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NOTES OF THE MONTH

The Roosevelt Edict

LEON TROTSKY:

ON THE WORKERS' STATE

Introduction by Max Shachtman

STRUGGLE FOR AIR SUPREMACY

By R. Fahan

On the National Question:

NATIONAL LIBERATION AND FANTASY

By Ben Hall

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VOLUME IX

APRIL, 1943

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NOTES OF THE MONTH

The Roosevelt Edict

If there was any doubt where Roosevelt stood in relation to the all-important question which confronts all the workers in the country—their wage and living standards—this was completely dispelled by the President's order freezing wages and prices, and halting the movement of workers from one job to another. The President's order was brief enough. In his statement, he declared:

"To hold the line we cannot tolerate further increases in prices affecting the cost of living or further increases in general wage or salary rates except where clearly necessary to correct substandard living conditions. The only way to hold the line is to stop trying to find justifications for not holding it here or not holding it there. . . . There are to be no further increases in wage rates or salary scales beyond the Little Steel formula except where clearly necessary to correct substandards of living. Reclassifications and promotions must not be permitted to affect the general level of production costs or to justify price increases or to forestall price reductions. . . ."

Immediately upon signing this order, the President directed Food Administrator Chester C. Davis and Price Administrator Prentiss Brown to place ceilings on all commodities "affecting the cost of living and reduce those excessively high." We shall return to this subject of price control and price ceilings for the purpose of showing that the President's order will not materially alter present exorbitant price levels. It is supposed to sooth the feelings of the workers, for the real situation finds that there has been no real price control or ceilings. The National War Labor Board, the Bureau of Internal Revenue and similar agencies having to do with control over wages and salaries were instructed to permit no further increases. At the same time, the War Manpower Commission was charged with the task of preventing job transferences by workers seeking higher wages. These most important measures of the presidential edict, totalitarian in content and aim, were placed under the general supervision of James F. Byrnes, Economic Stabilization Director.

Profits, Prices and Wages

The President thereafter explained his order in an address in which he constructed a four-legged stool, insisting that every part of his order must be carried out lest the stool fall and the nation face a widening spiral of inflation. The most significant feature of the order, however, is the absence of a single reference to the question of the huge profits siphoned off by America's industrial and financial ruling class. In his statement on the Debt Act, he did make reference to his attempt to set a ceiling on salaries at \$25,000. Congress, in passing the Public Debt Act of 1943, permitting an increase of the national debt from 125 to 210 billion dollars, attached a rider to its resolution forbidding any salary limitation, es-

pecially as proposed by Roosevelt. Congress questioned the constitutional right of the President to set any limitations on salaries—it does not question his right to limit wages! On the question of workers' wages, anything goes!

How did Roosevelt respond to this congressional action? He permitted the Act to become a law without his signature, for to veto the Act because it had attached to it the congressional rider on salary limitations, might have "seriously retarded" the Treasury's "war financing plans."

Why, one might ask, did the President go out of his way to attack Congress for the rider which cancelled out his plan for salary limitation of a *net* \$25,000 a year? Since Roosevelt's proposal on salary limitation had nothing to do with the fundamental question of the war profits earned by big business, his statement can have only a political and class significance. Salary limitation on America's ruling class would not in the least affect its war profits, nor its class position, its existent riches and resources which sets it poles apart from the toiling people of the nation. Roosevelt had hoped that the passage of the \$25,000 net salary limit would make it easier for the Administration to carry through its wage-cutting program against the American workers and thus effect the drastic reduction in the American standard of living with a minimum of "class disturbance."

"Equality of Sacrifice"

Salary limitation on the bourgeoisie would no more create "equality of sacrifice in wartime" than it would at any other time. Nor would such a salary limit impair, in any way, the standard of living of the ruling class. As we have so often pointed out, equality of sacrifice is possible only under conditions of a common economic and class position. In a social order of economic, political and social inequality, no equality of any kind is possible, equality of sacrifice or equality of enrichment. We are certain that the President is as fully aware of this singular fact as we. But, we repeat, his object had a class political meaning and it was upset, for the time being, at least, by an obdurate, reactionary and revengeful Congress, which disputes Roosevelt's "conciliatory" approach to the most important problems confronting the bourgeoisie in its class rule during the war. The bourgeoisie is in an offensive mood; a large section of this feels that it can utilize the war as a means of destroying a powerful American working class and it does not propose to permit the concepts and practices of New Dealism to intervene, especially when it believes that a decisive victory over the workers is immediately possible.

It is necessary to bear in mind in this discussion, however important the differences between Roosevelt and the reactionary Congress may be, there is no conflict between them on the fundamental question of wage control and the destruction of the living standards of the overwhelming majority of the

American people. The important aspects of the Rooseveltian war program have been adopted without much dispute. On those issues which separated the President from Congress in recent months, the latter has usually won. The victory over the farm bloc is not a victory of the workers and poor farmers over the rich landlords and plantation owners, but a victory of industrial and financial capitalism over the protesting agricultural rulers. And this struggle is by no means over. There are strong ties between urban capitalism and the farm "bourgeoisie" and compromises to their mutual benefit and profit have occurred and are likely to occur often again to the detriment of the workers and the mass of poor farmers.

The Role of Organized Labor

The third element in the present situation is the organized labor movement. Its organizational division is a source of weakness in the struggle against the bosses' offensive. It lacks political perspective and maturity. Unorganized politically, the labor movement has been the dupe of the capitalist political parties. Too many of its leaders are tied hand and glove with the politicians of the bourgeois parties. But more important than the above is the fact that the first-line leaders of the labor movement have surrendered everything to the Administration—their will to struggle, their independence of thought and action and, above all, the best interests of the workers they presumably represent.

Almost from the very beginning, the strike weapon of the workers was surrendered. This was to show good faith and a readiness to accept the burdens of the war on the basis of . . . equality with the American bourgeoisie! For this gratuitous gift of the labor leaders to American capitalism, *the workers* were repaid with successive blows which have sharply reduced their living standards. The labor fakery cravenly accepted the Little Steel formula of the War Labor Board in an exchange for a promise that there would be a limitation on salaries. Murray and Green needed this concession in order to make more palatable to the workers an actual wage cut.

How have these gentlemen responded to the latest Roosevelt edict? In the same supinely craven manner! The CIO and AFL officialdoms at first rushed into print to declare that they accepted, albeit with reservations and dissatisfaction, the new order. Only a few weeks ago they were busily engaged denouncing the Little Steel formula. The AFL and CIO representatives on the WLB demanded a revision of the basic wage principle upon which the board operated. They demanded the reopening of the packinghouse and aircraft cases. They demanded speedy action and decision on the thousands of cases which were before the board. And now?

At a closed conference of delegates of the CIO of New York and New Jersey, Lee Pressman, Stalinist fellow-traveler and general counsel of the CIO, reported on the policy of the CIO's leadership in the manner of the *Daily Worker*:

The executive order is in no way a step backward. It is a step forward. Let us not fall in with anyone who threatens the War Labor Board (WLB) and the national economic stabilization program. That is impeding the war effort. Only by putting our strength behind the WLB and our Commander-in-Chief are we taking concrete steps toward winning the war.

In his statement of the official position of the labor leaders, Pressman announced their abject acceptance of the latest decree. But all is not so simple in the camp of labor. The workers are thoroughly dissatisfied with their lot, with the position in which their leaders have placed them. The right to strike

to enforce their demands was surrendered without their consultation or vote. They were bludgeoned into accepting, without alternative choices, the Little Steel formula, which resulted in a static wage level completely out of line with the cost of living. As a result of the position taken by Murray and Green, the workers have produced more under worsened conditions of labor and have toiled longer hours for less wages than they would ordinarily accept. They have taken blow after blow from big business without fighting back—because their leaders advised them Roosevelt would represent their interests.

Consequently, there have been sitdowns, walkouts and wildcat strikes. Such limited actions were usually unorganized and spontaneous, taken in spite of directives from the officialdoms. The workers find it impossible to live under present conditions. The problem is simple, it is one of food, clothing and shelter. The paradox is easy to see: while the war economy has virtually eliminated unemployment, increased payrolls and created "steady" work, the living condition of the working class have sharply worsened.

What Is Lewis Fighting For?

Of all the labor organizations and labor leaders, only the United Mine Workers and John L. Lewis understand, not merely the objective situation itself, but the need to fight for a general improvement of the position of the workers. Is Lewis more radical than the other labor leaders? Is he more devoted to the interests of the mine workers? In some respects, yes. Recalling the last war and the post-war period, he is fully aware that unless the labor movement fights for its rights, unless the conditions of the workers are improved now, in the midst of the war, the reactionary ruling class, with the aid of the government, will smash militant unions, especially industrial unionism.

Lewis' fighting instincts and his courageous struggle against the Administration in the face of a concentrated barrage of abuse from it, the Congress, the venal press and the other labor leaders, have done much to strengthen the hand of the labor movement in general. His demand for a two-dollars-a-day increase for the coal miners has galvanized the fighting spirit not only of the mine workers, but it has also stiffened the attitude of the workers in other union organizations and industries. We have no doubt that Lewis' struggle has brought fear to the hearts of Murray and Green—fear that his conduct may win him the support of the overwhelming majority of the workers in the CIO and AFL. They look to the Administration to defend them against Lewis. In what way? *By defeating Lewis' efforts to win a two-dollar-a-day guaranteed increase for the coal miners!*

Thus it is correct to say that, in at least one way, Roosevelt's order was an aid to these labor fakery. There is no doubt that Roosevelt took this occasion, the miners' struggle, to issue his "hold-the-line" order. Let no one be fooled, however, into thinking that this was the only, or the main, reason for Roosevelt's action. On the contrary, the order was in the making for some time. Roosevelt had intended its issuance long ago and he was being pushed to make this statement by the bourgeoisie and its press for many weeks. Only in the sense of timing can it be said that Roosevelt intended this as a blow against Lewis. To believe otherwise would reduce analysis of the economic and political policy of the administration to an absurdity.

Naturally, the Roosevelt action has compelled Lewis to

alter his course and to prepare for a variety of compromises. He is prepared to forego his wage demand for a six-day week guarantee which would result in a \$2.25 daily increase for the miners. This proposal, made by Secretary of Labor Perkins, was swiftly rejected by the mine operators. Lewis' demand for a portal-to-portal pay was likewise rejected by them. Then Lewis proposed a government subsidy to the mine operators in order to help them meet the miners' demands. More recently, Lewis has made overtures to the reactionary farm bloc for a joint struggle against the Roosevelt order. In all of this he exhibits a fundamentally conservative political outlook, a lack of *class* and *political* consciousness. He has a bourgeois mentality. For this reason all of Lewis' struggles are confused, contradictory and misleading. His "guts" and manner of posing labor problems, however, have the effect of concentrating the attention of all the classes on the burning needs of the labor movement. And that is to the good!

CIO Is for Incentive Pay

Getting back to the CIO, we find confusion worse confounded. In the aforementioned conference, the Resolutions Committee, which endorsed the Pressman statement, found it necessary to incorporate "reservations." These are not positive reservations, threatening labor action unless they were met. They are "advisory" reservations which declare that the Roosevelt program will work only if: existing prices on food and other commodities are rolled back to prices in effect on September 15, 1942; if a tax program is adopted "that will take the profits out of war and which is based on the principles of ability to pay and equality of sacrifice," and there is limitation of high salaries.

But the President's order, "one of the greatest contributions which could be made to the war effort" (Pressman), strikes directly at the heart of the workers. The workers know this; so do the labor leaders. And so the sycophantic leadership of the CIO proposes that the workers seek wage increases through job reclassification and incentive payments. The first method is a long, tedious, unavailing avenue to seek wage increases. It is filled with deception and delay; it has meaning only under the conditions of an active and militant union leadership. The second method, incentive pay, is a time-honored weapon of the bosses to intensify the exploitation of the workers, to get more out of them for less pay. The trade union movement for years has fought incentive pay because it is a substitute for the living wage, because it creates competition among the workers, because it has the main purpose of increasing the profits of the bosses at the expense of a more intensely exploited working class. This bosses' weapon has now been adopted by the labor fakers with the aid of the reactionary Stalinist machine in the labor movement.

What is the net *class* effect of the present conduct of the labor officialdom? It strengthens the power of big business; it strengthens the power of the bosses' offensive! All other matters, important as they may be, are secondary when related to the foregoing. In supinely accepting the Roosevelt order, as they have accepted every Administration action relating to labor, in retreating before every blow delivered against it, the labor officialdom does not merely signify its friendship for the Administration, does not merely *attempt* to strengthen the Administration's position but, above all, it fortifies the hand of the reactionaries engaged in a campaign of destroying trade unionism. The more abject is the conduct of the labor

leaders, the more they surrender, the weaker become their organizations and their fighting power, and the easier becomes the task of big business and its allies. We are not interested in the possibility that these labor leaders may lose their positions, their sinecures as labor leaders. We are concerned only with the fact that their conduct has an adverse effect upon the position of the American working class.

We have said that all is not so simple in the camp of labor. Torn by the contradiction of supporting the Administration in its main endeavors and placating a restless and militant rank and file, the labor leaders themselves engage in contradictory actions. At the time of this writing there appears to be a sharp division of opinion among the labor bureaucrats. The closing sentence of the President's order was no sooner uttered than the WLB announced that no wage increases would be granted other than permitted by the Little Steel formula and, without defining its meaning, for substandard wages. It has held firmly to this position in relation to the thousands of cases now before it.

The AFL members of the WLB, in concurring in one wage award, denounced the President's order as a violation of the no-strike agreement, and as being fundamentally "unsound." The CIO members of the board, separately from the AFL members, have made their disagreement known to Economic Stabilization Director Byrnes. Sharp protests have come from the UAW, and many other unions have protested the Roosevelt edict to their international boards.

The dissatisfactions and the protests at the top and bottom of the labor movement are not unified. They occur against the background of the labor officialdom's indicated subservience to the Administration and with a promise, based on past experience, that in the end they will seek out some rotten compromise in order first, to control the ranks of the unions and second, to maintain their "alliance" with Roosevelt.

The picture, at this moment, is neither finished nor clear—almost everything depends on the ranks of the labor movement. But to date the international executives of the AFL and CIO have remained silent.

Summarizing Roosevelt's Order

The Roosevelt wage order is a blow against labor; it is a blow strengthened by the position held by the labor officialdom. One-third of the nation lives under substandard conditions and substandard wages. The wages of the overwhelming majority of the workers are far below the minimum requirements established by the Department of Labor (\$2,500 a year). The economic conditions of the workers, their housing conditions, their ability to buy food and clothing have all suffered during the past two years of the war economy; this deterioration of their living standards is made more conclusive by the Roosevelt edict.

But will not this situation be remedied by price control and the rolling back of prices? Utter nonsense. There will be no satisfactory (for the workers) adjustment of prices. Prices have exceeded all ceilings. An economist for the Labor Department discloses that prices have increased by thirty-one per cent more than the official figures of that same department. The cost of living has risen anywhere between twenty-one and thirty-six per cent. Yet the President demands adherence to the Little Steel formula which grants increases up to fifteen per cent!

Does the Administration intend to roll back prices by fifteen to twenty per cent? There is hardly a person who does not know that the thought of it alone is ludicrous. It is not even the aim of the Administration. Prentiss Brown, OPA director, has already admitted that prices actually cannot be controlled. The experiences of the past year are sufficient proof that the OPA director knew whereof he spoke!

It is not merely enough to say that prices must be controlled. The more important question is how they shall be controlled and who shall control them. And so long as price control remains in the hands of the Administration and big business, price control will remain the joke that it is. The labor officials first demand, and then plead, with the President that they be given rights and authority to help keep prices down. But they are as blithely ignored by the President on this as they have been on all other questions of authority and control.

There will be no substantial improvement in the price

level. Negotiations to lower prices will go on for months. The administrative bodies of the government will be negotiating for a long, long time. In the meantime, the position of the workers will have been materially worsened from the present low levels. Congress disputes the President's legal right to set a limitation on the salaries of big business. *It gives him the right to put a ceiling on wages.* The President makes his holiday attack on Congress, but the provision on wages stands. Leon Henderson's forecast that the living standards of the American masses will be reduced to the level of 1932 is becoming a reality more swiftly than most people believed possible. Unless the workers fight back, unless they succeed in shifting the burden of this war on the backs of the American capitalist class, where it rightfully belongs, it will take a long time in reviving. One of the first steps in this direction is a struggle against the misleaders who stand at the head of the great labor organizations.

A. G.

Mr. Willkie and Comrade Muratov

A Lesson in Democracy

In the beginning there was Walter Duranty. He acquired a certain notoriety and a not uncomfortable living by reiterating for twenty years that everything abhorrent represented by the Stalinist counter-revolution would be intolerable for civilized English gentlemen, and perhaps even for Americans, but for the stupid Russian it was all right, maybe even too good. He conceals very little of the abominations of the Kremlin régime; he even insists upon them; and with the aid of his outlook he succeeds in thrilling the whisky- and -soda crowd in London and the cocktail friends - of - the - Soviet - Union on Park Avenue and Malibu Beach with simultaneous feelings of superiority and of "understanding of Russia."

Then came Ambassador Davies, who found that Stalinism is after all not too far removed from Christianity, that the régime is not suitable for "the civilization we know," but that inasmuch as "the Russia of Lenin and Trotsky—the Russia of the Bolshevik Revolution—no longer exists," the Roosevelt policy of an alliance with Moscow in defense of American imperialism is indicated, justified, unexceptionable.

More recently, Mr. Wendell Willkie has come forward as an interpreter and friend of the "Russian experiment." Every effort to prod the memory, assisted by minute examination of old newspaper files, has thus far failed to reveal any friendliness by Mr. Willkie toward what Mr. Davies adequately called "the Russia of Lenin and Trotsky—the Russia of the Bolshevik Revolution." Like ninety-nine per cent of the other "friends of Russia" today, Mr. Willkie adopted an amicable attitude toward the country only after the workers' power had been completely and sanguinarily extirpated by the Stalinist counter-revolution. It is quite understandable.

In the *Reader's Digest* (March, 1943), Mr. Willkie writes about what he calls "one of the most effective societies of modern times" under the title of "Life on the Russian Frontier." It is the story of the Siberian territory of Yakutsk, as he found it during a brief stop-off on his aerial way through Russia, and the story is not without interest.

During the time of the Czars, Yakutsk was famous for tuberculosis, furs and syphilis. Convicts and political prisoners, including Alexander Pushkin, were exiled there. Many who endured its bitter life wrote of Yakutsk as "the people's prison."

All that is changed, however. Not, mind you, that Mr. Willkie was not apprehensive about what he would find upon landing. "Between the airfield and the town we looked for the *usual concentration camp* we had seen in some other cities—heavy barbed-wire fences, with sentry boxes at the corners. But there was none in Yakutsk, or at least we never came across it." Either the camp is not one of Yakutsk's outstanding show-places, or else his cicerone had other things to boast about. The illustrious guest was met at the airfield and thereafter guided around by the first citizen of the Republic, Comrade Muratov, President of the Council of People's Commissars of Yakutsk Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic.

"You are not going on today, Mr. Willkie," he replied, "nor probably tomorrow. The weather reports are not good and it is part of my instructions to assure your safe arrival at your next stop. Otherwise I shall be liquidated."

If there is one thing that Comrade Muratov (and all his peers) is warmly concerned with, it is to avoid liquidation, which is a Russian word that now means not being dissolved in water but being sent up in smoke. On that delicate point, Comrade Muratov is not an ignoramus. Mr. Willkie gives us his very interesting biography, complete at least to the time of going to press.

...he had been picked from a machine shop in Stalingrad for special schooling because he was bright. He had worked and studied his way through school, through the university and through the Institute of Red Professors, Moscow's leading graduate school in the social sciences. Two years ago he had been sent out to head the Council of People's Commissars of Yakutsk.

What a success-story! And how utterly simple! What an unexpected blessing for the Yakuts! In his day, Lenin had to be *elected* head of the Council of People's Commissars of the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic. Alfred E. Smith

had to be elected Governor of the State of New York, and Franklin D. Roosevelt had to go through the same involved, annoying process to be elected to the same post and later to the Presidency of the United States. The very same Mr. Willkie, in his effort to succeed Mr. Roosevelt, had to go through an election. How much simpler—and more gratifying—it would have been if there had been some All-seeing, All-knowing and All-providing Power to arrange that Mr. Willkie, for example, be “sent out to head” the Office of the Executive of the United States! Comrade Muratov is far and away better off than Mr. Willkie. “He had been sent out to head the Council of People’s Commissars of Yakutsk.” Mr. Willkie has told us, if we didn’t know already, what Yakutsk was under the Czars. In those dread and—thank God!—long past days, the Autocrat of All the Russias had and exercised the power to “send out” *General-Gubernators* to rule the provinces and territories of his empire. But—again, thank God!—that is all changed in this “one of the most effective societies of modern times.” Nowadays, He Who Is Sent is no longer called *General-Gubernator*. That says everything. As for They Who Receive Him Who Is Sent, they had better say nothing. For they know what happened, among others, to Comrade Muratov’s predecessors who “had been sent out to head the Council.”

Muratov did not tour Mr. Willkie through the cemetery which houses the remains of his predecessors and all other Wrong-Thinkers, because he is undoubtedly a comrade of tact and delicacy. But he did show him as good a time as he could. “The food served us was Siberian,” continues our Gulliver,

—a whole roast pig on the table, sausages, eggs, cheese, soup, chicken, veal, tomatoes pickles, wine and a vodka concentrate so strong that even Russians poured water into it. Each meal was as big as the one that preceded. There was vodka even at breakfast and steaming tea all day long. It is a cold country. Though I do not imagine the people outside our hotel ate as well as we did, they apparently ate plenty.

Plenty of what? Of Marie Antoinette’s cake, no doubt. More tangible edibles do not exist for the masses of the people who, especially now, are always on the verge of starvation. But if the Muratovs do not show much concern over what the people eat, or how they live, do not think that their attitude extends to that particular section of the “people” who constitute the bureaucracy.

I saw a good deal of Muratov for a couple of days. He was a man who would do well in any country; in his own country he was doing somewhat more than well. His way of doing things, like the Soviet way all over Siberia, was rough and tough and often cruel and sometimes mistaken. His comment would be: “But it gets results.”

Splendid! These four words should be inscribed as the generic motto on the shields of all bureaucracies, particularly of those who pretend to represent the workers, the masses of the people. Do oppression and exploitation “rough and tough and often cruel” get results? Of course they do! For whom? Why, for the oppressors and exploiters, for the Muratovs and Those Who Send the Muratovs. Example? Here it is, a “small” one:

“Have you a theater?” I asked Muratov.

He had, and went to it later in the evening. He told me the performance began at nine o’clock. After dinner we drank vodka and talked, and I suddenly realized that it was after nine.

“What time did you say the show started?” I asked him.

“Mr. Willkie,” he answered, “the show starts when I get there.”

And so it did. We walked into our box a half hour later, sat down, and up went the curtain.

To Mr. Willkie’s description of Russia as “one of the most effective societies of modern times,” every Muratov in the country would most emphatically and enthusiastically echo, “Absolutely!” But there is also no doubt that all the viceroys and satraps of the Czar would have been just as emphatic and enthusiastic in their day. They, too, were Sent Out. And although the curtain of the provincial opera house may not have waited to go up until they arrived, they glorified reflectively in the fact that in Moscow and St. Petersburg, the curtain did wait until the Imperial Family took its place.

At bottom, however, the old Czar was a naïve and honest murderer. He would have been offended if you called his régime a “workers’ state” or a “socialist society,” or anything less than the autocracy that it was. As for himself, he proudly and honestly called himself the Autocrat of All the Russias.

Our Wisconsin and Indiana democrats, however, are so deliriously delighted at the “effective” way in which Lenin and Trotsky, the revolutionary socialists, and socialism, have been “liquidated,” that the new Czar of All the Russias and his new slavery appear to them as a new freedom—not, the Almighty forbid! for Wisconsin or Indiana, but good enough for Russians. . . .

S.

The Struggle for Air Supremacy

A Phase of Imperialist Conflict

A great battle of words, both the shadow of a more substantial battle within the world economy and a prelude to the even greater battle still to come, has broken out in the press of the United Nations over the rôle of commercial aviation in the post-war world. Though the popular imagination was first stirred by the now famous “globalony” speech of Representative Clare Booth Luce, largely because of the carefully premeditated publicity campaign given her by the Scripps-Howard and Luce press, the controversy has far deeper roots, extending into the very question of the inter-imperialist relations among the United Nations if they win the war.

It is difficult for a layman to estimate accurately exactly what degree of technical progress has been made in the construction and planning of large-scale transport aviation and those planes, such as the helicopter, which are planned primarily for private and small-scale business purposes. One thing is certain, however: tremendous progress has been made, a new technical era has been opened, already rivaling and showing signs of overshadowing in significance the rise of the automobile. This development is hailed by the apologists of capitalism as an indication of the continuing virility of that economic system. In reality, of course, it is a bitter indictment of capitalism that this tremendous development in the field

of international transport and commerce, with its still incalculable possibilities for the improvement of the welfare of humanity, was so stunted in its development during peacetime and began to achieve prominence only as a result of the tragic stimulus of the needs of the imperialist war. A few figures will indicate, however, what a potent factor the airplane industry has become in the American economy. In 1942, production, according to Charles I. Stanton, U.S. Civil Aeronautics Administrator, was some \$6,250,000,000, nearly thirteen times as large as that of 1940 and more than fifty times that of 1938. Its 1943 production will be some \$20,000,000,000. By contrast, the automotive industry in its greatest year reached an output of \$3,700,000,000. These few key figures are sufficient to give an indication of the crucial rôle which this industry will play in the post-war period. The collapse of the airplane industry would immediately result in a major trend toward economic depression. Conversely, an imperialist success in obtaining world air bases, routes and trade, with the resultant need for continued transport production and the maintenance of a giant air industry, is a pleasing prospect for the imperialist planners.

Prospects for the Future

What, in brief, is the present status of international commercial aviation and its prospects for future development? At the present, America is indubitably in the most advantageous position for the conquest of virtual hegemony of the world commercial air routes after the war. She is producing today, in quantity, standard transport planes that can carry six-ton cargoes at about 200 miles an hour. According to reliable surveys conducted by *Newsweek* magazine and the semi-official trade magazine, *Aviation*, it may also be expected that in the near future planes will be produced that can carry 100 tons at a speed of about 350 miles, and that an average speed of from 275 to 300 miles an hour might even be expected on long runs. At present, because of the limitations imposed by the war as well as the inherent limitations imposed by the fact that capitalist economy functions with profit and not service as its main aim, the longer routes, broken up into frequent short stops and taken at considerably less than maximum speeds, are used. Thus, for example, what is theoretically the shortest, quickest and most feasible route—the Great Circle across the North Pole—is being developed for possible post-war use, but remains sidetracked to the advantage of the immediately profitable routes such as the “cross hemisphere” route from Chicago to Calcutta via New York, the Azores, Casablanca, Cairo, etc. This route provides more possibility of passenger trade and saves gasoline, since the shorter routes do not require such great expenditures of fuel and oil. However, from the long-range point of view of world economic planning—which is ultimately consistent only with the creation of a socialist economy—it is the Great Circle route that presents the greatest potentialities. Even within the limitations of capitalism, however, there will be growing importance for commercial aviation. While it will not succeed in supplanting railroads and ships in the immediate future, it will take over many important facilities: rapid mail services which would save the costs of cable tolls; transport of light, small but precious materials; transport of perishable materials; rapid passenger services.

When one translates this into the language of world politics and economics, it is more readily seen what tremendous importance commercial aviation has for the post-war world

which the Allies are planning. An entire new growth of imperialist expansion into previously neglected areas such as many of the Pacific islands and large sections of Asia can be envisaged. Whichever power will have control of the world airways will be in a fair way of obtaining imperialist world dominance. And, inversely, those powers with the major bases and routes will be able to seize control of this vast new industry for the purposes of knitting closer together their present empires, profiting from the revenues brought in by the new industries (the rate of profit of the airplane industry in the United States last year was among the highest of any industry of the nation) and maneuvering themselves into position for further economic conquests. What is more, it is not too difficult to convert from transport to war plane production; the imperialists of every nation see in the plane a potent weapon for the continuation of their rule even in the most far-off areas. Is it any wonder that even now, before the United Nations have come anywhere near winning the war, and before they have heard what answer the people of the world will give to their post-war plans, they are feverishly planning, frantically maneuvering for strategic positions in the post-war aviation field?

“Legal” Restrictions in the Air

An illuminating instance of the fact that a decadent capitalist economy imposes intolerable restrictions on the development of world production and trade can be seen when one examines the fantastically intricate “rules” which govern present aviation trade and which threaten to either sharply limit it in the post-war period or push it into a bitter economic war. No more intricate set of restrictions, based on the inter-imperialist rivalries, has ever been developed in any other field of transport or commerce. At present, commercial aviation is governed by two “principles.” One is the so-called principle of “national sovereignty”—each nation holds sovereign rights over its own air space (legally, a plane cannot fly over any foreign nation without permission). Secondly, there is the “closed port” system, which, unlike the “open port” arrangement of sea commerce, does not permit a foreign plane to land at a base without permission of the government which controls that base. It is apparent, of course, that with two such crippling measures in effect, it is impossible at present for any substantial development of commercial aviation to take place without getting involved in a series of national restrictions, imperialist rivalries and struggles. The situation is not unlike that produced on international sea commerce by the tariff walls.

It is in the planning for the post-war status of commercial aviation that the conflicts between the various imperialist powers become most sharp. If the Allies win the war, and if their rule is not immediately toppled by socialist revolutions, then America and Britain will be the two main rivals for aviation hegemony. The defeated Axis powers probably will be grounded, France and Russia hardly will be in a position to enter the struggle, and the two small imperialist powers, Belgium and Holland, which did have some commercial aviation strength, will be so busy reconsolidating their power that they will not be able to even peep into the controversy. The only significance which all the talk about “freedom of the skies” and “closed and open ports” and all the other aviation jargon can possibly have, therefore, is in light of the mounting rivalry between American and British imperialism. What, then, are the relative positions of the two antagonists?

There are, first, some general politico-economic considerations. America has undoubtedly set itself the prospectus of coming out of this war as the leading capitalist power. This has been discussed at length elsewhere in this magazine and need not be elaborated here. For this perspective it has many advantages and, at present, in the opinion of this writer, there are only two possibilities which might annul those advantages: 1) a war of such inordinate length that America would be dragged down to the levels of sacrifice of Russia and Britain and would therefore be unable to take advantage of what it hopes will be its comparative post-war economic strength; or 2) an alliance between Britain and Russia aimed against any attempt of America to climb to the top of the imperialist pile. Otherwise, America will have the general advantages of superior financial strength, greater military power and far less of a toll exacted by the war.

British-American Conflicts

Specifically, however, there are a number of advantages which American aviation has. First of these is the fact that American imperialism has contrived to arrange the war production program so that Britain concentrates on the production of fighter and giant bomber planes, while America concentrates on certain types of bombers and transport planes. In the worried words of Peter Masefield, aviation expert of the *London Times*, "The government appears to be evading the issue and to be afraid of offending the United States, which not only is building up a virtual monopoly in transport aircraft among the United Nations, but is acquiring nearly all the operational experience..." The second major advantage which America has is the fact that it has been building many bases in far-flung parts of the world, most of them adjacent to or within the British Empire, and that these bases are ideally suited for post-war commercial use.

It is therefore not for nothing that the spokesmen of British imperialism have been so agitated over this issue. For, at present, it is undeniable that they are coming off second best. The Tory MP Perkins says that "in the Pacific the Americans have a complete monopoly. In the South Atlantic the Americans have a complete monopoly. In the North Atlantic... for every British-owned air liner crossing it there are at least two American. ... In Africa the Americans were given an entree..." It is this situation which prompted the Lord Privy Seal, Viscount Cranborne, to declare in the House of Commons on March 11, 1943, that the British government had "a secret report" designed to safeguard her commercial aviation interests after the war. It was likewise this situation which prompted his threat that "If other nations (obviously the U.S.—R. F.) insist upon cut-throat competition, we are quite prepared to enter the fray against them." And there is somewhat more than idle boasting, though there is plenty of that too, in this threat. For, although Britain is at present in an unfavorable position, it is by no means without resources for putting up a stiff fight in case the aviation struggle breaks out into the open after the war. Its main trumpcard is, of course, the Empire. Regardless of the restrictions on air travel that continue to pile up, Britain can continue her air development so long as she holds on to the Empire. With the possible exception of the Pacific, where American refusal to allow foreign planes to land on the Hawaiian islands effectively eliminates any competition as long as America retains those islands, British planes can travel round the world and still be completely within the Empire. It is this great geographical-economic ad-

vantage which is Britain's main trump card. It has already yielded results. In Australia, for example, the British have terminal rights which American interests have never been able to acquire. Likewise in New Zealand. (It is this fact which explains the agitation conducted by American Army officials for commercial rights for those bases they have constructed on British territory.) And likewise in Africa, air routes initiated by the Pan American system, America's major air company, have been taken over by the British Overseas Airway. In Canada, the United States has agreed to turn over to Canada one year after the end of the war all permanent airport facilities built there with lend-lease funds. The one redeeming feature of this situation, from the point of view of American interests, is the fact that in places like Canada, and to a lesser degree New Zealand and Australia, the power of the American dollar is becoming stronger than that of the British legal tie.

Beginning of the Struggle at Home

With the status of this ripening struggle between America and British imperialism for control of the airways in the background, we can more readily understand the abstruse disputes over "freedom of the skies" and "closed and open ports." Clare Luce to the contrary notwithstanding, it becomes apparent that American imperialism, even if it doesn't know it yet, has found a spokesman with extraordinary vision in Vice-President Wallace. Mrs. Luce speaks up for a policy of "national sovereignty" in the air—that is, perpetuation of the present scheme, which is of temporary and limited advantage to American aviation. But when Henry Wallace proposes "freedom of the skies" he would give American aviation an even greater advantage than "freedom of the seas" gave to British merchant shipping. For, under this scheme, there would be allowed: the right of "innocent passage" over the air of any foreign country by non-military planes; the right of "free landing" or "open port" for refueling; and similar measures. This is clearly a setup for a country which has the planes, the financial backing, the world influence that America has, and only lacks entree into the bases now controlled by Britain. For Britain, there are no readily discernible advantages in this scheme. That Wallace tacks on his scheme for a United Nations Investment Corporation to operate a network of global planes, is not essential to the previously noted and main part of his plan; such a corporation has precious little chance of existence in the imperialist-rivalry-ridden post-war world, except perhaps as a means of militarily maintaining the might of world capitalism by using war planes against any revolution that might arise.

But while Wallace champions this "freedom of the air" scheme which would assure first place to American aviation, he is not in favor of an all-out commercial war against British aviation interests. Here again he shows himself to be a sensible statesman—from the capitalist point of view. For Wallace understands the need for some kind of capitalist solidarity on an international scale to organize against the threat of proletarian revolution, as witness his remarks against Trotskyism in a recent speech. He sees that if the Luce perspective of an all-out struggle against the British Empire is adopted, the result may be disadvantageous to both American and British imperialism. So he has adopted the perspective, and in this he appears to be speaking for the Roosevelt Administration, of a sort of post-war "limited hegemony."

This is a brief and very incomplete sketch of the aviation situation as it now stands. It is by no means an independent

equation; what will happen in the war and in world politics will in the long run determine the relationship of forces in this field, too. It is worth noting, however, that here is offered an incredible opportunity for progress on the part of humanity. The uses to which a socialist society could put the airplane are incalculable and stagger the imagination. That capitalism, on the contrary, can use the airplane only as a

means of horrible destruction at present, and can plan for it only the rôle of a mechanism for the furthering of post-war imperialist struggles, is but one more indication that socialism today stands at the very top of the human agenda, and that not the slightest progress toward peace and security can be made without struggling for socialism.

R. F.

What About the German Revolution?

A Discussion Article

I

It is time the German problems were studied. In the anti-Stalinist movement of all shadings, much energy has been spent on the "Russian question." That is its enduring merit. In contrast to the semi- and three-fourths Stalinist groups and grouplets from the dustbin of the Comintern, the anti-Stalinist groupings, by the discussion of the Russian question, penetrated into *all* the problems of the modern European and international labor movement, the one that just perished and the one soon to rise, and contributed much to their solution.

But a positive hiatus in the study of the European labor movement is the failure to investigate the problems and crises of the German labor movement in the period from 1918 to 1933. Here all or almost all the groupings stemming from Trotsky are handicapped by a certain factional blindness which is explained by the historical origin of Trotskyism. Inside the Communist Party of Germany (KPD) there was a series of weighty, internal discussions which revolved, in the first period, in the period from 1918 to 1923, essentially around specifically German questions, around the questions of the strategy and tactics of the German revolution. These discussions accompanied the decline and smashing of the revolutionary cadres of the German proletariat, had their repercussions in the Comintern, produced in it a series of groupings and factions, and were reflected, even if distortedly, in the struggles of the Russian factions *from 1918 to 1923*.

The discussion in the KPD dealt, roughly, with the estimation of the revolutionary situation in Germany in the years 1918 to 1923, and produced "right" and "left" factions: the right-wing factions posit a long historical perspective of the struggle for power, whose prospects must continually improve and appear more favorable by virtue of correct strategy and tactics, especially by correct trade union strategy and tactics, and by that means the broad masses of the social-democratic and trade union workers will be won. The "left," to put it roughly, warns against the upsurging and consolidating counter-revolution, demands a vanguard party whose main task is to consist of leading the masses into struggle, of winning the masses through revolutionary struggle and in the process of the revolutionary struggle, and warns against *overestimating* the social-democratic and trade union mass organizations as *the* main factor in the basic conditions for the victory of the German proletariat.

In this *first*, decisive and most important chapter in the struggle of the German labor movement, the *then* Trotskyist faction, through its exponent, Karl Radek, worked together with the right-wing faction of the KPD and shared its basic

conceptions of the estimation of the situation in Germany in all essential points.

This fact is in no wise altered by the *Lessons of October* by Trotsky, i.e., the position he took on the crisis of 1923, that subsequently constructed and inexact presentation of his actual attitude during the Ruhr crisis, as we shall endeavor to show later in discussing the year 1923.

On this first period of the German labor movement, the entire Trotskyist movement is filled with legends and historical errors which are closely connected with the difficult process of intellectual clarification in the "Russian question," and which must be rectified with the achievement of a sound theoretical standpoint on the question of Stalinism, so as to be able to reach an historically correct evaluation of National Socialism.

In the period of the Opposition Bloc, from 1923 to 1928, in the preparatory days of the rise of Stalinism and of National Socialism, the representatives of the Russian Opposition in Germany were composed exclusively of elements of the former left factions (disregarding certain episodic affairs from 1923 to 1925). In the Comintern, however, Trotskyism in the period before the formation of the Bloc, already had supporters from the right-wing elements of the Comintern, supporters who were lost, in the days after the disintegration of the Bloc, just as speedily as the left-wing groupings. Trotskyism was compelled, in the period from 1929 to 1933, to work in Germany with completely *new* elements. These new younger cadres no longer had any genuine relations with the ideological groupings of the time of the revolutionary struggles; they were made up of remnants of all factions; and were incapable of giving a real analysis of German developments. The right-wing faction, Brandler, Walcher, Thalheimer, Paul Frölich, timidly kept their distance from Trotsky and the Trotskyists, since its whole political line was directed toward reconciliation with Stalin; but its criticism of the position of the Comintern and the KPD in the German question fell in with Trotsky's conceptions.

II

The axis of Trotsky's criticism in this period is the false attitude of the KPD toward the SPD (Social Democratic Party of Germany) and toward the trade union masses. Trotsky criticized the "ultra-leftist" position of the Thälmann Central Committee, the theory of social-fascism (Stalin's twins, fascism and social-democracy), and put forth the demand that the Thälmann Central Committee should place itself at the head of the communist and social-democratic workers in the struggle against fascism. Trotsky especially polemized at that time

against Urbahns, who called for an organization independent of the KPD and declared the necessity of a policy that would compel the Thälmann Central Committee "to seize the power."

It would be a criminal act on the part of the Opposition Communists to take, like Urbahns and Company, to the road of creating a new Communist Party, before making some serious efforts to change the course of the old party. . . . *Should the Communist Party be compelled to apply the policy of the united front, it will almost certainly permit the attack of fascism to be beaten off.* (Trotsky, *Germany, What Next?* pp. 185f.)

This is exactly the position of the right-wing German communists from 1918 to 1923 in every revolutionary crisis; this is exactly the position of the Brandler-Lovestone faction in the years of its right-wing faction fight against the Comintern from 1929 to 1933. However greatly Trotsky and the Brandlerites diverge in all other questions, especially in the question of the attitude toward Stalinism, in this question they are united, and it is time to examine whether this position is right or is not.

In all the writings of Trotsky and the Trotskyists of that time and of the directly decisive pre-Hitler era, this thought it repeated, particularized and developed over and over again. It reaches particularly crass expression in Trotsky's elaboration of the coming German Soviets. Polemizing against Urbahns, Trotsky says:

. . . Urbahns, in refuting the pretensions of the Communist Party to the leadership of the working class, said at a meeting in Berlin in January (1932), "The leadership will be kept by the masses themselves and not in accordance with the desires or at the discretion of the one and only party" . . . to avow that the Soviets "by themselves" are capable of leading the struggle of the proletariat for power—is only to sow a broad vulgar Soviet fetishism. Everything depends upon the party that leads the Soviets. Therefore, in contradistinction to Urbahns, the Bolshevik-Leninists do not at all deny the Communist Party the right to lead the Soviets; on the contrary, they say, "Only on the basis of the united front, only through the mass organizations, can the CP conquer the leading position within the future Soviets and lead the proletariat to the conquest of power." (*Ibid.*, p. 99.)

Workers' State and Trotsky's Views

Naturally this conception of the German critics by Trotsky was closely connected with his general conception of the character of Stalinism, of the Russian state, of Russian economy and of the possible and probable evolution of Stalinism and the revolutionary labor movement. The revising of Trotsky's concept of the "workers' state" must lead inevitably to a reëxamination of the standpoint in the German question quoted above and till now generally accepted as correct. Max Shachtman says *very correctly* in his article "Twenty-five Years of the Russian Revolution" (*The New International*, November, 1942):

Trotsky proceeded from the doctrine that in Russia, as elsewhere, the proletariat can rule or the bourgeoisie, no one else. The result was the systematic underestimation of the significance of the Stalinist bureaucracy, of its social and political course, of its *durability*.

The conclusion from this new analysis (new in relation to the traditional Trotskyist ideology) of the "exploitive state" is, consistently, this:

The Russian proletariat faces its second great *working-class revolution*.

Stalinism is thus the singularly new form of the European counter-revolution in Russia; and the German developments must be reëxamined in the light of this counter-revolutionary Russian development and no longer from the standpoint of a labor movement which, linked with the Russian "workers'

state" from 1928 to 1933, could have developed and decided revolutionarily within the framework of the Comintern. Such a basic conception leads to the revision of all the prevailing Trotskyist notions about the internal reasons for the collapse of the German labor movement and the victory of national socialism.

III

In the incredibly barbarously superficial articles of Held "Why the German Revolution Failed," *Fourth International*, December, 1942, January 1943), the investigation of the German problems is begun with a philistine criticism of the familiar phrase of Zinoviev on the "three Soviet republics that we have in Europe" and of his expression, "soon all Europe will be Sovietistic." These agitational formulations of Zinoviev were one of the favorite targets of all the petty bourgeois critics of the Lenin-Trotsky conception of the objectively mature revolutionary situation in Europe in 1918-1919. To make Zinoviev "ridiculous" in the fourth year of the Second World war and the tenth year of Hitler's dictatorship because, in complete agreement with Lenin's conceptions of that time, he placed the struggle for power in Germany on the order of the day—is to have a perfectly preposterous point of departure for so much as posing the question. Zinoviev made many serious and fateful mistakes even in his best days. But this speech, and so many others out of his early days, still breathe the fresh revolutionary élan of the first October years, they reflect that sincere revolutionary faith of the heroic period of the Russian Revolution which was one of Zinoviev's best sides and the reason why he became one of Lenin's closest co-workers. It is high time to rap the knuckles of the "Boy Heroes" and to stop them from playing off the "Great Figure" of a Paul Levi, who did not measure up to his task for all his cleverness, against the "ultra-leftist" conceptions of Zinoviev—all the more so because this petty chatter has a political meaning, and a very dangerous one.

It is an historical fact that two conceptions were in conflict in the evaluation of the revolutionary situation in Germany in 1918. Lenin, Trotsky, Zinoviev held that the situation for the struggle for power was at hand. Radek, Rosa Luxemburg, Paul Levi were of the contrary opinion and set themselves the goal of constructing an oppositional mass party, aiming at winning the broad trade-union and social-democratic organizations first through *propaganda*. The only real supporter of Lenin's evaluation of the November situation was *Karl Liebknecht*, who was not, however, taken seriously by the leadership of the young Spartacus League, who did not, in fact, even participate in the actual leading core. Lenin's evaluation of the situation was also followed by a large part of the revolutionary workers, who, ten times wiser than their leaders, continually sought, from November, 1918, to October, 1923, to break the power of the counter-revolution by insurrection, and who continually failed because their most advanced organization and their most advanced leadership, the Spartacus League and its successor, the KPD, *were opposed to the insurrection at every single stage, always regarded the situation as "not ripe" and always based their practical analysis and politics on a slower development, with the result that it was "taken by surprise" by the collision of the revolutionary and counter-revolutionary forces every time.* The Spartacus League was *against the January uprising* in 1919, at that time still under the leadership of Rosa Luxemburg. It was *against the March struggles* in 1919, under the

leadership of Paul Levi. It was *against the uprising in the Kapp Putsch* in March, 1920, under the leadership of Paul Levi, Brandler, Pieck, Thalheimer and Ernst Meyer. And finally, it was *against the uprising in 1923*, under the leadership of Brandler, Walcher, Thalheimer and Paul Frölich.

Inner Crises of German Movement

These great crises were accompanied by hard internal struggles within the communist cadres, *or rather*, these great cadres unleashed hard internal discussions in the KPD. In the Comintern, the majority of the international communists *was always on the side of the incumbent Central Committee of the KPD*, which estimated the situation cautiously. *Today, however, it is quite clear that the debates at the various stages masked a false general conception of the German development.*

It is no historical accident that the only revolutionary party the German proletariat ever possessed placed itself in practice against the fighting workers in every salient, at the peak of the European crisis following the First World War. A truly typical representative of this conception was Paul Levi, a close disciple of Rosa Luxemburg. Paul Levi was a lawyer from Frankfurt am Main, coming from a wealthy family, cultured, clever, world-traveled, and by his conduct, breeding, education, speech and thought, separate from the broad masses of the German working class as by an unbridgeable gulf. Levi, a sincere and violent opponent of German imperialism and the war policy of the German social democracy, underrated the convulsion of the world capitalist system by the first war and overrated the factors of stabilization in Germany. What he aspired to, in consistent development of the basic conceptions of Rosa Luxemburg on the form and rôle of the German labor movement, was the *great oppositional workers' party in a bourgeois-democratic republic*, which, by its mass character and its all-embracing organization, was to become a decisive power in German politics and had no need whatsoever to employ "putschist" methods. Paul Levi had a fanatical hatred of "putschism, adventurism and slum-proletariat." Putschism to him was purely and simply any action that led or might lead to armed conflicts; and slum-proletariat to him was the millioned-mass of returned soldiers who were thrown out of the productive apparatus by the war, who could not find a place in the contracted German economy for years, and who played such a decisive rôle in the rise of National socialism. This struggle by Levi and his supporters against the slum-proletariat is so characteristic of the ultra-reformist character of the whole tendency because it expressed the fact that this school was not taking cognizance of the heavy crisis in Germany and was proceeding from the notion of a normal capitalism, in which the backbone of the socialist movement is and remains the social-democratic worker in the factory.

However, one of the most characteristic features of the new situation in Germany was precisely this split within the German proletariat, caused first by the contraction of German production as a result of the First World War and later, in the second period, after the crisis, by what is roughly described as "rationalization," which represented nothing but a decisive change in the whole technical foundation of German economy. Added to this is the fact that there was a profound difference between the psychology of the returned soldier and the later unemployed, and the psychology of the worker who was kept in the factory throughout the World War. The soldier had lost his respect for legality on the battlefields of Flanders and Russia. He saw houses burn, private property de-

stroyed, the shooting of hostages, the decimation of subversive elements in the army, corruption, cruelty, the class egotism of the officers' caste. He was therefore inclined to step much more lightly beyond the limits of legality. What was the *ne plus ultra* of adventurism to the well-installed attorney Paul Levi from Frankfurt, was a natural fighting method to the buck private, Max Hölz, which he had learned in the war from the bourgeoisie and now sought to utilize for his class. One needs to have seen with his own eyes the physical aversion of a Paul Levi for the methods of Hölz to be flabbergasted now, in the fourth year of the most barbarous, cruelest and most destructive world war, by the super-dimensional stupidity of people who, as Held does in his article, display an ability to glorify today the most philistine traits in the German communist movement of the first period.

The Role of Luxemburg and Levi

Paul Levi was the disciple of Rosa Luxemburg who, despite her great and deathless revolutionary services, failed as a leader in the decisive weeks in Germany, if one understands by this the correct evaluation of the situation and the correct elaboration of a line of struggle. It is of course idle to speculate on how Rosa Luxemburg's policy might have developed had she not been barbarously murdered by the White Guards. Her much-discussed criticism of the Russian Revolution, right and prophetic as it was in warning against the dangers of bureaucratic degeneration, was of course more than a criticism of bureaucratic dangers. At bottom, Rosa Luxemburg rejected Lenin's road to power, the road of insurrection. She considered that the situation was not "ripe" in Germany, or in Russia, or in Europe. In the program of the Spartacus League this conception is so clearly expressed that it is idle today to dispute over whether Rosa Luxemburg had this point of view or not; there is some point in disputing only whether this standpoint turned out to be historically justified.

The Spartacus League is not a party that *seeks to attain domination* over the working masses or *through the working masses*. . . . The Spartacus League will also decline to attain power only because the Scheidemann-Eberts have come a-cropper and the Independents have landed in a blind alley because of their collaboration with them. [How a revolutionary party is to attain power if the others have *not* come a-cropper, remains a secret of this formulation.]

The victory of the Spartacus League lies not at the beginning, but at the end of the revolution.

In a rough sketch of Luxemburg's standpoint we must content ourselves with this passage; but there is ample evidence that could be cited to show that Rosa Luxemburg and her disciples, among them primarily Paul Levi, held consistently to the view that the forces available in Germany in November, 1918, did not suffice for a struggle. As one of the most impressive details, it is in order to cite here only the fact that Rosa Luxemburg wanted to denounce Karl Liebknecht publicly in the *Rote Fahne** because of his participation in the January uprising. In defense of his standpoint, Paul Levi issued in 1921 a brochure on the Russian Revolution by Rosa Luxemburg with the title *Was ist das Verbrechen?* (!!) [*What Is the Crime?*] In this brochure Levi traces his standpoint consistently from Rosa's position and explains her attitude toward the January uprising with the statement that she deemed it her moral duty "to stand where the masses *erred*." Karl Liebknecht, however, was in Levi's words "intractable."

. . . and as Leo Jogiches was at that time, who made the proposal to make public in the *Rote Fahne*, right in the midst of the action, a sharp

*Official organ of Spartacus, later of the KPD.—*Trans.*

declaration which quite plainly disavowed Karl Liebknecht, which was simply to state that Karl Liebknecht no longer represents the Spartacus League among the revolutionary shop stewards. You are well aware how Rosa Luxemburg rejected Karl's attitude and how sharp her criticism was. She would have come forward with her criticism the minute the action was terminated.

Meanwhile, a wealth of historical material on the *weakness* of the then counter-revolutionary forces has come to hand. At a distance of twenty-five years of historical experience, the German bourgeoisie and its armed division, the German General Staff, shows itself to have been disunited, weak, unsteady, frightened. (The German social democracy and the German trade union movement—despite outward strength—internally decomposed, filled with overestimation of the revolutionary counter-forces, and fearful of the consequences.) There is, as mentioned, considerable rich material today to show *unmistakably that Lenin and Karl Liebknecht were right as against Rosa Luxemburg and Paul Levi*. It was right to say: "Throw out the traitors, Ebert and Scheidemann, call for the Soviet Republic with Liebknecht at its head." At this point we wish to cite only one fact out of the vast material, which seems to us to have been particularly characteristic of the situation. In November, 1925, the so-called *Dolchstoßprozess* [Stab-in-the-Back Trial] took place in Munich, where General Groener in his capacity of witness has the following to say:

On the evening of December 24, I had another talk with Ebert. He said, what are we going to do? I told him, there are only about 150 men left in Berlin [a hundred and fifty!]. The High Command left Berlin, went back to Wilhelmshöhe [near Kassel, a reactionary, industrially relatively weak city]. Ebert then said laughingly: You know, I'm going away now and lie down to sleep for three days, that's how badly I need it. I'm going to some acquaintances now, disappearing completely from the Federal Chancellery House, and I'm going to sleep. I shall see to it that the other gentlemen all go off in the next few days. If the Liebknecht group now uses the opportunity to seize the government for itself, there will be nobody here. But if it finds nothing when it gets here, it will make a somersault. Then we are in a position to open up the government again in a few days, somewhere else, perhaps in *Potsdam*. I proposed to him maybe to come to Kassel, but he went off to sleep. (Quoted by Beckmann, *Der Dolchstoßprozess in München*, 1925, pp. 110f.)

This detail seems to us so important because it shows how

precarious was the situation. Without doubt Ebert would have "opened up his government again in Potsdam or Kassel." The situation might possibly have developed as it did in Spain in 1936, i.e., a part of the reaction would have entrenched itself in the backward parts of Germany. The workers in the industrial regions would have had to organize and arm themselves and a civil war would have come along, in the course of which the Spartacus League could have developed itself to a revolutionary party and overcome the social democracy, not through propaganda but in action. The relative strength of the social democracy in the working class rested on the fact that it was able to play a double game. It was able to conceal to a certain extent its alliance with the Reichswehr. The more it could have been compelled to go to Potsdam or to Kassel, the greater would have been the chances to liquidate it in the working class. And the prospects of victory for a fighting Berlin, a fighting Ruhr district, a fighting Hamburg, against Kassel, were enormous, assuming, of course, that the vacillating and irresolute masses were "educated" by being drawn into the struggle with the counter-revolution. It may be said today without any exaggeration that a situation as favorable as the one in November, 1918, in Germany, will not be repeated in a single country in our generation. The bourgeoisie, weakened by the defeat, the army dissolved, the officers' corps not yet re-formed, the working class still reformistically infected and partly still in the hands of the bureaucracy of the trade unions and the SPD leaders, to be sure, but not yet decimated, not yet robbed of its best elements, and not morally diseased and corrupted, as is the case today because of Stalinism. Outside of Germany, however, the grave upsetting of the equilibrium of imperialist forces, the open crisis between American and English imperialism, between English and French imperialism, the unformed little vassal-states of the big imperialist powers in Europe, Poland, Czechoslovakia, the Balkan states, Austria, etc., and last but not least the victorious October Revolution in Russia with its immense influence within the European labor movement. (*To be concluded.*)

CLARA WERTH.

Whither Zionism? Whither Jewry?—III

Notes on the Theology of Zionism

In singling out the Soviet Union for discussion, its limitations must be kept in mind. Firstly, the violent controversy that is raging regarding it; and, secondly, the brevity of the span in which Russia could really be considered the prototype of a workers' state, and the subsequent degeneration of the Stalinist state. The first difficulty we shall solve is to make clear that this analysis is based upon the degeneration of Russia with the rise of the bureaucracy whose *general* features have been laid down by Leon Trotsky. Other difficulties we shall try to circumvent by constantly bringing in the relationship between the political and economic events in Russia and the position of the Jews.

On November 2 (15), 1917, the Declaration of Rights of the Peoples of Russia was issued, laying down the following principles:

1. The equality and sovereignty of the peoples of Russia.
2. The right of the peoples of Russia to freedom of self-determination, including the right to secede and form independent states.
3. Abolition of all national and national-religious privileges and restrictions whatsoever.
4. Freedom of development for the national minorities and ethnographic groups inhabiting the territory of Russia.

Lestshinsky's comment on this is the following (remember that he is a follower of Borochoy):

It is our opinion that whenever Jews have absolutely and actually obtained equal political rights, the Jewish economic problem has been solved. ("Why Biro-Bidjan?" *Jewish Frontier*, February, 1936, page 12.)

This is partially borne out by the experiences in Russia and by past Jewish history. Borochoy pointed out that the structure of Jews in the New World was much healthier than

in Europe because they were less hampered there by political restrictions. Social anti-Semitism, first as a hang-over from the Old World, then as an attribute of declining capitalism, has made serious inroads on these gains.

The Soviet Union was not merely content to declare equal rights; anti-Semitism was made a criminal offense in 1918. Concrete steps were taken to settle Jews on land (there were exceptions among those of bourgeois origin who were allowed to settle on land) and to have them absorbed in industry.

In spite of all these steps the Russian Jews suffered severely in the years of revolution and civil war. The causes were, on the one hand, their economic structure which caused 75 per cent of them to be classified as of "bourgeois origin," and on the other, the pogroms of the early periods of the uprising. It is already recorded as a classic example that Goddard, one of the fighters of the Paris Commune, had to plead with its leaders to inscribe Jewish civil emancipation on its program. The Russian Revolution in many ways was no different. Riots against shop-keepers, of which in certain sections Jews constituted a majority, were often turned into pogroms. In the Ukraine, nationalism was turned against assimilated Jews who were considered representative of the hated Great-Russian oppression. There was also the historical hatred of the Jews in this area, where whole estates had been farmed out to Jews in the past, whence they ruled in the name of the landlord. Yet all these pogroms were reactionary manifestations specially played up by the regular White Guard armies. Nevertheless they had a definite root in reality.

For this reason most socialist Zionists (excepting certain Left-Poale Zionists) conclude that the socialist revolution will not solve the Jewish problem. The means of livelihood are taken away from the Jewish bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie. In other words, for these sectors of society, we are to forfeit our revolutionary perspectives. What do these "socialist" Zionists want? Perpetuate these professions symbolic of capitalism? It is in their readiness to sacrifice the class interests of the Jewish workers that the "Left" of the Zionists demonstrate the degree to which bourgeois influences have permeated them. Again, certain Left Poale Zionist and parallel groups are not included in this statement, as demonstrated in our survey of recent European Zionism. We shall follow this up later. The above analysis primarily applies to American Zionists.

Those Zionists whose interests in the petty bourgeois Jews are so great would have preferred the Russian Jews to emigrate to Palestine before the Russian Revolution. They were to become proletarians in Palestine, whence they would make their own revolution. This argument besides being incognizant of the restricted character of immigration, ignores the fact that Jews will similarly suffer (they prefer to call it sacrifice) in their re-stratification in Palestine. But the immigrant *petty bourgeois* Jews do not become workers in Palestine. It is the Chaltz youth that enters the working class. And with Jewish policy in Palestine today consciously directed to become Great Britain's main support in the Near East, who knows what vengeance will yet be wreaked upon them. The anti-Semitic propaganda of the Nazis in this area is very successful.

One cannot, however, easily wave off the accomplishments of the Jewish community in Palestine. Palestine has absorbed in the post-war era up to 1939, a share of Jewish immigration larger than any other country. The numerical proportion be-

tween the Jewish workers and the Jewish bourgeoisie is healthier than in any other country. The number of collective settlements is further evidence of this fact. However, nothing is more false than to ascribe this proletarianization to the miraculous effect of Palestine *alone*. As proletarianization affects greater masses of the population, the Jews will similarly be affected. Where capitalist society declasses them, they will not be accused by the coming workers' régime of being of "bourgeois" origin. Besides, there was unemployment before the war in the holy land, Palestine, also.

As far as proletarianization in the SU is concerned, there has been definite conscious halutz activity in the Crimea. Unfortunately with the rise of Stalin, from 1924-29, all these settlements were liquidated (from Lesthinsky's *Jews in the USSR*, page 22). Jewish industrial workers have increased in number by 100 per cent; the number of Jews in agriculture has increased by 300-350 per cent (Lesthinsky: *Why Biro-Bidjan?*).

Still Zionists point to the unhealthy phenomena in Jewish structure. The table is from Lesthinsky's *Jews in the USSR*.

ECONOMIC DISTRIBUTION OF JEWS IN THE USSR

	-1934-		-1939-	
	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.
Officials and white collar workers.....	420,000	33.0	520,000	37.2
Liberal professions	100,000	7.8	180,000	12.8
Laborers	300,000	23.6	300,000	21.5
Agricultural workers.....	110,000	8.7	100,000	7.1
Artisans	210,000	16.6	200,000	14.3
Commerce	30,000	2.5	0.0
Indefinite	100,000	7.8	100,000	7.1

What is indicated by the statistics is first of all an undue concentration of Jews in the ranks of the bureaucracy. Jews who, in contradistinction to the rest of the Russian population, were predominantly city dwellers were naturally better fitted to participate in the functions of administration. Zionists deplore this situation. Jews are still in the "unproductive" occupations, they say. Thus their opposition to Jewish participation in the Stalinist bureaucracy finds its roots not in an analysis and comprehension of the parasitic function of that upper strata of Soviet Russia, but it is derived from nothing other than the outmoded physiocratic concept that sees productive labor only in relation to nature. And a large portion of these Zionists call themselves socialists.

The transfer of Jews from "bourgeois" trades into the administrative posts of the SU has in itself nothing negative. One cannot but hail the participation of hitherto "unproductive" Jews in the task of Soviet reconstruction. They are functioning in the fields in which they are, because of past tradition, most capable. It is as senseless to transfer an illiterate Russian peasant into the post of administrator as it is to force unprepared Jews into agriculture. Especially if both positions are occupied by individuals quite capable in their sphere. Further, the exploiting character of the government shop-keeper, contrary to its character in a capitalist society, is eliminated. But that does not yet satisfy the argument of the socialist Zionists.

They discover that similar statistics of the non-Jewish population show a relatively greater and more rapid influx into the ranks of the officialdom. This to them is irrefutable proof that even under socialism the Jews are going to be deprived of their livelihood by the native population. In other words, even though they are dismayed at the concentration of

Jews in the government positions, they wail when Jews are not allowed to share in the spoils of the Soviet bureaucracy. Instead of pointing out that the more rapid influx of the gentile population into these coveted positions means a closer approximation of the Jewish economy to that of the native Russian (since Russia, as later Germany, has solved its unemployment problem), they will allow the Jew to become proletarianized in Palestine only.

Yet there is a serious Jewish problem accompanying present Russian trends. This is to be blamed not merely on the remnants of capitalist society, which would on the basis of a socialized economy have been straightened out, but on the exploiting character of the bureaucracy. Undoubtedly the wrath of the population is gradually turning against the bureaucracy. Since Jews are prominently represented, especially in the lower strata of the bureaucracy, they appear as the immediate cause of this exploitation, and because of their more personal contact with the population as the embodiment and representatives of this hated class. (For a more detailed exposition, see *Anti-Semitism and Soviet Thermidor*, by Leon Trotsky.)

Not yet content, Zionists insist on forcing our hand by playing their trump card, "Biro-Bidjan." The implication is that Russia, forced to cope with the Jewish economic problem, finally gave way to this necessity by establishing Biro-Bidjan. The Soviet government, after a decade of unsuccessful experimentation, was finally forced to set aside a tract of undeveloped territory to turn Jewish city-bred bourgeois into farmers. The Jewish community was to advance Russia's frontier into Eastern Asia, and it is merely a shift from the Crimea region to the Eastern frontier, whence it shifted in turn to Uzbekistan.

Our hand unwillingly forced, we are again forced to resort to the Borochovist, Lestshinsky. Our trump ace reads:

The problem arises again—which economic problem can Biro-Bidjan solve?

The best proof that Biro-Bidjan is no longer solving the problem of the declassed is the fact that it is workers from factories and other productive projects who are sent to Biro-Bidjan.—(*Why Biro-Bidjan?*)

A very exhaustive survey of the social composition and trades of the settlers follows, inconceivable for the people who look at the Jewish problem through the spectacles of "enlightened" sophism.

Interest in the survival of Jewish culture has been repeatedly voiced in official Soviet circles, especially by Kalinin. In view of previous attempts almost to stamp out Jewish culture by physical force, the sincerity behind these statements can be justly doubted. To conclude from the failure of plans for Jewish mass settlements in Biro-Bidjan, that productivity can only occur in the historic Jewish homeland is unwarranted. In our efforts to avoid quoting experts of doubtful repute, we shall once more refer to Lestshinsky:

These experiments in the preservation of Jewish national group life (territorial concentration and local cultural and political autonomy—K. M.) have been notably lacking in success. Territorial concentration is practically at a standstill, and local autonomy is constantly declining because of the shifting of the Jewish population and its assimilation into Great Russian culture (page 27).

And again:

... the tendency of Jews to migrate to the large Russian cities from the former concentration in the Pale, has gradually broken down the centers of Yiddish cultural life. The accelerated assimilation of Jewish communists has also weakened this new nationalism (page 29. Both citations from *Jews in the USSR—1940*).

It would be paying too great a respect to bureaucratic mechanization to attribute the creation of Biro-Bidjan purely to the scheming minds of the bureaucrats. There was a definite demand on the part of Yiddish-speaking communists especially for national autonomous status for the Jews. But Jews simply could not be persuaded to emigrate there. Progressing assimilation and the convenience and opportunities offered by the Russian cities brought the enthusiasm when the project reached its practical stages to premature ebb.

* * *

Penetrating now for a few idle moments the realm of speculation, let us pose a few questions of serious import only at the Left Zionists for those on the Right will by now have flung this document away in utter disgust. Supposing that the Zionist movement were a proletarian movement under working class leadership and based on a perspective of overthrowing the capitalist system, conducting serious propaganda along those lines in addition to its Zionist work and following the type of Palestinian program indicated in the theses on Palestine, and thus fighting all the false "facts" disseminated by official Zionist propaganda—supposing all that for the purpose of discussion—could not Jewish concentration in Palestine seriously improve that abnormal economic structure, thus easing Jewish suffering in the coming revolution without deviating from the path of international proletarian strategy? The answer in our opinion is, unfortunately, No!

Restratification is under all circumstances a painful process. So is emigration. Jewish immigration into Palestine (further exemplified by Biro-Bidjan) has had necessity as its primary motive. No Jew, worker or petty bourgeois alike, will subject his future to the strange fortunes of a foreign and distant country unless so forced by the desperateness of his social and economic plight. This is only in light of the classic statement of Herzl, "The most desperate will go first," and Borochov, "The class struggle leads the Jewish proletariat to Palestine." American Jewry, despite the growth of social anti-Semitism, and its "sympathetic" views of Zionism, staunchly rejects emigration. For American middle class Jewry, Palestine, according to the posed question, would mean proletarianization. But what is more ridiculous than confronting a class with the proposition that it voluntarily abandon its privileges so that it can fight more effectively for a social order that it fears and abhors? This proposition will furthermore not aid us in "approaching" Jewry. If proletarianization is to be their fate, surely it will be easier in a land whose language and customs they have assimilated.

As for the Jewish workers, there can be no problem of restratification that will be solved in Palestine. They cannot become workers all over again. As far as their transition from skilled labor to unskilled labor is concerned, it is a by-product of capitalism from which the Jews in Palestine will escape as little as the rest of the world.

Wherever we face declassed Jews, Zionism will not be able to spare them that humiliating experience. All it can do is to promise a better future in Palestine. But the choice as to where the Jews will want to start anew, whether in Palestine or some other country, will not depend on problems of restratification but on the degree of special anti-Semitism prevailing in the countries in consideration. Social anti-Semitism does not exist in Palestine; yet other problems face the Jew there, and social anti-Semitism itself has never prevented the Jew from participating in the class struggle.

Doubtless the security of the individual Jew from the

ravages of anti-Semitism are today greater in Palestine than in any other country. But these are problems of expediency. The Jewish emigrant is constantly wandering from country to country to escape persecution, and nowhere can emigration be construed as a revolutionary force. It arises out of need. But in contradistinction to the class struggle of the workers—which is supplied by capitalism not only with growing misery as an impetus but also with the material means of its realization—immigration is a mere palliative while the decisive struggle is fought out on another front.

Further, with the decline of capitalism, which brings in its wake a further deterioration in the position of the Jews, the possibilities of immigration are similarly curtailed. While we have no absolute guarantees that the present policy of the United Nations toward Palestine will be maintained, we can unambiguously declare that those interest groups that would possibly be interested in post-war Jewish immigration will be equally concerned to see that the Jewish community in Palestine will remain under their domination or as their tool. Never, if they can help it, will they allow it to gain independent strength.

Because of this and the political boundaries that are instituted by these very same powers for imperialist reasons, and because private and national capital will never be able to promote the development of Palestine to a degree where it will hold the majority of Jews (unless their number radically declines) a significant number of Jews will continue to dwell in the diaspora. How their position will be affected, no left wing Zionist has been able to explain on a Marxian basis. Concentration in Palestine can be the solution of certain social problems of individual Jews, but never the social and economic solution of the specific Jewish problem.

The realization of a solution to the Jewish problem, whether within or outside of Palestine, becomes thus ever more closely tied up with the world problem. The war has intensified and marked these trends. We have noted previously certain trends in contemporary Zionism; it is also useless to mention that the lives of those Jews living in the diaspora will be dependent upon the type of society in which they live. Hence the solution of the Jewish problem and the realization of Zionism will be dependent upon the socialist revolution.

From the historical analysis presented, it will become clear that Zionism arose as a misdirected movement aiming at Jewish emancipation under capitalism. The character of this movement has been exposed and socialism counterposed as a solution. There is nothing in the Jewish problem which forces a solution beyond the confines of a socialist society. Yet the Zionist movement, despite its misguided character, had its root in social reality. This social reality is the existence of a relatively coherent Jewish group. For the accumulated energy of this group, socialism too must allow.

Yet the socialist revolution, in allowing for the practical realization of the ideals of Zionism, at the same time renders the urgency of such a movement unnecessary. By paving the road to Jewish concentration, the death-knell of this movement is at the same time sounded. The physical need for a solution of the Jewish problem will gradually ease as the countries settle to the building of the new society. Once the outward restrictions upon the Jewish community are drastically eliminated, one of the strongest points of Jewish survival will be undermined. That, whether considered desirable or not, will be the inevitable future trend. But our immediate perspective will be limited to the social revolution.

The social revolution can be compared to the focus of all the problems of capitalism—concentrated at one point by the efforts of the party of the proletariat acting as the lens—whence they diverge again. This time, though, the image is not perceived as the old reality but in inverted form. Not only are classes once oppressed now on top; new vantage points are gained also. What once stood on its head has now firm root in society.

So too, ahead of Zionists in France, Poland, and those in America that are moving in our direction by interpreting Zionism as national revolutionary or pro-Palestinian, we have come to join at the focal point. We cannot but wholeheartedly subscribe to Trotsky's statement:

... But not a progressive, thinking individual will object to the USSR designating a special territory for those of its citizens who feel themselves Jews, who use the Jewish language in preference to all others and who wish to live as a compact mass. Is this or is this not a ghetto? During the period of Soviet democracy, of completely *voluntary* migrations, there could be no talk about ghettos. But the Jewish question, by the very manner in which settlements of Jews occurred, assumes an international aspect. Are we not correct in saying that a world socialist federation would have to make possible the creation of a "Biro-Bidjan" for those Jews who wish to have their own autonomous republic as the arena for their own culture? It may be presumed that a socialist democracy will not resort to compulsory assimilation. It may very well be that within two or three generations the boundaries of an independent Jewish republic, as with many other national regions, will be erased. I have neither time nor desire to meditate on this. Our descendants will know better than we what to do. I have in mind the transitional historical period when the Jewish question, as such, is still acute and demands adequate measures from a world federation of workers' states. The very same method of solving the Jewish question which under decaying capitalism has a Utopian and reactionary character (Zionism) will, under the régime of socialist federations, take on a real and salutary meaning. This is what I wanted to point out. How can any Marxist, or even any consistent democrat, object to this? (*Soviet Thermidor and Anti-Semitism.*—L. T., *The New International*, May, 1941.)

It had been my intention to invoke discussion on the rôle of Zionism in such a period, for the social revolution will solve nothing, but will only remove the barriers in the way of socialist reconstruction. However, it is necessary to relegate future problems into their proper place and to proceed to a discussion of a Jewish program, which is the immediate task. As the logical conclusion from my article I will point out that the strategy of the Jewish working class will be similar to that of all other workers. This is not new in Marxian thought. Yet to lead them successfully to our road, we must be capable of pointing out *clearly* their connection to the proletariat. This necessitates exposing propaganda of anti-Semitism scientifically, knowledge of the history of anti-Semitism, understanding of other current ideologies among Jews. To this I hope to have contributed my small share.

KARL MINTER.

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National Liberation and Fantasy

In an article entitled "Our Differences with the Three Theses" (*Fourth International*, December, 1942), Felix Morrow discusses the movement for national liberation in occupied Europe. Who the "our" refers to is not clear, but since this is the same Morrow who was the official defender of the line of the SWP on China we may assume it to be more or less an official defense or elaboration of the SWP on this question.

At first glance the Morrow who confronts us here appears to be a new man. For China, he insisted that despite the fact that the war on its part is conducted in alliance with the imperialist war of the "democratic" camp by the bourgeois Chiang government, that war is a genuinely progressive war for national freedom. But how different is his approach to the European scene. No hint of his former "flexibility" is discernible. In reply to a group of European comrades who maintain that national liberation in Europe is a democratic demand deserving our support, Morrow, not without numerous distortions of their views, accuses them of working for the revival of the Third Republic in France, the Weimar Republic in Germany, of counterposing the "national movement to the workers' movement," and of committing a "nationalist deviation."

It might appear that Morrow, who developed the opportunist line on China, has had a change of heart and is now the champion of a revolutionary policy for Europe as against nationalist deviators. Nothing could be more mistaken.

The opportunism of the Cannonite position on China consists in clinging to support of a war which in the past was a genuine war for independence but which is now part of the general imperialist war carried on by the United Nations camp. This is a social-patriotism concealed only by the fact that China formerly fought a real war for independence against Japan.

Morrow established a principle for himself in China: support to the war of a bourgeois régime in alliance with imperialism. He applies this principle because China is a semi-colonial country. But if he concedes that in Europe a genuine fight for national liberation exists, not under the leadership of revolutionary socialist elements he would be compelled to apply his principle to Europe as well.

Should the Norwegians, for example, succeed in overthrowing the domination of Hitler and permit the reestablishment of a bourgeois régime which would continue a war in alliance with England and the United States, Morrow would be faced with an impossible difficulty. How could Morrow, who grants support to Chiang's war in alliance with imperialism, deny support to its counterpart in Europe?

But such a policy for Europe would be clear and open social-patriotism and Morrow's entire article is permeated with the fear of facing the ultimate consequences, in Europe, of his line in China.

Morrow can extricate himself from this dilemma in one of two ways: 1) he can develop his China line for Europe and fall into a hopelessly pro-imperialist war line, or 2) since the

development in real life of a progressive national struggle in Europe deals irreparable blows at his China position he can find refuge from life itself by falling back on principles eternally applicable "in this epoch."

He chooses the latter as the lesser of the two evils. The opportunist Morrow finds refuge from his own opportunism in the starry realms of sectarianism. Far from mitigating or nullifying the errors of his China line, Morrow's sectarian line for Europe reinforces them from another angle.

This article will concern itself not with Morrow's repeated and deliberate distortions of the Three Theses which he attacks but with outlining the essentially sectarian content of his whole treatment of the movement for national liberation in Europe.

"National Freedom in This Epoch"

Says Morrow: "The workers under the Nazi boot want national freedom. Good. The task is to explain to them that national freedom in this epoch is the task of the working class under the leadership of the Fourth International."

This idea is unimpeachable as a general principle. *But it also applies to China* and for that matter everywhere else, and not only to the problem of national liberation but to all the important social problems "in this epoch." But in China, where this principle is equally valid, Morrow recognizes in addition the need to support what he considers a progressive, democratic, anti-imperialist struggle now not under the leadership of the Fourth International but of the Chinese bourgeoisie. In Europe, Morrow confines himself to glittering universalities.

One might with equal validity proclaim to the Negro masses of the United States: "Full social, political and economic equality for the Negroes in this epoch is the task of the working class under the leadership of the Fourth International." But this hardly begins to define our relations to the Negro masses who fight today for equal rights under quite a different leadership.

What is at stake is the recognition of the progressive character of struggles which do not take place under your own socialist banner but which nevertheless in reality further the development of the socialist revolution itself. This is precisely what is occurring in occupied Europe today and exactly what Morrow contrives to dodge and to confuse throughout his whole article. Nowhere does he indicate the possibility of support to a not-yet-socialist struggle for national liberation in occupied Europe.

It is this attempt to substitute general principles applicable to "this epoch" for relations with a living mass movement that constitutes the hallmark of sectarianism.

"What Is Really New"

Given a correct estimation of the fight for national liberation it becomes possible for revolutionists to lead it into a fight against not only the foreign oppressor but the native bourgeoisie as well. Morrow is forced to give a twist to this

idea which transforms it into something entirely different and in fact altogether false.

What is really new in the occupied countries is that the national sentiment of the workers and peasants is sharpening their class bitterness against the collaborating bourgeoisie. National oppression has given a new edge to the class struggle. National sentiment hitherto serving only the bourgeoisie, today can be used against the bourgeoisie of the occupied countries. That is what is new. (Emphasis in original.)

Morrow translates "bitterness" against the collaborating bourgeoisie into class-conscious opposition to the bourgeoisie as a whole. The class struggle has become more intense against the entire bourgeoisie as a class because a section of it collaborates with the Nazis. What this neglects is the fact that national oppression makes the masses, including the workers, prey to bourgeois elements of the de Gaulle variety and above all especially vulnerable to the bourgeois democracy of the labor reformists.

In pre-war France, the socialist proletariat was led into the People's Front of collaboration with the bourgeoisie by its socialist and communist leadership. The working class tolerated this policy only because unity with the bourgeois politicians appeared necessary to defend the workers and their organizations from fascism inside France and from Hitler on its borders. This enemy, fear of whom facilitated class unity, is now the master of all of France, both as a fascist ruler and a foreign oppressor. Morrow contends that this national oppression itself intensifies the class struggle. What is this but a pale reflection of the Stalinist pre-Hitler idea of "After Hitler come we." By a similar process of reasoning, the class struggle in Germany received a "new edge" after Hitler's rise to power, when it became clear that the bourgeoisie preferred fascism and that the socialists and communists could not fight it.

But if the class struggle has become more intense, and if the main content of our slogan is "under the leadership of the Fourth International," then there is really nothing new. There is no new element which in any way modifies the road taken by revolutionists in their approach to the masses. Morrow, uncomfortable in the Europe of 1943, seeks a formula which would miraculously return him to the pre-war days when his China line had no application outside of Asia.

But there is something manifestly new. Before the war, the present struggle of the peoples of the occupied countries for national freedom did not exist. Now it does. Before the war the fight in all these countries was directly and first of all against the native bourgeoisie. Now, in order to carry on an organized, centralized and systematic struggle on a nationwide basis against the native bourgeoisie, the peoples of the occupied countries must get rid of the foreign oppressor. In this respect, the advanced peoples of occupied Europe are in the same position as the colonial peoples of Asia and their movement, like the latter, deserves our support.

Morrow has devised the theory of the "new edge to the class struggle" to escape the application of his China line to the European stage. In China, national oppression has led to a war for the democratic principle of self-determination which continues today, he maintains. Once he admits that this is the case in occupied Europe, the necessity of supporting bourgeois régimes in alliance with the imperialists inexorably follows:

The "Workers' Movement"

The "Three Theses" have this merit: they emphasize the democratic nature of the fight for national independence in

Europe. Morrow refuses to understand them, accusing their proponents of favoring the reestablishment of the Weimar Republic in Germany and the Third Republic in France; similarly a confirmed sectarian might accuse us of favoring the establishment of a capitalist régime in Spain because we supported the war against Franco. This is not because the Theses are unclear on this point or because Morrow read them hastily. Morrow cannot permit himself to understand this point and cannot honestly reply to it because his own line on the democratic struggle for freedom as developed for China leads to social-patriotism.

Does Morrow contend that the movement among the people of occupied Europe for national liberation is a conscious and direct struggle for socialism? We seek in vain for an answer to this question. Unwilling to characterize the movement as socialist and unable to characterize it as democratic, he seeks a new, ambiguous formula. It is a "workers' movement."

But this cannot save Morrow. The vague phrase, "workers' movement," clearly indicates the class composition of the chief organizations and groups and individuals participating in the fight for national liberation but it says nothing about the immediate and direct aims of the struggle, nothing about its political character. A "workers' movement," which is based first of all on the struggle for national independence, is a movement for democratic rights—and the proletarian struggle is going through a democratic phase.

Socialist United States of Europe

Says Morrow: "In discussions, the authors of the Three Theses have indicated that they consider national liberation as an immediate agitation slogan and the Socialist United States of Europe as a propaganda slogan, i.e., not suitable for immediate agitation. Their separation of the two slogans must be characterized as a nationalist deviation."

Here again Morrow refuses to recognize any distinction between a democratic slogan—national freedom, and a socialist slogan—Socialist United States of Europe.

Presumably Morrow equates these two slogans because just as "national freedom in this epoch is the task of the working class under the leadership of the Fourth International," so national liberation is impossible without a Socialist United States of Europe.

This is a principle absolutely valid "in this epoch." In the long run, unless the revolutionary masses go over from the fight for national independence to a Socialist United States of Europe, it will be impossible for them to solve their pressing economic, social, and political problems. Imperialism persisting, the further intensification of national oppression is guaranteed.

But despite this general principle, the peoples of Europe fight now for national liberation. This is a just demand and moreover its realization is a prerequisite to the voluntary federation of the peoples as against the forcible unification by Hitler. This fight for national independence is the ideal of hundreds of thousands and millions. In that sense the demand for national independence is an immediate agitational slogan. The demand for a Socialist United States of Europe is the program of an infinitesimally tiny minority and a propaganda slogan.

Morrow cannot separate these two slogans. Just as he finds it impossible to distinguish between a socialist and a democratic demand, he finds it impossible to recognize the possibility of a struggle by masses striving for national liberation,

not yet raising a socialist banner. Like all such movements it runs the danger of becoming a disciplined tool of the Allied war machine. But Morrow's China line prevents him from recognizing a genuine movement for liberation from one which has been subordinated to the imperialist war. Fearing to support the latter, he refuses to conceive of support for the former.

"We insist," he says, "that these two slogans must go together, otherwise the slogan of national liberation degenerates into mere bourgeois nationalism in the service of one of the imperialist camps."

If we translate this idea into the truth it would read as follows and demonstrate the crux of Morrow's difficulty:

"My China position supports a non-socialist, non-proletarian war for national liberation in alliance with imperialism. In Europe such a position would openly degenerate into mere bourgeois nationalism in the service of imperialism. To save myself, I 'insist' upon the possibility of and recognize only a socialist war for national freedom in Europe."

Morrow argues: "Only the working class can free the country by proletarian revolution."

Had Morrow deliberately set out to confound and confuse he could never have discovered more suitable formulations on every point. The above is a typical example.

Ordinarily the phrase "proletarian revolution" is quite clear and simple. We mean the *socialist* revolution. But the phrase may contain serious ambiguities.

There have been many proletarian revolutions in the last quarter of a century which did not solve the problems of national freedom, democracy, or any of the other major social problems of "this epoch." They were revolutions led by and dominated by the proletarian class and parties of the working class. But these proletarian revolutions stopped short of the socialist revolution, confined themselves within the framework of bourgeois democracy and consequently suffered ultimate defeat. Despite their failure to go to the end, great victories were achieved which made possible a speedy transition to the socialist revolution. Only in Russia did there prove to be a tested revolutionary party which could take advantage of such a proletarian revolution and lead it to the socialist revolution,

The only kind of proletarian revolution which can really achieve lasting national liberation, which can free a nation economically and politically from imperialism, which can establish a genuine democratic régime and prevent the restoration of capitalist rule is a *socialist* proletarian revolution which spreads internationally to the powerful, advanced, industrialized nations. The socialist revolution aims at the complete destruction of the power and influence of the bourgeoisie and the expropriation of the industries under their control.

But between now and the time when such a proletarian, socialist revolution succeeds, many struggles and revolutions can and will take place which are not under the leadership of revolutionary socialist parties and revolutionary socialist slogans. One such struggle is the movement for liberation in occupied Europe which leads in the direction of a revolution which will facilitate the socialist revolution.

The phrase "proletarian revolution" is thus able to slur together two different, though closely related, aspects of the working class struggle. It is this ambiguity which makes the phrase ideally suited to Morrow, who is concerned above all with glossing over the democratic nature of the liberation struggle.

Imperialism and Democratic "Restraint"

The difference between the *socialist* movement and the movement for national liberation which can also be carried on by revolutionary proletarian methods is that the former is directed toward the seizure of power by the proletariat for the purpose of expropriating the native bourgeoisie, while the latter sets as its first goal the ousting of the foreign oppressor as the precondition for organizing the socialist struggle of the masses on a systematic and centralized basis. Possible within the limits of still existing bourgeois property relations, the fight for national freedom is a *democratic* movement.

In order to achieve the ousting of Hitler the masses must be ready to struggle directly against their own collaborating bourgeoisie and the forces of Hitler occupation. In order to make the socialist revolution, the masses must be prepared to break with their own "democratic" bourgeoisie and its labor agents, to fight against the counter-revolutionary Stalinist régime which stands ready as the executioner of the Eastern European socialist revolution, and above all with the international bourgeoisie which as always stands ready with its tremendous economic and military resources to intervene in any one of the national sectors of its battlefield.

When Henry Wallace warns that if the Soviet Union agitates again for world communism there will be another war, he is really threatening war against all socialist revolutions; and when he promises food to those nations which string along with the Anglo-American camp, he promises blockade to its socialist enemies.

It is the power of the bourgeoisie on an international scale which makes it possible that the movement for national liberation will stop short of its logical and ultimate goal, the socialist revolution.

The real alternative presented by international imperialism to the revolutionary people of Europe will be: "Restrain yourselves to a 'normal,' ordinary bourgeois government and we offer you economic assistance, food and temporary, benevolent neutrality. But go forward to a socialist revolution and we promise you economic blockade and military intervention."

All kinds of concessions and compromises with capitalism and imperialism are possible provided the peoples "restrain" themselves and are "realistic." And it is to this realism and restraint that all the bourgeois democrats, reformists and Stalinists are dedicating themselves. These compromises are designed to withdraw the fruits of victory from the masses piecemeal until a firm basis for the bourgeois *status quo* is restored.

The thwarting of these "realistic" plans and the possibility of transforming the rising of the people for national liberation into an international socialist revolution on an all-European scale depends directly upon how rapidly the revolutionary, socialist proletarian party is organized and extended and obtains support from the masses. But this in turn is just as directly dependent upon the recognition by revolutionists of partial, progressive struggles which lead in their direction.

But all this is lost on Morrow. In his world, all is clearly black and white. All the reactionaries and imperialists line up clearly on one side and the revolutionary proletarians under the banner of the Fourth International line up on the other—and thus national liberation will be won. He must fear that if he recognized life with all its possible cruel compromises and betrayals, he would turn as opportunistic in Europe as he is already in China.

BEN HALL.

The Way Out for Europe

The immediate question for the masses of people in occupied Europe is the struggle for food and the necessities of life. Politically they see this task as the expulsion of the German invader. On that there is no disagreement. Yet never has the slogan of the Socialist United States of Europe been so urgent as it is today. The slogan is a propaganda, not an action, slogan. The whole point of the transition program was to provide steps between the concrete, immediate and the conscious struggle for socialism. Yet the socialist slogan has its place. And any political orientation which seeks to place it further away and not nearer to the day-to-day political slogans rests on a deep, a profound, miscomprehension of the European crisis.

Every concrete political judgment or proposal is the outcome of three factors. There is, first, your general estimate of the situation as a whole, as, for example, when you say of Europe today: socialism or barbarism; or of Russia that it is a workers' state. It is this which governs your estimate of the particular form which the general is taking at a given moment; as, for example, when you say today: Europe is being destroyed, or when, in 1939, we proclaimed the ruinous theory that the main imperialist aim during the coming war would be the destruction of the workers' state. Finally, there is always the concrete issue, for example, your precise estimate of the national question in Europe, or (as in 1939), your appraisal of the invasion of Finland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia by the Stalinist army. All of these constituents of a judgment are in actuality inextricably intermingled; they are constantly shifting and influencing each other. But by and large they have priority according to the order named. We propose to examine the slogan of the Socialist United States of Europe and its connection with the national question in that continent. We begin from the premise: Socialism or barbarism.

I. The European Barbarism

The most obvious feature of Europe today is that it is being rapidly battered to pieces. Whole provinces, not only cities, are laid waste; masses of capital are produced and destroyed, or transferred from one end of the continent to the other, without any relation whatever to human needs; the economy is uprooted and shaken together as in some cyclopean rattle. Millions of people are scattered in armies all over the continent; other millions, torn from their homes, are laboring in parts near or remote; millions homeless; the vast majority know no life but that of hunted and starving rats. Europe at the end of the war will emerge into the post-war misery as ancient man emerged from a cave after a tornado. Hitler today is challenging Roosevelt and Churchill with just this: You want to go on? Good, let us go on!

Europe has been devastated before, yet never, never on a scale approaching this. But the devastation is not a mere fact, however appalling and pregnant with consequences though that is. This devastation is the climax to a period such as no previous age has ever known. The hopelessness of capitalist economy is not a matter of production charts and statistics of foreign trade. Its bankruptcy is expressed in the unending anarchy, the accumulation of misery, agony of toil, slavery,

ignorance, brutality, mental degradation; the civil, the national, the imperialist wars, the combination of all three. The economic system has nothing more to offer us but these in increasing measure. That is the lesson of the last forty years. That is what capitalism is today teaching to the workers on a scale and with an emphasis beyond any education by the most powerful revolutionary organization. It is no longer a question of the analysis of surplus-value, or the export of finance-capital. It is life as it has been and must be. Socialism or barbarism is no longer theory. It is fact. Those who were born in 1917 (and will create the world of tomorrow) have grown to maturity in that decade before the war, which saw the world economic crisis and "the liquidation of the kulak as a class," Japan's attack on China and the rape of Ethiopia; the rise of Hitler and the collaboration between Hitler and democracy in the murder of Spain and Czechoslovakia. That was the decade of New Deals, Popular Fronts and the plans for four or five years which have always ended in increased misery, the decade of national sit-down strikes in the West and national boycotts in the East.

Every decade has its symbols, the manifestations which most strikingly characterize its essence. The symbols of the pre-war decade were the concentration camp and the mass political purge, the state-organized and continent-wide pogrom, the decade when Julius Streicher and the "Protocols of Zion" competed with Vishinsky and the Moscow Trials for the suffrage of European youth; the decade of the totalitarian radio and the totalitarian press, the decade when official murder and public cynicism made "shot while trying to escape" a universal password; all leading to the inevitable climax of the war.

How to believe that the European workers were imperious to all this? The European workers are sick to death of the old Europe. This was the basis of the politics of Trotsky, the embodiment of the socialist revolution, as it is of the politics of Hitler, the representative figure of the capitalist barbarism. Both understood and underscored the deep urge of the European masses to rid themselves of the never-ending, ever-increasing burdens, and the decisive rôle of the now defunct Social Democracy in crushing their fighting spirit. Both knew that the war would rapidly pose the ultimate solution.

Now as the war takes its gargantuan toll from a generation strained to the point of exhaustion even before the war began, how is it possible to believe that the European workers do not know what is happening to Europe? They do not have to read it in the papers. There under their feet and above their heads the barbarism is closing in upon them. If socialism is still to them an abstraction, the barbarism is not. As recent dispatches report in the minds of all Spaniards one thought, "What is going to happen to Spain?," so the ghastly European reality forces upon the minds of all Europeans, "What next for Europe?"

The Coming Vacuum

This is the opinion (and the fear) of the best-informed of the bourgeois observers. To take one: In the *New York Times* of February 17, Anne O'Hare McCormick, their able

correspondent on foreign affairs, writes an article, remarkable in more respects than one. It deserves an extended quotation. (We have added some emphasis):

The most striking thing about France today—and on this point all reporters agree—is that *the people have lost the fear of the Germans that has obsessed the French mind and French policy for fifty years*. Paradoxically, the France that was easily defeated has regained self-confidence under German occupation. Under the mocking eyes of the conquerors the conquerors have destroyed the legend of German efficiency. They have taught the French to believe again in their own civilization, their own intelligence, even in the superiority of their own muddle-headed and hidebound bureaucracy.

This release from the Nazi spell is taking place all over Europe. It is perhaps as important as anything happening on the battlefield, because it is the result of German inability to organize and rule other countries as much as it is the effect of the retreat from Russia. It is not too much to say that as an order of life, as a unifying force in an anarchic Europe, as an ideology that attracted followers in every neighboring country, national socialism is petering out faster than German military power.

National socialism, in fact, is also in retreat. *It is dying as a political force; but as it weakens it creates a vacuum which other forces are bound to fill. Will democracy move into that vacuum? Will communism? Will new and violent extremes of nationalism?*

The year 1943 is not 1917. We live in an age when a leading journalist, doing her routine, estimates the possibilities of a new society in Europe with the objectivity that one gives only to the commonplace. How, again, is it possible to believe that the European workers do not know and cannot see, even though negatively, that a crisis in human affairs has been reached? Go wrong here and there can be no recovery.

The Filling of the Vacuum

The vacuum does not wait until the day of the Nazi downfall. It is in process of creation now, and as it is created it is being filled, ideologically, by the tremendous historical events of these climactic war years.

Between 1940 and 1943 Europe has seen two great historical landmarks. The first of these is the collapse of France, far more powerful in its impingement upon the European consciousness than the defeat of Germany in 1918. Unlike the years after 1871 and 1918, recovery after such a defeat, in the world of today, would entail an effort as great or even greater than the conqueror's. In those days it was said that Europe needed a master, that Europe needed reorganization, that the unending social crisis (which had led to the catastrophe) had to be solved in some way. Russia was a cesspool of Moscow Trials, mass murder and the shocking treachery of the Hitler-Stalin pact. Perhaps Hitler's way was the way after all. Hitler, true to his doctrines, attempted the reorganization of Europe. The most significant lesson of the present period is his ghastly failure. The task is beyond capitalism. Had Hitlerism shown the slightest ability to heal some of the old sores it would have had the continent under its domination for a generation. But the new order was quickly recognized as merely a new and more efficient machinery for the old plunder. As the people felt on their flesh what the German conquest meant, they began to struggle blindly, at first without perspective. Before two years had passed, the second great historical landmark penetrated deep into the European consciousness.

To the masses of the people in continental Europe, the second great historical landmark of the war has been the achievements of Russia. The heroism of Leningrad, Moscow and Sevastopol; the successful defense of Stalingrad, an achievement without parallel in the whole history of war; the courage and resilience of the Russian offensive; the cohe-

sion of Stalinist society, these things have had an indelible effect on the masses of the European people. The collapse of France, the glory of Russia, that is the kind of history the workers understand at all times, but particularly when, as in Europe, so much of their personal fate depended upon whether Russia held or not. For them Russia is Bolshevism, a workers' state, a state without capitalists, socialism. The question of the new society against the old has been posed in Europe on a gigantic scale, so that the most inattentive pupil can read, and this at a time when the pupil strains every nerve because his future depends upon it. So that in addition to the negative consciousness of a putrescent capitalism, there is the positive achievement of Russia which stands in their minds as the antithesis of capitalist society. A revolutionist who believes that the workers of Europe are thinking of Russia in terms of Stalinist dictatorship, terrorism, the Moscow Trials, etc., does not see his activity as a reflection of the historical world, but sees the world as an embodiment of the pre-occupation of the revolutionary movement. What illusions (and what distorted truths) are mingled in this estimate by the workers is another matter. What concerns us is the fact, the most potent historical fact of the present European crisis. We turn our backs on it, misunderstand it, or forget it at our peril. The vacuum is being filled. All Europe has "socialism" in the background of its mind.

"We, or Rather, Our Sons . . ."

Let us ourselves approach this problem in reverse. Behind any proposal to make a change in the application of the socialist slogan undoubtedly lurks some variant of the idea that Lenin put forward in 1915. Given certain conditions of continued reaction and domination of Europe by a single power, a great national war is once more possible in Europe. No such situation as Lenin envisaged is visible in Europe today. Lenin in the course of his article used the phrase "twenty years." It is decisive. It would (in 1915) have taken at least twenty years to impose an alien domination on modern Europe. Mere conquest is comparatively easy; alien domination is something else.

Trotsky in 1938 repeated the thought with an elaboration that gives even greater clarity. In denouncing those who claimed that if Hitler attacked Czechoslovakia alone, Czechoslovakia's national independence should be defended, Trotsky wrote as follows (The NEW INTERNATIONAL, November, 1938, page 328):

In reality, all speculative arguments of this kind and the frightening of people over future national calamities for the sake of the support of this or that imperialist bourgeoisie flow from tacit rejection of *revolutionary perspective and revolutionary policy*. Naturally if a new war ends [our emphasis] in the military victory of this or that imperialist camp; if a war calls forth neither a revolutionary uprising nor a victory of the proletariat; if a new imperialist peace [our emphasis] more terrible than the Versailles Treaty places new chains for decades [our emphasis] upon the people; if unfortunate humanity bears all this in silence and submission—not only Czechoslovakia or Belgium but also France [our emphasis] can be hurled back into the position of an oppressed nation.

What Trotsky is saying is that, though this is theoretically possible, as far as he is concerned, such a perspective has no reality. He himself asks the question: "Is such an outlook excluded?" and proceeds (as if he scented danger) to answer the question all over again. *If the proletariat submitted . . . ; if the Fourth International failed . . . ; if the terrors of war did not urge to rebellion; if the colonial peoples bled patiently. . .* "Under these conditions the level of civilization will

inevitably be lowered and the general retrogression and decomposition may again place national wars on the order of the day for Europe."

But forthwith Trotsky pushes that possibility where it belongs: "Even then, we, or rather *our sons* [our very emphatic emphasis] will have to determine the policy in regard to future wars on the basis of the *new situation*."

Is one single one of those historical conditions to be considered as fulfilled? Most obviously not. Under the present historical circumstances, the very reverse of "passivity, capitulation, defeat and decline," at a time when all tensions are at their highest, the domination of France by Germany is and can only be considered by revolutionary socialists as an episode in the inter-imperialist struggle, a great, an important, a pregnant, but yet, nevertheless, basically an episode.

Absolute clarity on this is not only useful as a safeguard and line of demarcation. It carries a powerful implication that the more reactionary the steps imperialism takes, the greater the degradation it imposes upon Europe, the more concrete will become the slogan of the Socialist United States of Europe.

The Nazis and "Socialism"

If we wish an instructive test of the soundness of the above, let us observe the counter-revolution in the person of these master politicians, the Nazi leaders. As the crisis deepened they called upon the workers of the world to unite; and after a long absence in which the crisis of German imperialism is made obvious, not only to the world at large but to the German people themselves, Hitler ends his speech of March 22 as follows:

In the future, the peoples with true culture will be neither Jewish-Bolshevist nor Jewish-capitalist... The German national socialist state... will continue to work after this war with untiring energy toward realizing its program that in its last consequences will lead to the complete removal of all differences of classes and to the establishment of a true socialist community.

At the moment when he needs to pose the national defense of Germany in its sharpest form, this greatest of agitators poses it within the framework of "socialism" and the "classless society." Thereby Hitler shows the same unerring grasp of the mass mind in Europe today as he did of the Russian state in 1939. He knows that if even many millions of workers are not immediately conscious of socialism as the alternative to their present misery, that consciousness is just below the surface, established there by the whole past history of Europe and the movement of the objective situation. He seeks to unearth the awakening thoughts in advance, to capture them or to turn them in his direction. He seeks to associate the idea of a new society with himself and thus to rob the Marxists of their heritage. His satellites in the occupied countries follow faithfully. Pétain proclaimed the national *revolution*, and Laval now promises the French workers: socialism.

If these impudent scoundrels find it imperative to masquerade before the workers as the real revolutionists, the genuine socialists, why should revolutionists, at this critical juncture, propose a retreat instead of an advance with the slogan: the Socialist United States of Europe? Nothing that capitalism can do in Europe today can now suppress or dull the response to the socialist idea among the European workers. For Hitler or any other conqueror might dazingly conquer living space. But the destruction of the idea of socialism in the Eu-

rope of this generation would require the conquest not only of space but of time as well. And that not only Hitler but God Almighty himself could not do.

Barbarism Is a Social Phenomenon

Let us finally etch into our minds some picture of what is happening in Europe today, let us struggle to grasp this first and primary manifestation of the age in which we live, the most barbarous history has ever known. This we must do, for without this background we shall continually be taking two steps backward when the capitalist chaos invites a bold advance.

The science of the Middle Ages, unable to account for the calamities which periodically overtook them, peopled the earth and sky with the angels of God and the devils of Satan contending over human destiny. That ignorance, capitalist technique and capitalist rationalism have destroyed. But the new angels and devils which they have substituted fly daily in armadas a thousand strong, dropping real fire and real brimstone, still angels and devils, but now indistinguishable from each other except by the label fascism and the label democracy. The mechanized dragons and the heavy artillery devastate the countryside, destroying in an hour the labors of a lifetime. Give them two years more and what will remain? Lyons and Bordeaux, Turin and Genoa, Essen and Cologne, Hamburg and Bremen, Warsaw and Cracow, and a hundred others that have stood for centuries will be but names and rubble. Leningrad lives, but it is a town of living skeletons and two million fresh graves. How many more offensives and counter-offensives will Europe see, with swarms of tanks, planes, guns and men, creating deserts before they call it peace? From Germany alone some five million young men, the most precious possession of the nation, are now dead, seriously wounded, incapacitated or prisoners in the Russian campaign. Once more Hitler has blasted his way into the charred ruins of Kharkov. Will he attempt another offensive in 1943? And yet another in 1944? How many millions more will strew the road to Stalingrad and then perhaps the road back again? Two more years of such warfare will create in the homes of Germany and all its satellites an abomination of desolation; the Ukraine will be a new Golgotha, a field of skulls; and Kharkov, Rostov and Stalingrad, not human habitations but collections of dead men's bones. If not in Russia, then the full frenzy of the capitalist madness will rage in Southern Europe; or in Northern Europe; or perhaps in all three places together. Man is now being taught that he must control the devils that his own hand creates or he will perish.

Is it merely houses, factories and fields that are being destroyed? To think that would be an illusion as gigantic as the historical catastrophe that is unrolling before our eyes. These are but the embodiment of the social relations that are at the basis of society. Destroy these on the scale that they are being destroyed and you loosen every material and traditional tie which cements that society, already shaken, battered and reeling from the accumulated shocks of thirty years. Without the socialist revolution, Europe faces a post-war of famine, disease, political and social chaos and violence to which the years after Versailles will seem like paradise.

This barbarism Roosevelt proposes to discipline into some sort of capitalist law and capitalist order by means of exhausted American soldiers clamoring to go home; hastily trained administrators, manipulating puppet governments; and rations of bacon, dehydrated spinach and cigarettes. He

may succeed. He may. Marxism predicts, it does not prophesy. But Roosevelt's chances of success are for Roosevelt to advocate. That today is not our business. When everything is still to be decided, our task is to show to the workers the workers' way out. Not bring to the fore the question of a new order? That question is out of our hands. We could argue about that five years ago, not today. History has posed the question already, is posing it even where, at first sight, is only ignorance, fanaticism and destruction. Lenin once wrote that when a worker says he will defend his country, it is the instinct of an oppressed man that speaks. The apparent paradox hides the simplicity with which genius summarizes in a sentence the most profound contradictions of the histori-

cal dialectic. The incredible intensity of the national passions displayed by both attackers and defenders at Stalingrad testify to far more than mere servile acquiescence. In this fanatical "defense of the fatherland" by the warring children of totalitarianism is concealed the hope, the determination to finish once and for all with the old sacrifices and the old suffering, to insure that this will be the final struggle and the gateway into the promised land. Thus the very violence with which the old is destroying itself is a positing of the new. Our task is to give it a local habitation and a name. Its local habitation is the power of the working class. Its name is the Socialist United States of Europe. (*To be continued.*)

J. R. JOHNSON.

Appeasement in Theory and Practice

Reviewing Some Lessons of Spain

Spain is the most adequate symbol of the contemporary tragedy. No other country has been nearer to socialist salvation in the past decade; and none has had that hope more cruelly snatched from it. Few other countries suffer so terribly from the deprivations of fascist rule; and not many have a population so bitterly hateful toward its rulers. Yet it stands today, this Franco-ruled country, as the creature of world capitalism, the grotesque barrier set up to stem the socialist tide.

The liberals—whose sum of historical wisdom consists in the endless repetition, like the Surprised Virgin who had been seduced only twelve times before, that they were "betrayed" by the appeasing leaders of the democracies—like to refer to Spain as the first battle of this world war. There is a reed of truth to this label, but there is a forest of untruth, too. The Spanish Civil War was not essentially the prelude to the imperialist world war which now rages; it was rather the epilogue, the tragic finale, to that international civil war which began the very hour when Lenin proclaimed the Russian Soviet Republic and which ended—for the time, at least—in the defeat of the Spanish proletariat at the hands of international capitalism and its partner, Stalinism. Spain marked the defensive triumph of capitalist reaction for the decade between the two world wars. It was only after the international civil war between worker and capitalist had ended in the decisive victory for the latter that the capitalist world could turn to the next point on its agenda: its internecine war for the division and redivision of the world's wealth.

This is the fundamental fact about the Spanish Civil War. It is his failure to grasp it even remotely which leads Thomas J. Hamilton* to put forward the "appeasement theory" as his main theme in the book under review and which vitiates an otherwise excellent piece of work.

A New Devil Theory

The theory which views all of our social evils, especially the rise of fascism and the outbreak of war, as the result of the "appeasement" policy of the democratic politicians persists among the liberal publicists and also among sections of the working class. In the case of the publicists at least there is

little wonder; this theory is the last peg upon which they can hang their continued support of bourgeois régimes and their war policies which they know to be politically rotten. Once analyzed, however, this theory is indefensible. One might as readily pin the blame on Satan or Beelzebub, since a theory which places the responsibility for great historical developments on the stupidity or maliciousness of an individual is no more scientific, no more susceptible to logical or historical proof, than a theory which places the world's ills at the doorsteps of some supernatural evil. Why do Satan and Beelzebub spread evil? Because they are devils. Why did Chamberlain and Daladier "appease" Hitler? Because they were devils... rather, they were shortsighted, stupid, evil... that is, they were devils.

This kind of circumlocution gets us nowhere. Especially so when we return to the social matrix in which the "appeasement" policy was developed. Why did Chamberlain and Daladier "appease" Hitler? Because they desired the defeat of their own imperialisms? Because they desired the victory of German imperialism? Because they really believed that Munich would bring, as Chamberlain said, the age of peace? Merely to state these possibilities is to indicate their absurdity. Chamberlain and Daladier were vitally interested in the destruction of German imperialism and they had no illusions about any age of peace—as witness Chamberlain's frantic rearmament program before and after Munich. They were acting in what they felt was the best interests of their respective imperialist powers and there is increasing evidence that they were correct, from *their* class point of view.

Did they betray the liberals? No, the liberals betrayed themselves. Chamberlain never promised anything to the liberals, and if Daladier had promised something, the increasingly totalitarian character of his régime should have convinced even the most shortsighted of them that he was motivated by solid class interest and not by windy rhetoric. Why then was the appeasement policy followed by Britain and France, with the intermittent support of America?

Retrospective examination indicates that it was only the high bourgeois circles and the Stalinists, on the one hand, and the revolutionary socialists, on the other, who realized how close Europe had come to socialism in the two decades between wars. For the bourgeoisie and its newly-won ally in

*Appeasement's Child: The Franco Régime in Spain, by Thomas J. Hamilton. Alfred A. Knopf, publishers; \$8.00.

reaction, the Stalinists, this was a constant source of anxiety and worry. The European proletariat had displayed remarkable resilience. Despite a harrowing series of betrayals at the hands of the Social Democracy and the Stalinists, it came back periodically with renewed energy and the will to struggle. In Germany alone there had been several near-revolutions between the collapse of the Hohenzollerns and the seizure of power by Hitler. Britain had witnessed the cataclysmic general strike. Spain had been wracked by continual revolts. The smaller countries too had not known a moment of that "peace and order" which the bourgeoisie so reveres. Even in the late Thirties, when the betrayal of Stalinism was complete, when the turn to reaction was definitive and prolonged; even then the perspicacious bourgeoisie continued to tremble at the thought of proletarian revolution. Only the day before, the French workers had risen in the gigantic series of strikes of 1936; how near they had been to power, how shattered the ruling apparatus had been, how close an escape (due mainly to the treachery of the Popular Front) the capitalist state had had in France, only its trembling defenders could know. It was enough to give one a severe headache. . . . And, to top it off, the shouts of revolt from the streets of Paris had hardly died down when the Spanish proletariat—that most selfless and heroic of classes!—began to rumble forward, stung by the revolt of the generals. "Franco and Mola dare attempt a return to the past? We shall answer them by marching ahead to the future."

The Specter of Communism

It is against this background, so fraught with danger for the *status quo* and still containing hope, despite the series of previous defeats, for the revolutionists—it is only against this background that the appeasement policy can be understood. The specter of which Marx and Engels had spoken decades ago, the specter of communist revolution, still hovered over the heads of the rulers of Europe. Could they risk a war with Hitler, that wily upstart who was taking advantage of their predicament to increase his own power, when their class rear was so dangerously exposed?

Chamberlain and Daladier, as well as those who stood behind them, were no fools. They understood only too well the meaning of 1936 in France. And they understood that the fundamental choice in Spain was bluntly: fascism or socialism. They understood that any provisional liberal government of the Loyalist camp would, if it triumphed, be a puny Kerenskiad; that it would be unable to resist the very social movements which its triumph would unleash. And Daladier knew that a proletarian victory in Spain would stimulate once again those revolutionary forces which he had had such trouble in holding back in France. And Chamberlain, he knew that the English Channel wasn't very wide.

This is the basic social situation which must be appreciated in order to understand the appeasement policy. It was a class policy from beginning to end. It was a class policy based on the bourgeois need of suppressing socialist revolutions wherever they might start, *and it was based on the realistic assumption that for the English and French bourgeoisies it was better to strengthen Hitler's hand rather than to allow the workers to gain power anywhere.* That is why the Allies played the double game of trying to strengthen the bourgeois elements within the Loyalist camp at the expense of the proletarian elements while at the same time extending *de facto* aid to Franco by means of the tragi-comic Non-Intervention Committee. Some would-be economic analysts have tried to

make it appear as if the main reason for Britain's friendliness to Franco was its fear of what would happen to its economic investments in Spain, notably the iron mines in the North, if the Loyalists won. This concrete dollar-and-cents motivation undoubtedly played its rôle, but it was really small potatoes; Chamberlain wasn't as worried about the relatively small investments of some English capitalists as about the preservation of the capitalist *status quo* on the continent as a whole. That is the explanation of Munich. And that is also the explanation of why the Franco régime is not the product of the appeasement policy of a few blind men. It is rather the product of a conscious, carefully worked out conspiracy on the part of world capitalism (including the New Deal administration of Franklin Delano Roosevelt) to put even the fascist Franco in power in order to keep the workers out of power. (Some day, perhaps, when the archives of capitalist diplomacy are made available to scholars by triumphant socialist régimes, it may be seen that some such thoughts with regard to Spain were even explicitly discussed at the Munich conference. But regardless of that possible evidence, the general social course is clear enough.)

Once this basic class cause of the appeasement policy is understood, the subsidiary causes, some of them mere offshoots and by-paths of the main one, become clear as well. If Chamberlain was forced to come to an agreement with Hitler to postpone the imperialist war in order in the meantime to wipe out the proletarian revolution, he had no illusions whatever about the durability of that postponement. Both before and after Munich, Britain was rearming at a great rate. And it was the inadequacy of this rearmament as compared with that of Hitler which was still another cause of the appeasement policy. It was necessary for England to build the RAF. Despite their public histrionics to the contrary, Chamberlain and Churchill were playing one game; the one was the necessary prelude to the other; and it was primarily for mass consumption that it was necessary for them to wage, for a time, a public war of words.

The situation was even more aggravated in France. There, social instability and chaos had reached a dangerous point. The claim of certain reactionaries that the Popular Front hindered the war effort of France has a certain element of perverted truth: this bastard government could stir enthusiasm or organize efficiently for neither an imperialist war nor a war of socialist liberation. The French capitalist class was suffering from an advanced case of hardening of the arteries, and the Popular Front patent medicines were of little help. Here, even more than in England, the state of social disintegration made impossible an aggressive foreign policy, and appeasement was the result. Which is but another proof that half-way houses provide precious little shelter in these times of storm. . . . It was only after French capitalism could gather itself up sufficiently to find its strong man (Daladier, in comparison to whom even Napoleon III appears a figure of dignity and stature) that it could turn its attention away from its defeated but by no means quiescent working class and face its German imperialist rival on the battlefield.

The Role of the Catholic Church

Still another factor to be considered in estimating the causes of the appeasement policies was the rôle of the Catholic Church. This delicate topic has not yet been fully explored by any writer, but the general outlines are clear. In Spain the Catholic Church found one of its most profitable (in both senses of the word!) fields; it was one of the few important

countries in which it still played a considerable rôle in the educational apparatus and in political developments. It was also one of the largest land-owning institutions in Spain, profiting from the exploitation of the poor peasants. The victory of the workers, it realized well enough, would mean its elimination from all secular activities, which have a peculiar attraction for the other-worldly clergy. It would mean an end to its economic power as a landlord. Resultantly, the church wielded its international influence to win aid for the fascists. Especially was this true of the American Catholics. They, too, wanted to crush the last embers of the proletarian revolution.

Much has been written to show that the Munich policy was the result of anti-Soviet bias on the part of the democracies. In the opinion of this writer, at least, that factor has been greatly exaggerated. When one considers the desperate political and military straits in which Britain and France found themselves at the time, it became apparent that their main intent was defensive, that is, a play for time to prepare for the war with Germany which they knew was coming. But certainly they could not have failed to realize that it would be a policy of *class* suicide for them to engage in a war with Hitler against Russia. Such a venture could in no way have lessened the imperialist antagonisms between themselves and Hitler, and it would have seen them come off only second best. Did they play with the idea of letting Hitler fight alone against Russia and thereby gain time? Perhaps, but even that idea had many dangers for them: Hitler might become too strong, as he did anyway. There were no doubt influential sectors of French and British capitalism which desired such a course, but it would appear now as if this was not the decision of the ruling sectors.

But didn't the personal shortcomings of the Allied leaders play any part in the appeasement policy? Of course they did. But in secondary capacities, twisting a development here, pro-

tracting or accelerating one there, but not decisively changing the course of Europe's history. For instance, it might be argued with considerable force that Chamberlain and Daladier, because of their inherent timidity and shortsightedness, played the appeasement game too long, even for the interests of *their class*. That may well be. But it still does not change our basic analysis.

Is the Franco régime "appeasement's child"? No, it is the child of world capitalism, set up as a buffer against the socialist revolution—a buffer which is the joint, if not coöperative, product of Hitler, Mussolini, Chamberlain, Daladier and Roosevelt.

And today, despite the fact that a bitter world war has split the parents of the Franco régime, they still unite in supporting it. That is why the Franco régime can afford, in the words of Hamilton, to "deliberately set out to infuriate the conquered." It realizes that it has no mass support at home and cannot have any; it exists by the grace of world capitalism, which doesn't give a hoot about what Franco does to the Spanish people.

What he has done to them is described in objective detail in Hamilton's book. We have used most of our space to argue against the theory of appeasement which he has made the motivating thought of his work. Once the theoretical aspect is disposed of, however, there is much to be gained from this book. It is far more objective and factual than most of the books of the "foreign correspondents." You will grit your teeth in anger and bitterness when you read of the misery and starvation to which Franco has brought the Spaniards. You will want to remember who it was who brought him to power and props him up at this very moment.

ALFRED FREEMAN.

ARCHIVES OF THE REVOLUTION Documents Relating to the History and
Doctrine of Revolutionary Marxism

Trotsky on the Workers' State

INTRODUCTION

Our Differences with the Democratic Centralists

Trotsky's letter to Borodai, which we publish here for the first time in English, is of special interest and importance. The document is undated, but it was evidently written during Trotsky's exile in Alma-Ata, toward the end of 1928, shortly before the author was banished from **the Soviet Union to Turkey by the Stalinist régime**. The importance of the letter lies in the fact that it is the first document known to us in which Trotsky debates with a Bolshevik anti-Stalinist the question of the class character of the Soviet state: Is it still or is it no longer a workers' state?

Borodai, whose subsequent fate is unknown to us, was a militant of the Democratic-Centralist group, or "Group of the Fifteen," as it was sometimes known, who was expelled from the Communist Party by the bureaucracy in 1927 along with all his fellow-thinkers, and sent into exile. The Democratic-Centralist group was founded as far back as 1920 by a number of left-wing communists in the Russian party, who sought to break through the rigid walls of the War-Communism régime and restore a democratic system in the party. The conditions of civil war were not conducive to their victory, and the one-sided emphasis they placed upon the democratic principle

earned them the opposition of the most authoritative Bolshevik leaders, Lenin and Trotsky included.

In 1923, when Trotsky and his comrades launched the post-civil war struggle against a meanwhile swollen bureaucracy and for party democracy, they were joined by many of the original Democratic-Centralists, among them their outstanding leader, Timofey V. Saprónov, proletarian, trade union leader, and old, pre-war Bolshevik of high standing. It was Saprónov who took the initiative in bringing together and presiding over the first joint meeting of the representatives of the Trotskyist (or Moscow, or 1923) Opposition and the Zinovievist (or Leningrad, or 1925) Opposition. This meeting and the ones that followed led to the formation of the famous United Opposition Bloc, composed of the Trotskyists, the Zinovievists, the remnants of the old Workers' Opposition (led by Shlyapnikov and Medvedev) and of the Democratic-Centralists (Saprónov and Vladimir M. Smirnov).

Shlyapnikov and other Workers' Opposition leaders soon capitulated to Stalin, as did virtually all the leaders of the Zinovievist Opposition in 1927-28. Most of the Democratic-Centralists, and outstandingly their leaders Saprónov and

Smirnov, remained, in exile, incorruptible adversaries of the bureaucratic counter-revolution. There is no reason to believe that any of these militant revolutionists is still alive; they were murdered, gradually or outright, by the GPU.

In 1926, the former Democratic-Centralists broke away from the United Opposition Bloc because of the famous declaration in the middle of that year in which the Opposition pledged itself to refrain from factional activities—provided, of course, that a more or less normal internal régime was established in the party. The insurgents elaborated a platform of their own and set up a completely independent group. It became known as the “Group of Fifteen,” from the number of signatories to the platform. They were: T. V. Sapronov, V. M. Smirnov, N. Savaryan, V. Emelyanov (Kalin), M. N. Mino, M. I. Minkov, T. Kharechko, V. P. Oborin, I. K. Dashkovsky, S. Schreiber; M. Smirnov, F. I. Pilipenko, F. Duney, A. L. Slidovker, L. Tikhonov.

How Trotsky Formerly Answered the Question

At the Fifteenth Party Congress in November-December, 1927, adherence to the views of the Democratic-Centralists was declared incompatible with membership in the Russian party, as was adherence to the views of the Trotskyist Opposition. All supporters of both groups were expelled and the most prominent leaders and militants first sent into exile and, years later, shot. In exile, a rapprochement between the two groups proved unrealizable and, except for individual shifts from one group to the other, they remained as far apart as they had ever been.

What was the evolution of the political ideas of Sapronov and Smirnov, there is now no way of judging, and there probably never will be until the day the Russian proletariat makes public the confiscated documents in the secret archives of the Stalinist police. But what the ideas of the Democratic-Centralists were in the days of the following letter by Trotsky, that is, around the year 1928, is implicit in the questions put by Borodai. In a word, they were: The proletariat has already lost power; the triumph of Stalin over the Opposition marks the triumph of the Thermidor, that is, the counter-revolution; the working class does not rule in Russia and Russia is no longer a workers' state; it is necessary to prepare a new social revolution to restore the proletariat to state power.

These contentions Trotsky denied, as is clear from his reply to Borodai. It is the arguments he employed in refuting Borodai's views that are interesting and important, both for a knowledge of the situation in the Opposition in those days and, much more to the point, for a Marxian evaluation of the present situation in, and the class character of, the Russian state.

In the discussion and polemics over the class character of the Soviet or Russian state, Trotsky, *years later*, found himself obliged to alter his criterion radically from what it had previously been, not only for him but without exception for the entire revolutionary Marxian movement. “Found himself obliged,” we say, because of his insistence on maintaining his characterization of Russia as a workers' state long after the objective basis for it had been destroyed by the Stalinist counter-revolution. Trotsky, in later years, argued that Russia is a workers' state because the ownership of the principal means of production is vested in the state, that is, because property is nationalized.

The radical alteration of the criterion lay in converting nationalized property from a *necessary* characteristic of a workers' state into an *adequate* characteristic. In other words,

Trotsky began to argue that no matter how degenerated and anti-proletarian and even counter-revolutionary the political régime in the country, Russia nevertheless remained a (degenerated or “counter-revolutionary”) workers' state so long as property (the means of production and exchange) remained nationalized or state property.

It should be borne in mind that Trotsky *did not* hold that the existence of nationalized property was in itself adequate for a consistent *development toward socialism*. That required, he rightly emphasized, a socialist proletariat in political power and the victorious revolution in the advanced countries of the West. And, he added, given the absence of the political power of the workers and the revolution in the West, the workers' state would continue to degenerate and eventually collapse entirely. But so long as nationalized property remained more or less intact, Russia still remained a workers' state.

To repeat: for Trotsky, nationalized property was transformed from a *necessary* characteristic into the *adequate* characteristic, and the *decisive* one, at that.

This theory not only cannot withstand a fundamental Marxist criticism, but conflicts with the theory, with the criterion, originally and for a long time put forward and defended by Trotsky himself. The letter to Borodai is one of the many available evidences of this fact.

The State, Property and Class Rule

In his letter, aimed at refuting the thesis that Russia is no longer a workers' state, Trotsky does not once so much as mention the existence of nationalized property! He employs a different criterion, entirely correct and fully decisive, namely, *does the working class still have political power, in one sense or another, even if only in the sense that it is still capable of bringing a straying and dangerous bureaucracy under its control by means of reform measures?*

Why is this criterion correct and decisive? Because without *political* rule, the *proletariat* simply does not rule at all, and whatever you call the state or government under which it lives and works, it is not a workers' state. This is an iron law that derives from the fundamentally different *nature* of the class rule of the proletariat as contrasted with the class rule of *any private-property-owning class*. For example: Under a Bonapartist régime, be it of the early (Napoleon I or III) or the modern (Brüning or outright fascist) variety, the class rule of the bourgeoisie is maintained and fortified by virtue of two interrelated reasons:

(1) Although the bourgeoisie does not enjoy full or direct political power, it continues *to own*, as individuals and as a class, the means of production and exchange, and to draw profit and power from this ownership, and

(2) The régime which deprives the bourgeois class of full or direct political power uses that power to strengthen, to consolidate, to expand the social order of capitalism, to benefit the bourgeoisie in the most easily ascertainable tangible manner. Similarly, though not identically, under feudalism, where ownership of land was in private hands.

The proletariat, however, is not, never was and never will be a private-property-owning class. It comes to power, and lays the basis for an evolution to socialism, by nationalizing property and vesting its ownership in the hands of the state, making it state property as a preliminary to transforming it into *social* property. The state is not a class, but the complex of institutions of coercion (army, police, prisons, officials, etc.). Once the means of production and exchange have been made state property, the question, “Who is the ruling class”

is resolved simply by answering the question: "In whose hands is the state?" It cannot be resolved by answering the question: "In whose hands is the property?" because no class then owns the property, at least not in the sense in which all preceding classes have owned property. To put it differently, the question must be posed in this way (because no other way makes sense): "In whose hands is the state which owns property?" Still more simply and directly: "Who rules politically?"

That is why a Marxist may argue, on the basis of empirical evidence, that Trotsky was right, or was wrong, in saying to Borodai that the workers in Russia (in 1928) still ruled politically, or could "regain full power, renovate the bureaucracy and put it under its control by *the road of reform of the party and the Soviets.*" But he must acknowledge that Trotsky's criterion, his methodological approach to the question of the class character of the Russian state, was incontestable. All that is necessary and correct is stated by Trotsky when he writes to Borodai:

The question thus comes down to the same thing: Is the proletarian kernel of the party, assisted by the working class, capable of triumphing over the autocracy of the party apparatus which is fusing with the state apparatus? Whoever replies in advance that it is *incapable*, thereby speaks not only of the necessity of a new party on a new foundation, but also of the necessity of a second and new proletarian revolution.

Trotsky did not mean by this last a "political" revolution, as he said years later. He simply and rightly meant a *social* revolution. That is, the test of whether Russia was still a workers' state could be made by asking if the proletariat could still reform the political régime. If not, Russia is no longer a workers' state; a new party is needed, and a new social revolution to overthrow the ruling class and put the workers into power again. The idea is unambiguously stated.

Where Was Nationalized Property?

And nationalized property? It is, we repeat, not even referred to. Why not? Because, obviously, it is assumed as a *necessary* feature of a workers' state, its indispensable economic foundation, but not by itself *adequate* or *decisive* for a workers' state. That is right, and nothing Trotsky wrote years afterward can effectively refute his original and unassailable standpoint.

The formulation of the question in the letter to Borodai is not accidental. It is to be found in any number of Trotsky's writings of that period and prior to the self-revision of his view. In his letter to the Sixth Congress of the Comintern, on July 12, 1928, he wrote:

... the socialist character of industry is determined and secured in a decisive measure by the rôle of the party, the voluntary internal cohesion of the proletarian vanguard, and conscious discipline of the administrators, trade union functionaries, members of the shop nuclei, etc. If we allow that this web is weakening, disintegrating and ripping, then it becomes absolutely self-evident that within a brief period nothing will remain of the socialist character of state industry, transport, etc. (*Third International After Lenin*, page 300.)

That is, the class character of the political power is not determined by industry (nationalized property), as he later contended, but conversely, "the socialist character of industry is *determined and secured in a decisive measure*" by the party, that is, in Russia, by the political power. From which it follows that if that political power has been *utterly* destroyed, as Trotsky later acknowledged and insisted on, the class character of "industry" (nationalized property, again) has been *fundamentally* altered.

Again, in his theses on Russia, on April 4, 1931, he re-

turned to the same question, and from fundamentally the same standpoint:

If we proceed from the incontestable fact that the CPSU has ceased to be a party, are we not thereby forced to the conclusion that there is no dictatorship of the proletariat in the USSR, since *this is inconceivable without a ruling proletarian party?* (*Problems of the Development of the USSR*, page 34. My emphasis.—S.)

"This is inconceivable!" Why, then, is it a workers' state notwithstanding? Because, wrote Trotsky, there still remain powerful and firmly-rooted elements of the party, traditions of the October, etc., *and* by virtue of these the bureaucracy can be submitted to the proletariat and its revolutionary vanguard *by means of reform.*

The recognition of the present Soviet state as a workers' state not only signifies that the bourgeoisie can conquer power in no other way than by an armed uprising but also that the proletariat of the USSR has not forfeited the possibility of submitting the bureaucracy to it, of reviving the party and of mending the régime of the dictatorship—without a new revolution, with the methods and on the road of reform. (*Ibid.*, page 36.)

It follows unambiguously and inexorably that to recognize—as the further degeneration of the Russian Revolution compelled us all, Trotsky included, to recognize—that the bureaucracy *cannot* be submitted to the proletariat, that the so-called Communist Party *cannot* be revived, that the régime *cannot* be reformed, that a new revolution *must* be organized—is to recognize that Russia is no longer a workers' state.

That Russia did not degenerate into a capitalist state; why it did not go the road of capitalist counter-revolution, as Trotsky predicted; and, in general, a fundamental treatment of the class character of the present Russian state—these are the subject of studies made by us in previous issues of *THE NEW INTERNATIONAL*, where our theory of the bureaucratic-collectivist state in Russia is set forth (December, 1940, June, 1941, July and August, 1941, September, 1941, October, 1941, September, 1942, November, 1942). It is not necessary to deal with it in this introduction. It is not necessary, either, to dwell further on Trotsky's letter to Borodai, except to call the reader's attention to his remarks on the "duality of power" in Russia, concerning which Trotsky also drew erroneous conclusions, based on a faulty analysis, to which we will some day return.

Cannonite Tautology

What is worth noting, however, is that the Cannonites, who insisted three and a half year ago on discussing the "class character of the state" and nothing else, have maintained a most prudent silence since the day we began to develop our criticism of Trotsky's fundamental position and to present our own analysis. They confine themselves to muttering simple and undigested ritualistic phrases, which have no meaning to them, which they cannot explain coherently and which they justify by one final and unanswerable appeal: "Well, Trotsky said so." Fortunately, Trotsky also said that it is necessary for a Marxist to "learn to think."

To the question, "Why is it a workers' state?" they answer, "Because the state owns the property." To the question, "But what is the class character of this state that owns the property?" they answer, "A workers' state"! In this hopelessly vicious circle, the workers are reduced from a living, propertyless, stateless, oppressed and exploited class to a... decorative adjective.

To the question, "What are the property relations at the

basis of present Russian society?" they answer, "Nationalized property." That is like asking the question, "What are the marital relations under feudalism?" and being given the answer, "Male and female." That is, the answer says nothing. The whole question lies in this: "Just what are the relations of the classes or, if you wish, the social groups to the property? Just what are the production relations? Just what are the social relations?" But the answer, given with an increasingly mysterious look, remains, "Nationalized property."

"The Stalinist Bonapartist régime preserves the nationalized property in its own way," it is said. Correct! But why does that fact testify to the existence in Russia of a workers' state? The bourgeois Bonapartist or fascist state preserves private property not primarily for the bureaucracy (although for it, too), but above all for the very tangible benefit of the ruling class, the bourgeoisie, whose economic and social position it protects, consolidates, expands. Does the Bonapartist régime of Stalin preserve nationalized property for the tangible benefit of the working class? If so, what benefit? Does it protect, consolidate, expand the economic and social (to say nothing of the political) position of the proletariat? If so, what sign (not signs, just one sign) is there of it? The present bourgeois Bonapartist state reduces the proletariat to slavery and enormously increases the wealth and power of the capitalists. Which class does the Stalinist Bonapartist régime reduce to slavery, and which class does it accord vast increases of wealth, social position and power, while it is at work preserving nationalized property "in its own way"?

It would be interesting to hear something in detail on these matters from the Cannonites—not apart from abuse (that is utopian) but, let us say, in addition to it. Our interest, we fear, is doomed to remain unsatisfied. To all that was said, Poe's raven intransigently answered with two words, "Never more!" To all we have said in the past two years about Russia, the Cannonite raven has answered, when he did answer, with two words, "Nationalized property"! It is doubtful if he will some day become more articulate or logical.—S.



Dear Comrade Borodai:

I have just received after almost a month's delay, your letter of October 12 from Tyumen. I am replying immediately by return mail, in view of the importance of the questions you put to me. Taking your point of departure from the standpoint of the Democratic-Centralist group to which you belong, you put seven questions and demand that the answers given be "clear and concrete" and "not nebulous." An altogether legitimate wish. Only, our way of being concrete should be dialectical, that is, encompass the living dynamics of evolution and not substitute ready-made labels which, at first sight, seem very "clear" but are in reality false and devoid of content. Your way of putting the questions is purely formal: yes, yes—no, no. Your questions must first be put upon a Marxian basis in order that correct replies may be made..

1. After setting forth the character of the social composition of the party and its apparatus, you ask: "Has the party degenerated? That is the first question." You demand a "clear" and "concrete" reply: Yes, it has degenerated. However, I cannot answer that way, for at present our party, both socially and ideologically, is extremely *heterogeneous*. It includes *nuclei* that are entirely degenerated, others that are

still healthy but amorphous, others that have hardly been affected by degeneration, etc. The régime of apparatus oppression, which reflects the pressure of other classes upon the proletariat, and the decline of the spirit of activity of the proletariat itself, renders very difficult a daily check upon the degree of degeneration of the various strata and nuclei of the party and of its apparatus. But this check can and will be achieved by activity, especially by our active intervention in the internal life of the party, by mobilizing tirelessly its living and viable elements. Naturally, such intervention is out of the question if the point of departure is that the party as a whole has degenerated, that the party is a corpse. With such an evaluation of the party, it is absurd to address oneself to it, and still more absurd to wait for it, or for this or that section of it, that is, primarily, for its *proletarian kernel*, to heed or to understand you. To conquer this kernel, however, is to conquer the party. This kernel does not consider itself—and quite rightly—either dead or degenerated. It is upon it, upon its tomorrow, that we base our political line. We will *patiently explain* our tasks to it, basing ourselves upon experience and facts. In every cell and at every worker's meeting, we will denounce as a falsehood the calumny of the apparatus which says that we are plotting to create a second party; we shall state that a second party is being built up by the Ustrialov-people* in the apparatus, hiding behind the Centrists; as for us, we want to cleanse Lenin's party of the Ustrialovist and semi-Ustrialovist elements; we want to do this hand in hand with the proletarian kernel which, aided by the active elements of the proletariat as a whole, can still become master of the party and save the Revolution from death, by means of a *profound proletarian reform in every field*..

2. "Is the degeneration of the apparatus and of the Soviet power a fact? That is the second question," you write.

Everything that has been said above applies equally to this question. There is no doubt that the degeneration of the Soviet apparatus is considerably more advanced than the same process in the party apparatus. Nevertheless, it is the party that decides. At present, this means: the party apparatus. The question thus comes down to the same thing: Is the proletarian kernel of the party, assisted by the working class, capable of triumphing over the autocracy of the party apparatus which is fusing with the state apparatus? Whoever replies in advance that it is *incapable*, thereby speaks not only of the necessity of a new party on a new foundation, but also of the necessity of a second and new proletarian revolution. It goes without saying that it can in no way be stated that such a perspective is out of the question under all circumstances. However, it is not a question of historical divination, but rather of not surrendering to the enemy but—on the contrary—of reviving and consolidating the October Revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat. Has this road been tried to the very end? Not at all. At bottom, the methodical work of the Bolshevik-Leninists to mobilize the proletarian kernel of the party in the new historical stage has only begun.

The arid reply—"Yes, it has degenerated"—that you would like to get to your question about the degeneration of the Soviet power, would contain no clarity in itself and would open up no perspective. What we have here is a developing, contradictory process, which can be concluded in any way or the

*N. Ustrialov—bourgeois professor—expert employed at that time in a Soviet economic institution. Advocated support of bureaucracy against Opposition in the expectation that Right-wing elements of former would lead to the restoration of capitalism.—*Trans.*

other by virtue of the struggle of living forces. Our participation in this struggle will have no small importance in determining its outcome.

3. "Taking the present situation in the country and the party as a whole, do we still have a dictatorship of the working class? And who possesses the hegemony in the party and in the country? That is the third question," you ask further.

From the preceding replies it is clear that you put this question also inexactly, not dialectically but scholastically. It is precisely Bukharin who presented this question to us dozens of times in the form of a scholastic alternative: *Either* we have the Thermidor and then you, Opposition, should be defeatists and not partisans of defense, *or*, if you are really partisans of defense, then acknowledge that all the speeches about Thermidor are nothing but chatter. Here, comrade, you fall completely into the trap of Bukharinist scholastics. Along with him, you want to have "clear," that is, *completely finished* social facts. The developing, contradictory process appears "nebulous" to you. What do we have in reality? We have a strongly advanced process of duality of power in the country. Has power passed into the hands of the bourgeoisie? Obviously not. Has power slipped out of the hands of the proletariat? To a certain degree, to a considerable degree, but still far from decisively. This is what explains the monstrous predominance of the bureaucratic apparatus oscillating between the classes. But this state apparatus depends, through the medium of the party apparatus, upon the party, that is, upon its proletarian kernel, *on condition that the latter is active and has a correct orientation and leadership*. And that is where our task lies.

A state of duality of power is unstable, by its very essence. Sooner or later, it must go one way or the other. But as the situation is now, the bourgeoisie could seize power only by *the road of counter-revolutionary upheaval*. As for the proletariat, it can regain full power, renovate the bureaucracy and put it under its control by *the road of reform of the party and the Soviets*. These are the fundamental characteristics of the situation.

Your Kharkov colleagues, from what I am informed, have addressed themselves to the workers with an appeal based upon the false idea that the October Revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat are already liquidated. This manifesto, false in essence, has done the greatest harm to the Opposition. Such declarations must be resolutely and implacably condemned. That is the bravado of adventurers and not the revolutionary spirit of Marxists.

4. Quoting from my Postscript on the July victory of the Right wing over the Center,* you ask: "Are you thus putting entirely within quotation marks 'the Left course' and the 'shift' that you once proposed to support with all forces and all means? That is the fourth question."

This is a downright untruth on your part. Never and nowhere have I spoken of a *Left course*. I spoke of a "shift" and a "Left zig-zag," contrasting this conception to a consistent proletarian line. Never and nowhere have I proposed to support the alleged Left course of the Centrists, nor did I promise to support it. But I did propose and promise to support by all means every step that Centrism really took toward the Left, no matter if it was a half-measure, without ceasing for a single instant to criticize and unmask Centrism as the fundamental obstacle in the way of awakening the spirit of activity of the proletarian kernel of the party. My "Postscript"

was precisely a document exposing the political capitulation of the Centrists to the Right wing during the July Plenum. But I did not and I do not hold that the history of the development of the party and particularly the history of the struggle of the Center against the Right wing came to an end at the July Plenum. We are right now witnesses of a new Centrist campaign against the Right-wingers. We must become independent participants in this campaign. Naturally we see right through all the hypocrisy and duplicity, the perfidious half-wayness of the apparatus in the Stalinist struggle against the Right-wingers. But behind this struggle we see profound class forces which seek to break a path for themselves through the party and its apparatus. The driving force of the Right wing is the new evolving proprietor who seeks a link with world capitalism; our Right-wingers are timid and mark time, for they do not yet dare to straddle this warhorse openly. The functionary of the party, the trade unions and other institutions, is the rampart of the Centrists: in spite of everything, he depends upon the working masses and seems to be obliged in recent times to take these masses into account more and more: hence, the "self-criticism" and "the struggle against the Right." *It is thus that the class struggle is refracted and distorted*, but nevertheless manifested in this struggle; by its pressure, it can transform the quarrel between the Centrists and the Right-wingers in the apparatus into a very important stage in the awakening and enlivening of the party and the working class. We would be pitiable imbeciles if we took the present campaign against the Right-wingers seriously. But we would, on the other hand, be pitiful scholiasts and sectarian wiseacres if we failed to understand that hundreds of thousands of workers, party members, do believe in it, if not 100 per cent then at least fifty or twenty-five per cent. They are not yet with us, to be sure. Do not forget that, do not become ensnared in sectarian trivia. Centrism holds on not only because of the oppression of the apparatus, but also because of the confidence or the half-confidence of a certain part of the worker-party members. These workers who support the Centrists will enter the struggle against the Right much more readily than they did in the struggle against the Opposition, when they had to be dragged along with a rope around their neck. A serious and intelligent Oppositionist will say, in any workers' cell, in any workers' meeting: "We are summoned to fight against the Right wing—that's a wonderful thing. We have called on you to do this for a long time. And if you're thinking of fighting seriously against the Right wing, you can count upon us to the limit. We will be no strikebreakers. On the contrary, we'll be in the front lines. Only, let us really fight. The leaders of the Right wing must be named out loud, their Right-wing deeds must be enumerated, etc." In a word, the Oppositionist will push the proletarian kernel of the party forward like a Bolshevik, and he will not turn his back upon it on the pretext that the party has degenerated.

5. "Is it still possible to entertain illusions about the ability to defend the interests of the revolution and of the working class? That is the fifth question."

You put the fifth question just as inexactly as the first four. To entertain illusions about the Centrists means to sink into Centrism yourself. But to shut your eyes to the mass processes that drive the Centrists to the Left means to enclose yourself within a sectarian shell. As if it was a matter of whether Sta-

*Reference to the July, 1928, Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, at which the Right wing (Rykov) won an apparent, but actually a deceptive and short-lived victory over the Center (Stalin) on policy in agriculture.—*Trans.*

lin and Molotov are capable of returning to the road of proletarian policy! In any case, they are incapable of doing it by themselves. They have proved it completely. But it is not a question of divining the future fate of the various members of the Stalinist staff. That doesn't interest us at all. In this field, all sorts of "surprises" are possible. Didn't the former leader of the Democratic-Centralists, Ossinsky, become an extreme Right-winger, for example? . . . The correct question is this: Are the tens and hundreds of thousands of workers, party members and members of the Communist Youth, who are at present actively, half-actively or passively supporting the Stalinists, capable of redressing themselves, of reawakening, of welding their ranks together "to defend the interests of the revolution and of the working class"? To this, I answer: Yes, this they are capable of doing. They will be capable of doing this tomorrow or the day after if we know how to approach them correctly; if we show them that we do not look upon them as corpses; if, like Bolsheviks, we support every step, every half-step, they take toward us; if, in addition, we not only do not entertain "illusions" about the Centrist leadership but expose them implacably, by dint of the daily experience of the struggle. At the moment, it must be done by the experience of the struggle against the Right wing.

6. After characterizing the Sixth Congress [of the Communist International] and describing certain phenomena inside the party, you write: "Is not all this the Thermidor with the dry guillotine? That is the sixth question."

This question has been answered concretely enough above. Once more, do not believe that Bukharinist scholastics, turned upside down, is Marxism.

7. "Do you personally," you ask me, "intend to continue in the future to call the comrades belonging to the Group of Fifteen by the splendid epithet of 'honest revolutionists,' and at the same time to separate yourself from them? Is it not time to terminate the petty quarrel? Is it not time to ponder the consolidation of the forces of the Bolshevik guard? That is the seventh and last question."

Unfortunately, this question is not put quite correctly either. It is not I who separated myself from the Democratic-Centralists, but it is this grouping that separated itself from the Opposition as a whole to which it belonged. It is on this ground that a subsequent split took place in the Democratic-Centralist group itself. That is the past. Let us take the very latest phase, when the most serious exchange of opinions took place among the exiled Opposition, resulting in the elaboration of a whole series of responsible documents that received the support of 99 per cent of the Opposition. Here, too, the representatives of the Democratic-Centralists, without contributing anything essential to this work, once more separated themselves from us, by showing themselves to be more papist than the Pope, that is, than Safarov.* After all this, you ask me if I intend to continue in the future to "separate" myself from the Democratic-Centralists! No, you approach this question from the wrong end. You represent things as if, in the past, the Zinovievs, the Kamenevs and the Pyatakovs, hindered the unification. You are mistaken on this score, too. One might conclude from your remarks that we, the 1923 Opposition, were for the unification with the Zinovievists, and the Democratic-Centralist group was against. On the contrary. We were much more cautious in this question and we were much more insistent in the matter of guarantees. The initiative for the unification came from the Democratic-Centralists.

The first conferences with the Zinovievists took place un-

der the chairmanship of Comrade Saprnov.** I do not say this as a reproach at all, for the bloc was necessary and a step forward. But "our yesterdays must not be distorted." After the Democratic-Centralist group separated itself from the Opposition, Zinoviev was always for a new unification with it; he raised the question dozens of times. As for myself, I spoke up against it. What were my reasons? I said: We need the unification, but a lasting and serious unification. If, however, the Democratic-Centralist group split away from us at the first clash, we ought not rush into new corridor-fusions, but leave it to experience to check the policies and either deepen the split or prepare the conditions for a genuine, serious, durable unification. I hold that the experience of 1927-28 ought to have shown how absurd were the suspicions and insinuations of the Democratic-Centralist leaders toward the 1923 Opposition. I counted above all on the principled documents we addressed to the Sixth Congress facilitating the unification of our ranks. That is what did happen in the case of a number of comrades of the Democratic-Centralists. But the recognized leaders of your group did everything in their power not only to deepen and sharpen the differences of opinion but also to poison relations completely. For my own part, I take the writings of V. Smirnov calmly enough. But in recent times I have received dozens of letters from comrades who are indignant to the highest degree over the character of these writings, which sound as if they were specially calculated to prevent a coming-together and to maintain at all costs a separate chapel with a pastor of its own.

But apart from the whole past history of who separated from whom, of how it was done, of who honestly wants unity in our ranks and who seeks to keep a parish of his own, there still remains the whole question of the *basis in ideas* of this unification.

On this score, Comrade Rafael wrote me on September 28:

"Our friends of the Group of Fifteen have begun to conduct a furious campaign especially against you, and there is a touching harmony between the editorial in *Bolshevik*,* No. 16, and Vladimir Mikhailovich Smirnov and other comrades of the Group of Fifteen. The fundamental error of these comrades is the fact that they attribute too great value to purely formal decisions and combinations in the upper spheres, particularly to the decisions of the July Plenum. They do not see the forest for the trees. Naturally, these decisions are, during a certain phase of development, the reflection of a certain relationship of forces. But in any case, they cannot be looked upon as determining the outcome of the struggle that continues and will continue for a long time. Not a single one of the problems that provoked the crisis has been resolved; the contradictions have accentuated. Even the official editorial in *Pravda*, on September 18, had to acknowledge this. In spite of the 'steel hammer' that drives an 'aspen-wedge' into the Opposition every day (how many times already), the Opposition *lives* and has the will to live; it has cadres tempered in battle, and what cadres! To draw, at such a moment, conclusions like those of the Group of Fifteen, is false to the bottom and exceptionally harmful. These conclusions create a de-

*Extreme Left-wing leader of the Zinovievist section of the Opposition, and one of the last of the "Leningraders" to capitulate. Later murdered in the Moscow Trials frame-up.—*Trans.*

**Leader of the Democratic-Centralists, who initiated the Opposition bloc in 1926, composed of the 1928 Opposition (Trotsky), the Leningrad Opposition (Zinoviev), the Workers' Opposition (Shlyaknikov) and the Democratic-Centralists.—*Trans.*

*Official theoretical organ of the CPSU—Stalinist, of course.—*Trans.*

moralizing state of mind, instead of organizing the working class and the proletarian kernel of the party. The position of the Fifteen cannot but be passive, for if the working class and its vanguard have already surrendered all their positions and conquests without a struggle, then on whom and on what can these comrades count? You do not organize the masses to revive a 'corpse,' and as to a *new struggle*, given the situation of the working class as they picture it to themselves, the time it will take is much too long and this will lead inevitably to the position of Shlyapnikov." I think Comrade Rafael is perfectly right in characterizing the situation the way he does.

You write that the proletariat does not like nebulous half-measures and diplomatic evasions. That is right. And that's the reason why you must finally cast up a balance. If the party is a corpse, a new party must be built on a new spot, and the working class must be told about it openly. If Thermidor is completed, and if the dictatorship of the proletariat is liquidated, the banner of the second proletarian revolution must be unfurled. That is how we would act if the road of reform, for which we stand, proved hopeless. Unfortunately, the leaders of the Democratic-Centralists are up to their ears in nebulous half-measures and diplomatic evasions. They criticize our road of reform in a very "Left" manner—a road which, I hope, we have shown by deeds is not at all the road of Stalinist legality; but they do not show the working masses any other road. They content themselves with sectarian mutterings against us, and count meanwhile on spontaneous movements. Should this line be reinforced, it would not only destroy your whole group, which contains not a few good and devoted revolutionists, but like all sectarianism and adventurism, it would render the best service to the Right-Centrist tendencies, that is, in the long run, to bourgeois restoration. That is why, dear comrade, before uniting—and I am for unification with all my heart—it is necessary to establish the ideological delimitations, based upon a clear and principled line. It is a good old Bolshevik rule.

With communist greetings,

L. TROTSKY.

Plunder in Southeast Asia

FOREIGN CAPITAL IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, by Helmut G. Callis.
Institute of Pacific Relations, New York City, 1942; 120 pages.

Unless it has been destroyed by the Japanese as part of their propaganda campaign to win over Javanese support to the "New Order" in the East, there stands in Batavia, Java, a barbaric stone monument to Dutch imperialist exploitation of the Indies.

The monument, one of those serene expressions of the municipal artistic afflatus, consists of a skull cleft with a spear, and mounted on a wall bearing the following inscription in Dutch and Malay: "As a detestable memory of the punished traitor of his country, Pieter Elberfeld, it is forbidden to build or plant on this place from now on. Batavia, April, 1722." The crime of Pieter Elberfeld lay in arousing the natives against their Dutch masters.

The monument bears eloquent witness to the character of the Dutch rule in the East Indies. Detailed data in English on Dutch rule in these fabulous islands has, however, been surprisingly meager up to the recent past. The same holds true for other colonial possessions in Southeast Asia. It was

only with the swift overrunning of the area by Japanese troops that bourgeois ideologists began to bring the area into intellectual focus.

The book under review is one of a series published by the Institute of Pacific Relations on its specialty, the Far East. Its books, as a whole, are products of good bourgeois scholarship. As such, they are a welcome relief from the superficial "I-felt-it-with-my-very-own-nerve" sort of journalism the market is currently deluged with. The Institute's publications are worth the serious attention of every Marxist—though almost wholly for the factual material contained therein. This holds for Callis' *Foreign Capital in Southeast Asia*."

The analytical portions of the book serve only to reveal once more that bourgeois scholarship, with all its alleged objectivity, with all its antitheses in exquisite opposition, is only a more sophisticated apologia for the existing bourgeois order.

A "TERRA INCOGNITA"

The book offers nothing strikingly new for the Marxist, but it does give valuable data on an area of imperialist exploitation about which there has been comparatively little information available. The field covered includes the following colonies of Southeast Asia: the Philippines, the Netherlands East Indies, Formosa, British Malaya, Thailand, French Indo-China, Burma.

The dominance of finance capital in the colonies, one of the salient characteristics of capitalism in our era, is revealed throughout the book. In Japanese-controlled Formosa, for instance, "... six corporations produce 95 per cent of all the sugar that is produced on the island. . . . Through their cartel organization, the sugar manufacturers regulate prices and production in order to eliminate competition and to maintain profits."

That such practices are not merely a cunning device of the wicked Japanese capitalists but are a universal imperialist phenomenon is shown by the following passage on the teak industry in Thailand, where two-thirds of the teak holdings are in British hands:

"Eighty-eight per cent of the teak industry is in foreign hands, 5 per cent under governmental control and 7 per cent worked by private Siamese individuals," including some old Lao princes and certain local license holders. But only the great foreign corporations undertake the exploitation of the teak forests on a large scale. The number of small concessionaires has been constantly reduced, since they could not carry the financial burden.

The same condition obtained in French Indo-China:

In 1936 an area of 314,000 acres was planted with rubber in Indo-China and only about 3 per cent of this acreage was in the hands of small Asiatic owners. The really great concessions—approximately 45 in number—which are administered by eminent French colonial corporations . . . cover several thousand hectares each. The present value of French rubber holdings in the colony has been estimated to be over one billion francs.*

INTERNATIONAL CARTELS

In consonance with the advanced stage of development of capitalist economy, Asiatic colonies and their imperialist exploiters are linked together through international cartels. The British, for instance, by means of the "Royal Dutch-Shell combine, through Shell . . . hold 40 per cent of the capital of the two main oil companies, of the Batavian Company for production, and the Anglo-Saxon Petroleum Company for marketing." The British stake in the Netherlands East Indies oil production was recently estimated at *twenty-six million pounds sterling!*** Similar ends were achieved by interna-

tional agreements restricting production, such as the one restricting the production of tin, signed in 1937 by Belgian Congo, Bolivia, French Indo-China, Malaya, Thailand, the Netherlands East Indies, and Nigeria.

International cartels did not lessen international economic tensions, however. Sparks have flown in more than one collision between Britain and the United States over tin-smelting rights, rubber restrictions, etc. Only the all-menacing economic penetration of the Japanese prevented more serious explosions.

The book demonstrates clearly how colonial government is the agent of what the author terms the "metropolitan" exploiter country, bending everything to serve the economic aims of the latter through the erecting of tariff walls, building railroads at the expense of the native population, maintaining the native population in subjection, etc.

THE GOLDEN STREAM

Naturally, the profits have been handsome. In Formosa: "The rates of profit of the Japanese corporations have averaged 30 per cent. Their dividends have seldom been lower than 10 per cent." In Burma: "The yearly average dividend of the company [the Burmah Oil Co.] on its ordinary shares was 21.8 per cent between 1928 and 1938." (Note that this covers the worst years of the depression, particularly severe in the colonial countries.) In the Netherlands East Indies: "...from one-fifth to one-tenth of the population of the Netherlands is either directly dependent on, or indirectly interested financially in the commerce or industries of Netherlands India." (This is probably a moderate calculation.)

These super-profits are wrung from a native population

*The good author seems to be a bit dubious concerning the significance of investments such as these. He notes cautiously: "In Malaya as in other colonial areas of Southeast Asia, the metropolitan power is the leading nation in entrepreneur investment. This adds weight to van Gelderen's opinion that business investments are a form of colonial expansion"! Surely, if this man were a surgeon, he would treat persons for headache by drilling a hole in the skull to let the demons out.

**Under the circumstances it seems only decent for the British to give Queen Wilhelmina and her hangers-on, now in Canada, bed, board, and, on occasion, an extra-territorial lying-in chamber.

which is thereby reduced to economic prostration. Glimpses of the conditions of the native populations can occasionally be caught through the web of the text. In Thailand:

The rice cultivators are heavily indebted and have little or nothing to spend. What little money the lower classes have they bury in the ground or convert into jewelry, while the upper classes are said to send money abroad. "Common gossip gives the foreign deposits at many millions of pounds sterling."

It is interesting to note that out of a population of four-million in Thailand about 3,000 pay income tax.

Formosa neatly illustrates some practices common to the whole area in one form or another: "Administrative and legal means also helped to increase Japanese holdings. The confiscation of all lands and forests for which no written title deeds could be produced is one example of such measures."

Under such conditions, the struggle of the native masses against their enslavement is bound to make its presence felt, even in a book such as the one under review. And surely enough, running like a dialectical opposition through the entire book is the echo of the insistent voices of the Far Eastern masses.

For this reason, Carl F. Remer in his introduction feels constrained once more to exorcize the demon of socialism. This he does very glibly, utilizing a convenient fiction of his own creation, a nationally limited, state-capitalist specie of "socialism." Equally glibly he solemnly advances the following solution for a colonial world crushed by the yoke of finance capital:

We are thus driven to attempt integration by other methods than force. In international relations the state is better adapted to integration by force than to integration by persuasion. Some entity less than the state must be trust with the task of integration if it is to be accomplished by peaceful methods. The business corporation offers the possibility of peaceful integration, and the more so because it is conceivable that the "international" business corporation may at some future time be brought under international control in the general world interest.

The man, it would appear, lives according to the well-known credo of Tertullian: I believe because it is impossible.

JAMES M. FENWICK.

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