by means of which English imperialists accrue all the profit and the Indian masses all the debts.

It would be hard to imagine a more devastating picture of the incalculable ruin brought upon the Indian people than Reynolds gives us. Each chapter is replete with pitiless quotations and documentation that make a mockery of England's "civilizing" claims. Each chapter is carefully worked out and summarized by numerous source references.

But in his efforts to suggest a program for India's problems, Reynolds stumbles badly. A supporter of the British I.L.P., he exhibits more than the usual errors of that party. Reynolds does state that the socialist revolution alone is capable of giving the decisive reply to India's needs, but he is unable to pass beyond the limits set up by the Indian Nationalist Congress (I.N.C.). His description of recent nationalist history is filled with blunders, misunderstandings and proposals for downright false policies.

Thus, Reynolds doesn't grasp the rôle of Gandhi as Britain's "most successful" policeman in India. He vaguely defends him as a "blunderer", but Gandhi's whole career belies this. Gandhism is counter revolutionary as its practical politics of betrayal eloquently reveal.

Reynolds defends the I.N.C., specifically its "left" section, the Congress Socialist Party (C.S.P.). This party aims at turning the I.N.C. into a "Workers and Peasants Party". With the permission of the I.N.C.'s dominating bourgeois wing? Would this new, two-class party differ programmatically from the present reactionary, bourgeois I.N.C.? These and other questions are carefully avoided. How can one approximate political correctness with such an utter lack of perspective? Instead, the author seeks justification for the I.N.C. in his defense of M. N. Roy, the Indian Lovestoneite. But Roy, as shown by all his recent writings, has abandoned any former pretense at being a Marxist and has embraced the ideology of petty-bourgeois nationalism. Even the C.S.P. has sharply criticized Roy—from the left! Roy demands organizational liquidation of the C.S.P., acceptance of office by its leaders—in a word, adoption of the I.N.C. right wing program. If Reynolds is unaware of these facts and his suggested program is based (as it appears to be) upon sentimentality, then his ambiguous ideas regarding an Indian Peoples' Front can readily be understood.

He categorically opposes an English People's Front. A British People's Front régime would mean, for India, a repetition of the MacDonald Labor government experiences. Then, how can Reynolds defend the I.N.C. which is not only a continuation of previous Indian government, but a precursor of a future English People's Front? The I.N.C., today wielding power in 7 provinces of India, has shown its true worth. In People's Front fashion, it smashed the general strike in the jute industry, continued persecution and arrest of *its own members*, refused amnesty to political prisoners, accepted Indian re-armament in accord with British demands, etc.

Reynolds had prophesized that the I.N.C. would reject office and carry on a mass struggle against the new Constitution! But instead, Britain uses the I.N.C. as an effective weapon for retaining its grip upon India. And the "revolutionary" C.S.P. pathetically limps along after the I.N.C., accusing its right wing of betrayal! (How reminiscent of the Stalinists in their 1927 dealings with Chiang Kai-shek!) We must ask Reynolds if the I.N.C., which now rules so well for British imperialism, is an example of that class collaboration which, according to him, is "purely oppositional" in India.

Despite these serious errors, there is reason to believe that Reynolds will learn from the experiences contained in present Indian events themselves. A revolutionary party in India must be built up against the I.N.C. The I.N.C. will not mobilize the workers and peasants for a revolutionary war against British rule. Reynolds partly understands this because he realizes that only the *socialist* revolution can achieve even the simplest democratic demands. Not without importance is it that Reynolds' work does not contain that treacherous cynicism so characteristic of the Lovestone-Thalheimer political groupings. Above all, he is seriously concerned with finding the correct revolutionary solution for India's momentous problems.

S. STANLEY

## White Mule

WHITE MULE. By WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS. 293 pp. Norfolk, Conn. New Directions. \$2.50.

It may be premature to pass definite judgment on the content of Williams' novel, since it seems to be the first installment of a larger work in progress. In execution it displays the sure and competent touch which we have come to expect from its author. Williams' straightforward prose style, which has the exponents of semantics justifiably excited, is clean-cut, compact, free from complicating verbiage, adjusted to the rhythms of speech and economic expression rather than the stilted formalities of grammar. Dr. Williams' training stands him in good stead: his practised doctor's eye and sensitive poet's ear are so well co-ordinated that with a few careful phrases he can catch the essence of a baby's gesture, a cat's movement, the drama of a child-birth.

Yet, despite its technical excellence, the book somehow misses fire. It may be that Dr. Williams has over-ambitiously tackled a job somewhat beyond his scope. He seems to be attempting another panorama of the American scene, in terms of the shifting fortunes of an aristocrat of labor and his family. But, to judge from this fragment of the work, Williams, unlike Farrell and Dos Passos, does not have the larger, all-encompassing view which enables an author to fit his daubs of color into a broad canvas. As a result the book is curiously disjointed; minor scenes and events receive undue emphasis, the continuity seems disrupted, the interjection of social content

through the speeches and thoughts of the characters seems at times to be an artificial unifying device, extraneous to the immediate subject-matter. Of itself, the theme—the influence of the money-mad, power-driven American go-getting psychology on a one-time labor organizer and associate of Gompers, beginning to come into comfort and security—is an interesting one. But, however keen and incisive Dr. Williams' prose may be, we may be permitted to wonder whether his abilities to peg clean words into exact holes will not be dissipated in ranging over a broad social scene, where technical competence is not enough. The published section of the work is not reassuring. B.W.

### Briefer Mention

THE BROTHERHOOD OF RAILWAY CLERKS.  
By HARRY HENIG. 300 pp. New York. Columbia University Press. \$3.00.

A detailed study of the rise of an important railway labor organization which embraces so largely the "white-collar" workers on the U. S. railroads. Presented essentially from the standpoint of what the author not inexactly calls "business unionism," it necessarily gives a one-sided picture of this thoroughly conservative craft union. For example, only a few mildly critical pages are devoted at the end to the notorious banking enterprise of the union which collapsed in 1930 and no word at all is said about the scandal in "business unionism" created in 1924 by former Grand President E. H. Fitzgerald and his Railroad Brotherhoods' Investment Corporation which, though it soon blew up with a bad odor, did not prevent this labor Ponzi from being exonerated and reelected to his post at the 1925 convention of the union.

People always have been and they always will be the stupid victims of deceit and self-deception in politics, until they learn behind every kind of moral, religious, political, social phrase, declaration and promise to seek out the interests of this or that class or classes. The partisans of reform and betterment will always be fooled by the defenders of the old régime, until they understand that every old institution, no matter how savage and rotten it may seem, is sustained by the forces of this or that dominant class or classes. And there is only one way to break the resistance of these classes, namely, to find in the very society surrounding us, to find and educate and organize for the struggle, those forces which can—and owing to their social situation must—form a power capable of sweeping away the old and creating the new.—*Lenin*.

The democratic petty bourgeois, far from desiring to overturn the whole of society for the revolutionary proletarian, strives for a change in social conditions which will make the existing society as endurable and comfortable as possible for him.—*Marx*.

# CLIPPINGS

## Gide vs. Ehrenburg

The Paris weekly, *La Flèche* (Nov. 20, 1937) publishes a statement by André Gide in reply to calumnious attacks made upon him in the Moscow press by the well-known Stalinist hack, Ilya Ehrenburg.

IN *IZVESTIA* of November 3, an article appeared by Ilya Ehrenburg, dated from Bordeaux, November 1. A friend who knows Russian translated the following fragment for me:

"The terror begins. I saw a mine worker who had escaped from Gijon on October 22 after the city was occupied by the fascists. He told me that on the very first night the fascists shot 180 workers and 16 women on the Plaza Lorenzo. That was only a beginning; death threatens the militiamen, tens of thousands of Asturians.

"Here I must express the feeling of shame I experienced for a man. The very day when the fascists were shooting the women of Asturias, a 'protest' against injustice appeared in the French press. The protest was signed by the names of the writers: André Gide, Duhamel, Roger Martin du Gard, Mauriac, and Professor Paul Rivet. But these people protested not against the butchers of Asturias, not against the government of their country which refuses to put even a single ship, a single sailboat, a single cutter at the disposal of the Asturians condemned to perish. No, these tender-hearted writers protested against the government of the Spanish Republic which dares to arrest the fascists and the *provocateurs* of the P.O.U.M. I leave aside Mauriac. He is a Catholic, a man of right wing views. He valiantly raised his voice in the right wing press against the fascist atrocities in the Basque country. But before my eyes I see André Gide, his fist raised, smiling to thousands of naïve workers. I hear his voice. (He said it to me a year ago.) 'I think constantly of the Spanish republicans; it keeps me awake.' It is disgusting and pitiful. In spite of everything, they remained the flesh of the flesh of their class, the free-thinking Duhamels and the 'ultra-communist' Gides. And the ruling class persecutes them and covers them with filth. Also, sometimes overcoming their cowardice, they raise their little fist; only in order promptly thereafter, with their humanistic hypocrisy, to grovel again at the feet of the butchers. Yesterday, in the *Diario de Navarra*, organ of the butchers of Asturias, was reproduced in evidence the 'protest' of the new ally of the Moroccans and the Black Shirts, of the malignant old man, of the renegade with a dirty conscience, of the weeper of Moscow—of André Gide."

I deem it an honor to merit the insults that come to me from the fascist camp. Those that come from my comrades of yesterday might have been extremely painful to me at first (and especially those of José Bergamin), but I cease being sensitive

about them when they exceed a certain degree of ignominy. Is it really necessary to add that they cannot alter my feelings and will not succeed in making me an enemy of those who proffer them? At a time when the terror reigns, one has always the right to suppose that these very insults fill a need of personal protection, which deprives them of any value.

Ehrenburg is astonished and indignant at not seeing me protest against the denials of justice, the abuses and cruelties committed by the "Moroccans", and more generally by those of the Franco camp, against the republicans. It is true: however profound and painful my indignation at them is, any petition to Franco appears to me vain, coming from an avowed opponent. Injustice, when it comes from his side, hardens me; I suffer when it comes from ours. My attachment to the anti-fascist cause is too complete for me to endure without grief anything that might sully it in my eyes. In practise, I consider that it does itself the greatest harm by resorting, if only on a passing occasion, to actions which are precisely those we abominate in fascism and against which we shall not cease to protest. The "protest" that Ehrenburg alludes to, which Duhamel, Mauriac, Roger Martin du Gard, Paul Rivet and I addressed to the Republican Government on the occasion of the trial now under way [of the P.O.U.M. leaders], in order to ask it immediately to respect the rights of the defense, marks the esteem in which we want to keep it. For my own part, I would never have dreamed of sending such a message to Franco. But nowadays the most genuine feelings are distorted to such an extent by the press that those are considered as enemies of the republican and proletarian cause who, out of great love of this cause, would like to preserve it from the discreditment which dishonors it.

### A Correction

ON PAGE 42 of the February issue, James P. Cannon, writing on the Chicago convention of the new party, said: "The resolution of the National Committee, which calls for the unconditional defense of the Soviet Union against imperialist attack—a position which necessarily presupposes an uncompromising struggle against the Stalinist bureaucracy in war or peace—was adopted by a vote of 66 against 3 for one minority position and 2 for another." Attention has been called to the possibility that some readers may gain the impression that the difference between the National Committee resolution and that of the N.C. Minority related primarily to the question of defense of the Soviet Union. If the author has inadvertently made such an interpretation possible, he requests that it be corrected. The N.C. Minority resolution expressed itself in favor of defense of the Soviet Union from imperialist attack. It differed with the Majority resolution essentially on the question of the nature of the Soviet state. THE EDITORS

## The Postman Rings Many Times

And here are some excerpts from the letters he brings from readers of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL:

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Chicago, Ill. Karl Shier

...Very glad that the New International is again revived. Here's to a long and successful life. Long live 'Gene Debs and the American Revolution!...

Aitkin, Minn. Bruce Taylor

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