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VOLUME IX

OCTOBER, 1943

NUMBER 9

NOTES OF THE MONTH

The Auto Workers' Convention

Several important CIO union conventions have taken place recently—the rubber workers' union, the shipbuilders' union and the automobile and aircraft workers' union. If the Buffalo convention of the UAW is selected here for analysis and comment, it is not because the others are unimportant and may be ignored, but rather because an understanding of the situation in the UAW is the key to an understanding of the other unions, at least of those affiliated with the CIO. For the purpose of analysis, the UAW has the advantage over the others only in that it reproduces in the clearest way the situation that obtains in one form or another, to one extent or another, throughout the labor movement, its problems and the ways proposed to solve them.

Apart from this consideration, there are of course others.

The UAW is now probably the largest single union in the world, and certainly the largest in the United States. President Thomas' report showed a membership of 1,077,889 in July, 1943, twice what it was at the beginning of 1943 and three times as large as in January, 1941.

The membership is neither bureaucratized nor fossilized. If anything, most of the members are fairly new to the labor movement and inexperienced in the traditional solutions of its problems. But it is imbued with a spirit of militancy, a sound suspicion of any attempt to sacrifice its interests and, above all, a jealous, even truculent, insistence upon democratic rights and procedure in its ranks. Of all the unions in the country, none is more democratic. Nowhere is the leadership under such restraints and obligations to account for its stewardship to the rank and file. None of the other new unions has such a long record of well fought battles, and the memory of them is still so fresh that they echoed through every convention discussion.

Leave aside for a moment those aspects of the union that are accounted for by the exceptional war expansion of the industries covered by the UAW, and it can be said with emphasis that the way the UAW goes will be the way the other unions go, sooner or later. If the CIO is the vanguard of the American trade union movement, the UAW is the vanguard of the CIO.

Hence, again, its importance in general, and the importance of its eighth annual convention in particular.

Problems Before the Buffalo Convention

Often the revolutionary wing of the labor movement, of which our review is one part, will declare of a union: Such and such are its problems! The union itself, alas, does not always show that it recognizes the fact. In the case of the UAW convention, no disagreement existed on the question of its problems. What was said on this score by *Labor Action*, which is widely read among UAW members, was contested by nobody. Incentive pay schemes versus an organized fight for higher wages geared to the rising cost of living; the no-strike pledge versus regaining the right to strike in order to enforce labor's legitimate and long-repressed demands; subordination of the labor movement to Roosevelt and Rooseveltism versus independent political action in the form of a Labor Party—these were the problems before the UAW at Buffalo, and they still are. All, or most all, of the other problems depended for their solution on the correct solution of these three.

That, taken substantially, was also the position of the militant *Aero-Notes*, the official paper of the Brewster Local, No. 365, which was issued daily during the convention sessions. And not by the Brewster people alone. It was shared by virtually everyone else. Before the delegates would proceed to the election of their main officers and the international executive board they voted to have their outgoing officials take the floor formally to say just where they stood on these questions, especially the question of incentive pay.

How did the delegates handle these main problems? Their action will be more clearly understood if an examination is first made of the two factions contending for control of the union.

The Significance of the "Addes Faction"

The smaller, but by far the better organized of the two, was the combination of Secretary-Treasurer Addes, Vice-President Frankenstein, and the Stalinists. It would not be wrong to call it the Stalinist faction for short. That Frankenstein is a Communist Party member, is doubtful. He has followed its line, supported it and been supported by it, on numerous occasions, most decidedly in the present case. But he has also broken with it when it suited his book. At bottom, he is an up-and-coming bureaucrat with no more principle than can be found in a tin horn. Addes, an administration of good reputation, is different. That he is a member of the Communist Party cannot be demonstrated, but it is of no importance. He has followed the Stalinist line through thick and thin for years, and served as the most obvious front of the CP.

This faction succeeded in rallying a pretty odd mixture. Out-and-out reactionaries were not excluded from it by any means, or without influence in it. If the official Stalinist press itself, in a vain effort to take its stigma off the group, spoke of it as containing Ku Klux Klansmen, Coughlinites and other reactionary elements, nothing more need be added here on this score.

This does not, however, alter the fact that the group was dominated by the Stalinists. It was the vehicle and mouth-piece for their policies, and received its well-knit organizational strength from the straight CP forces in the union.

This is easy to check and cross-check. First, on every point in dispute between the Addes faction and its rival, the Stalinists publicly (that is, in their official press) supported Addes, and so did their known followers in the union, in speech and in vote. Second, the Addes group position on every question that came before the convention was in harmony with the known stand of the Stalinists and in no case in conflict with it.

If the Addes group did not speak out in every dispute in the *identical* language of the *Daily Worker*, or go as far in every question as Earl Browder, or open up its caucus meetings with an invocation of the Great Stalin, it was essentially for the same reason that the medicine-man selling his all-healing "snake oil" does not announce to the audience that the bottle contains nothing more than sweetwater, paregoric, alcohol and a touch of angostura—nobody would buy.

Once the fact is known that it was essentially the Stalinist faction, its aims are easy to define. The Stalinists are as much interested in preserving and strengthening the union movement for its own sake—namely, for the sake for which it authentically exists, the defense of the economic interests of the workers—as Mr. Henry Ford. If it serves their interests to paralyze it, if they would be helped by wrecking a union, they will wreck it, as they have done so often.

What are these interests? By now, the answer is fairly well known by every informed person in the labor movement. They are the interests of the reactionary Russian bureaucracy. The term "reactionary" is not employed merely as an epithet, but primarily for clarity's sake. Reactionary interests can be served only by reactionary policies, and that is what explains the character of the Stalinists in the unions.

For the Stalinists, the unions in this country have a value, and a considerable one right now, only as an instrument in the carrying out of the Kremlin's foreign policy. Stalinist control or weighty influence in the labor movement makes possible its use as a powerful pressure organ upon the government and the capitalist class for concessions to Moscow. In exchange for concessions, those already obtained and those hoped for, the Stalinists are prepared to deliver the labor movement, bound hand and foot, to the ruling class and its government.

The cry for the "second front" and a "better understanding with our Russian allies" is therefore necessarily coupled in this country with the campaign for incentive pay and the no-strike pledge. In simple English, the Stalinists are saying to Washington and Wall Street: "Give in to Moscow's demands for a 'second front' and the seizure of territories in Eastern Europe, and we will help you put over the speed-up system and keep labor paralyzed by a no-strike pledge. We are in a position to barter, for we already have control of this union and that one and the other one."

Anyone who fails to grasp these simple facts had better stop trying to understand the Stalinists at all, much less to fight them in the labor movement. The Stalinists are in the labor movement, but not of it. To them it is a pawn (a pawn of great importance) in the Russian overlords' chess-game of power.

Control of the UAW would be a real feather in the cap of the Stalinists, their biggest by all odds. At Buffalo, they set

themselves the aim of getting as far as possible in committing the union to their policy. But not being political amateurs, they knew the limitations imposed upon them. Getting a union like the UAW to vote the CP line all the way through is not as easy as it is in, say, the furriers' union, which the Stalinists have long had by the throat. To press their program too vigorously, too aggressively, and on every point, would be too revealing and therefore self-defeating. What happened at Buffalo will be clearer, then, if it is understood that the Stalinists were prepared to make retreats on matter of policy if such retreats would advance their aim of getting organizational control of the union. It was a tactic, as we shall see, that they pursued with considerable skill and success, aided by a capacity for demagoguery, unscrupulousness and machine control in which they have no master and not even an equal.

The Reuther-Leonard Faction

Numerically larger than the Stalinists, decidedly inferior in political alertness and factional solidity, but having the advantage of oftener support from President Thomas, who does not always seem to be aware of what is going on in the world at large or in his union, was the faction of Walter Reuther, the other vice-president of the union, and Richard Leonard, national Ford director. It constituted the majority of the international executive board and, despite the defeat of one of its partisans, Gray, it will remain the majority, provided Thomas, who holds the balance of the votes, continues to go along with it. Hence, it is the official leadership and the leading officialdom.

Does it represent the right wing of the union? That is how it was designated by most of the capitalist press. But by thus designating it, the press showed itself to be less bright than usual. It continues to think of the Communist Party as it was many years ago, in the days when it was really communist, working class and revolutionary, just as in his West-of-the-Pecos bar "Judge" Roy Bean could remember Lillian Russell only as a young beauty. *The most conscious, best-organized and most dangerous right wing in the labor movement today is the Stalinist wing.* Every intelligent and intelligible test confirms this fact.

Is the Reuther group the left wing? No, there is a small, unorganized left wing, but it is not represented by Walter Reuther. The Reuther group is a centrist group, on a present-day American trade union scale.

Unlike the Stalinists, the Reuther group, like any "genuine" labor bureaucracy, is concerned with maintaining the trade union movement. That its policies do not serve this purpose well is, for the moment, beside the point. It does not want to see the union completely hamstrung or destroyed, for without the union as its base, it is nothing, nothing at all. The Stalinists can keep going more or less, union movement or no union movement, provided their real foundation and source of nourishment, the Russian state machine, maintains itself in power. The "native" labor bureaucracy, whether represented by William Green, John Green or John L. Lewis, by David Dubinsky or Walter Reuther, needs a labor movement here at home. The very capitalist system which these bureaucrats champion in the name of capitalist democracy would find no use whatsoever for them if they had no labor movement as their basis.

The point is of key importance. When capitalism no longer needs, or can no longer afford, even its kind of democracy, and adopts fascism instead, the labor movement vanishes;

so does the labor bureaucracy, from Reuther to Green. The bureaucracy, therefore, wants its capitalist democracy, which makes possible some kind of existence for the unions; whereas fundamentally the Stalinists care as much about capitalist or any other democracy as they care about last year's snows. But the same consideration that prompts its concern with capitalist democracy's preservation, dictates to the labor officialdom (the "native" variety, we repeat) the policy of class collaboration with the "democratic" capitalists, compromise with them, concessions to them and retreat before them.

Does the officialdom typified by Reuther want to weaken the unions, hog-tie them, undermine them and let the capitalists get the upper hand? Not exactly. In fact, far from it. They want to maintain the unions if for no other reason than the fact, indicated above, that without them have have nothing and are nothing.

But nowadays the mere maintenance, to say nothing of the strengthening, of the unions is possible only if they are organized consciously and militantly in struggle against the capitalists and their government. Such a struggle would unleash social forces that would end the class democracy of capitalism by replacing it with a true socialist democracy. The labor officialdom shudders at the prospect! So does even that section of it represented by "young" and ex-socialist Reuther. Out of this dilemma spring the hesitations, the compromises, the fence-sitting and double-talk, the radical words and very unradical actions, the big promises and little fulfillment, of labor leaders like Reuther.

Speed-up schemes like the incentive pay plan will split and wreck the unions. Reuther knows it; he opposes it—but he cannot put forward a program of struggle in its place. The no-strike pledge ties labor up in a knot and helps prepare the destruction of the unions. Does Reuther understand this? We think he does, as do many others like him—but he does not call for regaining the strike right for fear of launching a struggle against "our" government and "our" war. So it goes with other vital questions.

Once this is clear, the reason why Reuther does not organize a rank and file group to counter the Stalinists is easy to grasp. The Stalinists have such a group, and have next to nothing to fear from it. Any group they organize is based on the "leader" principle—the ranks accept the decisions on policy handed down from above without question or discussion. To challenge a decision is to be expelled automatically. Given Reuther's position, he could not organize that type of rank and file group, at least not very easily. The ranks who rally to his support are the very one who have been repelled by the ultra-bureaucratism of the Stalinists. But they have also been repelled by the ultra-conservatism of the Stalinists. They want a militant policy. In an *organized* rank and file group led by Reuther, the members would unquestionably vote for a far more aggressive policy than Reuther has followed. He would be more or less bound by such a vote, committed to it, and obliged to speak for it. That is precisely what he is not prepared to do.

There, at bottom, is why Reuther and Leonard did not really organize a well-knit rank and file caucus similar to the Stalinist caucus. They trusted to their bureaucratic connections throughout the union, and to the relative superiority and greater popularity of the positions they took to carry them to victory over the Stalinists and to continued union control. At the so-called caucus meetings of the Reuther group, the leaders talked, handed down the "line," the delegates listened,

asked questions—but could not decide the policy by organized discussion and vote.

The faction remained a bureaucratic group of officials at the top. Its best followers supported it because it was the lesser of two evils, not because they were enthusiastic supporters of its ambiguousness and half-heartedness. It is really a wonder that the well organized Stalinists did not come off better than they did.

Having examined the basis, make-up and outlook of both groups, we can look into the issues over which they divided.

The Question of the "Second Front"

The powerful resolutions committee was divided into a majority supporting Reuther, and an Addes-Stalinist minority. Several of the Stalinist locals had submitted the customary "second front" or "Western front" resolutions, yet none of them was reported out to the convention floor. Why not?

"Second front" resolutions are the favorite Stalinist hobbyhorse. They ride it through every labor convention they can. The cold-blooded cynicism behind the attempt to force a "second front" is appalling. Are England and the United States prepared to launch an invasion across the English Channel from a technical-military standpoint? Will not a premature attempt result in tremendously unwarranted casualties? We do not know and it is more than doubtful if the Stalinists do. But they do not care. Casualties are their last worry.

What they are concerned with is helping Stalin. Stalin has recklessly poured millions into their graves on the Russian front. He who gave the "go" sign to start the war does not want the war to go on and end with a more or less intact Anglo-American army and a greatly weakened Russian army. Moreover, an invasion of Europe through the Balkans would be a threat to an imperialist "sphere of influence" to which the Kremlin lays claim. Invade? Yes, but only in the West, which Stalin has graciously acknowledged as the "sphere of influence" of his allies. Ready or not, the Kremlin says to its allies, you must take sixty divisions off our backs. The slaughter that might follow would merely be . . . unfortunate. (Russia's allies, it should be noted, are for their part not violently averse to the slaughter of others. And if the "others" happen to be Russians, that, too, is . . . unfortunate.)

The resolutions committee majority introduced a substitute for the various "second front" resolutions which contained the usual pious drivel about solidarity among the Allies and other hollow ceremonialities. Why didn't Reuther report out the "second front" resolutions and challenge the Stalinists to a discussion?

He knows what is what on this point. In a folder distributed to the delegates by his faction (the "UAW-CIO Committee for a Democratic, American Union"), he wrote: "Their sole interest is the victory of Soviet Russia. Just as during the Nazi-Soviet pact, the communists were unconcerned with the invasion of England and the destruction of the labor movements of France, Belgium, Norway, Denmark and Holland, so today they do not care what happens to labor and democracy in the United States, so long as Russia wins."

Correct and exact. And also a most damaging charge. If it could be sustained—the easiest thing in the world to do—it would serve to nail the Stalinist hide to the barn door. Yet Reuther did not seize opportunity by its so very tempting and easily grasped forelock. Why?

"It all boils down to one very simple question," shouted Delegate Bob Stone, "that the Resolutions Committee has not

got the guts to bring a controversial issue before the convention."

Also correct and exact. But the reason for the gutlessness of the Reutherites on this question was that a forthright condemnation of what is behind the Stalinist demand for a "second front" would have meant lifting the veil that has been hung, with Reuther's aid, over the real causes and aims of the war, not only on Russia's part but on the part of her imperialist allies. At most, Reuther could mumble something about war problems being best left to the War Department, which is about as sound an argument as the National Association of Manufacturers' propaganda that "management problems" in industry should best be left to management.

So Reuther ducked the fight, in accord with the sacred bureaucratic principle: Why fight, when ducking will get you just about as many votes for leadership, if not more?

To be sure, if the Reutherites lacked "guts" to fight out the "second front" question, the Stalinists did not show an oversupply of this commodity. They had all the necessary facilities to bring their resolutions to the floor. Yet the committee minority remained silent on the question and did not force the issue.

They did not dare risk it in the tense and closely-balanced convention. They are too exclusively identified with "second frontism" and to have brought Addes and Frankenstein into a fight for it would have meant fixing them good and proper with a label they were working feverishly to obliterate. Control of the international executive board by "second fronters" is worth a resolution for the "second front" any time. They sacrificed a man on first base in order to bring home a man on third. A wise decision, for their man on third, Addes, was reelected secretary-treasurer by the dangerously narrow margin of less than seventy-two votes, signifying that a switch of thirty-six votes would have elected his Reutherite rival, Leonard.

The Stalinists took a defeat on the "second front," but they took it in their stride. Reuther won a victory, but such a paltry, miserable, cowardly, hush-hush victory that the English language ought to have a special word for it.

The Incentive Pay Fight

On incentive pay, however, the fight was joined openly. Nobody could have escaped a discussion if he had wanted to. The "second front" in Europe may be, or may seem to be, remote. The incentive pay advocates, ranging from the manufacturers to the Administration bureaucrats, have, however, already opened their front on this question and penetrated right into the heart of the labor movement, spearheaded by their Communist Party shock troops.

What the incentive pay schemes mean to labor and the labor movement is too well known to our readers to require detailed analysis again. It is the scientifically-perfected speed-up system, resulting in the long run in a general wage-cut, pitting worker against worker, breaking down first the union standards and then the union itself. The UAW was built, so to speak, in the struggle against it, and the struggle is not yet fully won. "We come from Toledo," said Board Member Gosser. "We fought for nine years to eliminate piecework and haven't been able to do it yet. You put it up now, and by God, our children's children won't eliminate it." That is how over two-thirds of the convention felt about the question.

The Stalinists were, of course, too prudent to come out flat-footedly for incentive pay. Some of their spokesmen did,

but the more prominent leaders were more cagey. When the *Daily Worker* wrote of the Addes-Frankenstein group that "its fight on the incentive pay issue, however, was retarded by confusion and by a hesitancy to come to grips with the basic aspects of the question," it is this cageyness that it refers to.

It is not, argued Addes and Frankenstein with a worried eye to their reelection to office which was to follow the discussion—it is not that we are enthusiastic for incentive pay. What we really want is to protect the democratic rights of the membership, the autonomy of the locals. We want *them* to have the right to negotiate incentive pay contracts if *they* want them.

Demagoguery is the handmaiden of reaction. The Stalinist demagogues knew the strong attachment to democratic rights and local autonomy of the UAW membership and tried to exploit it to the maximum. In part, they succeeded.

But once the door is opened to an extension of incentive pay contracts throughout the industry, the fight against it is as good as lost. The struggle for industry-wide agreements is nipped in the bud. The hope rightfully expressed by Reuther for an agreement "so that a drill press worker in Detroit and a drill press worker in Flint and a drill press worker on the East Coast and South Coast will get the same money for running that same drill press," is dashed at its inception.

If General Motors or Ford can cajole the union into accepting incentive pay in ten plants, is it likely that they will allow themselves to be talked out of the incentive pay system in the other plants? Every local that accepts incentive pay becomes so much more force in the hands of the corporations that are driving the wedge of the speed-up system right through the industry as a whole. "It is fine to talk about democracy," said Reuther. "Supposing a local union wanted to sign a wage agreement working twelve hours a day without any overtime. Would you say that was interfering with local autonomy if they could do it?"

That was a good enough point to make in reply to the local-autonomy demagogues, for local autonomy, which is highly desirable in a union, has its limits, and these limits are reached when autonomy is exercised in such a way as to affect directly and adversely the interests of the union as a whole. But Reuther did not and could not answer the argument by which the Stalinists won whatever support they got outside their immediate factional ranks.

What was the nature of this argument which they made, and made skillfully? Here it is:

The cost of living is going up. Present wages are insufficient to meet it. Just exactly how can we raise wages now? That is what every worker wants to know. The capitalists are making huge profits. They are willing to "share" these profits with the workers, but on one condition only, that the workers are willing to sweat for them. Work harder, work longer hours, produce more, and you'll get more in your pay envelope. More wages are needed and wanted. How do *you* propose to get them? The Little Steel formula, the wage freezing decree, the War Labor Board and the President—all say that you cannot get higher wages any other way than the way we propose. We admit that our plan is not the best in the best of all worlds. But there is a war on and our boys are in the foxholes. The only other way of getting better conditions is—to strike for them! Are you prepared to strike? Are you prepared to withdraw the no-strike pledge? Are you prepared only to *talk* about industry-wide agreements, a sliding scale of wages to meet the high cost of living, or are you ready to

enforce your demands by such an unpatriotic act as the strike? Are you ready to fight, in deeds and not merely in words, against the War Labor Board and the President? That is the question!

Said Kerrigan: "When this question arose on the Board [at its Columbus meeting] I was in favor of the fact that we should discourage incentive payment plans, but I asked Brother Reuther one question: 'What do we do when we have exceeded the Little Steel formula, when we had a job evaluation set up by a previous directive order of the War Labor Board and the people in that plant sought an increase in wages and the company offers them a bonus on the total tonnage going out the door?' My mind was open on that subject. I don't recall an answer at that particular time."

Kerrigan got no more answer from Reuther at Buffalo than he got at Columbus.

Said Ed Hall: "You can talk about piecework. I don't give a damn what you call it, you can call it incentive pay, call it anything, but I am here to tell you, my friends, there are a hell of a lot of delegates in this convention that are going to have to come back to probably this hall, and they are going to have to reckon with their own words, if they are going to assume the responsibility that you are going to be able to give the workers in your plants the proper type wage increases. Oh, you can talk about breaking the Little Steel formula if you want to here. I know how far you are going to get here. You can talk about all these nice things."

A blunt man, this Hall; very much booed by the delegates; but not a stupid man, just a reactionary, and a realistic one. Of course, Reuther did not answer his jeering challenge about "how far are you going to get here" with "talk about breaking the Little Steel formula."

Said McHatton, a delegate from Timken Axle Company Local, which accepted an incentive pay contract to its regret: "Naturally, I do believe in Timken today if a vote was taken that we kick it out the window if we could possibly do it. You have no agency whereby you can defend yourselves today. We have gone to all the agencies. We have been down to the Regional Board in Detroit. They sent it to Washington. It has been kicked back to Detroit. Now we are going to take it to Washington, and it is a damned slow procedure, and they let you sweat and the company rolls back in their swivel chairs and laughs at you and says: 'What are you going to do about it?' And they are right, we can't do anything about it."

Reuther might have pointed out that there *IS* an "agency whereby you can defend yourselves today"—the union itself! But the trouble is that Reuther and Addes, each in his own way, have agreed that this agency must not *act* to defend its members.

Said William Sneed, of Local 453, a man honest enough to call incentive pay by its right name—the sweat-shop system—but prepared to vote for it because no real alternative was offered: "If the International has anything to offer better than that, we are willing to go along, but at the present time, Mr. Chairman, I don't see anything they have to offer and still and all they want us to break up the sweat shops. We agree with that but we haven't anything constructive that we can carry back home."

Said Shelton Tappes, the Stalinist leader in Ford: "A lot of people are confusing this thing. They are saying piecework, piecework, and they have worked up some of the rank and file on this matter. If they are honest with themselves they will say that we are in a war. We have a million people who

want wage raises and you can't tell us how they will get those wage increases. You can discuss this matter and kick it around all you want, but I know about 84,000 Ford workers in the shops right now working today who are interested in only one thing when you are discussing wages and that is whether or not they are going to get some money in order to meet the rising cost of living."

The argument that incentive pay would get labor higher wages was answered with crushing effectiveness by its opponents. Too many delegates had had too many bitter and disillusioning experiences of their own with these schemes to be seduced by the Stalinist sirens.

"I think it might increase pay for a small majority of the time when it is first introduced," said Krebs of Local 365. "Our own bitter experience with it taught us [that] as we increase our earnings, immediately behind our increase in earnings management starts chopping down the standards to get our pay down again."

"Every time we increase production beyond a certain point," said Handyside, of Local 157, "we get our prices cut, and the War Labor Board is favoring the cutting of these prices wherever they think you go beyond a certain figure."

But good as these answers were, they did not reply to the Stalinist taunt: "How else are you going to get higher wages—by striking?" Reuther gave no answer, for the good reason that he had none. More accurately, his answer was a series of highly desirable generalities, with which every man and woman in the union could agree, but which lacked this indispensable implementation: "If we don't get it by negotiation, we will fight for it with labor's traditional weapons."

How much can be accomplished now by mere negotiation?

In the first place, the Stalinists have already done a terrific amount of damage to labor through the unions they control or have already committed to the sweat-shop system. "I am faced with the problem" [before the War Labor Board], said Shipley, "of the UE [United Electrical Workers Union, controlled by the CP] wanting incentive plans, with Steel wanting an incentive plan, and only last Friday we had one of our own plants before the board."

In the second place, they have already created havoc inside the UAW itself. As Gosser said: "When the International Executive Board is split wide open, will you tell me how in the hell we can go down in Washington and say we want an increase, when actually half of us are sitting here today and saying we cannot get any money, we have got to go into incentive pay and make the workers work harder to increase their wages?"

If ever there was a "fifth column" operating inside the labor movement to weaken it in the face of the ruling class, to divide it, to show the capitalists that they need not be afraid of insisting on their demands and rejecting the demands of the workers, to muddle it and hamstring it so that its most earnest and legitimate aspirations to fight in self-defense are thwarted—it is the Stalinists. The campaign conducted by them for incentive pay, already half-won by them, is a classic demonstration.

The delegates voted them down in such numbers that the Stalinists forewent a roll-call vote. But the delegates had nothing to vote *for*, except the desire for better conditions voiced by the Reuther resolution. They had no *action* to vote for to implement this desire. Reuther went along with the genuinely progressive sentiment of the membership as far as he could go—which means, on paper. Action? That would

mean a break with the capitalists, a break with the Administration, a break with the famous "war effort" which is used to blackjack labor into submitting to the most outrageous attacks upon its rights and standards. And that is what Reuther and his colleagues could not bring themselves to do.

The convention decision on incentive pay was not a victory for the Stalinists, but it was not a real defeat, either. The edge of their drive was blunted, but not broken. From the standpoint of the progressives, who rallied to the Reuther group as the "lesser evil," as well as from the standpoint of the union's interests, the decision was not a defeat, but neither was it a real victory.

The fight against the return of the sweat-shop must still be won. In fact, it has yet really to be launched.

The No-Strike Pledge

So it went with the other important issues before the convention.

Take the question of the no-strike pledge. How vitally connected it is with such problems as wages and incentive pay systems, has already been pointed out. It should be added that the sentiment in favor of withdrawing the no-strike pledge is as widespread throughout the union as it is... unorganized. Several resolutions were submitted to the convention calling for its revocation. There was one from Local 9, another from Local 365, another from Local 337, still another from Local 581, and one from Local 351 and Local 212 and Local 15 and Local 7. But not one of them reached the floor. These resolutions were pretty flat-footed, courageous, unambiguous and militant, that is, they had all the virtues that would bring both factions of the Resolutions Committee into harmony against them.

Yet, while they were united against the resolutions calling for retraction of the no-strike pledge, the two factions were not agreed on what to present.

The Stalinists presented a minority resolution which simply proposed that "this convention reaffirm its pledge for uninterrupted production of the arms required for the speedy defeat of the Axis powers." The second resolve in the resolution called for the use of "labor's most powerful weapon of political action," not for a Labor Party—God forbid!—but "for the protection of labor's position and for the nationwide adoption of policies required for the most decisive prosecution of the war." In a word, the no-strike pledge all over again without the slightest qualification. The Stalinists do not sell out the labor movement; they *give* it away.

The Reuther majority had other considerations and other forces to deal with. It could not simply reaffirm the no-strike pledge in face of the growing and even bellicose demand for its recall. At the same time, for reasons set forth above, it could not propose the outright recall of the pledge, either. Characteristically, therefore, it proposed a weasel-worded formula, aimed at appeasing everybody, and ending with really satisfying nobody.

The pledge was reaffirmed in its resolution, too—"without any qualification" read an amendment which Reuther accepted. But, added this bold labor statesman, "in those plants where management is not bargaining in good faith and is taking advantage of the war situation and labor's no-strike pledge to destroy collective bargaining, the International Executive Board shall"—shall what? Shall reassert the right of the workers to strike? Nothing of the kind! It shall "urge

government operation of such plants" and the elimination of profits!

How brave, how radical, how menacing that sounds! That is just what it was meant to do—to *sound* radical and menacing. But like every club that Reuther wields, it is a bladder full of wind. The Executive Board shall "urge" the government. But it requires no miracles of memory to recall that the Executive Board has "urged" before this, and what is more, has pleaded and whined and whimpered and wailed. Results for labor and the union: zero and less. Therefore? Therefore the leaders decide that from now on they shall... urge, plead, whine, whimper and wail. This is absolutely guaranteed to make a profound impression upon the government. It is obviously a splendid substitute for the right to strike.

The delegates entered the convention disarmed by the no-strike pledge. They left the convention no better equipped to defend themselves than when they went in.

Fourth Term or a Labor Party?

As with the right to strike, so with the question of political action. There was no lack of resolutions from locals in favor of forming an independent Labor Party, not a few generations hence, but now. These resolutions never reached the floor, either. The debate occurred, instead, on the question of endorsing Roosevelt for a fourth term.

The Stalinists as usual took the more reactionary position. Their resolution called for the endorsement of Roosevelt without let or hindrance or qualification of any kind. The Reutherites were firmly determined to sell labor's support at no less a price than a few kind words. Their resolution called to support of "the President and true progressives in an effort to achieve sound and progressive steps including: rollback of prices; end speculation and war profiteering; revision of the Little Steel formula to permit economic justice to America's wage earners; a democratic rationing program," and more of the same.

Then came the "threat," that is, the bladder full of wind: "On the basis of an aggressive effort of the President and his Administration to fulfill this program, the membership of the UAW-CIO will mobilize its total resources for a campaign for the reelection of President Roosevelt for a fourth term, the reelection of Vice-President Wallace, and the election of a progressive Congress."

But if the President and his Administration make no more of "an aggressive effort... to fulfill this program" than they have made up to now—what then? Then? Then? Well... what can we do? The bladder isn't even full of wind, and it isn't even a real bladder. Reuther has a solid block of vacuum in his hand.

As his brother, Victor, explained the ever-so-secret strategy, the whole resolution is a clever hoax for Roosevelt to put over on the "reactionary Southern Democratic bloc." If Roosevelt is given a blank check by labor, he must succumb, poor devil that he is, to the pressure of the Southern bloc. If, however, labor strikes an ominous pose and strikes out with the thunderous prose of Walter and Victor Reuther, Roosevelt will be able to go to his Southern friends and say: "Better give in on a couple of points, boys, if you want me to keep labor's votes so that you can keep your places."

A marvelous strategy! A powerful political concept! Snake oil is like water in comparison. To be sure, it has a little defect. It is not only obvious, but it has been used—*by* Roosevelt and *against* labor!

It is Roosevelt who has gone to labor and said: "If you let me strangle you slowly, I think I can resist the pressure of the Southern Democrats who demand that your throats be slit at one stroke." Whereupon Murray and Reuther reply: "Let us really outwit the Southerners. We will strangle ourselves. We will deprive them of their argument in favor of throat-slitting by showing them we have practically stopped breathing!" Is that not, after all, the way our labor leaders "voluntarily" gave up the right to strike?

"Who appointed the War Labor Board?" asked Emil Mazey, of Local 212, the only delegate who spoke up for a Labor Party. "Who appointed the people to the rationing program? . . . Who appointed McNutt, the 'Hoosier Hitler,' as the director of the Manpower Commission? Each and every one of those appointments was made by the President of the United States!"

But Mazey's voice was lost in the convention. Why? He expressed more authentically than anyone else in the convention the sentiments of the really progressive and militant elements in the union. Why didn't these sentiments find a louder voice and a more organized form?

The Progressives in the UAW

Who can be called a "progressive" in the UAW today? Given the labor movement as it is, and the problems it faces, we would describe as progressive—not as revolutionary socialists, but as progressive—those militants who stand at least: for a Labor Party, for regaining the right to strike, for a fighting program and a fight to raise wages at the expense of profits. Such a program is a minimum required for the preservation of the union and for laying the basis for its consolidation and advancement.

It should, of course, be added that it is not enough to "have" such a program; it is necessary to fight for it and fight for it in an effective, that is, an organized way.

Are there such progressives in the UAW? Not less than thousands. Were they any at the convention? Just how many, did not appear in the discussions; but there were a few and they included articulate and able men.

Reference has already been made to the paper of Brewster Local 365, *Aero-Notes*. Its contents, by and large, were excellent and just what was needed. They breathed an utterly different spirit than the feeble breeze that emerged from the Reutherites. In its October 7 issue, it quoted Local President De Lorenzo as saying that "Effective combatting of the Communist Party elements within the UAW will depend on how successful a Progressive Group can be completely organized on a nation-wide and year-round basis." Elsewhere in the same issue it said: "From all indications, the Mazey-Silvers-De Lorenzo group will lead the onslaught against many of the policies of the outgoing board."

A few militant speeches were delivered by the three local leaders, and they were superior to the other remarks by far. But the "onslaught" did not materialize. To the observer, it was evident that the progressives were not a group, that they were not organized on a "nation-wide and year-round basis." As against the Stalinists, they rightly supported the Reuther group. But they were not as clearly separated from that group as the situation demanded and made possible.

The Stalinists have launched a campaign of blackmail and intimidation against the three local leaders, and designated them as the "Trotskyists." Naturally, not one of the three is a Trotskyist, and does not deserve the honor. But for all their

irresoluteness and unpreparedness, they have taken a position publicly in favor of a progressive program, and that is what gives the Stalinists their fit of rabies.

What men like Mazey and De Lorenzo do is not decisive, but it is important. Still more important is what the progressives in the union ranks do. They are facing grave tests, just as the union itself does. The continuation of the present union policy and leadership means disaster, sooner rather than later. Both must be changed. It is not a job for overnight. It depends precisely on "how successful a progressive group can be completely organized on a nation-wide and year-round basis."

No serious steps have yet been taken to do this. The progressives confined themselves to isolated and individual actions. They were obviously hesitant about constituting themselves as a group independent of Reuther and Co. They undoubtedly feared that an "onslaught" might play into the hands of the Stalinists, who would subject their action to the uttermost demagogical exploitation. But that fear is as valid as the fear of Reuther that the organization of a Labor Party might play into the hands of the "Southern Democrats." The answer the progressives give Reuther on this point applies with no less force to their own situation inside the union.

The convention is over, but not the problems nor the fight to solve them correctly. Hope for the future lies entirely in the organization of genuine progressive forces in the UAW—and elsewhere. Not organization at the last minute, one day before the next convention, but organization from this moment on.

If this is not done, then between Stalinism on one side and Reutherism on the other, the union as it was will be gutted. If it is done, and done well, the UAW will not only remain the vanguard of labor, but move on to great victories in the tradition of the triumphant battles that gave it birth.

M. S.

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Does America Have a Foreign Policy?

Willkie Breaks Some Ground

The current myth, zealously pursued in some political quarters, is that the United States has no foreign policy. In recent months, two books have appeared devoted to this problem. It would be correct to say, however, that Wendell Willkie's book, *One World* (Simon & Schuster, publishers; 86 pages, \$1.00), complains, not so much against the absence of a foreign policy as it does against the specific policy of the Roosevelt Administration, or the lack of a forthright statement of its policy. Walter Lippmann, in his *U. S. Foreign Policy*, does make the direct charge that "for nearly fifty years the nation has not had a settled and generally accepted foreign policy."

In the case of Wendell Willkie, we are presented with a political statement on foreign policy which is in the nature of an electoral campaign against the incumbent President. Willkie is a politician in his purpose. Lippmann, on the other hand, offers himself as a politically disinterested student of the world needs of American imperialism.

Although Willkie's book has enjoyed an unprecedented sale and circulation, resulting in an enormous influence for his views, Lippmann's contribution is equally as important a treatise on the specific question of foreign policy since he has published the views of a stronger group of the American bourgeoisie, a more openly imperialist wing. We shall return to Lippman in another article.

In a manner of speaking, the former presidential candidate wrote a political *Gulliver's Travels*, which is pedestrian in style and superficial in content. But this is all minor, for the essence of the report on his travels is to propose in general, and in the most indefinite way, a new *orientation* (not policy) in foreign relations.

The simplicity of Willkie's ideas may reflect his "Hoosier" background, as some have explained, but the fact is that what he has to say can be said simply. Moreover, as a politician, he has sought to make his views widely known and easily understood by millions of Americans, for he intends to pursue the subject in the next big political campaign.

Aside from a light and interesting description of the significance of the airplane in modern travel, and an interesting, though unimportant, description of the personalities he met, the main theme in the book stands out clearly.

Willkie describes world state relations in the following way: The war with the Axis is a great war for freedom and for our "way of life." It is necessary to defeat Germany, Italy and Japan in order to save democracy and capitalism. In this struggle we are allied to three great powers, Great Britain, Russia and China. The alliance, while undebatably necessary, is wrongly weighted. It is too deliberately controlled by the United States and Great Britain. Russia and China have been relegated to minor seats in this alliance, the results of which cannot but be disastrous.

There follows a rather sharp criticism of British imperialism, the imperialism of the "flame and the sword." Willkie prefers the benevolent type, the imperialism of "capital and the dollar." He regards the "flame and the sword" as an unnecessarily expensive and dangerous weapon. And he points

out that "imperialism" (the British method) has resulted in the growth of a world-wide and vigorous anti-imperialist movement of the colonial peoples which will hereafter make it impossible to pursue profitably the "direct" (or the British) method of exploitation of these peoples (as if American imperialism did not pursue the same aims and methods as the occasion required).

He has erected a simple edifice. Repeating what has now been accepted by the whole bourgeois world, he points out that the economic world is a completely interdependent whole, ruling out economic nationalism. As a bourgeois he desires to reconcile the internationalization of capitalist economy with its national base. As a representative of American capitalism, however, he is anxious to produce such a relationship between the powers as will "accord" each a fair share of the world's markets and resources and yet give to the United States, as the outstanding economic power, its predominant share, based, of course, upon its greater needs in the fields of exports and imports (in the first case, capital and finished goods and, in the second place, raw materials).

It is Willkie's thesis that Great Britain is a subordinate economic and political power. Its world possessions and influence, however, are far in excess of its real needs, that is to say, far more than a thriving American capitalism can afford to let her have. He wants to reduce her share of the world market and world resources. To accomplish this economic feat (one that is on the way to being accomplished in the course of the war) the aspirant to the American presidency is compelled to wage what he considers a crusade against "imperialism" in defense of the colonial peoples.

He feels that in this way, America can summon the assistance of these peoples (China, India, the Dutch East Indies) in the "cold" process of economically subordinating England and destroying her empire base. Thus he feigns shock at Churchill's declaration, "We mean to hold what we have." And he becomes particularly furious when this "bricklayer" added that he did not become the King's Prime Minister to "preside over the liquidation of the British Empire."

This fundamental position of British policy, as enunciated by Churchill, he found prevalent among the high officers of the British Navy. He describes a dinner at the Alexandria home of Admiral Harwood, commander of the British Eastern Mediterranean force. There were present ten persons in the naval, diplomatic and consular service. This is how Willkie reports the discussion:

We discussed the war in the detached, almost impersonal way in which the war is discussed all over the world by officers engaged in fighting it, and then the conversation turned to politics. I tried to draw out these men, all of them experienced and able administrators of the British Empire, on what they saw in the future, and especially in the future of the colonial system and of our joint relations with the many peoples of the East.

What I got was Rudyard Kipling, untainted even with the liberalism of Cecil Rhodes. I knew that informed Englishmen in London and all over the British Commonwealth were working hard on these problems, that many of them, for example, were trying to find a formula which will go farther toward self-government than the older concept of "trusteeship." *But these men, executing the policies made in London, had no*

idea that the world was changing. The British colonial system was not perfect in their eyes; it seemed to me simply that no one of them had ever thought of it as anything that might possibly be changed or modified in any way. The Atlantic Charter most of them had read about. That it might affect their careers or their thinking had never occurred to any of them. That evening started in my mind a conviction which was to grow strong in the days that followed it in the Middle East; that brilliant victories in the field will not win for us this war now going on in the far reaches of the world, that only new ideas in the machinery of our relations with the peoples of the East can win the victory without which any peace will be only another armistice.—(Emphasis mine—A. G.)

It should be clear that these men, "executing the policies made in London," were doing their jobs. For, fundamentally, there has been no change in London; the capital is reflected in its servants throughout the Empire. Does Willkie understand this? The whole book shows that he does.

He regards Asia as the next great area of economic exploitation, especially China. Willkie is anything but stupid, and he was quick to see that there is a change in the peoples of that part of the world, i.e., he observed the growing determination of the colonial world to fight imperialism and obtain national independence. He supports national "independence" because he believes that economic imperialism can gain its objectives by a universal application of the "good neighbor" policy, a policy generally pursued by American imperialism, under Roosevelt, to such good advantage.

He found a "new spirit" in Turkey, in the Middle East as a whole, in Russia, in China and in India. Even though he was requested by the President to by-pass India, Mr. Gulliver made sure to include India in his ambulations. The peoples in that part of the world hate British imperialism; they regard the United States differently. That the latter is partially true is explained by the specific direction of American foreign expansion. These people have not been visited by American imperialism and therefore believe that "American business enterprise does not necessarily lead to attempts at political control."

That they are intransigent in opposition to British imperialism, a force which confronts them in their daily life, in great and small things, is obvious from the nature of British ownership, control and supervision of these areas. But it is precisely this hatred of British imperialism in Asia and Near

Asia which Willkie desires to capitalize on for the purpose of advancing American economic interests.

He believes it can be done by "democratic" means, by benevolence, by persuasion, and above all by the overwhelming power of American production. He foresees great vistas of economic prosperity in the hundreds of millions of peoples of the oldest continent, in the enormous wealth of its scarcely tapped resources. But to "develop" Asia, it is first necessary to smash the British Empire and its hold on India.

The proper exploitation of Asia requires peace! It cannot be done in a period of war, unstable relations with the Asiatic countries, especially if they will resist foreign economic penetration; or, on the basis of sharp internal class relations. Thus, Willkie is a staunch bourgeois democrat at home, a "benevolent" economic imperialist abroad. He believes American wealth and its productive apparatus are rich enough to pay for such a policy and he believes its returns will make this investment quite cheap. This, and not remorse of his Commonwealth & Southern past, as one writer believes, is the source of Willkie's "liberalism."

Precisely because he understands the nature of the world, Willkie is aware that to put Britain in its place, it will be necessary to acquire "allies." He sees those allies in the form of China and Russia. They are indispensable links in Asia and Europe to hold the British lion at bay. If such links can be forged, then the future of American imperialism will, in his opinion, be secure for many generations.

There may be objections that this thesis is vague; it lacks the specificity to permit further and deeper analysis. But the extremely general nature of the Willkie policy is not accidental. It is the first public presentation of an orientation that quite probably has not been detailed by its advocates. And its advocates are many, for Willkie is not a lone wolf in this situation. He speaks for a powerful and growing section of the American bourgeoisie whose views are publicly set forth by the *Time-Life-Fortune* group. Willkie is the outstanding political representative of these forces. For this reason alone his views are infinitely more important than the fact that his book lacks a scholarly investigation of foreign policy or is not at this time charted out in detail.

SAM ADAMS.

Notes on Russia in the War

The "Enigma" of Stalinist Policy

As the war goes from one stage to another, the rôle of Russia seems to become more enigmatic. Neither the friendly press nor the unfriendly shows a clear understanding of Stalinist policy. More than one political writer freely admits his perplexity over the matter in its fundamental aspect.

"It all comes down to an issue of whether Stalin is out to make the strongest Russia he can make on national lines or whether Moscow still nurses dreams of international communism." This is the way the plainly baffled foreign editor of the *New York Times* states the problem, without being able, for all his wisdom and authoritative connections, to supply the answer. The formation of a London counterpart of the

Moscow "Free German National Committee," with identical objectives, leads a London correspondent to the gloomy but not very enlightening comment, "What those objectives are is anybody's guess." Raymond Clapper acknowledges that "We do not know what Mr. Stalin wants to do about Germany." Mrs. Anne O'Hare McCormick writes that "Washington is puzzled" by the publication of the Moscow Committee's manifesto, and "nobody in our government pretends to know" what it means. Even such an old hand at European politics as Friedrich Stampfer, the former editor of the social-democratic Berlin *Vorwärts*, finds that "Russia's real intentions toward Germany are still very obscure." These are only sample comments; they all read alike.

Whatever else is not known or understood, this much is: there is a breach between Russia and her Anglo-American allies, and as the war progresses the breach widens in spite of the daily prognostications of an impending common understanding.

Stalin's Conflicts with His Allies

First and foremost there is the question of the "second front." Especially since the defeat of the Germans at Stalingrad, which marked the turning point for the war in Russia, Moscow has persistently and with increasing bluntness demanded that the United States and England open up a large-scale land front in Western Europe. No explanation for the delay in opening this front, good or poor, valid or invalid, has met with the slightest sympathy from the Kremlin. Rather, it has set in motion an active pressure movement of all its supporters in the Allied countries to back its demand.

Secondly, there is the question of the territories "acquired" by Russia between the birth and death of the Hitler-Stalin pact. The Kremlin not only demands that its Western allies acknowledge its sovereignty over these territories, but makes it as plain as words can do that it is in no way disposed to negotiate or even discuss the matter on any grounds but its own.

Thirdly, there is the question of the post-war organization of Europe. The differences here boil down to this: Russia wants a continent cut into as many more or less weak parts as possible, all friendly to her, none under exclusive British or American domination, and as many of them as possible under her domination. The United States, to the extent that its policy has been worked out—and it is not definitive, given the unsettled political disputes of the ruling class, its uncertainty about the future action of the European masses, and uncertainty about British policy, on the one side, and Russian on the other—wants the destruction of Germany as a potential economic and military rival, the establishment of "order" all over Europe, and the financial-economic, if not the physical, domination of the continent by itself, with England as junior partner. England's policy is identical save in one most important respect: she proposes to substitute herself as master of Europe in place of the American claimant, and hopes to achieve this aim by balancing off one power or group of powers on the continent against another, including the balancing off of Russia and the U.S.A.

Flowing from these differences or connected with them is a series of others which make up Russia's complaints and grievances.

The Polish and Yugoslav governments in exile are execrated by the Kremlin but supported by Washington and London. Russia is at war with Finland but her allies are not. Franco's "Blue Division" is at war with Russia, but Washington and London maintain friendly relations with Madrid. Washington, in particular, has flirted openly with all sorts of European reactionary, clerical and semi-fascist elements—like Otto Habsburg, Tibor Eckhardt of Hungary, and others—who represent anti-Russian encirclement to the Kremlin and are decidedly unacceptable to it. Toward de Gaulle, on the other hand, Moscow has displayed a warmth that contrasts with her allies' coolness and even hostility. There are other points of friction and conflict, but these will suffice.

During the period when the war was going badly for Russia, the complaints of the Kremlin were subdued or retired to the obscure background, and the differences presented in the

most moderated form, if at all. Only the call for a second front was heard, and far more as an anguished appeal than as a truculent demand.

Now, however, the accent and tone are different. The moment of greatest peril from the Reichswehr seems to have passed for Russia. She has displayed recuperative powers that no one foresaw or expected. Hitler suffered a terrible defeat at Stalingrad and has certainly had nothing to boast about in Russia since. The Russian armies keep pressing him backward on one front after another, regardless of cost.

Russia's "moral" position, so to speak, or more accurately, her military and political position, is stronger by far than it ever was. "Backward" Russia, after losing millions of her population, tens of thousands of square miles of her territory and no one knows how many millions of her soldiers, is not only continuing her fight upon the longest front in the war, but is engaging the great bulk of the Axis military forces, something around two hundred divisions, and carrying the fight to them at a mounting pitch of intensity. In contrast, her "advanced" Anglo-American allies make the most sensational parade of the fact that they have managed, after weeks or even months of fighting, to throw back the three or four Axis divisions they engaged in Africa, the four or five in Sicily, or the five or six in Italy. The world-wide total casualties of the United States since it entered the war hardly compare with what Russia loses in a few weeks.

These comparisons are not unnoticed in Russia. Now that her position is so greatly improved, and her dependence upon her allies not so acute, the appeal for a second front is present as a brusque demand, not just a front anywhere, but precisely at the point nominated by the Kremlin. Looming behind the demand is the implied threat: *If you do not open such a front, be warned and watch out!*

Watch Out for What?

Watch out for what? That is precisely what Stalin does not tell his allies in the great war for freedom and democracy. Or rather, what he does tell them, directly or indirectly, is so ambiguous, or so incomplete, or so seemingly contradictory, as to drive them frantic with conjecture and bafflement. No calm, and certainly no clarity, prevails nowadays when Russian aims and policy are discussed in the chancelleries of Washington, London, the various governments in exile and, for that matter, of the Axis countries. It is alarm that prevails, and it is heightened by every Russian advance. Among the various dissociated liberals, the alarm has reached the point of hysteria characteristic of this gender in every crisis.

If only the three great statesmen (sometimes the fourth great statesman, Chiang Kai-shek, is included) would sit down in a room and talk over their differences "frankly and sincerely," the whole problem (and they are now quite sure there *IS* a problem, whatever it may be) could be solved, or pretty nearly. At least, such a meeting of minds might reveal just what the devil the problem is.

But it is just such a meeting with Stalin that Roosevelt and Churchill have sought to arrange, up to now without spectacular success. Churchill's first meeting with Stalin in Moscow was a notorious fiasco. Since then, Stalin has been not too politely deaf to the urgent invitations sent him; he has as much as said:

People who are only fighting three or four German divisions and a handful of Japanese regiments at the periphery of the world may have plenty of time for conferences. We,

however, are not in such a fortunate position. Open the western front, take a few dozen Axis divisions off our backs, and we will have more time for talking. As for discussing the fate of the Baltic countries, for that we have no time at all, now or later.

It is therefore quite certain that the forthcoming meeting of the second-rank minds (not the great statesmen themselves, but only their foreign secretaries) will produce nothing worth serious mention so far as solving the fundamental question of Anglo-American-Russian relations is concerned. They may some day get near to a patched-up solution, but much time must yet elapse, many events take place, and many, many more meetings be held before that it is accomplished.

Meanwhile, what is to be watched out for? There is the enigma! Let us try to make it less enigmatic.

Russia's Rulers and Their Aims

The ruling class in Russia is the Stalinist bureaucracy. It is composed of the leaders of all economic and political (including military) life in the country. They are organized, led and controlled by the political machine of the bureaucracy, the so-called Communist Party. This bureaucracy came to power in one of the bloodiest counter-revolutions in history. To achieve its unchecked totalitarian mastery of the country, it not only wiped out all the great achievements of the socialist revolution of 1917 but physically exterminated a whole generation of revolutionists with a thoroughness and cold-blooded cynicism unmatched by any reactionary power in the world, and reduced both worker and peasant to a new kind of state-serf.

This bureaucracy came to power under exceptionally favorable circumstances. Its domain was one-sixth of the world's surface, endowed with tremendous, barely-exploited resources and a population greater than that of any modern power. It was able to traduce the sympathy of toilers throughout the world by adopting as a guise some of the outward trappings of the great working class revolution of the Bolsheviks which it was itself destroying. Its consolidation was favored by the fact that the surrounding capitalist world was gripped for years by the most paralyzing economic crisis in history, and by the fact that there was relative peace in the world.

The causes and circumstances of the rise of this new class have been detailed by us elsewhere. Here it is enough to point out that the Stalinist bureaucracy came to power not only by overturning the power of the proletariat and reducing that class to its subject, but also by just as ruthlessly crushing the elements of capitalism in Russia and the classes representing it. Under Stalin, forced labor went hand in hand with the "extermination of the kulak as a class" and the wiping out of the NEP and the Nepmen. This point is of special importance in understanding Stalinist policy in and after the war. The collectivist bureaucracy does not tolerate sharing power with capitalism (to say nothing of the working class!) *wherever it has the strength to take power exclusively for itself.*

What is the economic basis of the Russian bureaucracy's power? The state-owned, state-centralized, state-managed, state-exploited property which belongs to it collectively and to it alone. From it, it derives its strength, its power, its privilege, its rule. Unless faced with a superior force (and none has yet presented itself), it will not divide this power with any other class, be it capitalist or proletarian.

To defend its rule and privilege, it must defend the economic basis upon which it rests, and repel all social forces that

covet it. Throughout her history, Russia has been defeated by one power after another because she was weak—the master of platitudes and the bureaucracy once said in a speech—and that is why we must become strong. "To become strong" meant, for the bureaucracy as well as for any other modern class, to industrialize the country, to modernize it, to "catch up with and outstrip" the advanced countries. The bureaucracy proceeded to do just that and, as the war has shown, on a titanic scale and with unexpected success. A socialist success? In no way! For the successes of Russian economy were accomplished at the drastic expense of the social position of the working class and to the benefit of its exploiters and rulers. At the same time, however, the successes were accomplished without benefit to the capitalistic elements or classes in Russia, but rather to their detriment; more simply, to the point of their destruction. The bureaucracy will not share its power with any other class.

The Stalinist bureaucracy, at least as well educated politically as the other ruling classes of the world, understood all along that war is inevitable in the modern, capitalist world. In order to strengthen itself, it required time, and if possible, a time of peace. Its foreign policy was therefore directed to postponing the outbreak of the war as long as possible, but also to making such alliances with sections of the capitalist world, or maintaining such divisions and antagonisms within that world, as would reduce the magnitude of a possible attack upon Russia or, inasmuch as war must come sooner or later, to have it occur as an inter-capitalist conflict. Hence, Stalin's famous "pacifism," the Litvinoviad, the "collective security" policy, coupled with less publicized attempts to ally Russia with one bloc of capitalist nations against another.

That kind of "pacifism," however, is related to war as reactionary nationalism is related to expansion and conquest—it precedes it and prepares for it. The inevitable Second World War, as the rulers of the world, Stalin included, knew and know, would have for its aim the redivision of the world in favor of the victors. More clearly than any of the other powers, perhaps, the Stalinist bureaucracy understood that the war meant redrawing the map of Europe, of Asia and all the other continents. Hitler was a pacifist for years—in preparation for the war, a nationalist for years—in preparation for conquest. Similarly (though not identically) with American imperialism. Likewise, Russia.

The Basis of Russian Expansion

Russia? Russia expand? Is that possible? What about Stalin's theory of "socialism in one country"? And his protestations that he does not covet an inch of foreign soil, any more than he will yield an inch of his own? He did yield; and he did covet. Now he intends to yield nothing, and to acquire as much of what he covets as possible.

To think of the Stalinist bureaucracy as guided strictly by some abstract formula ("socialism in one country"), is the sheerest abstractionism. It does not sit down before a meticulously drawn map of the Soviet Union and say: "We go as far as these frontiers and not an inch farther. Within them we shall always sit tight because our theory of socialism in one country will not let us go beyond them."

The Russian bureaucracy is inhibited by nothing but superior force—not by theoretical considerations or any other abstractions. And it is a ruling class whose rapacity has few equals in the world. In none of the democratic capitalist countries, at least, is labor so intensely exploited as in Russia. In

none of them are the rights of the masses so shamelessly ignored. In none of them is the disparity between the social position of the aristocracy and that of the masses so great. But it is not mere desire, "free will," that impels the bureaucracy to expand wherever its strength makes expansion possible. There is a stronger, more compelling force.

No country in the world today, whatever its social character, can stand still and remain independent, at any rate, not for long. The present world tends more and more to be divided into a few of the advanced and powerful economic countries who enjoy independence, and the other that stagnate or regress economically and inevitably fall into economic and then political dependency upon the few. For a country (and the ruling class in it) to survive as an independent entity, in our time especially, requires an extension of its economic (and therefore its political) power. That holds for the capitalist countries. That holds for Stalinist Russia, which is not capitalist. (That would hold for a working class republic, even if in a different sense.)

The idea that Russia can expand its economic power indefinitely within the frontiers of what was the Soviet Union on August 22, 1939, and in disregard of the expansion of the big countries outside those frontiers, is a first-class illusion which is not, however, shared by the Stalinist bureaucracy. It understands the world situation; it realizes the problem; it knows better, even if some of its apologists do not.

Living amidst a hundred countries of more or less equal strength which would themselves be living a static existence within their own respective frontiers, Stalinist Russia would, or at least might, also continue a static existence within its former frontiers; that is, it would continue to "reproduce" itself or to expand only "internally." But this is of course a fantasy of fantasies. In actuality, Russia, like all other countries, lives in a world partitioned by a declining number of great powers, each of which can survive only at the expense of the others. That is what "expand or die" means for the old capitalist powers like Germany, the United States, England and Japan. Russia must keep pace with their expansion. In a physically limited world, this also means: resist, or confine, their expansion. Otherwise, Russia would eventually be overwhelmed by one or another of the powers that had succeeded in becoming the single, or one of two, super-giants in the world.

In other words, for all the social (not socialist!) differences that mark her off from the capitalist world, Russia is nevertheless confronted with the same problem and driven by the same impulsion as every other country in the world. The important difference between country and country (other considerations—like geographical position, for example—being equal) lies in comparative physical strength, backed, of course, by economic strength. Norway cannot dream of aspiring to the ambitions of Yugoslavia, or Italy to those of France, or France to those of Russia, or Russia to those of the United States.

Russia's "Defensive" Expansion

It may be, and has been, said: Is it not a fact, however, that Russia's occupation of border countries is merely a defensive measure, aimed at acquiring strategical outposts that would discourage or blunt attacks from aggressor nations? And is it not a fact that these border countries were not really sovereign in the first place, or that, in any case, their occupation for defensive purposes by Russia saved their tenuous sovereignty from being overturned by aggressor nations? Is it

better for Lithuania to be under Hitler's domination, or Stalin's? Does Bessarabia really belong to Russia, not to Rumania?

Implicit in these questions are the arguments made by really innocent people, but above all by the Stalinists, by their apologists of the Arthur Upham Pope type, by the liberals who trail them and, alas, by some "Trotskyists." But the arguments are replete with confusion, chauvinism, cynicism and downright mendacity.

IF it could be shown that the seizure of these countries brought *freedom* to the peoples of the occupied territories, and thereby advanced the cause of freedom in other subject or semi-subject countries, it would be the right and duty of every real socialist, and even of every consistent democrat, to defend the action. But nobody in the wide world can show that.

Let us take the case of Poland. The incorporation of its eastern section into Russia reduced the inhabitants to slaves of the bureaucracy, or, as Trotsky put it with an incomprehensible modification, to "semi-slaves" of Stalin. What is more, it was accomplished as a by-product, or a joint product, of the reduction of Western Poland to "full-fledged slaves" of Hitler. The same holds true for the other seizures. The same will hold true for the other "defensive" conquests made by Russia in collaboration with its present imperialist allies.

Given the above consideration, the second argument stands out in its hoary reactionary nakedness. The United States occupied the Philippines to "protect" them from Spain and continued to occupy them to "protect" them from Japan. Japan now occupies them to "protect" them from the United States. Similarly, England protects India from other aggressors and, just incidentally, exploits and oppresses the Indians. Germany's "protectorate" over Czechoslovakia and the rest of Europe is equally notorious and instructive. In every such case, the imperialist apologists will say, informally, to be sure, "Granted, we are not ideal overlords. But the others who would take over if we withdrew are so much worse!" The more blatant imperialists simply say, "This is our mission." The language is classic. But we still believe that the Philippines belong to the Filipinos, who must have the right to rule themselves, and Bessarabia belongs to the Bessarabians, and not to a "Russia" which actually means a counter-revolutionary bureaucracy.

It is sometimes lamely argued by the more radical apologists: "But under Lenin, too, Russia crossed borders, conquered territories—in the Far East, in Tannu Tuva, in Georgia, in Poland, Where is your internationalism?" The similarity is only superficial. Under Lenin, the conquests of the Red Army brought freedom, or at least the beginnings of freedom, and extended the realm of socialism. Under the Stalinist bureaucracy, the conquests of the Russian army bring the end of all freedom for the working class. The difference, as Lenin used to say curtly, is enough for us.

The third argument is also classic and no less mendacious. Washington on the Potomac had to be defended by occupying the Gulf of Panama under the first Roosevelt, and by occupying Iceland under the second. To defend London on the Thames, England established a world empire, each part of which was occupied to defend the part preceding it in the series. To defend Berlin, Hitler first took the Rhine, then the Danube, then Danzig and found that he required for the defense of all of them—Cairo on the Nile. If the defense of Leningrad on the Neva and Odessa on the Black Sea requires the

seizure of Kaunas on the Niemen and Jassy on the Pruth, why does not the defense of Kaunas require the occupation at least of Königsberg, if not of Warsaw on the Vistula, and so on and on and on?

If, as Stalin said in his 1942 May First order of the day, "We want to free our brother Ukrainians, Moldavians, White Russians, Lithuanians, Latvians, Estonians and Karelians from the insults to which they have been subjected by the German fascist beasts"—why not "free" in the same way the other peoples who have been subject to insults no less gross? What is the criterion? The 1939 frontiers of the Soviet Union? But that would exempt at least the Lithuanians, Latvians and Estonians from the blessed freedom. The frontiers of old Czarist Russia? But that would mean a "gay, prosperous and happy" life not only for the Lithuanians, Latvians and Estonians, but also for the Poles and Manchurians, and a virtual protectorate over Servia and Bulgaria. "Blood brotherhood"? But the "racial" criterion would bring under Stalinist "freedom" half the populations of Europe and Asia. Are the Poles and Slovenes less racially akin to the Great Russians than the Lithuanians; the Hungarians and Finns less than the Karelians; the Chinese and Tibetans less than the Kirghiz and Buriats; the Turks and Iranians and Afghans less than the Turkmen, Kazakhs, Uzbeks, Tadjiks and Beluchistanians? (To mention the Volga Germans would be indelicate.)

The incorporation of any or all such countries and peoples into the USSR would be fitting, desirable and greatly contributive to progress and freedom, *IF* it was a free Union, *IF* it was Soviet, *IF* it was Socialist, *IF* it was a Republic. But it is none of these. It is as much a republic as Germany; it is the land where socialists are most fiercely hounded in the world; the soviets have been abolished in it; and the "Union" is an empire of the Great-Russian bureaucrats who have deprived the people of the peripheral "republics" of their most elementary rights, including autonomy and self-rule.

That the Russian ruling class wants the "border" countries for defense, is true, but not in the sense of its apologists. It aims to conquer and keep them for the defense and extension of the bases of its power, its privilege, its rule. It seeks their natural resources, their industrial plants and their populations—control, exploitation and militarization of which would enhance its wealth, its power, its resistivity to attack, and the weight of its voice in world affairs. This should not be so hard to understand after the events of recent years.

Naturally, there are limitations to the imperialist ambitions of the Stalinist bureaucracy. But these are not limitations set by some fundamental principle, or an abstract theory or formula. They are determined concretely, at every given stage, by the relationship of forces. Specifically: by the relationship of forces between Russia and both its capitalist allies and opponents, on the one hand, and by the relationship of forces between Russia and the working class and revolutionary socialist movements, on the other.

The Duality of Foreign Policy

This dual relationship expresses itself in an apparent duality of foreign policy. It is this duality that creates the dilemma in the mind of the bourgeois politicians and analysts as to just what Russian aims are. The famous enigma is revealed when the duality is analyzed, separated into its parts. In doing so, we get a clearer idea of the radical difference between the

policy of Stalinist imperialism and the policy of capitalism imperialism.

First part: Where the Stalinist bureaucracy does not dominate the working class and the labor movement, be it by persuasion or by violence; and where an attempt to overturn capitalism (we are assuming conditions when such an attempt is possible) would promptly bring reprisals against Russia by strong capitalist powers in a position to execute them; and especially where geographical remoteness makes the physical control of the country by Moscow extremely difficult—in such countries the Russian bureaucracy works to prop up capitalist rule, and to maintain a capitalist government. It prefers a democratic government, so that its agents, above all the Communist Party, may be free to work and exert pressure in its behalf, and a "strong" democratic government which will hold in check or suppress anti-Russian extremists from the right or working-class and revolutionary anti-Stalinists from the left. In any case, the government must be friendly to Russia, if not outrightly pro-Russian.

Thus, the Russian ruling class is interested in preserving capitalism only if a genuinely socialist revolution threatens. Against such a revolution, it always has and always will unite with the capitalist class. In this respect, as in all others, it shows that it is a thousand times closer to capitalism in its social type, its social inclinations, interests and instincts, than it is to socialism. The most striking example of how this policy worked out was the rôle played by Russia and its henchmen in the Spanish Revolution and the Spanish Civil War. It is playing the same rôle today in the revolutionary situation in France and Italy, and *may* (we shall soon see why the word "may" is used) follow the same rôle tomorrow in the revolutionary situation in Germany.

Second part: Where the Stalinists do dominate the mass movement; and where the world bourgeoisie is not in a very good position to prevent an overturn of capitalism by the bureaucracy; and where geographical conditions facilitate not only such an overthrow but also physical control by the Kremlin and its police—in such countries the bureaucracy tolerates neither the rule nor the existence of the capitalist class, democrats and fascists included. Such countries, under such conditions, it seeks to annex and subjugate. The well known examples are the three Baltic countries, Bessarabia, etc. It will be remembered that they were seized and, unlike Spain, capitalist property in them was wiped out, at a favorable moment, that is, when neither the Axis nor the Allies could do anything to prevent it.

Once this is understood, the heart of the enigma has been reached, the mystery is unveiled. Then, retracing our steps to the differences between Russia and her capitalist allies, we can see that they all pertain not so much to the "conduct of the war" as to the post-war period or, more specifically, to the repartitioning of the world after the war, to the division of the spoils. This applies as much to the difference over the "second front" as to the others.

Russia's imperialist program for the post-war world is not too difficult to ascertain. To describe it is to see how reactionary it is in every respect.

Russia's Imperialist Program

In Eastern Europe: The annexation of Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Southern Finland, the Western Ukraine and White

Russia, Bessarabia and Bukovina is openly demanded and declared to be beyond debate.*

But these annexations are not the limit. Always remembering the indispensable prerequisite of a favorable relationship of forces, Russia aims at having, as a minimum, vassal governments in Poland proper, in Finland, in Bulgaria and if not in all of Yugoslavia, then at least in Servia. As a maximum, the complete occupation, domination and annexation of all these countries, including the expropriation of the native capitalist class (as well as, remember, the working class and peasantry) and the seizure of all property by the bureaucracy. Success in such an audacious program means also, as the map will immediately show, the finish of Rumania as well.

In the Near East: As a minimum, "free passage" through the Dardanelles and down to the Persian Gulf. As a maximum, return of the territory lost to Turkey through the Brest-Litovsk Treaty (Kars region), the occupation of bases on the Dardanelles and Bosphorus, and either a protectorate over or occupation of Iran, in whole or in part. The Russian demands on Turkey were revealed to Hitler and von Ribbentrop (according to these gentlemen) in the famous meeting they had with Molotov just before June 22, 1941. There is no particular reason, in the given case, for granting greater credence to Molotov's subsequent denials than to Hitler's and Ribbentrop's asseverations.

In Asia: A minimum of the northwestern provinces of China, including most of Sinkiang, Shensi, Suiyuan, Kansu, Chinghai, Ninghsia and Sinkiang, with a population of over 20,000,000. A maximum—provided there is a collapse and defeat of Japan—of most or all of Manchuria.

Is the realization of so breath-taking a program guaranteed? Let us underscore right here that we believe no such thing. Is it the *program* of the Stalinist bureaucracy? This we most decidedly believe. Is its realization *possible*? Yes, entirely possible, in our opinion—provided the Kremlin finds the circumstances favorable for it. The circumstances are of two kinds: one, the weakness of the revolutionary socialist and nationalist movements; two, inability, for any reason, of Russia's allies to stop her expansion.

What indications are there that this is the Stalinist program and that steps have been taken in the direction of realizing it?

How the Kremlin Is Preparing

1. Stalin has successfully maneuvered a break with the Polish "government in exile" in London. In Moscow, he has set up a completely servile Polish National Committee, with a full-sized apparatus, including a radio station and, what is more important, a now highly-trained, highly-mechanized Stalinist division of Poles, the Kosciuczko Division. How suc-

*We will no more allow a discussion of whether Lithuania belongs to us than the United States would discuss the frontiers of California or New Mexico, argue the Stalinists. The comparison is revealing. The southwestern states referred to by the Stalinists were acquired by the classic methods of imperialist rapine! Do the Kremlin and the *Daily Worker* mean to say that the Baltic states were acquired in the same way? Moreover, states like California, New Mexico and Texas, whatever their origin, have been an integral part of the U.S.A. for almost a hundred years. They enjoy equal rights with all other states, and differ from them in no important cultural, linguistic or political respect. In none of them is there any movement or desire for "national independence." To compare them with the three Baltic states is at once odious and stupid, i.e., Stalinistic. One might wonder why the Stalinists do not make a really appropriate comparison, namely, with the countries forming the colonial empire of France, England or the United States, countries like Morocco, India, Hawaii and Panama. The answer is, *They do!* See, for example, Alter Brody, in the *New Masses*, June 15, 1943. His article is a magnificent example of the Stalin-imperialist mentality and argumentation. We hope this footnote rescues it from undeserved oblivion.

cessful the agitation and organization work carried on among Polish prisoners and deportees in Russia has been, we do not know. But undoubtedly it has been intensive. Stalin can appear in Poland tomorrow with a well-integrated force, not only Polish, but backed by the vast apparatus (to say nothing of the "Red" Army of the Kremlin). How much resistance will the "government in exile" be able to offer? In any case, much more will be offered by the rank and file revolutionary underground movement. Just how much, remains to be seen.

2. Finland seems to be just about at the end of her rope. The fact that Stalin has remained ice-cold and silent to the recent all-but-public appeal by the Finns for a "decent" peace, is significant. Stalin is in no mood for a "decent" peace with the Finns. If the military situation continues to improve for him, tomorrow will find the Kremlin even more peremptory and exigent in its demands on Finland. For Germany, it does not ask "unconditional surrender." For Finland, it may very well ask just that. Meanwhile, somewhere in the Kremlin files lies the easily-dusted-off "Finnish People's Government" of O. W. Kuusinen.

3. In Yugoslavia, from all reports, the Stalinists have been steadily gaining strength at the expense of the Greater Serbian imperialist force of Mikhailovich. The "Partisans" do not seem to be a Stalinist army, but the fact of Stalinist control (or at the very least, Stalinist decisive influence) in it seems to be well established. In one respect, the situation is more favorable in Yugoslavia for the Stalinists than in Poland—in the former country they have a substantial armed force right on the spot, with the only other armed native claimant for power, Mikhailovich, increasingly discredited, even though by no means a negligible force for that.

4. In Bulgaria, in spite of the savage persecutions to which it has been subjected for more than twenty years, the Communist Party, whose strength is difficult to judge, nevertheless seems to be the only organized force among the masses, apart from the army. Among the population in general, and even in higher circles, including the military, a pro-Russian orientation has not only been maintained but, it seems, strengthened. Bulgaria is not yet officially at war with Russia and very likely will not be. A collapse in that country, originating there or following a general European collapse, would undoubtedly create conditions favorable to Stalinist control or, at least, to decisive Russian political influence.

5. In Iran, something like half the country is already occupied by Russian troops and the "Iranian government" is just about as independent as the Slovenian government of Father Tiso. Although the other half is formally occupied by the British, there are indications that it is American influence and control that are growing in the country. Oil has an attractive smell. Nevertheless, Stalin is there and is fairly well entrenched. It is hard to believe that "after the emergency is over," the Russian troops and commissars will simply walk out of the country of their own accord and with a brief "Good-bye and thank you."

6. The Stalinists—Russian, not Chinese—have been dominant in Sinkiang for several years now. Russian "advisers," who are to be found everywhere in this Chinese province, pretty much dictate all policy. Not only has the provincial army been built and trained by Russian officers and equipped with Russian armaments, but Russia has long maintained garrisons of her own troops in a number of strategic Sinkiang cities. Freedom of speech is generously allowed if you say nothing anti-Russian. How closely controlled Sinkiang's po-

litical life is may be judged from the fact that the "purges" in Russia are paralleled in the province. When the GPU head, Yagoda, was shot in Moscow, his man, head of the Bureau of Public Safety in Tihua, Sinkiang's capital, was shot immediately afterward! You can get into Sinkiang only with the approval of Moscow or the Russian diplomatic agent in Lanchow, and if any foreigner has succeeded in entering in the last few years, the fact is certainly not widely known.

The whole of Northwest China could be dominated without too much difficulty from a series of very well equipped Russian air bases, centering in Alma-Ata (where Trotsky was once exiled!), which is just inside the Russian border from Sinkiang, and directly related to the large air bases built by the Russians, with Chinese aid, at Lanchow, Ansi, Hami, Tihua and Ili, and largely manned by Russians. It is hardly necessary to mention the independent and powerful Stalinist Eighth Route Army, which dominates Yen-an with reputedly 100,000 regulars and many times that number of cooperating partisans. For all its self-transformations and avowals of loyalty, it has remained what it was, an arm of the Stalinist régime, successfully exploiting the peasant discontent, and therefore a permanent thorn in the side of the Chinese bourgeoisie. It is noteworthy that just recently the Russian Stalinist press made a special point of its critical attitude toward the Chungking régime of Chiang and his circle, as if to go out of its way to emphasize that in China, too, Russia is intent on playing an independent rôle, by no means confined to altru-

istic gifts of aid and best wishes to the Chungking government.

* * *

Even if all this is granted, it does not yet take up the question that has arisen recently to the top of people's thoughts, namely, what are Russia's intentions toward Germany? No matter how much importance is attached to such countries as Russia's border states, they are not of world-deciding significance. A country like Germany is.

Germany is the key to Europe. Will Russia be the key to Germany? Does Stalin aim to "communize" Germany, as the bourgeois press would say? Can he? Or does he merely want a good, strong, friendly, democratic neighbor in Germany? Just what is the meaning of the mystery-creating "Free German National Committee" set up in Moscow? Are Russia's difference with the Allies over the question of Germany's post-war fate irreconcilable? If not, along what lines may they be reconciled? What rôle may the German workers be expected to play in all this?

Obviously, these are vital questions. For Europe, they are becoming *THE* vital questions, because at bottom Germany remains what she always was—the key to the European (and therefore to the world) situation. But to pursue our analysis along this line requires another article, and we shall come to it in the next issue.

MAX SHACHTMAN.

Philosophy of History and Necessity

A Few Words with Professor Hook

Hook's study of the "hero" is a study of political leadership. Men have always had leaders. *The* leader is an exclusively twentieth century phenomenon. Inseparable today from the question of the leader is the question of the totalitarian party. In the conflicting loyalties of a world in turmoil, the relation between leader, party, class and society is not only Hook's problem. It is the problem of hundreds of millions, and Hook's ideas represent a current of opinion which goes far beyond his modest political coterie. This is one reason why we must follow his argument closely. The second reason is because, as we shall see, his position is, ultimately, the class alternative to Marxism.

"Eventful" and "Event-Making" Men

Hook is at pains to agree with the "orthodox" Marxist theory of great men being the product of their environment. "But," and here begins his "unorthodoxy," "there are individuals in history who not only talk back but react in such a way as to modify the original relations of social interest in a radical way." The first are merely "eventful" men. The second are "event-making" men. The "test-case" (Chap. XI) of his "unorthodoxy" is Lenin and the October Revolution. He licks his lips over the undeniable truths that the Bolshevik Party took the wrong road until Lenin came, that nobody but Lenin could have set it right, and that without Lenin the work of the Bolshevik Party was unthinkable. From this he deduces that the Russian Revolution was due to the character of Lenin.

Hook is very sure of himself. When Trotsky, in his discussion of Lenin's intervention, says that Lenin was the product of the whole past of Russian history, Hook chortles that, inasmuch as such a phrase could explain both the success of the Bolsheviks with Lenin and their failure without him, it is completely irrelevant to the question. "To relapse into outright mysticism, all Trotsky need do is to assert that the existence of a Lenin in Russia in 1917 was assured by the whole past of Russian history." Hook, brushing Lenin aside, asserts that "*the Russian Revolution* [My emphasis—A. A. B.] of October, 1917, was *not* so much a product of the whole past of Russian history as a product of one of the most event-making figures of all time" (page 220). And to make our assurance doubly sure, he quotes: "The greatest bit of chance is the birth of a great man" (page 228). For Russia in 1917 there were alternative paths of development and chance, not necessity, brought Lenin to lead the socialist revolution to success.

"What manner of man," asks Hook sententiously, "was Lenin?" Lenin's characteristics, as he lists them, were: the superb sense of political timing; the stubborn tenacity of purpose; his unsurpassable confidence in himself; party life was "spiritual meat and substance" to him; and (here we get something at last) Lenin "raised the party to the level of a political principle." And this, according to Hook, is "the source of all his deviations from the essentially democratic views of Marx." Thus from Lenin's character grew the totalitarian party.

In reality the truth about great men is exactly the opposite of the delusively simple deductions of Hook. Hook does not

understand the relation of the class to the nation. Lenin was so great precisely because he saw that, *for the class he represented*, there was no alternative course of action. Far from being a gifted individual who took advantage of a national calamity, Lenin was the most representative Russian of modern Russia, embodying in his life and work nearly two centuries of Russian history. Yet this individual is and will always be the greatest practical leader and teacher of international socialism. To understand this is to understand not only the relation of party and leader but the whole problem of our time.

We have given Hook his full say. Let us have ours.

At any given period, the national future is represented by a certain class. The greatest national leader is he whose class basis makes his character and aims the subjective negation of the objective national crisis and thus the most truly representative of the national needs. In all history there is no more typical example of this than Lenin.

The needs of the class are determined by the economic needs of the nation. In the world market of the twentieth century, the problems of every nation and therefore of every class within the nation can be solved only on an international scale. Hence the *proletarian* international basis of Bolshevism, the foundation of the Communist International and the revolutionary internationalism of Lenin and Trotsky. Hence also the *imperialist* "internationalism" of Hitler over Europe, of Japan over East Asia, of Stalin astride Europe and Asia, of Churchill over India and Africa, of Roosevelt over all, and the internecine shambles of imperialist war.

The general type of party is not the creation of the leader but an instrument of the economic needs of the nation as represented by the class. When, as today, the national crisis requires a total economic reorganization of the nation, the party of the class in power will be organized to undertake the revolutionary or counter-revolutionary dictatorship over every sphere of the national life. Hence the all-inclusive character of every modern party of the revolution, like Bolshevism, or of the counter-revolution, like fascism. There the similarity ends. Bolshevism, based on the creative capacity of the masses, now occupies the first place in the economic and political development of Russia during two centuries. In Italy and Germany, fascism has ruined the nation and earned for itself the execration of future generations.

The national characteristics of the revolutionary party vary with the historical circumstances under which it is born and matures. But, as a rule, the more desperate the class struggle, the more characteristic and representative of the class are the party and leader. The national characteristics of Bolshevism are due to the specific circumstances of the young Russian proletariat compelled to oppose the bourgeoisie for the revolutionary leadership of the nation. The revolutionary party was therefore compelled to elevate its proletarian character and proletarian function to the level of a fundamental principle.

But, just for this very reason, Bolshevism has its international application. The class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat is the fiercest class struggle in history. Hence the workers of France, of Germany, of Italy, will of inner necessity found parties of a Leninist type aiming at Lenin's historic purpose.

The Russian Nation and Lenin

In 1776, Jefferson declared the independence of the American bourgeoisie, who drove out the British monarchy. In 1789, the French bourgeoisie declared the rights of the French bourgeoisie (which they called the rights of man) and broke the French monarchy. Contemporaneously, Dunning moved in the English House of Commons that the "power of the Crown has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished." Shortly after, the executive power of the British government began to follow the legislative, into the hands of the bourgeoisie. But in 1773, Pugachev, to impress the peasants he was leading against Czarism, announced himself as a new Czar, Peter III. This aberration was not due to Pugachev's "character." The technological level of Russian production was such that the classes consisted of millions of serfs and their feudal masters, neither of whom could conceive of any other national leadership than the Czar and the Czarist bureaucracy. This national problem remained insoluble until the victory of the proletariat and enin. Yet the territorial extent and geographical situation of Russia made it one of the great powers of Europe. Russia, therefore, was always striving to "catch up with and outstrip" the more advanced countries of the West. Hence, to a degree far exceeding that of any other similar group in Europe, the political leaders in Russia were always *conscious students of international ideas*. Lenin's internationalism was Russian of the Russians.

Peter I, as we know, went in person to Western Europe to study. Catherine the Great corresponded voluminously with Voltaire, Diderot, d'Alembert and Grimm, and her legal codes were compiled directly from the writings of Montesquieu, Beccaria and Blackstone. They were so radical that their circulation in France was forbidden. Her reforms withered under the heat of the French Revolution and the necessity of pandering to the greedy landlords. Alexander I played with liberalism for a while, but when Speranski, his able minister, attempted mild bourgeois reforms, the all-powerful Russian aristocracy broke Speranski. Alexander later became a characteristically Russian ruler of the nineteenth century: he organized "The Holy Alliance" against democracy and was the most active supporter of the European counter-revolution.

Conversely, the Russian Revolution found international roots. Officers of the army, educated in democratic ideas by their long campaigning in Europe against Napoleon, organized themselves on international models, the Italian Carbonari and the German Tugendbund. While Alexander strangled the universities at home, they educated themselves on revolution abroad. When Alexander ordered the Russian guard to crush the Neapolitan uprising, these Russian conspirators became revolutionary. But the only possibility of success for a Russian revolution, the raising of the peasants, this these "liberals" could not encourage. Their rising ended in the Decembrist catastrophe of 1825. Pushkin escaped only by rushing home to destroy incriminating papers. For his *Ode to Liberty* he had been exiled from Moscow. He wrote a *History of the Pugachev Rebellion*; his literary inspiration was the revolutionary Lord Byron. After Waterloo, Russia was preëminently the country of revolution and counter-revolution on a national and international scale.

Precursors of Lenin

From the passionate study of the German idealists, Schelling, Fichte and Hegel, arose a school of Russian idealists, the Slavophiles. They found their solution of Russian misery in

the Russian soul, the product of the Russian commune. Their opponents, Bakunin and Herzen, fought them with an adaptation of the ideas of Western socialism. Fifty years before Lenin, Herzen preached a peasant brand of Russian revolution and world communism. The European revolution would begin at the end of a great war, peasant Russia giving the signal. *Both groups believed that Russia would teach the world.* Gogol wrote *The Inspector*, satirizing the Russian bureaucracy, and his equally famous novel, *Dead Souls*, is named after the Russian serfs; conflict over the revolution and absence from Russia broke his spirit. Belinsky, who, under the influence of Hegel, drew away from the revolution, returned to make literary criticism a weapon of social reform. Herzen and Bakunin went abroad in time to take part in the revolution of 1848, thus beginning that wonderful chapter in the political and intellectual life of Western Europe—the Russian emigration. A Russian army crushed the successful uprising of the workers and students in Hungary. In Russia, the revolutionary organization was broken, the universities were again strangled, and Dostoyevsky received his reprieve on the very step of the scaffold. *The House of the Dead*, the record of his life in Siberia, was for long his most popular work.

Ten years later, Czarism made some attempt to reform the country. But the emancipation of the serfs was sabotaged by the landlords. The zemstvos, a form of municipal government, fell under the influence of the landlords and Czarism. Zamiatin, the reforming Minister of Justice, was dismissed as lightly as was Speranski. Reform or no reform, the incessant revolutionary agitation continued, and Chernychevsky, the great Russian writer and critic, admired by Marx and loved by Lenin, led the nihilist movement. He went to exile and prison for over twenty years for his book, *What Is to Be Done?* Turgenev, like Gogol, quarrelled with the revolutionary movement and, as a result, went abroad, where his genius faded. Ten years later Czarism ordered the Russian students abroad to return home. They brought back what in Russia became populism, the personal crusade among the peasants and, later, terrorism. Nekrassov wrote *Who Can Be Happy and Free in Russia?* Look again at the mere names of those world-famous books. They tell the history of Russia.

It is at this stage that developing capitalism began to produce the Russian proletariat. Marx, in 1873, had already noted the, to him, astonishing grasp and brilliance of his Russian critics (cf. preface to *Capital*, Vol. I, 2nd ed.) But with the appearance of the spontaneous labor movement, Marxism achieved a success in Russia far surpassing that of any other nation in Europe. As Lenin himself says: "Marxian books were published one after another, Marxian journals and newspapers were published, nearly everyone became a Marxist, Marxism was flattered, the Marxists were courted and the book publishers rejoiced at the extraordinary ready sale of Marxian literature" (*Collected Works*, Vol. II, p. 102). When Lenin was fighting for a proper attitude to theory, he based it not only on the general theoretical tradition of Marxism but on the special national characteristics of Russia.*

Farther on we shall deal with the political and organizational duties which the task of emancipating the whole people from the yoke of autocracy imposes upon us. At the moment, we wish merely to state that the rôle of vanguard can be fulfilled only by a party that is guided by an advanced theory.

*We omit any reference to Plekhanov, Tolstoy and Gorky, as their relationship to the Russian Revolution is so familiar.

To understand what this means concretely, let the reader call to mind the predecessors of Russian Social-Democracy like Herzen, Belinsky, Chernyshevsky and the brilliant band of revolutionists of the Seventies; let him ponder over the world significance which Russian literature is now acquiring; let him . . . Oh! but that is enough!

This is the stock from which Lenin came. It was the absence of a bourgeoisie to lead the nation which shaped these generations of intellectuals and great writers (surpassed by none in the nineteenth century) who reached their culmination and fulfillment in the Bolshevik Party and the proletariat at the head of the Russian nation. What Hook so dully calls Lenin's superb sense of political timing was the grasp of the historic process, the sense of the international political situation, the insight into the ebb and flow, particularly the flow, of revolutionary dynamics on the grand scale. These made him the strategist that he was. And all this was the heritage of a long Russian tradition which found its fullest fruition in Marxism.

The tenacity of purpose, the unsurpassable confidence in himself was, like so much in Lenin and Bolshevism, the highest point of a generation which had, by and large, assimilated the lessons of the numerous generations sacrificed in the ceaseless efforts to overthrow Czarism, an overthrow which became more imperative with every year that passed. If Lenin insisted that revolution was a profession, it was because revolution had been more or less of a profession in Russia for three generations. He tells us why he raised the party to the level of a political principle. In his early essay, *Where to Begin*, he says that "it would be too late to start building such an organization in the midst of uprisings and outbreaks." And for proof that he was concretely responding to what was going on around him he writes a page or two further on, "Before our very eyes, broad masses of the urban workers and the 'common people' rushed into battle, but the revolutionaries lacked a staff of leaders and organizers."

If Lenin insisted on one kind of party, it was because he and so many other Russians knew that all other kinds of parties had been tried in Russia and failed. Above all, the history of Russia had taught them that the Russian bourgeoisie could not be depended upon in the struggle against Czarism, and that, therefore, the main business of the new party was to keep the influence of the bourgeoisie away from the proletariat. That did not come from Lenin's "character." It was the product of the whole past of Russia.

The Bourgeois "Heroes"

Let us illustrate this from the opposite class, the rôle of the bourgeois "heroes" of Russia. The ablest bourgeois of Lenin's generation was Witte. As a Czarist minister, he organized and financed the primary capitalistic development of Russia—the railways. He reorganized the financial system and pushed Russian imperialist interests in China and Persia. He sought foreign loans but tried to extricate Russia from the grip of foreign capital. In typical Russian fashion, the court camarilla had him dismissed in 1903. Czarism brought him back in the crisis of 1905. He proposed reforms. They were officially accepted but sabotaged by the other departments. He was made Prime Minister of the first constitutional cabinet. But he had to fight against the revolutionary workers on the one hand and Czarism on the other. When he asked his Minister of Agriculture to prepare a bill dealing with the land question on the basis of giving some land to the peasants,

the court had him dismissed. Trotsky, who did not pay compliments to class enemies, described him as having both brains and character. Witte detested the cruelties of Nicholas, which he called senseless. He was a man of vision and a man of wit.

Here clearly was a bourgeois of superior caliber. The able Stolypin, who followed Witte, shared the fate of Speranski and Zamiatin. Such were the attempts to bourgeoisify Russia from the top. The bourgeoisie itself never had a single outstanding leader. The bourgeois party, the Cadets, was founded only in 1905 and was in a hopeless position from the beginning. When Witte offered Miliukov, the Cadet leader, a place in his cabinet in 1905, that "hero" refused. The liberals, he knew, dared not break their alliance with the workers; for Czarism would immediately break them. Yet they could not lead the revolutionary workers against Czarism, for they depended on Czarism to suppress the revolution.

The history of all Russian bourgeois "heroes" is a Kerenskiad. Miliukov was to become a minister for two months in 1917, when the workers threw him out. The next leader of the Russian bourgeoisie was the petty bourgeois socialist and hanger-on of the bourgeoisie, Kerensky, who was soon compelled to turn to Kornilov. After Kerensky, the leaders of the Russian bourgeoisie were Kornilov, Kolchak and Denikin, Czarist generals. Finally the hopes of Russian restoration depended upon the terrorist adventurer, Savinkov.

Compare this miserable sequence of futile "heroes" with the magnificent line of great Russians from Pushkin to Lenin, whose genius, rejecting Czarism, could find material support at last only in the Russian proletariat.

The concrete October Revolution is the only one we have before us for analysis and to that a Lenin was no accident but as organic as Czarism itself. To make a Lenin an historical accident, you have to presuppose a Russian bourgeoisie capable of opening out a new road for the nation. The whole past of Russia shows that this was exactly what it could not do. As to the outstanding rôle Lenin played inside his own party, even Marxist histories tend to give it a false significance. Lenin fought for the Bolshevik principles in 1903, and won. He was constantly winning, which means that he expressed ideas which stood the test of practice. The proletariat as a whole, at all critical moments, followed the Bolsheviks.

More important than this, however, is the fact that the Russian proletariat taught and disciplined Lenin and the Bolsheviks not only indirectly but directly. Basically, the organization of the party paralleled the organization of the pro-letariat in revolution. In 1917, Lenin thought the struggle hopeless, and was thinking of giving it up. A few weeks afterward came the massacre of January, and the magnificent response of the Russian proletariat revived the faltering leader. The proletariat created the soviets. The Bolsheviks learned here to understand the vitality and creative power of the proletariat in revolution. In 1917, Lenin despaired of the revolution within his lifetime. A few weeks later, the Russian proletariat rid the nation of Czarism. The great change of policy in April was only a manifestation of the essential policy of the Bolshevik Party, to express and organize the instinctive desires and aims of the proletariat. "Dictatorship over the proletariat," indeed! It was the Russian proletariat that drove the bourgeoisie out of the factories. Trotsky, in his *History of the Russian Revolution*, noted, and not for the first time, that the revolutionary masses were to the left of the party.

The proletariat repeatedly led the Bolsheviks and gave Lenin courage and wisdom. Between 1890 and 1921 the inter-relation between leader, party, class and nation was indivisible. The transformation of Bolshevism into totalitarianism is adequately dealt with in the literature of Trotskyism. The analysis is embodied in history and the lessons are plain. With the proletariat or against it, that is the future of every modern nation. The secret of Lenin's greatness is that he saw this so clearly, and he saw this so clearly because this choice was the inescapable product of the whole past of Russia. What was the necessity of this particular individual Russian, Lenin, to the inner necessity of Russian economic development, is a more ample and at the same time a more subtle question, fully explicable only in terms of the Hegelian categories, possibility, actuality, necessity, chance, etc. Experience has shown that the last man from whom one can expect any understanding of this is Hook, professor of philosophy, and author of *From Hegel to Marx*.

Hook's "Purpose"

Hook hasn't written all this stuff without aim. What, he asks, would have been the consequence for history if the October Revolution had not occurred or, occurring, had failed? (page 210).

The Constituent Assembly would "in all likelihood" have converted Russia into a constitutional republic on the model of France and England. Henceforth only quotation is credible.

The preponderance of socialist sentiment guaranteed a highly advanced system of social legislation. The banks and some of the basic public services and industries would probably have been socialized, but there would have been no collectivization of industry.

For seventy years the Russian bourgeoisie was futility itself. For seven long revolutionary months the Mensheviks and the Social-Revolutionaries socialized nothing. No matter. Hook calmly assumes that those who preferred to perish rather than socialize would have socialized if they had not perished. Now does it begin to appear why Marx and Lenin were so savage against people who persist in asking if something else could not have happened?

So much for Russia. Now for the world.

The Russian market would have been opened as a vast field for European industry. The catastrophic world crisis which began in 1928 would have probably been deferred, and in any event its effects appreciably mitigated when it did occur.

All prevented by the "hero," Lenin. A truly "heroic" theory of crisis. Now for fascism.

Fascist parties would have existed as political sects, but fascism as a mass movement would not have developed in the face of a United European working class.

If Lenin's father had died before Lenin was conceived, then we would have been spared fascism.

Now for World War II.

But in the West, in the absence of fascism, war might have been avoided although its danger would not have been dispelled. A democratic Russia in the League of Nations from the very beginning would have been a natural ally of the Weimar Republic, and the worst features of the Versailles system would have been obviated.

So that the fact that Lenin's mother was not sterile caused the greatest catastrophe the world has ever known.

And, finally, the world of the future.

A reconstituted socialist and labor international might perhaps have emerged from the carnage of the first war, mindful of the opportunities it missed in 1914 and powerful enough to prevent the settling of economic issues by the trial of arms.

If only Lenin had caught whooping-cough and died, we would have had (who knows?) socialism!

If any serious person really should accept this outrageous nonsense, he should think twice about getting married, and at the first sign of unusual ability in his son, he should place him under a pillow and sit upon him. For if one Lenin could cause so much mischief to the world, another would just about finish it.

Let us suppress our natural instincts and go on. Let us also suppress all reason and suppose that a reconstituted socialist international had prevented the new war. But what about the crisis of capitalism? What about the great magnates of capital who would still have remained? The national rivalries for the exploitation of Africa, India and Asia would still have continued. The colonial countries would still need the agrarian revolution and freedom. Now either Hook would offer the capitalist magnates holy water and say "Wash and be clean," or they would have to be removed. How? By force. But these gentlemen and their supporters are notoriously adept at defending themselves. So that even granting the crude stupidities of Hook's utopia, we are back again at the hated socialist revolution and the confounded dialectical necessity of the miserable Marx. If ever there was a proof of the inevitability of socialism acceptable to Hook, surely this is it.

Fascism and God

The implication of Hook's theories can now be briefly summed up in two words—fascism and God. The fear of social revolution creates in the petty bourgeois mentality a longing for a "hero," a great "event-making" hero who will "save" the nation. Now that is exactly what fascism proposes. Hook's talk about democratic checks on the "hero" is nonsense, on a par with his philosophy and his history. People simply do not act that way. When they are in insoluble difficulties, they accept a prospective "hero" and when they do they will give him the power he asks for. Against this suicidal tendency the only barrier in the nation is the proletariat. The proletarian leader may find himself in a situation where it is perfectly possible to seize despotic power, as was Lenin. He will shun it like poison. For the simple reason that any proletarian leader knows that the great enemy of proletarian power and the surest indication of its defeat is the passivity of the masses. The modern nation in crisis has this alternative, the party of the revolutionary proletariat, which seeks to release the greatest untapped power in the nation—the creative capacity of the masses—or the parties of Mussolini, Hitler and Stalin. The Marxian analysis subordinates the "hero" to the class and the inner necessity of economic development. Hook raises not the party but the "hero" to the level of a political principle. *Il Duce. Der Führer.* The ideology is the ideology of fascism.

Hook's political philosophy is the open gateway back to God. He does not say that the death or illness or personal weakness of this or that leader accelerated or retarded the historical process. That is quite legitimate, historically necessary and, within limits, very useful. What he says is that someone was accidentally born and thus caused social revolution, world economic devastation, fascism and imperialist war. The historical movement is here entirely subordinated to the

chance birth of an individual. If this is true, it is, today, possible at any time, for it is, as Hook insists, a matter of chance. There may have been born to our world a "hero" who will do Christ knows what. We do not know, we cannot know, we shall never be able to know. We cannot even guess. As Engels said long ago, call that by whatever name you please, it is God. St. Augustine had more excuse and from all accounts did a pretty good philosophical job on his God. Hook, the great sneerer at Marx and Hegel, turns out to be not even a prophet, but that most pitiable of modern creatures, a man looking for one. His "hero" is no more than St. Augustine's God transferred from heaven (or, like Lenin, from hell) to earth. Hook understands nothing, but a sure instinct guides him—the instinct of the frightened petty bourgeois who has turned his back on the proletariat and therefore is pulled irresistibly into the camp of reaction—politics, history and philosophy as well.

Let him look at Europe today and he will see that there is no hiding place down there. Roosevelt, the "hero" of democracy, now systematically prepares the subjugation of the people of Europe just struggling free from the "hero" Mussolini and the "hero" Hitler. In this new phase of proletarian struggle which is just beginning, Hook's interpretation of the rôle of the hero is so much ammunition to the enemy. Even when Hook was more indulgent to Marx, he refused to accept dialectical necessity and based his Marxism on what he called voluntaristic humanism, or some such. Look where it has landed him.

Lenin, on the other hand, was no voluntaristic, humanistic lover of the international proletariat. Student of Hegel, believer in dialectical necessity and historic purpose, he foresaw the unending devastation of all society by decaying capitalism and summed up our age: proletarian revolution or imperialist war, the power of the workers or capitalist barbarism. The test is practice. All Hook has to do is to look and see. The dialectical method of Marx will periodically shoo away the chattering Hooks and continue its confident way.

A. A. B.

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Origin of Capitalism in Russia

An Old Essay by Lenin

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

Except for the brief concluding remarks, this is the first English translation of Chapter I of Lenin's famous *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*, first published in 1899 under the pseudonym of V. Ilyin.

It is significant to observe that Lenin embarked on a detailed study of "the process of formation of the home market for large-scale industry" in Russia as a direct consequence of his theoretical debates with the *Narodniki*, "Populist" writers who exercised a considerable influence on Russia intellectual groups in the 1890's. He first undertook to refute, on a purely theoretical basis, the *Narodnik* view that "the home market in Russia... contracts as a result of the disintegration of the peasantry and as a consequence of the impossibility of realizing surplus value without a foreign market." He then presented with meticulous care statistical data which supported his theoretical view and makes his book an exemplary piece of scientific research.

In the preface to the book, Lenin states that he examined the principal theoretical postulates of abstract political economy in the first chapter in order to be relieved of "the necessity of having repeatedly to refer to theory in the further exposition of the subject." Although the principal theoretical discussion is comprised in Chapter I, the Stalinists have so little respect for the theoretic interests of English-speaking Marxists that this important theoretical chapter was omitted from the work when it was finally published, in an abbreviated form, in English in the 1930's.

The present translation has been made from the second, or 1908, edition, which has been reprinted in all subsequent editions. Quotations by Lenin of English works have been reproduced from the original English. Lenin's citations from Marx's *Capital* are, in most instances, both from the German and Russian translations. The present translator has cited the pages from the Moore and Aveling translation. There are only two instances—one quotation from Proudhon and one from Rodbertus—where it has been impossible to find the quotations in the original and it thus became necessary to retranslate from the Russian. All footnotes are Lenin's own, except those signed by the translator.—F. FOREST.

The market is a category of commodity production, which, in its development, is transformed into capitalist production, and only under the latter circumstance acquires complete domination and general prevalence. Therefore, in order to examine the fundamental theoretical postulates about the home market, we must proceed from simple commodity production and follow its gradual transformation into capitalist production.

I. The Social Division of Labor

The social division of labor is the basis of commodity production. In it, manufacturing industry is separated from extractive industry. Both of these are divided into subordinate classifications and sub-classifications, which produce particular products in the form of commodities and exchange them with those of all other industries. The development of commodity production thus leads to an increase in the number of separate and independent branches of industry. The tendency of this development consists in this: to convert into a separate branch of industry not only the production of specific products, but also of separate parts of the product; and not only the production of a product, but also the various operations in the processing of the raw materials for use in the product. Under natural economy, society was comprised of groups of generally similar household units (patriarchal peasant families, primitive rural communes, feudal estates) and each of these units performed all phases of economic life, beginning with the production of various types of raw materials

and ending with their final preparation for use. Under commodity production, there are created dissimilar economic units, the number of separate branches of economy increases, and the number of economic units which perform the same economic function decreases. This progressive development of the social division of labor is the primary factor in the process of the home market for capitalism:

... On the basis of a production of commodities and its absolute form, capitalist production... [says Marx] these products are commodities, use-values, which have an exchange-value which can be realized, converted into money, only to the extent that other products face them as commodities and values. They have an exchange-value to the extent that they are not produced as immediate means of subsistence for the producers themselves, but as commodities, as products which become use-values only by their conversion into exchange-values (money), by being got rid of. *The market for these commodities develops through the social division of labor; the separation of the productive labor into various departments transforms their respective products mutually into commodities, into mutual equivalents, makes them serve mutually as markets.* (*Das Kapital*, III, 2, 177-8. Russian translation, page 526. The emphasis is ours, as is the case with all quotations, unless it is specifically stated otherwise.)¹

It is self-evident that this separation of manufacturing from extractive industry, of manufacture from agriculture, transforms agriculture itself into an industry, i.e., into a branch of economy which produces *commodities*. This process of specialization, which separates various phases of the manufacture of products from one another, creating an ever greater number of branches of industry, develops also in agriculture, creating regions of specialized agriculture (and the system of agricultural economy*) which causes exchange not only between the products of agriculture and industry but between various products of rural economy. This specialization of *commodity* (capitalist) agriculture appears in all capitalist countries, manifests itself in the international division of labor and also appears in post-reform Russia, as we shall show in detail below.

Thus, the social division of labor is the basis of the whole process of the development of commodity production and capitalism. It is quite natural, therefore, that our *Narodnik* theoreticians declared this (latter) process in Russia to be the result of artificial measures, a result "of a deviation from the path," etc., etc., tried to gloss over the fact of the social division of labor in Russia, or to minimize its significance. V. V., in his article, "The Division of Agricultural and Industrial Labor in Russia" (*The European Courier*, 1884, No. 7), "denied" "the domination in Russia of the principle of the social division of labor" (page 347), declared that with us the social division of labor "did not arise fundamentally from the mode of life of the people, but attempted to slip in through the crevices" (page 338). N—on, in his *Outlines*, deliberated thus

¹*Capital*, III, 747—Tr.

*Thus, for example, I. A. Stebut, in his *Basis of Field Culture*, distinguishes the systems of agricultural economy according to the principal market products. The major systems of economy are three: (1) husbandry ("grain," according to the terminology of A. Skvortsov); (2) cattle breeding (chief market product—the products of cattle) and (3) industrial ("technical," according to the terminology of A. Skvortsov), the chief market products—agricultural products destined for technical transformation. Cf. A. Skvortsov: *The Influence of Steam Transportation on Rural Economy*, Warsaw, 1890, page 68 ff.

about the increase in the quality of grain destined for sale: "This phenomenon could mean that the grain produced is divided more evenly throughout the nation, that the Archangel fisherman now eats Samar bread, and the Samar farmer's dinner is made appetizing with Archangel fish. *In reality, nothing of the sort occurs.*" (*Outlines of Our Post-Reform Social Economy*, St. P., 1893, page 37.) Without any supporting data and contrary to generally known facts, he here directly decrees the absence of the social division of labor in Russia! The Narodnik theory about the "artificiality" of capitalism in Russia could not indeed be established, except by denying the very basis of commodity economy—the social division of labor—or by declaring it to be "artificial."

II. The Growth of the Industrial Population at the Expense of the Agricultural Population

Since, in the economic epoch which preceded commodity economy, manufacturing industry was united with extractive industry, chief of which is agriculture, the development of commodity production is represented by the separation from agriculture of one branch of industry after another. The population of a country with a poorly developed (or completely undeveloped) commodity production is almost exclusively agricultural. However, we need not construe this to mean that the population is concerned only with agriculture. It signifies only that the population engaged in agriculture itself processes the products of agriculture, that exchange and division of labor are almost completely absent. The development of commodity production, consequently, signifies *eo ipso* the separation of an ever greater part of the population from agriculture, i.e., the growth of the industrial population at the expense of the agricultural population:

*It is the nature of capitalist production to reduce the agricultural population continually as compared to the non-agricultural, because in industry (strictly speaking) the increase of the constant capital compared to the variable capital goes hand in hand with an absolute increase, though relative decrease, of the variable capital; whereas in agriculture the variable capital required for the exploitation of a certain piece of land decreases absolutely and cannot increase, unless new land is taken into cultivation, which implies a still greater previous growth of the non-agricultural population. (*Das Kapital*, III, 2, 177. Russian translation, page 526.)**

Thus it is impossible to imagine capitalism without an increase of the commercial-industrial population at the expense of the agricultural population, and everyone knows that this phenomenon is revealed in high relief in all capitalist countries. It is hardly necessary to demonstrate the tremendous significance of this circumstance, because it is indissolubly connected both with the evolution of industry and with the evolution of agriculture. The establishment of industrial centers, the increase in their number and the attraction they hold for the population can only have a most profound influence on the entire organization of the village, can only promote the growth of commercial and capitalist agriculture. All the more remarkable is the fact that the representatives of Narodnik economics completely ignore this law, both in their purely theoretic discussions and in their discussions about capitalism in Russia (about the peculiarities of the manifestations of this law in Russia we will treat in a more detailed manner below, in Ch. VIII). In the theories of V. V. and N—on about the home market for capitalism, there is omitted this vital detail: the withdrawal of the population from agricul-

**Capital* III, pages 746-7. All emphasis, except when otherwise stated, is Lenin's, the reader will recall.—Tr.

ture to industry and the influence this exerts upon agriculture.*

III. The Disintegration of the Small Producers

Until now we dealt with simple commodity production. Now we proceed to capitalist production, i.e., we assume that instead of simple commodity owners we now face, on the one hand, the owners of the means of production, and, on the other, the wage worker, the seller of labor power. The transformation of the small producer into a wage laborer presupposes his loss of the means of production—the earth, instruments of labor, shop, etc.—i.e., his "impoverishment," "ruin." There is a view that this disintegration "lessens the buying capacity of the population," "contracts the home market" for capitalism. (N—on, l.c., page 185. Also, 203, 275, 287, 339-40 and others. This viewpoint is also held by V. V. in the majority of his works.) We are not concerned here with the factual data about the course of this process in Russia—in the succeeding chapters we will examine these data in detail. At the present time the question is posed purely theoretically, i.e., with reference to commodity production in general during its transformation into capitalist production. The writers mentioned above pose this question also theoretically, i.e., from the single fact of the disintegration of the small producers they deduce the contraction of the home market. Such a viewpoint is entirely incorrect; its stubborn survival in our economic literature can be explained only by the romantic prejudices of Narodnism (as to this, cf. footnotes to the article*). They forget that the "freeing" of one segment of the producers from the means of production necessarily presupposes the transfer of these means of production into other hands—their transformation into capital. It presupposes, consequently, that the new owners of these means of production now produce in the form of commodities products which formerly were consumed by the producer himself, i.e., they expand the home market. It presupposes, furthermore, that, in expanding their production, these new owners create a demand in the market for new instruments, raw materials, means of transportation, etc., and also for means of consumption (the enrichment of these new owners naturally presupposes an increase in their consumption). They also forget that it is by no means the well-being of the producers that is of importance for the market, but the fact that he has money. A decrease in the well-being of the patriarchal peasant, who previously existed in a predominantly natural economy, is completely in consonance with the increase in his hands of a sum of money, because the greater the ruination of such a peasant, the more must he resort to the sale of his labor power and the greater is the portion (although absolutely smaller) of article of consumption that he must purchase on the market.

With the setting free of a part of the agricultural population, therefore, their former means of nourishment were also set free. They were now transformed into material elements of variable capital [capital spent in the purchase of labor power]. (*Das Kapital*, I, 776).³

The expropriation and eviction of a part of the agricultural population not only set free for industrial capital, the laborers, their means of subsistence, and material for labor; it also created the home market. (*Ibid.*, 778).⁴

*We pointed out an identical attitude toward the question of the growth of the industrial population on the part of the West-European romanticists and the Russian Narodniki in the article, "Toward a Characterization of Economic Romanticism. Sismondi and our own Sismondists."

³Lenin is referring to his article, "Toward a Characterization of Economic Romanticism," referred to above.—Tr.

⁴*Capital*, I, 817.—Tr. ⁵*Ibid.*, page xvi, Lenin's emphasis.—Tr.

Thus, from the abstract-theoretic point of view, the disintegration of the small producers in a society of a developing commodity production and of capitalism signifies exactly the opposite of that which the Messrs. N—on and V. V. wish to deduce from it; it signifies the creation, and not the contraction, of the home market. If this same Mr. N—on, who declares *a priori* that the ruin of the Russian small producers signifies the contraction of the home market, quotes at the same time the contradictory assertions of Marx cited above (*Outlines*, pages 71 and 114), it merely demonstrates the remarkable capacity of these writers to confound themselves with quotations from *Capital*.

IV. The Narodnik Theory of the Impossibility of Realizing Surplus Value

A further question in the theory of the home market consists in the following. It is well known that the value of a product in capitalist production falls into the following three parts: (1) the first replaces constant capital, i.e., the value which existed previously in the form of raw and auxiliary materials, machines and instruments of production, etc., and which is only partly reproduced in the new product; (2) the second part replaces variable capital, i.e., covers the wages of the worker, and, finally (3) the third part consists of surplus value, which belongs to the capitalist. It is commonly assumed (we present this question in the spirit of Messrs. N—on and V. V.) that the realization (i.e., finding a corresponding equivalent, a sale on the market) of the first two parts presents no difficulties because the first part goes for production and the second part for consumption by the working class. But how is the third part—surplus value—realized? It cannot be wholly consumed by the capitalists! And our economists come to the conclusion that “the way out of the difficulty” in the realization of surplus value is “the acquisition for a foreign market” (N—on, *Outline*, Part II and XV in general and page 205 in particular; V. V., *Oversupply of the Market by Commodities in From the West*, 1883, and *Outlines of Economic Theory*, St. P., 1895, page 179 ff). The necessity of a foreign market for a capitalist nation is postulated by these writers in this manner—that the capitalists cannot otherwise realize the products. The home market in Russia, they assert, contracts as a result of the disintegration of the peasantry and as a consequence of the impossibility of realizing surplus value without a foreign market. Since a foreign market is not within reach of a young country that so lately came to the path of capitalist development, the lack of foundation and still-birth of Russian capitalism are declared by them to be proved on the basis of these *a priori* (and theoretically incorrect at that) considerations!

Mr. N—on, discussing realization, evidently had in mind the Marxist theory on this question (although he does not mention Marx by so much as a word in that part of the *Outlines*) but he failed utterly to understand it and perverted it to non-recognition, as we shall presently see. Therefore a curious thing occurred: his views coincided in all essentials with the views of V. V., whom no one can accuse of “non-understanding” of the theory because it would be the greatest untruth to suspect him even of the slightest acquaintance with it. Both authors present their doctrines as if they were the first to discuss this subject, drawing certain conclusions as if they came “out of their own heads.” In the most Olympian manner, both ignore the discussion of the old economists on the subject, and both repeat the old mistakes which were refuted

in a most detailed manner by Marx in the second volume of *Capital*.* Both authors reduce the whole question of the realization of the product to the question of the realization of surplus value, evidently assuming that the realization of constant capital does not present any difficulty. This naïve view encompasses a profound error, from which flowed all subsequent mistakes in the Narodnik doctrine of realization. In reality, the difficulty in the question of explaining realization arises precisely in the explanation of the realization of constant capital. In order to be realized, constant capital must again be returned to production and this realization occurs directly only when the products of such capital are means of production. If the product that replaces the constant part of capital consists of means of consumption, then its direct return to production is impossible. *Exchange* becomes necessary between that department of social production which produces means of production and that which produces articles of consumption. In precisely this fact lies the whole difficulty of the question, *unnoticed* by our economists.

V. V. represents the question in general as if the aim of capitalist production would not be accumulation, but consumption. Deeply philosophical, Mr. N—on states that “in the hands of a minority there is a mass of material objects, which exceeds the consuming capacity of the organism (*sic!*) at the given moment of their development” (*l.c.*, 149); “not the modesty and abstention of the manufacturers serve as the reason for the surplus production, but the limitations or insufficient elasticity of the human organism [!!], which has not succeeded in expanding its consuming capacity with a rapidity equal to the growth of surplus value” (*Ibid.*, 161). He tries to present the matter as if he did not consider consumption to be the aim of capitalist production, as if he took into consideration the rôle and significance of the means of production in the question of realization. In actuality, he did not at all clarify to himself the process of circulation and reproduction of the whole social capital, and thus entangled himself in a whole series of contradictions. We will not stop to examine all these contradictions in detail. (*Cf.* pp. 203-5, *Outlines*, by V. V.) That is a very thankless task (partly fulfilled now by Bulgakov* in his book, *About Markets Under Capitalist Production*, M., 1897, pages 237-245). Furthermore, to prove this criticism of the discussions of Mr. N—on, it is sufficient to analyze his final conclusion, namely, that the foreign market is the solution to the problem of the realization of surplus value. This conclusion of Mr. N—on (in essence, only a repetition of the conclusions of V. V.) shows in the most graphic manner that he has not understood at all either the question of realization of the product in capitalist society (i.e., the theory of the home market) or the rôle of the foreign market. In fact, is there an ounce of common sense in dragging the foreign market into the question of realization?

The question of realization consists in this: How to find in the market the different elements of the product to replace the value components of the capitalist product (constant capital, variable capital and surplus value) and the material components of the product (means of production and means

*Particularly astounding under the circumstances is the audacity of V. V., which transcends all literary license. In explaining his doctrine, he reveals a complete ignorance of the second volume of *Capital*, where the question of realization is dealt with. V. V. here brazenly declares that he “utilized the Marxist theory for his schemata” (!!). (*Outlines of Economic Theory*, III, *The Capitalist Law (sic!!!) of Production, Distribution and Consumption*, page 162.)

*It is not superfluous to remind the contemporary reader that Mr. Bulgakov and also the oft-quoted Messrs. Struve and Tugan-Baranovsky had tried to be Marxists in 1899. Now they have all safely turned from being “critics of Marx” into ordinary bourgeois economists. (Remark to the second edition.)

of consumption, which are in part articles of necessity and in part articles of luxury). It is clear that foreign trade should be abstracted from this problem, because introducing it not only does not by a hair's breadth advance the solution, but rather pushes the solution further away, transferring the question from one country to several countries. The same Mr. N—on, who finds in foreign trade "the way out of the difficulty" of realization of surplus value, deals with the question of wages, for example, thus: by that part of the annual product which they receive in the form of wages, the direct producers—the workers—"can withdraw from circulation only that part of the means of existence which in value equals the gross sum of wages" (203). It may be asked: how does our economist know that the capitalists of the given country produce precisely that much and precisely that kind of articles of consumption that can be realized by wages? How does he know that, in this instance, one can get along without a foreign market? Obviously, he cannot know that. He has merely eliminated the question of the foreign market because, in the discussion of realization of variable capital, what is important is the replacement of one part of the social product by another, and it is not at all important whether this occurs within one country or within two countries. In relation to surplus value, however, he shifts from this necessary postulate and instead of offering a solution, he simply shirks the question and shifts to the question of foreign markets.

Sale of the product in a foreign market itself calls for an explanation, i.e., the necessity to find an equivalent for the portion of the social product sold, finding one type of capitalist product that can replace the one sold. That is why Marx states that "it is not at all necessary to take into consideration" the foreign market and foreign trade in the analysis of realization, because: "The introduction of foreign commerce

into the analysis of the annually reproduced value of products can, therefore, produce only confusion, without furnishing any new point in the aspect or solution of the problem." (*Das Kapital*, II, page 469.)

Messrs. V. V. and N—on stated that they fully appreciated the contradictions of capitalism, and pointed to the difficulty of realizing surplus value. In actuality, their appreciation of the contradictions of capitalism is extremely superficial because, if we are to speak of "difficulties" of realization, and about crises flowing from these difficulties, etc., then we must acknowledge that these "difficulties" are possible not alone in relation to the surplus value, and that they are not only possible but are necessary, as regards all parts of the capitalist product. Difficulties of this sort, depending upon the disproportionality in the division of different branches of production, constantly arise not only in the realization of surplus value, but also in the realization of variable and constant capital; not only in the realization of the product in articles of consumption but also in means of production. Without such "difficulties" and crises, capitalist production in general, the production of individual producers for an unknown market, cannot exist.

V. I. LENIN.

⁵The paragraph from which Lenin quotes the above phrase and the following sentence reads: "Capitalist production does not exist at all without foreign commerce. But when we assume annual reproduction on a given scale, we also assume that foreign commerce replaces home products only by articles of other use-value, or natural form, without affecting the relations of value, such as those of the two categories known as means of production and articles of consumption and their transactions, nor the relations of constant capital, variable capital and surplus value, into which the value of the products of each of these categories may be dissolved. The introduction of foreign commerce," etc., as above. (*Capital*, II, page 548.)—Tr.

[Continued in next issue]

Two Discussion Articles on the National Question:

Socialism and the National Question

Socialist United States of Europe Is Nearer

Gates thinks that the question of the Socialist United States of Europe is "a programmatic question, over which there is no fundamental dispute, and in which there is nothing new." (NEW INTERNATIONAL, June, 1943, page 187. The trouble is that Johnson misunderstands the rôle of the party. It isn't so simple.

The National Committee resolution and Gates' exposition are based upon a false theoretical analysis of the national struggles in Europe.

Lenin in 1915 suggested certain historical conditions that would once more make possible a great national war in modern Europe.

It is highly improbable that this imperialist war of 1914-16 will be transformed into a national war. . . . Nevertheless, it cannot be said that such a transformation is impossible; if the European proletariat were to remain impotent for another twenty years; if the present war were to end in victories similar to those achieved by Napoleon, in the subjugation of a number of virile national states; if imperialism outside of Europe (primarily American and Japanese) were to remain in power for another

twenty years without a transition to socialism, say, as a result of a Japanese-American war, then a great national war in Europe would be possible. This means that Europe would be thrown back for several decades. This is improbable. But it is not impossible, for to picture world history as advancing smoothly and steadily without sometimes taking gigantic strides backward is undialectical, unscientific and theoretically wrong. (Emphasis in original, quoted by Gates, NEW INTERNATIONAL, June, 1943, page 187.)

The Viewpoint of Lenin

Lenin is here taking as a precedent the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars. From 1793 to about 1807 revolutionary France fought a progressive war against monarchical and feudal Europe. About 1808 the progressive German aristocracy and the bourgeoisie reorganized Germany, introducing the reforms of the French Revolution (as far as was possible from above), in order to free the country from the imperialist domination of Napoleon (see my article, "Capitalist Society and the War," NEW INTERNATIONAL, July, 1940, page 115). The war thereupon changed its character, becoming, in its

next stage, on the part of Germany, a progressive war of national emancipation. Today, in the advanced countries, the progressive national rôle played by the German bourgeoisie can be played only by the proletariat. But the national war of the proletariat is the war for international socialism. Nothing that Hitler has done has changed this in the slightest degree.

We must see this very clearly. In 1792 the Paris workers compelled the French bourgeoisie to stay in Paris and fight. In 1814 the Paris workers asked Napoleon to defend Paris. Both the bourgeois emperor and the bourgeoisie refused. In 1871 the more mature Paris proletariat, in its eagerness to defend the country, armed itself and overthrew the Paris bourgeoisie, which fled—only to Versailles. In 1942 the French bourgeoisie runs to Algiers or joins the Germans, whereupon not the Paris but the fully matured French proletariat takes upon itself the liberation of France, leading the nation. But this is all on the basis of the advancing proletarian revolution and the struggle for workers' power. There is nothing bourgeois about it at all, nothing.

Lenin, and Trotsky after him, posed the transformation of the imperialist war into the national war on the basis of the incapacity of the proletariat to lead the nation, following the complete subjugation of Europe by a victorious dictator. That would be a terrible social retrogression, a genuine "hurling back of society." In my article I quoted, instead of Lenin, Trotsky, who outlined these conditions chiefly to show how impossible they were for any period that we could foresee. Lenin, then without our experiences, is not so sharp, but is clear enough. Look at that quotation again.

The first condition is that the European proletariat remains impotent. The whole question revolves around that. Secondly, the particular war must come to a stop without a revolution, owing to the impotence of the masses. Revolutions in the defeated countries there will be none, because instead of a bankrupt bourgeoisie, the European proletariat will have to deal with a European dictator like Napoleon. Lenin then looks to see if there is a socialist revolution abroad, to keep the European proletariat alive. If, however, there is no gleam of hope, then and only then, after many years, will the proletariat be in such a condition that the bourgeoisie would have to take the lead against the European dictator and fight a "truly national" war.

Study of the NC resolution convinced me that the resolution did not really know where it stood on this question. Indirectly but as emphatically as I could, I warned, "No such situation as Lenin envisaged is visible in Europe today." To this Gates replies: "We have merely to ask: If this is so, why, then, do you say that you support the slogan of national liberation?" He actually says: "It has not happened *exactly* as Lenin said, yet several important conditions cited by him have indubitably occurred." Instead of retreating, he plunges head foremost. Which are the "several important conditions" of Lenin which exist to keep the proletariat impotent and open out the possibility of a national war once more in Europe? There is absolutely not one. Being in confusion here, Gates is in confusion everywhere. And let me say in advance that this is a very dangerous question on which to take an unclear position and then attempt to justify it.

The Proletariat and the War

The NC resolution and Gates have what I called "a deep, profound miscomprehension of the European crisis." After study of the NC resolution I thought it imperative to draw

sharp attention to the tremendous experiences which made the European proletariat of 1939 so different from the proletariat of 1914. I pointed out also that, to crown all this, bourgeois Europe was being battered to pieces, thus relieving the proletariat of any sense of allegiance to the existing society. I emphasized the tremendous historical developments of the war. But the NC resolution then and Gates now understand neither the deep revolutionary temper of the masses today nor its relation to the successive shocks of the war. Let us briefly analyze the relation:

a) Hitler begins with a tremendous "dynamism." He knows and all history teaches that in his situation he must win and keep on winning. As I explained in July, 1940: his blitzkrieg dared not fail, "for failure and a war of stalemate meant certain disaster." (NEW INTERNATIONAL, July, 1940, page 121.) If even he had conquered Britain, he still had America to deal with. There is no peace for him. But for the time being the masses are stunned.

b) In June, 1941, he attacks Russia. *The moment he does so the European proletariat stirs itself.* Hitler's aim is to capture Leningrad, Moscow and Kharkov in one sweeping campaign. His dramatic failure in front of Moscow lifts the European proletariat still higher. So does the entry of America.

c) The unexpected and superb defense by Russia during 1942 has a tremendous cumulative influence on the revolutionary development of the European proletariat. In this war every month is equal to a year. In the second half of my article (NEW INTERNATIONAL, May, 1943), I wrote: "Let there be no mistake about this. Stalingrad and the American invasion of Africa marked a new stage of the war—the impending defeat of Germany." And, in opposing the idea that the workers were sluggish, not organized, etc., and that the revolutionary movement was non-existent, I wrote: "These arguments, apart from their theoretical invalidity, lag behind the tremendous speed of development in Europe and the contradictory dynamics of the actual conditions." The NC resolution states that "... the working class, as a whole, is still in a sort of stupor."

And (even if this were true) how will it come out of the stupor? "The intensity of the exploitation and oppression of the conqueror, rising constantly, helps to enlarge the ranks of these groups [who struggle] by driving the more spirited workers to join them, and the indications are that this trend will continue." (NEW INTERNATIONAL, February, 1943, page 39.) Nothing could be more misleading. Not intensity of exploitation, but the whole past of the last twenty-five years and what Lenin calls "military decisions of a violent nature" are the decisive factors on the revolutionary aspirations and actions of the masses today. Does this need proof now? Today, not a year after the NC resolution, all occupied Europe is poised for revolution.

The Socialist United States of Europe

All these commissions and omissions reach their culmination in the treatment of the slogan, the Socialist United States of Europe, and that is why I concentrated on it. I wrote: "Behind any proposals to make a change in the application of the socialist slogan..." and Gates interpolates "What kind of change and who proposes it?" It seems now that Johnson does not understand even the rôle of the language. The NC resolution says that "to believe that this slogan should occupy the same place in the Marxian program and, above all, in the Marxian platform, in the revolutionary transitional demands, now, when Europe is divided into one independent state and

a whole series of subject nations, is the sheerest kind of abstractionism and dogmatism, and represents a failure to understand the radical change that has taken place in the European situation."

That, I say, is not only false but theoretically ruinous. I am going to state the difference now so that there can be no possibility of misunderstanding.

The NC resolution believes that inasmuch as the proletariat is compelled to take upon itself the national defense against a foreign power it thereby becomes less class-conscious, less concerned with socialism, less militantly determined to achieve the socialist revolution. *I state unequivocally that exactly the opposite is the case, that inasmuch as the proletariat, particularly in France and Poland, now has to take upon itself the national defense in place of the bankrupt bourgeoisie, it is more class-conscious, it is more socialistic, and more determined than ever before in its history to achieve the socialist revolution.* Every step forward for national liberation sharpens the demand for social liberation. In 1943 it could not be otherwise. This, a theoretical premise, has been abundantly justified by the facts.

The Tasks of the Vanguard

What, then, must we do? We can learn from our enemies. As soon as Hitler realized that his "dynamism" was over and that this could not be hidden from the German proletariat and the people of Europe, he and Goebbels began to tell the German people: "We are in peril—national defense or ruin." It is just at this stage that the revolutionary movement everywhere, understanding the proletariat of Europe better than Hitler, must begin to reinforce the revolutionary sentiments of the German people and the German soldiers by saying: "You are in peril—socialist revolution or ruin." This, I say, for occupied Europe, was central to any analysis of the national question.

The perspectives of the war in December, 1942, and the chaos of Europe offered special opportunities for persistent work in this field. I emphasized that the barriers between the workers of Europe were down. The workers were all thrown together, irrespective of nationality, millions of German soldiers scattered over Europe, not only on battlefields but among the population, millions of oppressed nationalities in Germany. The vanguard had now to pose before them the question of unity and leave the rest to the rapidly developing situation.

Having this in mind, I offered the example of a leaflet which the French workers might address to the German workers. The leaflet must be reread. Here are extracts with emphasis added. "From the French workers to the German workers." The leaflet tells the German soldiers that they are hated and will be fought mercilessly as long as they do Hitler's work. But it says also: "*We the common people of France,*" "You, the soldiers and the other workers seize the power in Germany. . . . Why don't you and the other workers of Germany try your hand at ruling the country? Every other class has tried. That is the true socialism. Workers' power, not Hitler's Germany and Hitler's crimes."

After a workers' victory the European workers would all protect the German workers from Roosevelt and Churchill. "*We have to . . . build a new Europe . . . all of us as workers together . . . We shall be invincible.*" At the end I say: "Long live Free France! Long live Free Germany! Long live the power of the workers. For the Socialist United States of Eu-

rope." Then I put in a postscript, reminding the German workers of the great socialist movement in old Germany and asking them to give a sign to help rebuild the socialist movement in France. Gates may not know what the leaflet means. The German workers would.

Gates gives no sign that he recognizes the German question or the twelve million foreign workers in Germany, all burning to liberate themselves. I asked a series of questions in connection with the leaflet. No answer.

For Gates the leaflet is a "compound of bourgeois nationalism in the tradition of de Gaullism." The liberals call this ex-monarchist a democrat but Gates makes de Gaulle into an international socialist. For Gates "there is not the slightest harmony between the content of the leaflet and the slogans attached thereto."

There are here two mistakes. The first is a profound misconception which does not distinguish between the abstract concept of "nationalized property" and the concrete struggle of the workers against intolerable conditions and a hated enemy, which drives them to take the power into their own hands. If the proletariat seizes power, for whatever reason, for land, bread and peace, or only for bread and water, then, in Lenin's words, we have left capitalism behind and are on the very threshold of socialism. And the struggle for the power of the workers everywhere, what is that but the struggle for the Socialist United States of Europe? It is there that we begin.

The second mistake is the stubborn ignoring of the international political tasks flowing from the rôle of German imperialism in Europe today. This is no question of a doctrinaire internationalism but *organic to the national liberation of occupied Europe.* In 1939 and 1940 the French proletariat, for instance, had as its main objective task the political preparation of the French proletarian revolution. Today the course of events has made the defeat of German imperialism the conscious predominating concern of hundreds of millions in Europe. That is the great change that has taken place. Vital political consequences flow from it. The demoralization and disintegration of the German army and the stimulation of the German proletariat to unite with the foreign workers and overthrow Hitlerism is a concrete task which, in the large areas of Western Europe, achieves the national liberation at least from German imperialism. The danger for a revolutionary grouping is not that it will ignore national liberation. The danger is exactly the opposite. It is that it will forget that once the masses are in motion, particularly such masses, at such a time as this, their consciousness does not keep pace with their actions. In the common struggle for national liberation, *our* task is the clarification of ends and *means* for the power of the masses. In the common struggle against German imperialism, *our* task is the international solidarity of the proletariat. That is Bolshevism. It is very easy to see Bolshevism in the past and, still more, in the future. In the present, however, it is always hard. To see differences to their roots and to formulate them is not easy and requires more than Gates gives to it.

National Liberation

Yet in occupied Europe any political organization which fumbles or hesitates about presenting the national emancipation to the workers as the first question before them and be-

for it, is crazy and fittingly doomed. In the whole wide world only the Cannonites think otherwise and but for their confusion on the subject I would not have thought it possible that such people could exist. There is no contradiction between the struggle for the power of the workers and the slogan of national liberation as the main agitational slogan.

On this question, however, nine-tenths of the NC resolution takes one position and one-tenth of it talks almost one-half of another position. Excepting for the section on the dual power, the NC resolution envisages a struggle for national liberation, and as a subsidiary to this, the raising of the slogans, right of free press and right to organize. But suddenly in the section on the dual power the resolution speaks for the struggle for power. Very revealing is the manner in which this is done. The resolution says that the old owners who fled when the Germans came will put in appearance and claim the ownership of the property. Now: "It is incredible that in all or even in most cases the workers will simply bow to these claims, and without another word, resume work," etc. It is good to know that this is incredible. That being so, the business of the resolution from start to finish should have been the preparation of national struggles with the seizure of these factories and similar revolutionary activities, as their immediate culmination. The vanguard must struggle for factory committee and peasant committees to be the centers of the national resistance, to work for the coördination of all these groups in the struggle against the invader. *At the same time* it must pose unhesitatingly and without equivocation the question of the power of the workers through the workers' organizations which, however camouflaged, will in reality achieve the national liberation. Will there be a "democratic interlude"? History will decide.

The NC resolution actually says that after the national liberation, "the power will, so to speak, lie in the streets. The mass will incline instinctively to take hold of it in its own name." That is a tremendous thing to say. Power in the streets means the absolute bankruptcy of the bourgeois régime. This power the workers must seize and to get it more easily and to safeguard it, they must work on the German soldiers and encourage the German revolution.

The national struggle is here closely linked with the international. That is *the* outstanding feature of Europe. Why is this so hard to see? Let French, Poles, Czechs, Austrians join the Italians and Germans who a few weeks ago sang the *International* in Berlin and together shouted: "Down with the war!" As I pointed out in my article, a new road will have been opened for all. Despite their armies and their food, the United Nations would be in a terrible dilemma.

"Against Hitler. *Here* for national freedom, *there* for peace." Yes, but also: "Against Hitler. The unity of the workers. That brings us out of this mess. That stops the war. Why should we murder each other? All of us together. That, soldiers, brothers and sisters of all nationalities, is the beginning of the Socialist United States of Europe we have talked about for so long. This is it." This is the Bolshevik presentation of the national question. And the whole movement is toward this. Europe is very near to it. It may occur sooner or later. It may not occur. That is not the point. We are not prophets. The European vanguard and we must work with the trend and in theory at least command events. That is what my article, first and foremost, tried to show. Gates finds that "the resolution of the Workers Party... indicated the kind of epoch in which we live." But Johnson's conception

"has no relation to time and space. It is in the realm of fantasy where belief is substituted for reality." The gates of wrath which the wrath of Gates so incautiously opened should now be closed and kept closed while the inmate meditates upon the headlines in the evening paper.

The Socialist United States of Europe is not the main agitational slogan. In my article I wrote:

Does this mean that in Poland, France or Estonia we try to organize a mass demonstration for the Socialist United States of Europe, as we would try to organize a strike against mass deportations? Such stupidity need not be theoretically refuted. If attempted by some lunatic, its ignominious failure would be refutation enough. Yet the slogan is closer to reality today than before. There is a task here of combination. (NEW INTERNATIONAL, May, 1943, page 152. Emphasis in original.)

I shall not labor the point further.

The Building of the Party

I have left this to the last because the successful building of the party is the outcome of a correct political analysis and of nothing else. To say a party must be built is to say nothing. We have been saying that for a decade. The question is how to build it. On the question of the party, however, the NC resolution breaks new ground. Here it is: "Between the present day and the day the masses rise up against the beneficiaries of the war, a considerable period of time will in all probability elapse" (NEW INTERNATIONAL, January, 1943, page 9). This "considerable period of time" is not stated but from the general tenor of the resolution we may guess at it. However, its length "depends almost directly on how soon it will be possible to reestablish an independent mass labor movement..." (*ibid.*) Gates, and he merely repeats the NC resolution (NEW INTERNATIONAL, February, 1943, page 39), tells us with precision what this independent labor movement is: "The European labor movement... working class fraternal organizations... coöperative organizations." All these, says the NC resolution, must be reformed "under the leadership of a cohesive vanguard party" before the masses rise up against the war. The whole passage should be read to see how dogmatically this point is made. The ordinary mind spins itself dizzy seeking some basis for this fantastic proposition. I do not propose to argue about this unless some attempt is made to defend it.

In my article, again indirectly and with great moderation, I indicated the error. (I refuse to make capital about Italy because the falsity of this astonishing discovery should have been seen in advance of any concrete disproof.) I wrote:

Let us not forget, as Marx has so carefully pointed out, that the working class is disciplined, united and organized by the very mechanism of capitalist production itself. Five thousand workers in a factory are in a most fundamental sense organized. They can transform themselves into a soviet in an hour, *given the complete, the shameful bankruptcy and disgrace of the ruling class and the absence of any of its agents masquerading as workers' leaders.* (NEW INTERNATIONAL, May, 1943, page 150. Emphasis in original.)

My next two sentences show precisely the relation of the party to the "spontaneous" action of the masses. "The Labor Front* may very well find the power thrust into its hands." Then I add: "What it will do with it is another question. Soviets do not necessarily mean soviet power." If (in my hypothetical case) the bankruptcy of the German bourgeoisie is shameful and complete, if the social-democracy does not exist, if the régime is in such crisis that only the workers in the So-

*The Nazis driven out, of course.

viets can hold society together, and yet I say that we do not necessarily have soviet power, isn't that bending over backward to show precisely how important is the rôle of the revolutionary party? But in the NC resolution, which, according to Gates, is supposed to teach the importance of the party, the relationship between mass action and soviets, mass labor parties and vanguard party, overthrow of the old régime (which brings the European war to an end and achieves the national liberation) and the dictatorship of the proletariat (which is something else)—this is so confused that for the masses to act it seems that you must build even a fraternal organization! Our theoretical structure is now all in pieces.

In reality, the building of the party can stem only from a clear theory and a firm grasp of the concrete situation. Nearly everybody is preparing for national revolution, even some fascists. The vanguard, foremost in the national struggle, and, like the rest, raising the slogan of national emancipation as the main agitational slogan, sharply differentiates itself from all the others in the resistance group by insisting that the workers are not fighting for the national emancipation in order that those who ruined or betrayed the country should come back and rule. The rule must be by the workers and peasants themselves." The vanguard summons all those who think so, and there are plenty, to prepare now for the power of the working class. That is the nucleus of the revolutionary party. Without that, no revolutionary party.

Such, in my view, is the revolutionary conception of national emancipation in its relation to the socialist revolution, which is the expressed theme of the NC resolution. Instead of that, what do we have? On March 15, seven months ago, the bourgeois and Stalinist National Resistance Committee of France called upon the French people to be ready to seize the government and to administer it. Naturally, they hope to control this, but that is for us to help the workers prevent and organize to prevent. In June, Eisenhower begs the French people not to act, please not to act, to wait. In July, The New INTERNATIONAL prints two extracts from Trotsky directed against "sectarians and phrase-lovers," proving that for the occupied countries the slogans, right of free press and right to organize, are correct. Johnson presumably does not know that in a fascist country, in general, you must use democratic slogans. Right to organize and programs of economic demands to educate the workers, that is what preoccupies the NC resolution which Gates so stoutly defends. The truth is that, in occupied Europe today, given the fierce hatred of the invader which characterizes the masses of the people, their feeling that the foreign government is not theirs and cannot last, such slogans push the masses back. When used by a revolutionary organization as the main slogans after the slogan of national liberation they are thoroughly reactionary and place those who use them, for whatever purpose, at the tail of the national movement. The slogan to emphasize after national liberation is the power of the workers in a workers' government. Going wrong here, the NC resolution then proceeds to push back the slogan of the Socialist United States of Europe. This is no "programmatic" question. Still less is it a question of Johnson's ignorance. It is a question of the socialist revolution in Europe. However restricted your topic, your conceptions of that revolution govern it.

The conceptual root of all this false policy is the original confusion as to whether Hitler has not "exactly" but partially created the conditions hypothetically posed by Lenin. To say that Hitler has hurled society back in any sense except the

purely agitational is wrong. He has so contributed to the ruin of bourgeois society in Europe as to bring the socialist revolution immeasurably nearer.

It is necessary to draw the analysis to its conclusion, particularly today.

(1) At the present moment the key to the European situation is more than ever Germany. With the defeat of Germany impending, the vanguard in the occupied countries, while struggling for the national liberation, must find ways and means to open out for the desperate German people and the doubting soldiers a new road by way of the proletarian revolution. That will be the national emancipation, in more senses than one.

(2) The United Nations and the German bourgeoisie will do their best to prevent this revolution. If there is a proletarian revolution in Germany, the revolution in the occupied countries will assume a dynamic force which will place squarely upon American imperialism the necessity of reinstating the native bourgeoisie to its former power. If peace is made before there is any revolt in Germany, or the revolt is stifled or deflected, the proletariat in the occupied countries will have a much harder road. But all signs point to the growing consciousness of their terrible situation among the German workers, confusion in the Germany bourgeoisie and looming catastrophe for the German bourgeois state. Great battles are ahead. The Nazis face destruction and, if allowed, may do strange things. But the question now for the German bourgeoisie is: How much more can the army and the people stand? Obviously, we are approaching a great historical climax, which will decide the relations in the next stage of the struggle for proletarian power. It may take a year. It may take a few months. No one can predict these concrete things. But, despite the innumerable varieties of historical experience, such a climax is now a legitimate expectation. It is next on the order of the day. For a revolutionary, that is sufficient. It is on such that we must build at home as well as abroad.

J. R. JOHNSON.

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Politics in the Stratosphere

Further Away from Reality, Not Nearer

Johnson's rejoinder to my criticism of his article, "The Way Out for Europe," is a polemical fantasy. There is no attempt at a debate of the issues, a reply to criticisms by marshalling data in support of avowed generalizations, or even to defend assertions made in an original presentation of views. Johnson's current contribution to the discussion of the national question can best be characterized as evasive. Now the old errors are proclaimed in an entirely new way. The methodology, however, remains the same.

In place of answers to concrete questions, we have the same kind of sweeping generalizations, the reassertion (with intense fervor) of a non-existent situation, and the same journalistic, impressionistic and dogmatic evaluation of the objective condition of capitalism in Europe and the state of class relations. It is of the "I believe" and "I assert" school.

He has again demonstrated what I proved by my June article, namely, that he does not understand the problem of the revolutionary vanguard party, the immediate need for its organization on a continental scale, and the necessity for such parties to develop on the basis of struggle. Without this factor, a discussion of the prospect of the socialist revolution is utterly meaningless.

What Johnson does is to substitute pre-conceived and pre-determined idealistic observations for scientific examination and dialectical analysis.

In his generalizations, there are, of course, many things which are true. These general truths (capitalism is in a state of decay, capitalism organizes the working class, the bourgeoisie is no longer capable of progressive existence, the masses are dissatisfied, etc.) are not enough for arriving at a position on the *concrete questions*, or the immediate tasks of the revolutionary socialists in Europe. His generalizations are an evasion of the real problems. In his writings one can find almost everything, in general, and yet little specifically. It is like gelatine that has not hardened; it cannot be held. It slips through the fingers. You can defend and oppose almost anything with such ideas. The half-truths of his position enable him to reject any criticisms because he has always "mentioned" the point criticized. The fact that it has no relation to previous argumentation and position does not at all disturb him.

Thus, my criticism of his article, "The Way Out for Europe," which appeared in the June issue of *THE NEW INTERNATIONAL*, serves as a reply to his present article. Were it not for the additional new errors contained in Johnson's contribution it would not even be necessary to answer it, since it is manifestly impossible to reply to an article or a document which is replete with error in every paragraph.

Before treating these questions, it is necessary to correct Johnson's utterly erroneous interpretation of the Lenin quotation which has figured in the discussion. This is important, because in revealing Johnson's errors at this point we find a key to the false thinking which guides him throughout on the national question.

The Lenin Quotation—and Its Distortion

In June, I quoted from the 1915 article by Lenin, in which he poses several conditions which might reintroduce the na-

tional question in Europe. The reference to the authority of Lenin was not made as a substitute for argument, as my article so obviously makes clear. Lenin, however, is the greatest Marxist authority on the national question, and his views, based upon experience, observation and polemics with other leaders of the revolutionary movement, are exceedingly important for the present generation of Marxists.

Lenin described a situation which *could* recur in Europe. His historical reference to Napoleon was made to describe the *kind* of situation he had in mind. What Lenin *meant* and what he *said* can hardly be misinterpreted by anyone acquainted with the disputes between Lenin-Bukharin-Pyatakoff and between Lenin and Luxemburg. But that is precisely what Johnson does—he misinterprets Lenin, distorts history and reveals that he does not understand the meaning of this reference.

In the first place, questions of fact are involved. On these there can hardly be any debate.

What was the first post-war period like? The proletariat took power in one country (Russia). The new revolutionary state looked to Western Europe for the continuation of the revolution it had begun and—for its completion. But the proletariat was *defeated* in every single other attempt it made for power: Germany, 1919, 1923 and 1933; Hungary, Austria, Spain, China, the Balkans and France. The Russian Revolution was isolated and this isolation produced the conditions which resulted in its defeat.

Imperialism has *remained* in power. A new *Napoleonic power* (not Napoleon) arose on the European scene with "victories *similar* to those achieved by Napoleon." (Emphasis mine—A. G.) This power has conquered most of Europe. That it is now threatened by other powers cannot alter the facts as they have existed for several years and as they exist right *now*. The proletariat has been *impotent* and remains in that state *now*. This latter fact, too, has nothing whatever to do with the question of whether it has revolutionary potentialities and a will to engage in revolutionary struggles or that such struggles must and will come in Europe. Its "impotence" is a relative matter which is determined essentially by the degree of its organization, experience, knowledge, skill and strength in relation to other classes.

It is true that both Lenin and Trotsky *believed* the aforementioned development improbable. But they were mistaken. Their *belief* in its improbability, however, cannot affect the objective fact that the improbability has become the actuality. It is clear from Johnson's treatise that he simply does not see this.

How does our protagonist fare with the "historical" aspects of this dispute? Even worse. Listen again to what Johnson says:

Lenin is here taking as a precedent the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars. From 1793 to about 1807 revolutionary France fought a progressive war against monarchical and feudal Europe. About 1808, the progressive German aristocracy and the bourgeoisie reorganized Germany, introducing the reforms of the French Revolution (as far as was possible from above), in order to free the country from the imperialist domination of Napoleon. The war thereupon changed its character, be-

coming, in its next stage on the part of Germany, a progressive war of national emancipation." (Emphasis mine—A. G.)

"Germany" and the Napoleonic Period

A strange history indeed! Johnson confuses the Germany of Bismarck in the war of 1870 with the Prussia of Frederick IV in 1808. Yet the two situations are not comparable. The "Germany" Johnson speaks of was not a nation at the time Napoleon ruled most of Europe. What is now Germany was then divided into separate states: Prussia, Westphalia, Saxony, the Confederation of the Rhine, and Bavaria. *National unification and the national war did not occur until some sixty years later!*

Johnson's "progressive German aristocracy" was one of the most corrupt, reactionary, bourbon-feudal classes on the Continent. Under the rule of Frederick IV, it was a weak, servile and trembling aristocracy, and Napoleon's war upon it was a progressive war. He represented, historically speaking, the rising bourgeois order. More immediately, *he* carried the sword of the French bourgeoisie. Of this Prussia, Napoleon aptly said: "A vile king, a vile nation, a vile army, a country which deceived everybody and does not deserve to exist." It was certainly a far cry from the Prussia of Frederick the Great.

The "progressive German aristocracy," Johnson notwithstanding, did not introduce the "reforms of the French Revolution." But the *bourgeoisie* of Johnson's "Germany," on the other hand, hailed Napoleon because he liberated them from the rule of the "progressive German aristocracy." *The reforms introduced into this "Germany" came from Napoleon, and not from this newly discovered "progressive" class.*

During the year 1808, which Johnson falsely refers to as date of the Prussian revolt, Napoleon ruled Prussia as well as all the other German states. Many of these states were *allied* with the French military genius. Prussia did not go to war against Napoleon until 1813-14, when it was assured that the continental coalition under Metternich, the reactionary, feudal-bound "Holy Alliance," meant business. It was not a *major* power in this alliance. Neither was the coalition war against Napoleon fought to advance capitalism. On the contrary, it sought to strengthen the decaying remnants of feudalism, which were themselves eventually devoured in this conflict. This coalition hoped, in addition to driving Napoleon out of Central Europe, to restore the Bourbon monarchy in France, and one of the driving forces of the feudal "united front" was the fact that "the vile rabble is for Napoleon."

The war, therefore, was not a war of national emancipation as we understand it today. Some of the states making up this coalition were themselves oppressors of other nationalities and were certainly the representatives of the old order. The real national wars began much later. Furthermore, Lenin did not have in mind the wars at the turn of the nineteenth century, but the national wars in middle and latter half of that century. To impute to Lenin the idea that the modern bourgeois society might be faced with a struggle against the reintroduction of the feudal order, which is all the sense there is in Johnson's remarks, is due to his utter *miscomprehension* of the whole subject.

It is out of this kind of history and thinking that Johnson builds the whole edifice of his views on the national question. He believes that his distortion of Lenin's views actually strengthens his own on the national question. It doesn't. It shows that in Johnson's mind, either the proletariat takes power now, in this situation, or else we face a throwback to

feudalism, the ancient "barbarism," or worse. This kind of confusion is a species of "defeatism" which compels Johnson to estimate falsely the current European situation.

The Meaning of the Fascist Victory

An analysis of the state of the European working class is crucial to the whole discussion. It is precisely in this connection that Johnson preaches a mish-mash compounded of wishful thinking and not a little yokel-chucking, all of it embroidered by rhetoric.

His analysis of the European situation is agitational. It is the result of an erroneous estimate of the *historical* and the *concrete* significance of Hitler's victory in Germany. Where objective research is required, Johnson gives us speeches about the glorious European working class.

There are several statements in his article which reveal his disqualification to speak with any authority on the question in dispute. I shall consider them one by one.

"To say that Hitler has hurled society back," writes Johnson, "in any sense except the purely agitational, is wrong. He has so contributed to the ruin of bourgeois society in Europe as to bring the socialist revolution immeasurably nearer."

Before examining this unbelievable statement, I should like to pose a few questions. What does Johnson mean by "purely agitational"? If it is correct to say the above in that form, is it not also correct that it exists as a fact? Or does Johnson believe that because something is agitational, it is therefore not true? And, if it is a fact, is there not a whole train of consequences which must be deduced from this fact?

Otherwise, Johnson must conclude that Hitler's victory was of no great consequence. Otherwise Hitler's victory must have been the most progressive event of the past twenty-five years because—because it has advanced "the socialist revolution immeasurably nearer." Does Johnson really want to defend this concept, which is implicit in his views? Of course he does. As a matter of fact, he emphasizes the point in his article.

It is only from the loftiest and most abstract historical plane that one can state that the victory of fascism advances "immeasurably" the socialist revolution. If what Johnson means is that the very existence of fascism is evidence of the utter decay of capitalism, that it is in a state of dissolution and disintegration, that is one thing. But if that were all there would be no need of discussing the question at all, for it has nothing whatever to do with the dispute on the national question.

Sad to say, however this is not what Johnson means. He actually means that Hitler's victories have strengthened the proletariat, increased its consciousness, and made it more determined than ever before in history to "achieve the socialist revolution." To say that this is not true does not make one less revolutionary; on the contrary, the recognition of the true state of objective conditions is indispensable to revolutionary Marxism.

And how does Johnson's view square with the traditional views of revolutionary Marxism, to say nothing of the simple facts? It does not square at all; it violates every tenet of Marxism.

Our movement has had considerable experience in the question of fascism. It was Trotsky who first analyzed German fascism, its struggle for power, and the consequence of a Hitler victory in Germany. That was ten years ago. But even Trotsky did not begin anew in 1931, 1932 and 1933. The early

Communist International had already had a number of experiences with this phenomenon.

Fascism as Counter-Revolutionary

During the days of the fascist struggle for power in Germany, the Marxists of the Fourth International carried on a tireless agitation to convince the existing parties of the working class to unite in the common struggle against fascism. One of the most significant contributions to this struggle was the idea advanced by our movement that a victory of Hitler would result in an international defeat of the working class; that the working class movement would be *thrown back* for years to come.

This was the most important question in the whole dispute with Stalinism, which advanced the thesis that *a victory of fascism in Germany would accelerate the proletarian revolution in that country and throughout Europe*. Fascism, said the Stalinists, would destroy the democratic illusions of the masses and prepare them for the dictatorship of the proletariat. That is to say, fascism was the new locomotive of the socialist revolution.

This view of the historical place of fascism had terrible consequences for the working class. It strengthened the tendencies of inertia which already existed after a long series of defeats. It enhanced idealistic conceptions of the socialist revolution. It strengthened the view of the automatic character of the socialist revolution, the concept of spontaneity and the Stalinist version of the "inevitability of the socialist victory" without regard to the questions of organization, education, experience, struggle and plan, which are the collective attributes of the revolutionary party—the essential instrument of the socialist victory. Johnson has now acquired these dangerous ideas, and proceeds to advocate them ten years after Hitler took power in Germany.

I have not doubt that, as he reads these lines, Johnson will exclaim: This is ABC. Gates doesn't have to teach me these things. I have known them all along.

That is exactly the point. Johnson knows about this, but it just has no meaning to him. It is merely some knowledge picked up along the wayside. It plays no part in his thinking, as witness the above quotation.

Compare Johnson's point of view with the views of Trotsky. In warning the German Stalinists of the consequences of a Hitler victory, Trotsky wrote:

The coming into power of the German National Socialists would mean above all the extermination of the flower of the German proletariat, the disruption of its organizations, the extirpation of its belief in itself and in its future. Considering the far greater maturity and acuteness of the social contradictions in Germany, the hellish work of Italian fascism would probably appear as a pale and almost humane experiment in comparison with the work of the German National Socialists.

Was this victory by Hitler an advance of the socialist revolution or a "throwback"? Again, on fascist rule, Trotsky wrote:

When a state turns fascist, it doesn't only mean that the forms and methods of government are changed in accordance with the patterns set by Mussolini—the changes in this sphere ultimately play a minor rôle—but it means, first of all and for the most part, that the workers' organizations are annihilated; and that a system of administration is created which penetrates deeply into the masses and which serves to frustrate the independent crystallization of the proletariat. Therein precisely is the gist of fascism. (Emphasis mine—A. G.)

A Partial Balance-Sheet

Trotsky wrote that if the working class movement succeeded in defeating Hitler it would mark a new leftward turn in the international situation. But, if Hitler succeeded in prevailing over the German proletariat, the international consequences of such a victory for Hitler would result in the triumph of reaction throughout Europe.

Does Johnson know what this means? Hardly, and therefore I propose to tell him. The victory of fascism in Germany resulted in:

- a. The destruction of the German working class movement in every form.
- b. It strengthened the fascist régime in Italy and gave Mussolini the courage to engage in his Ethiopian adventure.
- c. It created the conditions for the annihilation of the heroic Austrian working class and the destruction of its organizations.
- d. It led to the triumph of fascism in Spain and directly assisted in putting Franco into power.
- e. It stimulated the wave of reaction throughout Europe and aided in the establishment of a whole series of fascist and semi-fascist régimes in a number of other countries.
- f. It incorporated Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Lithuania into Greater Germany and destroyed their national independence.
- g. It aggravated the international situation and became a primary cause for the outbreak of the Second World War. The outbreak of the war has a twofold significance, however. It is not only an expression of the severest crisis of capitalism. But the fact that it could occur is evidence that the working class was too weak, too disorganized, too undeveloped and unprepared to prevent an imperialist war!
- h. In the course of the war, this colossal power went on to occupy almost the whole continent of Europe with victories "similar to Napoleon's."

And this has done what? According to Johnson, it has brought the socialist revolution immeasurably nearer; it has strengthened the working class. What has really happened in the working class will be dealt with next month, when I propose to bring the discussion back from the world of "religion" to the world of reality.

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