

**The New** \_\_\_\_\_  
**INTERNATIONAL**

March • 1944

**The Meaning of the  
National Service Act**

*By the Editor*

*The European Revolution and Stalinist Russia*

**IT IS TIME TO UNDERSTAND**

*By Max Shachtman*

**Technocracy: Totalitarian Fantasy**

*By Paul Temple*

**Leon Trotsky on Leninism**

**Chiang Kai-shek's  
China**

*By Ria Stone*

**European Labor  
and Fascism**

*By Walter Jason*

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## MANAGER'S COLUMN

The last two issues of The New International had a one hundred per cent sale on the newsstands of New York City, creating an almost unprecedented situation in the business office. Many requests for the February issue containing the editor's analysis of the "Fight in the American Labor Party" went unfulfilled—a state of affairs that evoke an obvious moral, to wit, a subscription to the magazine is your best guarantee, etc., etc.

Beginning with this issue, the press run will receive progressive boosts, a reflection of the upward trend of circulation and the start of a determined campaign to peg its index to a level the magazine has long deserved.

New subscriptions and renewals have been coming in at a fairly steady rate, but do not amount to a *hill of subs*, which is precisely what the situation requires. We realize that it is more difficult to compete with *Labor Action's* pace at the NI price, but agents might conceivably treble our present circulation by soliciting NI subs with the identical effort and time. Every reader of *Labor Action* is a potential reader of the NI.

New York City led the sub-getters last month, with California in the second slot. Other cities heard from (in a whisper): St. Louis, Philadelphia, Columbus, Rochester, Dunkirk, Washington, D. C., and Detroit. Our agent in Hartford, Conn., not only sells out his monthly bundle but pays his bill as though it were a simplified income tax return. Note to Chicago: thanx for cleaning up those old red figures. Feels swell to tote a clean slate, doesn't it!

The British magazine, *Left*, lend-leased Reva Craine's article on "Bolivia: Colony of the U. S. A.," from the July, 1943, NEW INTERNATIONAL. Third time, too.

The April number of The New International will feature the second part of Paul Temple's dissection of technocracy, the conclusion of Ria Stone's series on China and an article on Spain by Miriam Gould. Plus, of course, the editor's "Notes of the Month" and book reviews. Reserve your copy now by subscribing for yourself, friends and shopmates.

T. R. C.

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## THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

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Editor: MAX SHACHTMAN

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# THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

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VOLUME X

MARCH, 1944

NUMBER 3

## NOTES OF THE MONTH

### National Service Act

Long before the war broke out in Europe, the War and Navy Departments had been laying their plans for participation in any military conflict. Under conditions of modern society, consideration of the home front, i.e., the industrial and physical mobilization of the country, is, in many respects, even more important than the actual creation of the armed forces and the planning of battle strategy. That the bourgeois state understands this is revealed in the fact that since the close of World War I the military and naval staffs have been drawing blueprints for the total mobilization of the country for war. This was true for every power in the world.

### A Plan Worked Out Long Ago

The United States had its "War Mobilization Plan," all worked out in detail. An examination of these plans in the midst of the present war will show how startlingly realistic were the concepts of the planners. It will be discovered that in many important and decisive aspects the policies of the present war administration are merely the acceptance and application of a program long ago worked out by the War and Navy Departments. This is particularly true with respect to the draft, industrial mobilization, control of labor, control of raw materials, prices, wages and a partial control of profits, even though these are now the greatest in the history of American capitalism.

The pattern of national development is duplicated in all other countries of the world involved, in one way or another, in the war. In the Axis countries you have complete totalitarian organization of society; the same is true of Russia. In the other United Nations, there is a *similar* totalitarian organization of the home front, its degree dependent upon many factors, such as pre-war riches, raw materials, labor supply, industrial development, class relations, etc. But the longer the war goes on the more marked becomes the "leveling" process, that is, the *tendency toward complete totalitarianization of all countries.*

It is only with this background that one can understand the President's message calling for a national service act to be enacted as law. At first glance, it appears that the principal need for such an act is as an anti-strike weapon. Roosevelt emphasized this point. The overwhelming majority of comments of the capitalist press, leading financiers and industrialists, likewise concentrated on this aspect of a national service act. Of all comments, those of the labor movement were nearest to the truth when it called national service a

slave act, a measure for the totalitarian organization of the country.

While the President's plea for the passage of a national service act appears to be unheeded in Congress and is possibly doomed at this time, we have not heard the last of it. It may come from Roosevelt again, or from some other administrative or congressional source.

Actually, the "anti-strike" character of a national service act is only one of its features. There are now many measures (most notorious, the Smith-Connally bill) which can be employed for this purpose. The experience in Great Britain, where a national service act exists, shows how ineffectual it is in preventing strikes. Strikes have repeatedly taken place in that country. The British ruling class was not, and is not now, too greatly concerned with this apparent breakdown of its national service act. Something more fundamental is involved in the demand for this sweeping measure of controlling the life of the country and it is revealed in the manner in which Roosevelt proposed a national service act for the United States.

Aside from the labor movement, what is the argument of American capitalists as to Roosevelt's message? Such an act, say these gentlemen, should have been proposed long ago, at the start of the war. If we have been able to go along without it up to now, in the most crucial preparatory stages for war, it is not necessary at this late date. Surveys taken disclose that most congressional leaders are opposed to the act. It is even said that the majority of the Cabinet is against it. And, as we have pointed out, since it does not find a great deal of favor among financiers and industrialists who are willing to let things alone in their profiteering hey-day, what force is pressing for the passage of the act? The answer is: the War and Navy Departments! The military branch of the government has been most insistently in favor of the passage of a national service act as the means of realizing the total triumph of their long-laid war mobilization program.

Their demand for the national service act is connected with their more realistic appraisal of the war, its duration and forthcoming intensification. Thus it is possible to say that the military, as a result of its special position in the current life of capitalism, responds more sensitively to the needs of American imperialism. Whereas the turn in the military fortunes of the Allies has resulted in a far too optimistic appraisal of the future by the civilian rulers of American capitalism and has caused this optimism to be translated in a desire for relieving the controls created by the war, the military leaders realize that the war is first reaching its acute stages, where the destruction of men and material will heavily drain the home front.

### Totalitarian Trends

The totalitarian nature of the war naturally has a totalitarian influence on the social order. The increasing intensity of the war merely accelerates the totalitarian sweep over the "civilian" nation. If we examine the home front we will easily see how, imperceptibly at first and more rapidly as the months go by, totalitarian measures have been enacted in this "most

democratic of democratic capitalist nations." In its recently adopted political resolution, the Workers Party summarized the real situation in the country when it said:

Under the conditions of modern total war, which requires the complete mobilization of all phases of life of the warring country, the outstanding feature is the state direction and control over the entire economy. Thus in the United States, growth of state-directed capitalism under the Roosevelt régime, made imperative by the bankruptcy of the entire system, was tremendously increased as the country became organized on the basis of a war economy.

Planning for war leads to state direction of capital accumulation and control over the allocation of the productive resources of the country, material and human. In the interests of capitalist society at war, the profit motive of the private capitalists had to be integrated with the needs of the war itself. The state, therefore, decides how much and what type of war goods must be produced; how much and what type of civilian goods are to be manufactured. The production of consumer goods is subordinated to the output of war goods. Through price controls, forced savings, taxation, loans, priorities, labor freezing and control, the Roosevelt government seeks to achieve a balance between production and consumption in such a way as to get the maximum materials for war and the absolute minimum of consumer goods necessary to maintain the population. . . .

The new rôle of the state in this war has been accompanied by the passage of subtle totalitarian measures, which, while they have not touched on the more prominent and spectacular forms of civil liberties, have been extremely effective on the economic field. Here the totalitarian direction has been unmistakable and is reflected in congressional anti-labor legislation, the no-strike pledge, the War Labor Board, the wage freeze and the hold-the-line order, and the direct interference in the affairs of the labor movement by the state and even more dangerously by the President as the personification of the state.

Every sector of economic, political and social life feels the increasing power and weight of the state. The bureaucratic machinery of government has grown to enormous proportions. There are not only the ordinary departments and bureaus which once constituted the apparatus of normal government; they too have expanded numerically. But there are new types of agencies and bureaus which have extended the arm of the state into reaches once regarded as inviolable. A glance over the expansion of the state machinery since the beginning of the New Deal revealed, even before the war, the intervention of the state in industry, business and finance. The efforts of the New Deal to alleviate the crisis of the Thirties inevitably oriented the state machinery toward a new life, toward the

"organization" of the social order under the limitations of the capitalist structure.

The war, as an abnormal and acute period of capitalist existence (we are not now discussing whether war is really a normal and integral feature of capitalism, which it is, but make the distinction for the purpose of distinguishing peacetime from wartime existence), made it obligatory for the state to assume direct charge of production and consumption, military preparations and execution of war policies, and to intervene increasingly in the social, economic and political life of the nation.

The extension of government bureaus in the economy of the nation, beginning with the long-ago established RFC, has reached a point which includes many more important aspects directly related to actual production and consumption. It not only says who shall produce, what shall be produced, but how much and for how much. It awards contracts, sets the level of production, provides for penalties and awards. In considering post-war conversion and planning, it is deciding through its WPB what companies shall reconvert, how much they shall reconvert, and who shall not be permitted to enter certain fields of production. It decides how much consumers goods may now be produced, who shall produce and who shall not. It governs foreign trade and is leading the struggle of American capitalism for control of new sources of raw materials, oil, rubber, minerals, etc.

But all of these manifestations of the totalitarianization of the economic, political and social life of the country are still haphazard in the sense that it is not part of a consistently organized plan and system. When all this is taken into consideration, it will be seen that the demand for a national service act is precisely for the purpose of meeting this requirement. The military staffs understand better the need for a national service act because the nature of their profession gives them a wider bureaucratic vision and penetration. They want a complete totalitarian organization in order to permit a conclusive control over the whole fabric of American capitalist society. Roosevelt's demand, therefore, must be viewed, not from narrow considerations of it as an "anti-strike" weapon, but, more fundamentally, from the point of view of the increasing totalitarianization of life under capitalism, given impetus by the requirements of imperialist war.

# It Is Time to Understand

## Continued Confusion Leads Only to Disaster

Confusion as to the aims of Russia in the war is gradually dissipating from the minds of her Anglo-American allies. What antipathy there is in London and Washington is based on indignation at the thought that Moscow should aim, in general, at extending its oppression and exploitation to other lands and peoples, inasmuch as up to now this has been the exclusive prerogative of the capitalist imperialisms; and in particular that it should extend its rule over territories which Russia's allies believe ought to *their* vassals or slaves. However, the military situation is such that the Honorable Allies find it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to translate their competitor's antipathy toward the unfolding of Russia's imperialist program into effective obsta-

cles. They must make the best of a trying dilemma, and bide their time.

### The Theory of the SWP

Confusion about Russia in the ranks of the Trotskyist movement, or, more accurately, in the part of it represented by the Socialist Workers Party, is not, however, being dissipated. The contrary is unfortunately the case. For it, Russia continues to be a workers' state, which has been degenerating day-in, day-out, for twenty years, which is now a life-long prison of the working class (to use the SWP's own words), which establishes not less than semi-slavery wherever it extends its sway (to use Trotsky's own words), but which does

not cease for all that to be a workers' state which must be unconditionally defended and supported in the war.

Furthermore, according to the SWP, Russia is a "counter-revolutionary workers' state." The state is proletarian because property is nationalized; it is counter-revolutionary by virtue of the Stalinist political régime, the bureaucracy. What makes it counter-revolutionary? Is it for capitalism? Is it for restoring private property? No; the fact is that it defends nationalized property "in its own way." Is it for maintaining capitalism in the countries it conquers? No; the fact is that it abolishes capitalist private property in these countries and reorganizes the economy to correspond exactly with Russia's. Well then? Well, it is counter-revolutionary because it is a deadly enemy of the working class everywhere and a violent opponent of the proletarian revolution. But is not the essence of a social revolution the expropriation of the ruling class and a fundamental change in property relations? And is that not exactly what the Stalinist bureaucracy, its army and its police, do when they conquer new territory, as in the Baltic and Balkan countries? To this question the SWP replies with a triumphant affirmative. But then, what is the *class character* of this social revolution, carried out by the Stalinist bureaucracy? The SWP rejects our theory that this bureaucracy is a new class (without as yet offering a single word of argument against it). Good. But the question still remains. Is this social revolution a proletarian revolution? No answer—except Trotsky's above-quoted remark that when Stalin nationalizes the property of the conquered countries, he reduces the proletariat to semi-slavery. Is this *social* revolution a *socialist* revolution? No answer—except in the not very courageous form of the assertion that Stalin is carrying out "the extension of Soviet property forms." And the Russian army, which is the bureaucracy's completely controlled instrument in this "extension of Soviet property forms"? This army must be defended and supported, says the SWP. But—at the same time, "we are against the seizure of new territories" by the Kremlin!

What is clearly implicit in all this? The Stalinist bureaucracy is carrying out a revolution that is new in history, namely, a counter-revolutionary socialist revolution; we support the army which seizes the countries in which the bureaucracy carries out this revolution; we are opposed to the seizure of the countries in which this revolution is carried out; but this opposition is purely verbal inasmuch as we support, and call upon the workers to support, the army which is assigned to seize these countries.

The SWP has dug itself deep into the shelter of this galimatias of a dogma. But the realities of life, to which we have repeatedly added some wisely-unanswered critical remarks, have subjected it to such a merciless pounding that the position has become utterly untenable. Instead of abandoning it openly and in time, the SWP vacillates helplessly between clinging to it and the urge of some of its members to shift to a more easily held position. Fundamentally—and this is the source of the growing confusion—it represents vacillation between an objective capitulation to Stalinism and an advance to revolutionary Marxism. If these alternatives seem exaggerated, it can only be because documentation has not yet been supplied for the analysis. Let us supply it.

### Wright on Stalin

In *The Militant* of January 29 appears an article by the now dubiously renowned John G. Wright called "Red Army Victories Alarm Stalin's Allies." It is sensational only in that

it brings to a new low the position that *The Militant* has been developing on the question of Russia. In view of the startling views expressed in it—and it is written, let us note, by one of the Fiercest of the Fierce among the "Trotskyists"—the reader will surely not be bored by even a lengthy quotation:

But the whole point is that the capitalists refuse to reconcile themselves to the price that Stalin needs and demands, that is, the strengthening of the Soviet Union in *Eastern Europe*. Stabilization of capitalism in Europe is impossible without a capitalist Poland as a "buffer" in order to keep the Soviet system isolated in preparation for its eventual destruction. Churchill and Roosevelt know this, and are working to this end.

The establishment of the Curzon line, that is, in essence the reservation of the 1939 borders gained by Stalin through his previous deal with Hitler, would weaken Poland as the pivot of this indispensable capitalist "cordon sanitaire." Furthermore, implicit in the Kremlin's territorial demands is the extension of Soviet property forms to the whole of Poland. That this threat is not distant is borne out by the latest pronouncement by Stalin's Union of Polish Patriots calling not only for the inclusion of Silesia, Pomerania, East Prussia and Danzig in a "New Poland," but also for the seizure of Polish landed estates, their division among the peasants and "the nationalization of industries and mines taken from the Germans" (*Daily Worker*, January 28).

*Inasmuch as Polish industry is almost wholly in the hands of the Germans, the realization of this program would signify the complete destruction of Polish capitalism and a giant step in the inevitable extension of Soviet property forms far beyond the frontiers of 1939.*

In its turn, this carries a twofold threat to capitalism: first, in addition to strengthening the USSR immeasurably, it would greatly hamper further attempts to isolate it. Second, the revolutionary wave in Europe, especially in Germany, would receive so mighty an impulsion from such developments in the territories of former Poland, let alone Silesia, East Prussia, etc., that the attempt to drown the coming European revolution in blood would be rendered well-nigh impossible.

In any case, Roosevelt and Churchill will not voluntarily surrender to Stalin a single section of capitalism, no matter how tiny. Each advance of the Red Army, however, poses this issue pointblank and brings more and more sharply to the forefront the basic antagonism in the camp of the "United Nations"—the irreconcilable class conflict between the "democratic" capitalists and the Soviet Union, even in its degenerated condition under Stalin.

... But the irreconcilable class forces underlying the new crisis cannot be definitely suppressed or overcome by Stalinist intrigue and imperialist diplomacy. Inescapably they must and will manifest themselves in a life-and-death struggle between the forces of "democratic" capitalism and the Soviet Union. (Emphasis in original.)

We ask the reader to overcome his revulsion and read the above a second and a third time so as to get its full flavor. It is the flavor of Stalinist degeneration—not of the "workers' state" this time, but of SWP theory and policy. What Wright says openly—poor fellow!—without the slightest feeling that it is shameful, is substantially identical with what the Stalinist bureaucrats say among themselves to the accompaniment of hilarious winks and jovial nudges in each other's ribs. That is how they justify their arch-hypocrisy and double-dealing to themselves and to the initiated and more reliable followers: "Of course we are still fighting for socialism, only with our new policy it is easier because we are fooling the bourgeoisie. Intrigue? Yes, but infernally clever and—successful. The working class? What is that, anyway?"

### Stalin's Great Achievements

According to Wright (and remember, this is one of the most obstreperous of the self-appointed Genuine Trotskyists talking):

1) Stalin not only needs but *demand*s the strengthening of the Soviet Union. It used to be said that he was weakening it. If this is no longer the case, why should not the thoughtful communist worker, who is also for the defense of Russia, say to himself: I will continue to support Stalin, but now with the approval of the Trotskyists.

2) Stalin is undermining the stabilization of capitalism in Europe, which means undermining capitalism itself. It used to be said by the Trotskyists that he is helping stabilize capitalism, that he is an agent of world capitalism, its tool, but they must have been joking. Stalin is actually "strengthening the USSR immeasurably" (immeasurably! says Wright, for he is no man to mince words). He and his so-called bureaucracy are giving a mighty impulsion to the revolutionary wave in Europe, so mighty, indeed, "that the attempt to drown the coming European revolution in blood would be rendered well-nigh impossible." So, pursues the thoughtful communist worker, I will continue to support this underminer of capitalism, this strengthener—this immeasurable strengthener—of the Soviet Union, this mighty impeller of revolutionary waves.

3) Stalin is fighting for the "extension of Soviet property forms to the whole of Poland," and "this threat is not distant," either. Stalin is fighting for an immediate, direct overthrow of capitalism in Poland, its "complete destruction," which means "a giant step in the inevitable extension of Soviet property forms." (Immeasurable strengthener; giant stepper; why not Man of Steel and Genial Leader?) No capitalist Poland means no capitalist stabilization anywhere in Europe. It used to be said that Stalin's rôle and goal were exactly the opposite of all this, but that was just a manner of speaking. Now the Marshal of Marshals is fighting for the socialist revolution against capitalism, with giant steps at that. The communist worker will continue to draw his conclusions—all, of course, provided he takes Wright seriously for the capitulator to Stalinism that he is.

4) Blank, blank, blank. These blanks used to be occupied by warnings that the triumph of Stalin not only "carries a twofold threat to capitalism," but a multiple threat to the working class, its interests and its aspirations. But what are such bagatelles compared to the "extension of Soviet property forms" by Stalin and the somewhat degenerated but highly nationalized GPU? And inasmuch as Wright is concerned only with big things and not with bagatelles like the enslavement or semi-enslavement of the workers by Stalin, the working class simply does not exist anywhere in his article. It need not be warned, it need not be guided, it has no particular function to perform or rôle to play, it does not exist in Wright's excited scheme of things. The advances of the Russian army (for no good reason in the world *The Militant* continues to call it the Red Army) poses "pointblank" the issue of . . . the struggle between capitalism and Stalin's property forms; they bring "sharply to the forefront" the irreconcilable class conflict, between irreconcilable class forces, manifesting themselves in a life-and-death struggle. Class conflict? Class forces? Life-and-death struggle? Between whom, do you think? The bourgeoisie and the proletariat? No, "between the 'democratic' capitalists and the Soviet Union," "between the forces of 'democratic' capitalism and the Soviet Union." The working class? What is that, anyway? That is something you leave out. Important is the fact that Stalin's "property forms are extended" over the working class of Poland and elsewhere, like a running noose over a mustang, so that it can be bridled and saddled with a "workers' state" which is degenerated, Bonapartist, counter-revolutionary, a prison for the workers, in which they do not rule, have nothing to say, and are totalitarian slaves, but which is, thank God, nevertheless a workers' state.

Where, the reader may now ask, is the confusion? Wright is not so much guilty of confusion as of splattering a ninety-nine per cent pure Stalinist poison on the pages of *The Mili-*

*tant*. The confusion of the SWP, we said, lies in the oscillation between Wright and the revolutionary Marxian position. Wright's article evidently evoked sufficient dismay to cause the editors of *The Militant* to attempt at least a partial disavowal of his views, without, of course, indicating by as much as a word that there are two views and a conflict between them. That falls under the heading of educating the reader, you see.

### The Answer to Wright

In the two issues following Wright's monstrous article, *The Militant* published two editorials, one unsigned, "Program for Poland," and the other more official yet, signed by "The Editors," and entitled "Stalinism and the Danger to Europe's Coming Revolution."

The first opens refreshingly enough with a highly deserved rebuke, and not just at bourgeois commentators, but at Wright, who is equally guilty. "In the current dispute over the Polish question, public attention has hitherto been concentrated exclusively upon the views and proposals of the various governments involved. . . . Not one of these powers [England, the United States, the Polish government in exile, or Stalin] has signified any intention of permitting the Polish people to determine their future. They propose to settle all questions solely through the reactionary methods of traditional power politics."

So far, so good. What follows is even better.

The Polish workers and peasants however have not suffered the horrors of the Second Imperialist War and fought against the Nazi beasts in order to pass under the yoke of any other dictatorship, whether it comes from the west through the restoration of the old régime backed by Anglo-American bayonets or whether it comes from the east in the person of the Bonapartist bureaucracy of Stalin. While the diplomats of the "United Nations" secretly dicker for the most advantageous terms, the Polish masses are waging their own independent fight for freedom against the national oppression of the Nazis and the social oppression of capitalism.

The Polish people don't want any more lords and masters over them. They want to decide for themselves what system of society and what kind of government they shall have. And, despite the conspiracies and deals between the capitalist owners and the Stalinist bureaucrats, the Polish workers and peasants will speak the last word on these vital questions. . . .

In their struggle for such a free and independent socialist Poland, the Polish workers and peasants will find powerful friends and allies, not in the Anglo-American capitalists or the Stalinist bureaucrats who threaten to replace the fascist oppressors, but among the insurgent masses of the rest of Europe.

The words come late, but not too late. In any case, they are excellent. Wright should be compelled to write them on a blackboard one hundred times a day for three months before he is permitted to speak or write another word on any question relating to Russia. At the same time, however, the editors, and the SWP in general, cannot be permitted to continue with their evasions and double-talk, with putting forward a new line, or half line, without abandoning the old. In other words, they cannot be permitted to remain confused and, above all, to confuse others.

First: The editors tell us that "the advanced Polish revolutionists are anti-Stalinist, but they are pro-Soviet. They understand that despite Stalin, the Soviet Union is nevertheless unlike the capitalist world." Unlike in what way? In that it is a workers' state of one kind or another? The editors delicately refrain from saying. Not once, in either editorial, do they refer to Russia as a workers' state—the pen is beginning to stutter. Russia is unlike the capitalist world; not despite Stalin but precisely because of him (that is, Stalin as a synonym for the ruling bureaucracy). In Russia today we have

neither a capitalist nor a workers' state, but a new social system which we call bureaucratic collectivism. It is increasingly clear that the SWP has reached a complete blind alley in its attempt to maintain that this *anti-workers'* state is proletarian and at the same time to maintain any kind of revolutionary policy for the situation in Europe. You cannot get out of this blind alley, as the two editorials try to do, by stressing the latter and remaining discreetly silent about the former. The contradiction is only ignored but not eliminated.

### Stalin, the Bourgeoisie and the Proletariat

*Second:* The editors point out that the "capitalists are first and foremost concerned with the property forms in the occupied territories, they are concerned with the preservation of the capitalist system in Europe." Correct. And Stalin? Is he for maintaining the capitalist "property forms" in the occupied countries, or is he, as Wright quite correctly shows, for destroying them and substituting "Soviet property forms"? Now, *IF* the mere existence or establishment of nationalized property in a country gives it a workers' state (degenerated or otherwise), as the SWP dogma reads, then does not Stalin's aim at a social revolution in Poland (i.e., the "extension of Soviet property forms") bear, fundamentally, a proletarian class character, which is, consequently, socialist in tendency?

The SWP can escape this inexorable conclusion from its dogma only in one of three ways: (a) by asserting that Stalin aims to maintain capitalist private property in the territories he conquers, a prediction it would be well-advised not to make; or (b) by claiming that a basic change in property forms and property relations, such as Stalin will clearly attempt, does not constitute the hallmark of a social revolution, a conclusion violating all history and all the teachings of Marx and Trotsky on the point; or (c) by agreeing with us that while it would mark a social revolution, it would be carried out by a new *class* which is neither bourgeois nor proletarian.

*Third:* The capitalists fear expropriation of their property not only by the socialist proletariat, but even by the Stalinist bureaucracy. Right. But the editors add: "The European peoples have aspirations and aims entirely different and opposed to those of Stalin." *Entirely* different? What about the "Soviet property forms" which are by themselves enough for a workers' state? Do not the European peoples, in so far as they are socialistic, have a common, if not an identical, aim with Stalin in the matter of "property forms"? That follows incontrovertibly from the SWP's theory, and to write about "*entirely* different" aims and aspirations is a mighty brash and cavalier way to dismiss one's own dogma!

The fact is that "*entirely* different" is fairly correct. Despite the argument of the SWP that nationalized property is what makes Russia a workers' state—an argument that implies a *fundamental* community of interests between the Stalinist bureaucracy and the socialist proletariat—nothing of the sort is true. Where property is state-owned, control of the state is control of society as a whole. Where the working class controls the state, as was the case in the early years of the revolution, it is a workers' state; the *form* in which property is owned (in this case, state ownership) is filled with one social content, one class content. Where the bureaucracy controls the state, and in a totalitarian way, as has been the case in Russia for almost a decade, the same property form is filled with a *fundamentally different* social or class content; entirely different property or social relations are established; the working class rules in no sense whatever, but is ruled over and ex-

ploited.

The failure to understand this simple idea is what is breaking the neck of the SWP. *Explicitly*, the SWP rejects this idea. *Implicitly*, it is dragged into giving the most reluctant, tongue-in-cheek acknowledgment of its validity. That is why it now feels obliged to support the workers of the capitalist countries, not only in fighting capitalism, but also in fighting against the "extension" of the rule of the "workers' state" over themselves. Example? Interestingly enough, it occurs in connection with Poland, as we shall now show.

### The Philosopher's Stone in 1939 and in 1944

*Fourth:* When Poland was first partitioned by the Berlin and Moscow gangster-imperialists, the question arose in the SWP of what attitude to take toward the Russian army (there was, of course, no dispute about the question of the German army). The majority said: Support the Russian army! We, of the then minority, said: Support neither army; organize the "third camp" of the independent proletarian struggle against the imperialist war and for workers' socialist power; teach the Polish masses that they must struggle against both oppressors who threaten them, even though the two are not socially identical, that they must *prepare*, beginning right now, for the uprising against both reactionary sides.

All of Trotsky's vast capacity for irony was tapped to ridicule this idea, to the uncontrollable chuckling of the majority. "Shachtman began by discovering a philosopher's stone: the achievement of a simultaneous insurrection against Hitler and Stalin in occupied Poland. The idea was splendid; it is only too bad that Shachtman was deprived of the opportunity of putting it into practice. The advanced workers of eastern Poland could justifiably say: 'A simultaneous insurrection against Hitler and Stalin in a country occupied by troops might perhaps be arranged very conveniently from the Bronx; but here, locally, it is more difficult. We should like to hear Burnham's and Shachtman's answer to a 'concrete political question': 'What shall we do between now and the coming insurrection?'"

The irony was, however, lost on us. In the first place, the Marxists had heard this same "annihilating" poser put (not by Trotsky, to be sure!) about what the Czech workers should do "between now and the coming insurrection" while their country was occupied by troops, about whether a simultaneous insurrection against Hitler and Benes could be arranged very conveniently from the Bronx, from lower Manhattan, from Coyoacan, or even in Prague. In the second place, as in Czechoslovakia, it was not a matter of "arranging an insurrection" in Poland. The question was one of a political line of revolutionary socialist opposition to both reactionary war camps, one of training and preparing the workers in such a spirit, and of arming them with such a policy that they would not fall victim to Hitler's army or Stalin's, but move closer to the day when they could settle accounts with both.

Be that as it may, let us look at the SWP "Program for Poland" four years later. The Russian, alias the Red Army, is again approaching Poland. Where is *The Militant's* courage? Why does it not say, as it did in 1939, that the Polish proletariat and peasantry should support the Russian army and work for its victory? There is not a blessed syllable about this in either of the two editorials! (There is indeed one vague, indirect and ever-so-mealymouthed reference to the Russian army, with which we shall deal below.)

The emphasis now, in 1944, bears no resemblance whatsoever to the emphasis in 1939. Now we are told that the

Polish workers and peasants have not "fought against the Nazi beasts in order to pass under the yoke of any other dictatorship, whether it comes from the west . . . or whether it comes from the east in the person of the Bonapartist bureaucracy of Stalin." Bravo! Late, but welcome nevertheless. (We were once denounced indignantly for "coupling" the two dictatorships, for putting them on the same plane. Now . . .) And the Poles "will find powerful friends and allies, not in the Anglo-American capitalists or the Stalinist bureaucrats who threaten to replace the fascist oppressors, but among the insurgent masses of the rest of Europe." Again, bravo! And the Poles "are likewise aware of the counter-revolutionary rôle of Stalin and his clique. They know of the oppression of the nationalities and the peoples inside the Soviet Union. They understand that Stalin's Kremlin gang come into Poland not as liberators but as oppressors." A double and triple bravo! The Poles, we are glad to see, understand, and the editors of *The Militant* also . . . finally . . . understand, at least in part.

Does this mean that the Polish vanguard elements should oppose both the Hitler forces and the Stalin forces? Does this mean that *The Militant*, too, has begun "by discovering a philosopher's stone: the achievement of a simultaneous insurrection [Ha-ha-ha!] against Hitler and Stalin [Ho-ho-ho!] in occupied Poland"? From the quotations above, one would think so. The Poles do not want to pass under Stalin's dictatorship; the Stalinist bureaucrats are not their allies or friends; they are counter-revolutionary; they come not as liberators but as oppressors. And one would think so, also, from the already mentioned fact that the editorials have nothing to say about supporting the Russian army, about helping it to victory, about being the "best soldiers in its ranks." Is silence on this key point supposed to reveal the superior political and revolutionary qualities of the editors over us, who have stated our views forthrightly and unambiguously for over four years?

And yet there is a sentence about the Russian army and Poland. Here it is, from beginning to end: "They [the advanced Polish revolutionists] understand the great opportunities that are opening up for the Polish people and their struggle because of the victorious advance of the Red Army." Here the bold editors bring up short. They add not a single word. Desperate reality pulls at their tongue, but the dogma has them by the throat! So, all they can emit is a mean little cowardly squeak that can be interpreted whichever way you please.

### **The "Red" Army "Offers Opportunities"**

In what sense does the victorious advance of the Russian army offer great opportunities to the Polish revolutionists? In the same sense in which the victorious advance of Eisenhower's army offered opportunities to the Italian revolutionists? In the sense in which the victorious advance of the Japanese army offered opportunities to the Burmese? In other words, in the sense that the Russian advances so weaken the enemy, who is sitting right now on the necks of the Poles, that they can more easily deal a death blow to him, without in the slightest way doing anything to help seat the "liberating" Stalinist armies on their necks? Interpreted *this way*—and it was only in this sense that it was valid in the case of Burma, for example—what *The Militant* says is not untrue.

But does it follow from this, as *The Militant* editors have argued for so long, that the Polish masses should defend and support the Stalinist armies, work for their victory? It does not follow in the case of Russia in Poland any more than it

did in the case of Japan in Burma, or in similar cases elsewhere. That is what followed for *The Militant* from 1939 onward. Does it still?

If it does, then *The Militant* might at least have the sorry courage of a Wright and blurt it out so that all may know that it still stands where it stood before—the ambiguous phrase, plus the enormous silence, give rise to doubts. In that case, let *The Militant* explain why the Poles must offer all resistance possible to the "Kremlin gang [who] come into Poland not as liberators but as oppressors," who are not "friends and allies," but must not resist—on the contrary, must defend and help to victory—the Russian army, even though this army is, in Trotsky's words, "an instrument in the hands of the Bonapartist bureaucracy." In other words, if *The Militant* holds to its old position, let it explain why Poles must oppose the executioner while helping him fire the gun (the "instrument") which is aimed right at them. If we may paraphrase Trotsky's irony about the "simultaneous insurrection," and paraphrase it for an idea to which, we think, it properly applies: "The idea is splendid! it is only too bad that the editors are deprived of the opportunity of putting it into practice."

However, if what once followed for *The Militant* no longer follows, it is doubly its duty to say so and to explain why. And if it no longer follows, away with these miserable subterfuges and double-talk! Instead of deceitful sentences such as we have quoted, *The Militant* should be saying to the Polish and all other workers that the Stalinist army is advancing under the banner of Stalin, Kutuzov and Ivan the Terrible for the purpose of reducing them to slavery! That would be a real step forward and lead directly to an even more important advance.

It is high time this step was taken. It is high time to understand. The European proletarian revolution is maturing. This is no longer the expression of a mere wish, in any sense. We have already seen the actual outbreak of the first stage of the revolution in Italy. With even one eye we can see the growth of the revolutionary forces in the popular underground movements in other countries.

*The Militant* sees, as the editors so correctly put it, that Stalin "threatens instead of dismember Germany; he threatens the German people with slavery. If the blood of the Russian and German masses continues to redden the territories of the eastern front, the responsibility in major measure rests on Stalin and his counter-revolutionary régime." It refuses to see, or to say, that its "workers' state" is precisely this Stalin and his counter-revolutionary régime; that the "nationalized property" is precisely the foundation of power of this Stalin and his counter-revolutionary régime; that the misnamed Red Army is precisely the instrument of this Stalin and his counter-revolutionary régime—of the state that threatens Germany and other lands with dismemberment, the people with slavery, and the revolution with such a bloodbath as even Anglo-American imperialism might well shrink from.

Up to now, all this preposterous and reactionary mumbo-jumbo about Stalin's Russia being a workers' state and Stalin's Bonapartist army being "Trotsky's Red Army" which is bringing socialism to Europe, has been little more than a tragedy. Tomorrow, for all that we hope for and work for in Europe, and for us here, it can become a first-class disaster.

Isn't it time to understand this? The question is addressed to those who have retained the capacity and the will to understand. They will not prove to be, we hope, too few.

MAX SHACHTMAN.



# Technocracy: A Totalitarian Fantasy

## Myths and Realities About a "New Ordre"

Along in 1932 and the beginning of 1933, at the bottom of the "Great Depression," the new word "technocracy" hit public attention with the same mass impact as apple-selling, depression jokes, bankers gravitating downward from upper stories, and breadlines. The little furor over the new and high sounding words which it spewed forth to a goggling group of newspaper readers lasted only a little longer than the aforesaid degravitating course of the bankers. It choked off in 1933 when the New Deal alphabet began to steal the limelight from the technocratic spawn of "ergs," "extraneous energy," "social thermodynamics," etc. And not much more was heard of it for ten years.

In 1942 Howard Scott and his brainchild came forth with another bid for popular attention. It was by now "Technocracy, Inc." and it had had its face lifted. From a group of statistically minded research men with a new vocabulary, it had become a quite mysteriously well-heeled organization which could shoot \$100,000 on a series of newspaper ads; commanded fleets of gray cars; sported uniforms and salutes—and a new refurbished Howard Scott who posed, no longer as "merely" a theoretical genius, but as a Leader and a Man of Destiny. Branch organizations had sprouted in different sections of the country, quite the largest being (as might be expected) in the Los Angeles area of Southern California. From dealing mainly in ergs, calories, joules and kilowatt-hours, it was now talking in terms of an immediate social program on the conduct of the war, governmental organization, international politics, race relations, etc. And the mark of the beast on its new body of ideas could be detected without an electronic microscope: a new fascist hat was in the ring.

But before entering on a detailed description of this late portentous change in the character of the technocrats' movement, it is well first to analyze technocracy itself, that is, its economic and social theory.

The most immediate reason for making this analysis is the existence of two quite common myths about technocracy, the first of which is carefully fostered by the technocrats themselves:

- (1) That technocracy has made certain valuable and *new* contributions toward an understanding of modern society;
- (2) That technocracy has "taken over" many socialist ideas, and that in fact a good part of its ideology is socialism in an "Americanized" form.

Both of these are—myths, nothing more.

### Where Technocracy Started

The technocrats trace their ancestry back to 1919, which is both the date of the publication by Thorstein Veblen of his *Engineers and the Price System*, and the formation by a small group of economists and technicians of the "Technical Alliance," together with the then unknown Howard Scott. Scott claims that he developed his ideas independently of Veblen, which may well be true. At least—although there are many similarities between Veblen's work and Scott's theories, especially verbal similarities—Scott's subsequent development of those ideas represents only their crude vulgarization and degeneration into nonsense, and should not be held against the

subtler intellect and more rational thinking of the author of *The Theory of the Leisure Class*.

The 1919 group included some people of repute: among them, Wesley Mitchell, Stuart Chase, Charles Steinmetz, Leon Henderson and Bassett Jones, attracted on the basis of Veblen's germinal ideas, and thinking of themselves as the "engineers" to whom Veblen had directed his challenge to save society from the "price system." It never did anything of note and very soon disappeared with the return of "normalcy."

At the beginning of the 1930's, with capitalist economy pounding on the rocks and all orthodox economic thinking shipwrecked, some of the lesser lights of the 1919 group again teamed up with Scott, who had meantime christened his cerebrations "technocracy," for the purpose of making a statistical study of the effect of technological advance on the economic system. This was a laudable academic endeavor, and they managed to wangle the wherewithal to do so from Columbia University and the American Institute of Architects. (When Scott hit the headline jackpot with his ideas in 1932, Columbia made haste to disclaim all connection, and quite a number of Scott's research co-workers pulled out in a hurry, denying that his hair-brained theories had any necessary connection with the research work the group had been doing.)

Technocratic literature today is filled with vague references to this research body (its adventitious relation with Columbia is carefully mentioned to inflate its academic standing), together with the claims that it produced "startling" and brand-new light on the economy, and that the social theories of technocracy flowed from the graphs and charts there developed with the inevitability of a mathematical equation. The following is a sample:

In their researches the scientists [Scott and his co-workers are meant] discovered a new method of social operation... [From their findings] come concrete indications of the end of the price system on the North American continent. The evidence is positive and complete." (*Technocracy in Plain Terms*, page 8.)

It is no wonder, of course, that all such references are made in general (but sweeping) terms—the common denominator of most of technocracy's popular propaganda. Vague references to science, scientists, mathematics and research are impressive, and it is a common prejudice that a man who can get up a chart showing the production of pig iron from 1880 to 1930 is thereby also automatically qualified to speak on the fate of humanity.

On what was this actual research with which technocracy started?

### Technocracy's Graphs and Charts

In point of fact, it dealt with two things:

- (1) America's technical capacity to produce abundant wealth, and the evolution of this capacity.
- (2) The development of labor-saving automatic machinery, displacing human labor.

That research into these well known trends and the development of statistical charts and figures on them are useful, goes without saying. If Scott had ended there he would have performed the same service that is being done every month

of the year by similar academic groups. As a matter of fact, the most complete work on the first item has been done by the Brookings Institute, a thoroughly pro-capitalist institution.

This is the "new" and "startling" body of facts on which the technocrats base their puff that "scientific research" "mathematically" proves the social theories of technocracy! To go no, further, it is as if one were to painstakingly develop a detailed chart showing the war casualties on the battle fronts --and then point to it as "scientific" and conclusive proof of the theory that modern wars are fought to kill off the surplus population!

Two other remarks on the technocrats' use of statistics and figures on the advance of technology:

(1) Their literature shows the childish tendency to talk as if it was not until Howard Scott came along that the discovery was made that machines have been used more and more to displace human labor and that this has had a tremendous impact on economy. Some of their guileless readers would undoubtedly be surprised to learn that this has been stock material in economic discussions since Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* in the 1770's.

(2) Especially during the technocratic flurry of 1932-33, a large number of spectacular examples of technological displacement which were heralded forth by Scott were shown up as loose, inaccurate and exaggerated. Since this does not affect the heart of the matter--the economic tendency itself being plain enough--it is not really worthwhile to go into this in any detail.

It was, however, sufficiently demonstrated that Scott was writing more in the style of advertising copy than scientific soberness. He was, for instance, not loath to point to the example of an automatic road-building machine which could lay eight miles of surfaced road a day with only two workers on it--without mentioning the fact that to feed such a machine some thirty-five trucks had to be in constant attendance, while a large gang of hand laborers had constantly to be employed constructing feeder lanes. Or to refer to plants which were only in the idea stage as if they were in actual operation. This is relevant only to the fact that all technocratic literature insists upon the micrometric accuracy of every subordinate clause written in it.

At any rate, Scott pulled together a lot of statistics. But statistics have to be interpreted--by means of analysis, hypothesis, correlation with other facts. Here Scott doffs the garb of research expert and dons the mantle of the quack.

### **Presto! The Worker Vanishes!**

Well, now, technological improvement has been displacing human labor. What are the conclusions from this fact?

The well known result is the development of "technological unemployment"--that is, the creation of a chronically unemployed reserve of workers, due to the invention of labor-saving machinery. There are still some people who repeat the hoary myth that every new machine creates as many jobs as it displaces, but the technocrats do not go in for this brand of nonsense. They have their own.

Where the economic analyst notes the development of this type of chronic unemployment, Scott records nothing less than ... the abolition of human labor! One of the fundamental tenets of technocracy is that labor has become non-essential to society.

"Technology has swept away the human worker," proclaimed Scott in *Harper's Magazine* (January, 1933). Or an-

other sample: in his *Introduction to Technocracy*, he writes of the last one hundred and fifty years:

"The number of man-hours of human effort required per unit output was greatest one hundred years ago, and declined steadily ever since, approaching the limit of zero in all our best practices." (All emphasis in quotations is mine unless otherwise noted.)

It is by fantastic statements such as these that our technocratic graph-and-chart experts precede their conclusion that labor is non-essential to industry. It would do no particular good to call their attention to the mass-production industries, assuredly not among our worst industrial practices, where the human worker is far from "swept away" and non-essential! One may suspect that their eyes are fixed so firmly on the technological horizon that they cannot see the real today; but nevertheless Scott wrote "has swept away," not "will sweep away."

To be sure, the day may come when the necessity for human labor approaches zero, but at the moment this is a reality only in the science-fiction magazine's robot stories and in the inflated statistical puffs of technocratic exaggerations. As we shall see, it is characteristic that in technocratic literature it is assumed for practical purposes this blessed state already exists.

With the consistency of lunacy, the technocrats follow through with the consequences of this "discovery." Labor is non-essential to industry and society? It is today a negligible quantity; it plays no social role; it is completely to be ignored in an understanding of the world today, and in point of fact technocratic literature does so ignore it; the labor movement is merely an anachronism, due to be wiped out entirely in a few years by the research laboratories; and one's attitude toward it can well be the same as toward the Australian platypus.

(Note that it requires no graphs to prove that what is really non-essential in industry today, especially technologically, is the capitalist absentee owner, but the technocrats never mention this; they direct attention to the "non-essential" worker!)

### **From Automatic Machines to Automatic Collapse**

In 1933, Stuart Chase--who has gone chasing after more messiahs in the field of sociology than Mme. Besant in the field of religion--was in a technocratic mood; and in his very sympathetic pamphlet on technocracy he carried Scott's thesis forward:

The automatic process continually displaces the manual worker. He secures a job, if he is lucky, in one of the "service" trades, usually a white collar trade. He leaves, or he is thrown out of, the classic proletariat. What becomes of the class struggle theory? Where are the toiling masses, without a worker in the plant? Photo-electric cells can readily identify the color red, but they are difficult to organize. Service trade workers are even more difficult. *The official labor movement, it is significant to note, has not progressed in the new mass production industries, and in the next phase, the automatic industry, there will be nobody to organize.* When this development proceeds to a certain point, which we may or may not yet have reached [Chase is actually uncertain whether or not there are any workers left to organize!--P. T.], the whole Marxian thesis stands in need of substantial revision. Marx wrote in a time of far lower energy magnitudes. One suspects he would be the first to recognize the changed situation today. (*Technocracy--An Interpretation*, page 27.)

Poor Karl Marx, to be so insidiously flattered! But unfortunately for the "significant" fact which Chase pointed to in

<sup>1</sup>Cf. "The destroyer of trade unions is not the employer but such men as Benjamin Franklin, Faraday and the electrical wizard, Steinmetz. They displaced brawn by brains." (*The Mystery of Money*, an official pamphlet.) Now the NAM can push its anti-labor drive with the full sanction of science and Scott.

1933, the mass production were not only organized, but, as the Marxists expected, went to the vanguard of the labor movement. And the class struggle, whose death was thus heralded forth by our technocrat in imitation of hordes of similarly unlucky forerunners, broke out with unprecedented intensity in the sit-down strikes. And Karl Marx did not have to make a 180-degree turn in his grave.

But still—will not industry, given continued technical development, sooner or later really arrive at the “automatic” stage, with the attendant social consequences indicated by Chase?

Certainly, *but not until the present economic system is abolished.* For the capitalist system, which does nothing except for a profit, in modern days finds it unprofitable to introduce new devices which would have the effect of increasing the more abundant flow of socially useful wealth. As an economy based on scarcity, it tends to suppress the technological improvement which would only have the effect of piling up more goods on a market which it does not provide with the purchasing power to absorb them. The technocrats themselves refer to this phenomenon\* but without the faintest glimmering of its economic meaning.

For the technocrats do not argue that the present system must be abolished *in order* to permit the continued development of technology. They stand the proposition on its head. Their basic thought is that it is precisely the *unstoppable* and *automatically* continuing development of technology which is the force which will *by and of itself* overthrow the present system.

Chase summarizes this prognosis concisely:

The technical arts cannot be halted. As they march they are exploding unemployment, money values and vested interests. The price system cannot withstand an indefinite series of such explosions without collapse.” (*Ibidem*, page 28.)

This is a faithful rendering of Scott’s views: technological improvement will itself bring about the automatic collapse of the present system, which will fall of its own weight. The technocrats conceive their job to be merely to sit back and wait for this to happen.

### The Inevitability of Physics

This mechanical-minded fatalism, gone hog-wild, of the technocrats flows from a basic characteristic of their theories, without which their fantasies cannot be understood and which permeates their thinking on every point. It is the assumption that society, with all the problems peculiar to it, obeys the same laws as an automobile engine—and *no others*.

At this point the unprepared reader will not interpret this statement with the complete literalness which the technocrats intend by it. It is not a metaphor or an analogy that they are making, or merely an attempt at an illuminating comparison.

“All social activity must obey the laws of physics,” states Scott flatly and unqualifiedly. And by this he means, neither more nor less, that *all one needs to understand what is going on in society is a knowledge of the contents of a good college physics text-book.* (It is, of course, a coincidence that these contents exhaust his own qualifications to pose as a social scientist.) The pamphlet, *Technocracy in Plain Terms* (page 7), repeats this guiding dictum; but to spare further quotations one need only glance at the table of contents of the very offi-

\*“Scott tells us that a razor blade with a tungsten carbide edge, fabricated with only a twenty per cent increase in energy, would last for a generation,” writes Chase. But the only moral he draws is the wideness of the horizon of technology.

cial and definitive *Technocracy Study Course*, a book of a couple of hundred pages.

The first one hundred and twenty pages of this complete *Study Course* is entirely devoted to nothing more than subjects such as: molecules, atoms, potential and kinetic energy, laws of thermodynamics, efficiency of engines, calories, solar radiation, biological equilibrium of plants and animals, early discovery of metals, production of pig iron, Newton’s three laws of motion, the nature of ferro-alloys, etc.

For Scott this half-baked condensation of physical science is the total content of *social* science also. The only social motive factor is technological invention. There is nothing else. All economics and sociology, economic analysis and social ideas are otherwise meaningless and a waste of a scientist’s time.

La Mettrie was the eighteenth century author of *Man, a Machine*, who presented the mechanical-materialist notion that man is nothing but a self-propelled engine, operated by the laws of physics and chemistry alone, ignoring the qualitative difference between a living organism and dead matter. La Mettrie had at least the historical excuse of writing in the childhood of modern science. Scott extends this early philosopher’s crude notions to apply even to the again qualitatively different *social* organism—and presents this cast-off relic of philosophy as an “ultra-modern” discovery. As usual, the technocrats, who reject all theory as such with scorn, are not thereby prevented from filling its place with the very crudest theories of all. They boast that they have “applied” science to sociology. This is patently not so. They *substitute physical science for sociology*, rather than apply the scientific *method* in order to arrive at a real science of society.

### The Blessings of Ignorance

I have said that this mechanistic theory is the basis of all their views, and we shall see this further as we review what they have to say. But two examples may be brought in at this point.

One is Scott’s account of the history of the development of society in the last six or seven thousand years, during which man has passed through the social stages of the primitive tribal commune, the chattel-slave system from ancient Egypt to Rome, the feudalism of the Middle Ages, and early and modern capitalism.

For Scott, this history of society is a very simple one. For six or seven thousand years nothing happened of social importance; then, in the middle of the eighteenth century, the steam engine was invented, and social change began. That is all.

Since all human activity is determined, quantitatively, by the amount of energy consumed, we can truly say that *all history, until recently, has not witnessed an appreciable social change, in the sense herein defined.* . . .

He [the technocrat] speaks of the period from the dawn of history to the middle of the eighteenth century as *six thousand static years.* (*Introduction to Technocracy*, see pages 11-20.)

The sub-title, “The First Social Change in History,” on page 2 of this pamphlet, refers also the middle of the eighteenth century.

Why did it “suddenly” happen that in the middle of the eighteenth century the steam engine got itself invented and machine production became dominant? Why didn’t the discovery of the principle of the steam engine by Hero in ancient Greece lead to a machine economy way back then? etc.

These questions do not exist for Scott. It just happened, that’s all. Besides, an answer cannot be gotten out of a statis-

tical chart of the production of pig iron, or deduced from either the first or second law of thermodynamics. *Why* history happens, and *why* society changes is therefore an insoluble mystery, since the technocrat on principle refuses to consider that the re-discovery of the steam engine principle could have the social effect it did only because of the social and economic changes which had already taken place by that time and provided the new context for it. One will hardly expect them to understand why the history of *today* is happening.

Fascism, for example. There has been more than one explanation advanced for the rise of fascism, but never one like Howard Scott's.

The difference between fascism and America's way of life is not merely a difference in ideology. It is a basic difference in the method of social operations. *In all fascist countries, including Germany, physical wealth is produced chiefly by human toil and hand tools, while in America physical wealth is produced chiefly by technological processes using extraneous energy.* (*Total Conscriptio—Your Questions Answered*, page 20.)

This—"human toil and hand tools"—is given as the dominant content of the most highly developed industrial economy outside of the United States! One might call Scott merely an ignoramus were it not for the fact that technocrats are brought up to look upon this charlatan as the mastermind of the ages. This is the length the technocrats go in attempting to interpret social phenomena starkly in terms of technology.

### How Scott Abolishes Economics

This mind-set of the technocrats once understood, their reaction to the basic problems of economics will seem less fantastic; if not less stupid.

For the long and short of the technocratic approach to economics is... that there is no such animal. There is no question of what the technocrats counterpose to present-day economic theory. They have no counterposed theory. They believe in principle in not having any. All their argumentation in this field is simply devoted to demonstrating that economic theory as such is nonsense. (Remember... the laws of physics.)

Most, if not all, of their critics have not understood that this is the case. The technocrats themselves are perfectly clear in presenting this point of view.

Writing—sweepingly as usual in the name of the "scientists and technologists"—Scott blankly says that they "do not understand" why investigators into the nature of economic society "should forever busy themselves with the facts of ownership and pecuniary values."

They do not understand the current accounts of what has happened [the depression] or the proposals as to what should be done about it. *For the entire range of facts and events dealt with lies completely outside the range of facts and events with which they are concerned in their own accounts.* (*Introduction*, page 9.)

This sounds like an indictment of the very real social ignorance and limited horizon of technical men. But Scott is not bemoaning it; he identifies himself with the know-nothings:

To these men of matter-of-fact and of quantitative measurements... the current proposals looking toward a return to better times are utterly beside the point.

Scott demonstrates the irrelevance of economics by tackling, as is proper, the basic problem of economics: the concept of the *value* of a commodity. This is what he has to say about it, in his vaunted rôle of "scientist and technologist":

The technologist examines our so-called standard of measurement, the monetary unit—the dollar. He notes that it is variable. Why anybody

should attempt, on this earth, to use a variable as a measuring rod is so utterly absurd that he dismisses any serious consideration of its use in his study of what should be done.

He also considers "price" and "value" and the fine-spun theories of philosophers and economists who have attempted to surround these terms with the semblance of meaning. These terms, like the monetary unit, may have had meaning to men in the past but they mean nothing whatsoever to the modern technologist. The standard of measurement is not relevant to the thing measured and the measuring rod and the things measured, as if they were stable, are all variables... It is, of course, quite possible to rationalize this in terms of the functions of the price system; but after it has been rationalized it still remains to the technologist nothing more nor less than an item of nonsense. He simply refuses to think of that item of our technological equipment as waving up and down like that. It doesn't. (*Introduction*, pages 22-23.)

"All this," he complains, "constitutes a situation which is obviously alien to the technologist's world of thought, theory and action."

And it is therefore damned. Anything, you see, which is outside of Scott's "range of facts and events" or his "world of thought" is an unreal shadow. This is a proposition which is so obvious—to Scott—that he "simply refuses to think" any more about it. It is a fact, at any rate, that he says no more about it.

### A Little Knowledge . . .

Since Scott simply refuses to think about it, one can understand why he never bothered to find out more about economic theories of value. The sum total of his knowledge on this score seems to be a statement in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* that "Value is defined by the economists as the measure of the force of desire." (This same bit of erudition is trotted out in three different pamphlets. Apparently Scott didn't even bother to look it up in a different encyclopedia.) Armed with this exhaustive survey of economic thought, he thereupon treats "value" and "price" as synonyms, scientifically makes a field trip to the grocery, where he notes that prices are variable, and disposes of the whole alien business with the conclusion that obviously this economic set-up is not proceeding according to the established laws of thermodynamics, astro-physics and biological equilibrium.

Scott's treasured quotation from the *Britannica* represents the view of one school of capitalist economists, and has long since been exploded by Marxist criticism. The scientific socialist analysis of capitalism shows that the value which a commodity has in the process of exchange for other commodities depends on the amount of human *labor* which is necessary for its production. They exchange in corresponding proportions, and this fact sets the levels—the values—around which the day-to-day prices fluctuate, like the crests and troughs of waves around sea level. The very scientific technocrats dislike variables intensely but forget that altitude on this earth is measured from a "mean sea level," which actually exists only as a mathematical abstraction.

Scott summarizes: "Neither value, price, nor money may be measured *physically*"—that is, one can't put a ruler up against value and record the result on sensitized film—"and so science has relegated all three to their proper place along with the wails of the banshee." With this criterion, what a multitude of the scientific facts of life would be banished with the banshees!—including that imponderable, Scott's intelligence.

Speaking of ignorance, the pamphlet, *The Mystery of Money*, refers to Major Douglas, the social-credit exponent, as the "follower of Marx" who "amplifies the Marxian theories of unearned increment"! The writer is obviously dealing with a subject "alien to his world of thought."

## A Case of Scrambled Ergs

What do the technocrats propose to replace the idea of exchange value? They propose "energy costs."

This is the measurement of all the energy consumed in the production of any goods, as measured in calories, electrical ergs, kilowatts, etc. Thus the "energy cost" of a pair of shoes would be figured up by Scott's technologists by adding the amounts of various kinds of mechanical and electrical energy consumed by the stitching machines, cutting machines, water power, electric lights, steam locomotives transporting the materials, etc., involved in shoe manufacture—including very incidentally the calories of human energy consumed by the workers in the course of the whole process. This method is proposed because it is physically measurable and is therefore "scientific."

It is not necessary to go into all the absurdities of this fantastic proposal to see one glaring fact. The Marxist theory, which traces the source of the value of commodities to labor, has as its aim the *explanation* of why capitalist economy works the way it does and has the results it has. Through an understanding of the actual world, which is the world of capitalist society, it points the path to the abolition of the very conditions it is devoted to analyzing. Thus it provides that grasp of the social forces now at work which is necessary for the struggle of labor to take command of those social forces.

The technocrats do *not* put forwards their "energy cost" proposal as an explanation of the actual world. They do *not* claim that it sheds any light on what is happening in economy today. It is merely something that ought to be. When the laws of physics bring about the automatic collapse of the system the technocrats hold themselves ready to step forward and introduce the system of "energy costs," which because it can be physically measured, will enable them to plan production by keeping track of the ergs. As a bookkeeping device, it is part of the technocratic blueprint for the future.

The Technocrats present the change from reckoning price in money to reckoning wealth in "energy cost" as THE fundamental social reform which will eliminate its present evils; it is the essence of the change they propose. Each man equally is to be given "certificates" representing a certain amount of ergs, kilowatts, etc., and for these certificates he will receive goods whose production has consumed that amount of energy. Instead of being tagged in dollars and cents, goods in the technocratic distribution depots (stores) would be price-marked with a certain amount of ergs; and instead of handing dollars over the country, the consumer would make the purchase with "energy certificates."

It is obvious that this "energy certificate" system is a system of *rationing*, just as the use of money in capitalist economy is—a system of rationing *scarcity*. But as soon as scarcity is eliminated, the use of any rationing device becomes an absurd superfluity. As soon as bread, for example, is produced by socialist industry in sufficient quantity to satisfy everyone's needs, it becomes unnecessary to *limit its distribution* either by energy certificates or any other form of money. As the level of production rises, freed of capitalism's stranglehold, this would apply to more and more of the necessities of life. The full flowering of the socialist production of abundance would tend to abolish the necessity for the use of money. But suppose television sets, flivver airplanes, diamond rings and hand-designed violins are not produced in sufficient quantity as yet to be distributed in this fashion? Then production and consumption in this sector of economy must still be limited.

The limitation on production will be determined, not only on the basis of how many ergs will have to be expended, but also on other factors: the availability of suitable machinery, raw materials, types of labor, etc. The adjustment of consumption demand to production will have to be effected by regulation of prices; the deliberate inflexibility of the technocratic "energy measurement" would only be an obstacle to such planning engineering. A handsewn dress made by a sedentary seamstress might take fewer ergs and calories for its production than a store dress made by giant machinery bursting with kilowatts, but that would not prevent women from passing up the dress of "high energy cost" for the "cheaper energy" dress.

The technocratic notion of "energy cost" has no bearing upon an understanding of why the present system acts as it does; and as a proposal for the post-capitalist future it sounds more like a WPA project for unemployed statisticians than a realistic method of planning economy.

## The "Price System"

The poverty of the technocrats' ideas on what makes the system tick does not, however, prevent them from speaking, in the grandiloquent terms of a megalomaniac, of their powers of analysis and prediction. The only laugh to be derived from the otherwise completely humorless writings of the technocrats is from their amazing braggadocio.

Any statement made by Technocracy, Inc., is a statement of fact, not theory. Technocracy's predictions are made with almost the same mathematical and scientific exactitude as astronomers' predictions of the next solar eclipse. (*Technocracy in Plain Terms*, page 14.)<sup>4</sup>

Actual concrete predictions by the technocrats are not plentiful, but those that have been put into writing are worth being set beside the above modest claim. In 1938 the official pamphlet, *The Mystery of Money*, made one of its sure-fire predictions:

Scientific research, working with mathematical accuracy, has shown that the limits of tolerance beyond which the price system on the continent cannot much longer be maintained *will be reached around 1942*.

We shall see two other predictions later.

But while technocracy refuses to understand anything about the present system, it has a label for it—the "price system." Its use of this term is misleading in two ways.

(1) The term "price system" has often been used (by Veblen, for example) as in effect a synonym for "capitalist system." Not so the technocrats.

The term price system must not be confused with such terms as profit system, or capitalist system. The factor of ownership does not alter the mechanics of operating a price system. (*Mystery of Money*.)

Remember, by the price system we do not mean capitalism. We mean the entire method of exchange and barter, wages and money. (*Technocracy in Plain Terms*.)

Technocratic writers and speakers are instructed not to refer to "capitalist system" or "capitalists" at all. Technocratic literature never refers to "profits" any more than to "profit system." This plays no rôle in their analysis of society.

(2) Their use of "price system" gives the impression that the term refers to some distinguishing characteristic of that system. This is not so. The technocrats make no distinctions in applying the term.

The present system, of course, is a price system. How about the feudalism of the Middle Ages? That was the price system too, says Scott. And ancient Egypt and the Roman Empire,

<sup>4</sup>The Technocrats are on principle opposed to participating in debates or discussions with proponents of opposing viewpoints. Their official reason is: "You can't argue with facts. All we present are facts."

which were based on chattel-slavery? Price systems all. Socialist or communist society? Price systems, says Scott.

In fact, according to the astronomically-accurate analysis of technocracy, everything past, present or proposed is the price system—except technocracy—*whether or not* such system depended on a money economy, or were based on the exchange of products, or existed with or without money, or even with or without prices.

It is no wonder that technocracy can explain nothing. For how *could* it explain phenomena *peculiar* to capitalism—like periodic industrial crises—on the basis of a criticism of an unchanging system which has presumably existed since the dawn of history?

In point of fact, they distinguish technocracy from the “price system” in that, under technocracy, it is proposed that goods be distributed equally, rather than sold. This is the kernel of the technocratic theory which has impressed some people as an approach to socialism. This view has it that technocracy “has its points”: something like a Texas steer—a point here and a point there, and a lot of bull in between. Is there a socialist point to it?

In the first place, we shall see that the *theory* of the technocrats is not the significant thing about them—any more than Hitler’s “national socialist” theory was the indicative thing about his movement.

The rôle of their theory is the same as it was in the case of Hitler. As the *New York Post* put it (approvingly) on December 31, 1932:

It [Technocracy] leaves them offering mathematical formulæ and a semblance of realism about the machine civilization in which we live, without the ugly necessity of handing over that civilization to the uncouth working class.

Technocracy points vaguely to some kind of planned society where wealth is distributed. Hitler’s demagogy was more concrete.

But in any case, even on the face of it, a closer look at the “new order” which the technocrats propose shows that it is not socialism or a reasonable facsimile thereof. It is fascism.

[Continued in next issue]

PAUL TEMPLE.

# What Is Leninism?

## A Timely Excerpt from Trotsky’s “New Course”

Leninism cannot be conceived of without theoretical breadth, without a critical analysis of the material bases of the political process. The weapon of Marxian investigation must be constantly sharpened and applied. It is precisely in this that tradition consists, and not in the substitution of a formal reference or of an accidental quotation. Least of all can Leninism be reconciled with ideological superficiality and theoretical slovenliness.

Lenin cannot be chopped up into quotations suited for every possible case, because for Lenin the formula never stands higher than the reality; it is always the tool that makes it possible to grasp the reality and to dominate it. It would not be hard to find in Lenin dozens and hundreds of passages which, formally speaking, seem to be contradictory. But what must be seen is not the formal relationship of one passage to another, but the real relationship of each of them to the concrete reality in which the formula was introduced as a lever. The Leninist truth is always concrete!

As a system of revolutionary action, Leninism presupposes a revolutionary sense sharpened by reflection and experience which, in the social realm, is equivalent to the muscular sensation in physical labor. But revolutionary sense cannot be confused with demagogical flair. The latter may yield ephemeral successes, sometimes even sensational ones. But it is a political instinct of an inferior type. It always leans toward the line of least resistance. Leninism, on the other hand, seeks to pose and resolve the fundamental revolutionary problems, in creating an illusory appeasement, in lulling critical thought to sleep.

Leninism is, first of all, realism, the highest qualitative and quantitative appreciation of reality, from the standpoint of revolutionary action. Precisely because of this it is irreconcilable with the flight from reality behind the screen of hollow agitationism, with the passive loss of time, with the

haughty justification of yesterday’s mistakes on the pretext of saving the tradition of the party.

Leninism is genuine freedom from formalistic prejudices, from moralizing doctrinalism, from all forms of intellectual conservatism attempting to bind the will to revolutionary action. But to believe that Leninism signifies that “anything goes” would be an irremediable mistake. Leninism includes the morality, not formal but genuinely revolutionary, of mass action and the mass party. Nothing is so alien to it as functionary-arrogance and bureaucratic cynicism. A mass party has its own morality, which is the bond of fighters in and for action. Demagogy is irreconcilable with the spirit of a revolutionary party because it is deceitful: by presenting one or another simplified solution of the difficulties of the hour it inevitably undermines the next future, weakens the party’s self-confidence.

Swept by the wind and gripped by a serious danger, demagogy easily dissolves into panic. It is hard to juxtapose, even on paper, panic and Leninism.

Leninism is warlike from head to foot. War is impossible without cunning, without subterfuge, without deception of the enemy. Victorious war cunning is a constituent element of Leninist politics. But, at the same time, Leninism is supreme revolutionary honesty toward the party and the working class. It admits of no fiction, no bubble-blowing, no pseudo-grandeur!

Leninism is orthodox, obdurate, irreducible, but it does not contain so much as a hint of formalism, canon, nor bureaucratism. In the struggle, it takes the bull by the horns. To make out of the traditions of Leninism a supra-theoretical guarantee of infallibility of all the words and thoughts of the interpreters of these traditions is to scoff at genuine revolutionary tradition and transform it into official bureaucratism. It is ridiculous and pathetic to try to hypnotize a great revo-

lutionary party by the repetition of the same formulæ, according to which the right line should be sought not in the essence of each question, not in the methods of posing and solving this question, but in information... of a biographical character.

Since I am obliged to speak of myself for a moment, I will say that I do not consider the road by which I came to Leninism as less safe and reliable than the others. I came to Lenin fighting, but I came fully and all the way. My actions in the service of the party are the only guarantee of this: I can give no other supplementary guarantees. And if the question is to be posed in the field of biographical investigation, then at least it ought to be done properly.

It would then be necessary to reply to thorny questions: Were all those who were faithful to the master in the small matters also faithful to him in the great? Did all those who showed such docility in the presence of the master thereby offer guarantees that they would continue his work in his absence? Does the whole of Leninism lie in docility? I have no intention whatever of analyzing these questions by taking as examples individual comrades with whom, so far as I am con-

cerned, I intend to continue working hand in hand.

Whatever the difficulties and the differences of opinion may be in the future, they can be victoriously overcome only by the collective work of the party's mind, checking up each time by itself and thereby maintaining the continuity of development.

This character of the revolutionary tradition is bound up with the peculiar character of revolutionary discipline. Where tradition is conservative, discipline is passive and is violated at the first moment of crisis. Where, as in our party, tradition consists in the highest revolutionary activity, discipline attains its maximum point, for its decisive importance is constantly checked in action. Thence, the indestructible alliance of revolutionary initiative, of critical, bold elaboration of questions, with iron discipline in action. And it is only by this superior activity that the youth can receive from the old this tradition of discipline and carry it on.

We cherish the tradition of Bolshevism as much as anybody. But let no one dare identify bureaucratism with Bolshevism, tradition with officious routine.

LEON TROTSKY.

# The China of Chiang Kai-Shek

## *The Kuomintang Government and the Classes*

[Continued from Last Issue]

From the very first years of imperialist aggression against China in the nineteenth century to the present day, the Chinese ruling class has proved itself incompetent to defend the nation. In 1895 the Manchu government of China fought the Japanese in the Sino-Japanese war. The masses saw no reason to take any interest in the conflict and China rapidly went down to ignominious defeat. Five years later the masses of North China took the initiative in struggling to drive the foreigners out of China. The Powers, comprising eight nations, were forced to take extraordinary measures before they finally defeated the Boxer rebels. The Chinese masses had taken the first steps on the road of proving that they alone could defend the nation.

Between 1915 and 1922, the Powers, with Japan and America in the lead, were proceeding apace with the partitioning of China among the imperialists. The Chinese landlords and bourgeoisie were powerless to prevent the process. In 1925 the proletariat took the initiative in organizing the struggle against the imperialists. When the movement reached the heights of proletarian revolution, the Chinese bourgeoisie allied itself with the imperialists to suppress the masses. In the tradition of the Mings in 1644 and the Manchus in 1860, the Chinese ruling class preferred foreign intervention and occupation to national leadership by the Chinese masses.

From 1931 to the present day, the Japanese, striving for imperialist hegemony in Asia, have occupied one section after another of the Eastern coast of China. The Chinese ruling class has again proved itself unable to resist the invaders. The years since 1937 have proved conclusively that the struggle against imperialism in China can be conducted only through the independent struggle of the Chinese masses. The Chinese ruling class, true to its traditions, can only carry the ball for one or another of the imperialist teams.

### **From the National to the Imperialist War**

At the beginning of the war with Japan in 1937, the Chinese bourgeoisie was concentrated in the coastal areas of Eastern China. It was reluctant to risk the property destruction which was entailed in war with Japan and conscious of the hostility of the Chinese proletariat. When resistance was finally forced upon it both by popular pressure and by the imminence of total absorption of Chinese industry by the Japanese, the bourgeoisie continued to hope that the Western Powers would be drawn in without much delay on its side. Within a few months, however, it became apparent that the West was too engrossed in its own pressing problems to give immediate aid. Moreover, the foreign capitalists, loyal to imperialism as a whole, tended to regard the entrance of Japan as a force which could keep law and order in China. The property of the Chinese bourgeoisie was either completely destroyed or absorbed by the Japanese imperialists.

Even then a good section of the bourgeoisie was reluctant to pursue the scorched earth policy and transport capital and machinery to the interior for reconstruction. Instead they flew to the areas under Anglo-American protection with their liquid funds, there to sit out the war in luxury and comfort.

However, the more politically-conscious elements among the bourgeoisie realized that if they all fled abroad or to safety in the International Settlement, the interior would be left to the communists to mobilize the masses in a national resistance movement.

The retreat to the interior was gradual and accompanied by frontal resistance to the Japanese. During 1938 the national government was practically located in Hankow. Popular pressure resulted in the formation of a People's Political Council by Chiang Kai-shek and the official recognition of the new Fourth Army in the Yangtze region, composed of various elements under the leadership of communists.

The end of the Hankow period was heralded by the fall of Canton and completed by the loss of Hankow in October, 1938. With the retreat of the National Government to Chungking in Szechuan Province, the differences between Chiang Kai-shek's China in the Southwest and those of the communists in the North and the proletariat in the East were accentuated both geographically and politically. Wang Chin-wei fled to become a Quisling for Japanese-occupied China. Tension between the New Fourth Army and Chiang's forces increased, and the New Fourth was finally officially abolished in January, 1941, after refusing to obey government orders to move North.

Chiang's speech at the inaugural session of the People's Political Council on July 6, 1938, had revealed the pressure exerted on him to "rally the nation's political strength and to mobilize all the people for direct participation in the war." The political consciousness of the people became indispensable to the Chinese government.\* While still in partially industrialized Hankow, Chiang was forced to admit that the period of military rule had given way to that of political tutelage.

By 1939, however, Chiang is again placing his reliance in the Western "democracies." Moreover, he asserts that "judging by present conditions not only has our program for the period of political tutelage received a serious setback but much of the work of the period of military rule has to be done all over again." (Speech of February 2, 1939.) The old story of the Chinese ruling class abandoning the masses for the sake of imperialist alliances was resumed. With Chiang's return to the Anglo-American camp and Wang Chin-wei's flight to the Japanese there was initiated in Asia the pattern which has since marked the European scene. The native bourgeoisie is divided into satellites of the two rival imperialist camps. Like the European bourgeoisie, the Chinese bourgeoisie has its government in exile at Chungking, completely dependent upon the Allied imperialists and psychologically remote from the fighting front.

The war of resistance has been mapped out by Chiang into three stages: retreat, stalemate and counter-offensive. Unable to fight aggressive battles without giving greater concessions to the people, the Generalissimo has been content to withdraw and carry on harrying actions against the Japanese during the stalemate period. The counter-offensive begins when Anglo-American imperialism underwrites it.

In the early years Chiang was forced to appeal to the Japanese masses. On July 7, 1938, he addressed the Japanese people as "My friends. . . From the very beginning of the conflict, we have regarded as our enemy only your militarists but not the people of Japan, people like ourselves. . ." A year later, Chiang said: "Our people in the war zones should try by all possible means to make the enemy soldiers who have been deceived by their militarists and forced to come to China understand that aggression is the way to self-destruction and death, while opposition to war is the way to salvation and life."

These appeals to the Japanese masses were dictated by the pressure of the appeasers at home. Chiang urged these to hold out, promising that the Japanese would soon collapse from internal dissension. Today, however, Sun Fo, president of the legislative Yuan, is more confident. Says he: "Whereas the Chinese revolution started as a spontaneous movement of the Chinese people led by the Revolutionary Party as their

\*See the "Program for National Assistance and Reconstruction" adopted by the Kuomintang Party Congress, emergency session at Hankow, March 29, 1938, reprinted in *Amerasia*, April 25, 1943, pages 118-120.

vanguard, the proposed Japanese revolution will have to be initiated and introduced by the victorious United Nations after defeating the Japanese military power." (*New York Times*, October 10, 1943.)

Two months after Pearl Harbor, the Generalissimo and Madame Chiang traveled to India to act as Asiatic spokesmen for the Anglo-American imperialists.\* To the Indian masses, determined to fight for independence from Britain, Chiang addressed these insolent words: "The anti-aggression nations now expect that in this new era the people of India will voluntarily bear their full share of responsibility in the present struggle for the survival of that free world in which India must play her part."

American and British imperialism were willing to pay Chiang well for his counter-revolutionary rôle in the Far East. From 1938 to 1940 America had made three loans to the Chungking government, all politically timed to offset Axis moves and economically secured in Chinese tin and tungsten: a loan of \$25,000,000 in 1938 after Wang Chin-wei's capitulation to the Japanese; a loan of \$20,000,000 when Japan decided in 1939 to "recognize" Wang's régime as the national government of China; and a loan of \$25,000,000 in 1940 after Vichy had agreed to Japan's occupation of French Indo-China.

In the summer of 1941, when war between American and Japanese imperialism was only a matter of time, a loan of \$100,000,000 was made. The attack on Pearl Harbor sent Chiang Kai-shek to India, and brought Lieut.-Col. Stilwell and a \$500,000,000 loan from the United States to China. It also meant the loss of Burma and the closing of all doors into China from the South. As a result, this comparatively large credit could not be used for foreign goods. The Chinese government has therefore used it as security for a large internal loan to which the bourgeoisie is forced to subscribe. Thus, an almost direct relationship of interdependence between the Chinese bourgeoisie and the American government has been established. From 1928 to 1937 America was the patron of the Nanking government. Today, the Chungking dollar is linked to and completely dependent on the United States Treasury.

### The Government and the Chinese Bourgeoisie

During the first eighteen months of war the government's main industrial rôle was providing aid for the transportation of private industry from the coast and lending capital to enable it to resume production. By 1939, however, the government had begun to play a more decisive rôle in industrial development. Besides guaranteeing profits to stimulate production, the state found it necessary to establish government enterprises in basic industries. On January 24, 1940, the Ministry of Economic Affairs announced the nationalization of iron and steel. (*China After Five Years of War*, Chinese News Service, 1942, page 94.)

This trend toward a state-controlled capitalism has been partly necessitated by the large capital requirements for basic industry. But government monopoly exists also in salt, sugar, tobacco, matches, tea and wine. The reasons for state intervention in production are political as well as economic. Many members of the bourgeoisie have been reluctant to develop the West, the years from 1925-27 having revealed to them the social and political dangers of breeding a proletariat. Specu-

\*This is not to gainsay Chiang's desires to create a Chungking-Delhi axis against Western imperialism. He has denied it often enough to show that Britain and America are telling him to abandon the idea—or else. . . .



lation and profiteering bring more immediate gains with less risk.\*

The rôle of the government in economic life was formally recognized in the National General Mobilization Act of 1942.\*\* This act gave the government almost unlimited power in civil and economic life for the duration.

### The State and the Proletariat

Government control of industry has been accompanied by government regulation of the trade union movement. Since 1940 the trade unions of "Free China" have been under the control of the Ministry of Social Welfare in Chungking. All union officials are appointed by the government. Under wartime regulations, all workers must join unions, and strikes are prohibited. The Chinese Association of Labor, the only official federation, claims a grand total of 422,652 workers throughout "Free China." (*Allied Labor News*, April 15, 1943.)

In the spring of 1943 the Chinese executive Yuan passed a set of eighteen regulations to freeze workers in industrial and mining fields. Workers in these industries must register with their respective authorities and are not allowed to leave their occupations unless dismissed by their employers. Employers may not dismiss workers unless the latter have violated specific regulations under the present law. Workers incapable of their jobs may be dismissed; those over fifty are allowed to leave if physically unfit. Factory or mine owners, if forced to suspend business for over a month, may dismiss workers. Workers and employers are treated as individuals not only in their relations with each other but also with the authorities. There is no mention of unions in any of the negotiations. (*Ibidem*, May, 1943.)

Virtually nothing is known about the activity of the proletariat in Chiang Kai-shek's China. According to Freyn, who betrays no sympathy for labor, "in its sixth war year, China can look back on a record free from strikes, lockouts and other signs of unrest which elsewhere accompany a deterioration in the standard of living." (*Op. cit.*, page 130.) Mass resentment appears to be directed primarily at the profiteers on the market and at the government for being liberal with these elements.

### The State and the Profiteers

In Chiang Kai-shek's China the landed gentry and the merchants control the retail market. Nowhere in the world have there been such fantastic increases in retail prices. From an index of 100 in 1937, retail price level in Chungking had climbed to 1722.9 in 1941. In March, 1942, the general price index was 3799. Today the increase ranges from 7000 to 10,000, depending on the area.

Appeals for rice donations have been made to the general public. One appeal brought 30,000 piculs from ten Szechuan counties. The average donation was twenty to thirty piculs; the favorite concubine of the former Szechuan governor was credited with hoarding 70,000,000 piculs.

Finally, the government was forced to take increasingly drastic measures against the hoarders. For example, the former Mayor of Chengtu was paraded through the streets of

\*In September, 1940, Chiang rebuked these profiteers: "Billions of dollars of unproductive capital are available in the interior; but instead of being diverted to regular channels, they are employed for personal gains and such illegitimate transactions as hoarding and manipulation. Some private individuals simply sort away their money." *Free China's New Deal*, by Hubert Freyn, MacMillan, 1943, pages 43f.

\*\*For a copy of this act, see Freyn, pages 250-256. The act empowers the government, whenever necessary, to "restrict the people's freedom of speech, publication, writing, correspondence, assembly and organization."

Chungking and shot in public. The price of rice thereupon dropped from \$180 a picul to \$90. But the landed gentry soon recovered, and a few months later the price per picul was \$160. (Freyn, page 123.) In January, 1943, Chungking put price ceilings on 656 commodities. By spring the prices were rising again and had reached sixty-seven times their pre-war levels. (Freyn, page 130.)

The rise in prices is especially hard on the urban population and the soldiers. The workers, whose labor is essential to production, have been able to force some wage increases despite the forbidding of strikes. After protest parades by government workers of the white collar class, the government was forced to institute a system of partial payment in rice to these workers. The armed forces, with no recourse, continue to suffer.

In some villages, farming and home industry enable the people to maintain a bare subsistence level when crops are good. But in many areas millions face starvation because of general devastation and famine. Toisan, for example, in the South, formerly depended for its rice on Siam, Burma and French Indo-China, all now in Japanese hands. Moreover, it has been hit by famine after occupation and reoccupation by the Japanese. The Toisan peasants are forced to sell their children in neighboring cities.

The white collar workers and petty bourgeois intellectuals, who constitute only three to four per cent of the population, can only plead for political democracy, petty reforms, increased government supervision, and a place in the bureaucracy for themselves.\* Among the masses of the people, the unrest does not take overt form, so far as we know.\*\* But every measure taken by the government against the profiteers, however ineffective, reveals the pressure of the masses. Every failure of these measures points out more clearly the need to overthrow completely the wealthy classes against whom the government is admittedly so "liberal."

### The Peasants in Chiang Kai-shek's China

Throughout Chiang Kai-shek's China the land hunger of the masses and unproductive land ownership by the gentry are the most obvious features of the landscape.\* The average Chinese family farms nineteen mow, or a little over three acres, the smallest acreage in the world except for Japan. Eighty per cent of China's farmers are tenants or part tenants. Tenant farmers tilling one acre must pay as much as fifty per cent of their crop to their landlords. Such high rates makes it much more profitable for landlords to lease their land rather than manage it on a large-scale productive basis. The inevitable result is the prevalence of small farms, lack of technical improvements and a disproportion between industry in the cities and agriculture in the country.\*\*

In Szechuan, seven per cent of the landlords own but do not till seventy per cent of the land. They spend their time in trade, banking, usury and the social and political duties of the gentry—namely, squeezing taxes, rent and interest from the laboring peasants. Funds loaned to the farmers at comparatively low interest by the government, e.g., for coöpera-

\*See *Amerasia*, April 25, 1943, for an analysis of little parties in Kuomintang China.

\*\*The American government maintains a strict censorship on all news emanating from Chungking, and nothing unfavorable to the Chiang Kai-shek regime is permitted to emerge.

†See *Agrarian China*, "Selected Source Materials from Chinese Authors," published in Chinese periodicals during the 1930's. Compiled and translated by the research staff of the Institute of Pacific Relations, 1938. As in feudal Europe, churches and other "educational institutions" are arge and-owners. It took the 1927 revolution to sweep many nuns and monks from their temples. "Change in Land Ownership and the Fate of Permanent Tenancy," *Agrarian China*, page 22.

‡ "The Present Land Problem in China," *Agrarian China*, page 60.

tives, are funneled through this gentry, and by the time they reach the farmer the customary usurer's rate has been approximated.\*

The war, with its scarcities and fluctuations of currency, has increased the polarizing tendency toward wealthy landowners, on the one hand, and the landless peasantry on the other. The landlords receiving rents in kind and paying taxes in cash,\*\* were able to hoard and take advantage of favorable price rises and currency changes for profiteering. With their profits they bought up new land. The middle peasants, who paid taxes in cash but received no rents in kind, have been almost swept away.

Land that was worth C\$100 in 1931 is now worth more than C\$70,000 in Chungking. This increase is due not only to overcrowding. As the China Information Bulletin puts it: "Land is indestructible. The hoarding of land is therefore highly profitable, thus resulting in the gradual concentration of ownership in the hands of a small portion of the people." (*New York Times*, July 23, 1943.)

This acceleration by the war of the progressive impoverishment of the peasantry had to be checked by the government if it was to be able to demand additional sacrifices for the war. Hence in 1941 the land tax was revised. Provision was made for taxes in kind and for compulsory purchases of foodstuffs by the government. This was aimed to reduce hoarding and force the landlords to accept a larger share of the tax burden.

But laws against the gentry are useless when the administration of the laws remains in the hands of the gentry. In the past, government measures ostensibly aimed to effect rent reduction and resale of land to the tenants have been successfully frustrated by this political power of the landlords. ("The Latest Agrarian Policy of Kuomintang," *Agrarian China*, page 155.)

In China is has always been as difficult to distinguish the rents from the taxes as it has been distinguish the landlords from the government, both nationally and locally. The bureaucracy is a "communal landlordism" which by its juridical rôle is able to mobilize greater political and military power for the suppression of mass discontent. Rents, taxes and interest are literally forced from the peasants at the point of a gun by special guards. These guards, known as the Min-Tuan or "pacification" forces, are estimated at two million in Free China and are using one million of China's scanty supply of rifles for the protection of property rights. (Edgar Snow, *The Battle for Asia*.)

The agricultural proletariat in China is relatively small compared to that in the advanced countries, not only because of the absence of large-scale farming but also because of the prevalence of feudal relations. Tenants are forced to repay their loans of equipment and grain in labor on the land of the rich peasants. Rich peasant families take in concubines instead of hiring wage-earning laborers. The system of early marriage in China also owes its continuance to the economic reality that it is far more advantageous to acquire a daughter-in-law than to hire a laborer by the year. The poor peasants in turn must marry off their daughters early because it saves food for other mouths. In certain sections of China slaves are maintained for house and field work. ("Agrarian Laborers in Kwangsi," *Agrarian China*, page 80.)

\* "The Experiences of a District Director of Co-operatives," *Agrarian China*, pages 211-216.

\*\*More often than not the landlord's control of the local administration enables him to pass the land taxes on to the peasants directly.

China's whole past history proves that the Chinese peasants do not accept their hardships passively. The recourse to banditry and the kidnapping of the rich is a form of social protest. In some places the wealthy gentry supply these bandits with food rather than undergo the formality of being kidnapped and ransomed. They know that it is useless to kill off the bandits because more will spring up where others are destroyed. (*Changing China*, by G. E. Taylor, Institute of Pacific Relations, 1942.)

Peasant riots and organized refusals to pay rent reached their height during the 1925-27 revolution and the ensuing years of agrarian revolution. The attitude among many peasants is: "If there is no rebellion, how can the poor continue to live?"\*

In 1936, when the government conscripted poor peasants for work on the Szechuan-Hunan highway, the laborers organized many riots, in some cases disarming the local militia, killing their foremen and destroying the local engineering offices. ("Labor Tax in the Building of the Szechuan-Hunan Highway," *Agrarian China*, page 110.)

We do not possess facts and data on the activity of the peasants in Chiang's China today. But we are familiar with their revolutionary temper in the past, and we know that they are being organized by the government itself in labor battalions and in the army. At the end of the war they will be in a position to utilize this training to eradicate the private-property relations in land, the condition which has been for so long the curse of the Chinese peasants. As in the Russian Revolution, the men from the front will introduce "into the business the heavy determination of people accustomed to handle their fellow men with rifles and bayonets."

### China's Peasants in Uniform

The well educated classes, who have always been a vested interest in Chinese society, are exempted from fighting in the Chinese army. The army is a coolie army of nearly ten million men. The only exception to this is the cadre group of 300,000 men (thirty division) who are the "Generalissimo's Own," militarily trained by German army officers. The officers of the regular army are provincial leaders with no professional military training and with the social background of the local gentry.

In his ragged cotton uniform, with hand-made and often mended straw sandals and hat, carrying a rifle, a rice bowl and a pair of chopsticks, the Chinese soldier marches endlessly from one front to another, living in deserted temples and stables. He may have volunteered to get the rice allotment which is the only food provided the soldier by the government. More likely, he was conscripted on the village system, which enables the local gentry to buy off military service for its sons. On his way to the training depot, he was probably roped together with other conscripts to make sure they all got there. His officers force him to perform labor service for the large landowners, for which the commander, and not the men, receives the compensation. In many cases he is locked in at night by his officers. (*Amerasia*, September, 1943, page 276.) His pay check is about one American dollar a month.

Such an army can continue to fight as well as it has only because of its belief that it is fighting for national liberation

\*This remark was made by a group of embittered women to a government field worker. This worker reports that the peasants have no faith in government measures and that their most urgent demand is "not the remeasurement of land for tax consolidation but rather something which would give them a chance to breathe beneath the heavy pressure of their landlords." "Experiences of an Official in the Land Tax Consolidation Bureau," *Agrarian China*, page 153.

and because of the lack of any clear alternative method of struggle. The effectiveness of this army against the Japanese has declined during the years 1937-42. An analysis of casualties inflicted by the regular Chinese army indicates a drop to 32 in 1943 from the 1937 base of 100. (*Ibidem*, July, 1943, page 229.) The causes of this decline are partly the changes in China's foreign supply position. But the change is also rooted in the declining morale of the army. The realization that despite enormous casualties (estimated at five million) their battles "cannot be expected to have an determining effect on the war as a whole" (this was stated by a Chinese government spokesman, *New York Times*, July 24, 1943), must raise serious doubts in the minds of these ragged heroes.

The government of Chiang Kai-shek has too little to offer the peasant millions who make up the regular Chinese army. To the peasants, the Kuomintang promises land reform, but to the landlords it promises compensation for all land redistributed. Few people know better than the Chinese peasant that the landlord is his implacable enemy who must be deprived of all wealth before rural reform can be undertaken.

In most cases the people do not look upon the armed forces as their liberators (*The Chinese Army*, by E. F. Carlson, pages 30-34). Because of the meagerness of supplies to the army from the government, it is necessary for the soldiers to live off the land. As a result it is often difficult to distinguish the regular armed forces from the bandit irregulars who for centuries have lived by military requisitions and looting of the masses.

#### Chiang Kai-shek Plans for the Future\*

Chiang's plans for economic reconstruction after the war provide for a state-controlled capitalism with the aid of foreign capital. This is clearly outlined in the resolution passed by the Central Executive Committee of the Kuomintang in September, 1943 (*New York Times*, September 26, 1943). State supervision is taken for granted as the general rule and only such "industry which may be entrusted to individuals or industries which will be less suitable for the state to operate shall be privately operated. The government in some cases shall give such industry the encouragement and protection of the law. . . . Industries which assume the nature of a monopoly shall be state-operated. The government shall stipulate specifically what constitutes state-wide industries and what constitutes private industries." According to the Twentieth Century Fund report of 1943, Chinese "industrial development will proceed under state guidance and to a large extent under state ownership and direction. The shortage of private industrial capital in China, the absence of a vigorous industrial class and the large financial problems involved are presumed to necessitate state control."

Within recent months the Chinese bourgeoisie has accompanied its pleas to America for more guns with cordial invitations for investment of capital. Under old Chinese regulations it was required that fifty-one per cent of stock interest in joint capital arrangements must be Chinese, and a majority of the board of directors, as well as the chairman and general manager, must be native. The new resolution passed by the Kuomintang asserts that "hereafter no fixed restriction shall be placed on the ratio of foreign capital investment in joint enterprises. In the organization of a Chinese-foreign joint enterprise, except for the chairman of the board of directors, the general manager need not necessarily be a Chinese."

\*See "Chungking Considers the Future," by Gunther Stein, *Far Eastern Survey*, September 7, 1943.

An American was recently appointed acting inspector-general of the Chinese Maritime Customs Service. In the past the imperialist power controlling China's customs revenue has been able to dictate which clique should rule in China. Before the war Britain was strong in the administration of the Chinese customs service. The United States, Britain and Japan played approximately equal rôles in the foreign trade of China. Japan and Britain did not hesitate to collaborate against America, nor America and Japan against Britain.\* Today, Chiang is completely committed to string along with American imperialism. His participation in the Cairo Conference is ample proof that Chiang Kai-shek's China will never play an independent rôle in the fight against Japan."

The pro-fascist leanings of the Kuomintang government are revealed in Chiang's plans to maintain national government troops in a good number of provinces and employ army officers as local administrators. The demobilization of China's army of eight to ten million men would only reinstate in an aggravated form the situation of latent unemployment that existed in China before the war. Employment must also be sought for the increasing number of army officers. The sharpness of the class struggle will demand even more severe repression than existed before the war. The promises of constitutional government given by the recent Kuomintang ple-nium are more empty than they have ever been.\*\*

Finally, the reactionary character of Chiang's plans for the future are unmistakably revealed in his Spiritual Mobilization and New Life movements. These movements, loudly acclaimed by Westerners as wiping out old Chinese habits of spitting and opium smoking, are in reality aimed at perpetuating the old feudal social relations and substituting spiritual food where material food is needed.† On an intimate local scale, Chiang is attempting to reinstate the pao-chia system whereby households are the units of responsibility under government supervision.‡

But the Chinese people have been uprooted by forty years of wars and revolutions. The family system has been broken up by the entry of nearly ten million men into the armed forces. Provincial barriers have been broken down by the mélange of dialects within the army. The national outlook of the Chinese masses has been broadened by the propaganda

\*Britain's dominance in China depended on her alliance with Japan and on the French fleet. America's policy in Manchuria in 1931 won Japan to her side sufficiently to doom the British. The fall of France in 1940 ended Britain's chances for falling back on French support.

†Pearl Buck's incessant pleas for more aid to China betray both her realism and her hypocrisy. Familiar with the Chinese ruling class from long residence in China, she was well aware that they might turn to Japan if American imperialism neglected them. Knowing the hatred of the Chinese for the British imperialists, she is also anxious that America free herself from the suspicion that she is united with the British Empire. What this "friend of China" fears most of all is a strong Asia united against the West. As she herself says: "I shudder to think what the future will be with Russia established, as indeed she already has been, as the world's greatest military force; when China establishes herself, as she will undoubtedly do, as another great military force; when the people of India, freed by their own efforts, as they are determined to be free, will be a great potential power." Invoking the spirit of Thomas Jefferson, Mrs. Buck appeals to the American bourgeoisie not to industrialize Asia, but keep these people what they "have hitherto been, to our great good fortune, peaceful agricultural peoples." *Asia*, November, 1943.

\*\*See *Amerasia*, October 1, 1943, for a devastating analysis of the emptiness of these promises in the past.

‡"This system with every ten families as the unit, was originally used as a measure for common defense but has long been utilized by the authorities as a means of demanding community responsibility and as an additional instrument for the maintenance of peace and order." *Agrarian China*, page 212.

The Generalissimo's Western-educated wife is apparently more aware of the general need for material reform. However, she wholeheartedly endorses the Generalissimo's spiritual path as an immediate substitute. See her book, *China Shall Rise Again*, Harper's, 1940. The Generalissimo's Russian-educated son, Chiang Ching-kuo, is magistrate of Kansien. "His methods and ideology are called communistic or fascist by people who object to his authoritarian administration. His system is called state socialism by people who dislike regimentation." (*New York Times*, November 5, 1943.)

that their struggle is part of a world struggle against fascism and reaction. The planes flying overhead, the use of medicines and surgery, and the demands made up the population to care for the wounded have gone far to emancipate the Chinese from old superstitions, ancestor worship and the old religion. In the huts of the most backward areas, placards with political slogans have replaced the ancestral tablets with their Confucian proverbs. After the 1911 revolution, the queues and bound feet which symbolized servitude to the Manchus began to disappear. In the 1925-27 revolution the bobbed hair of the women was a sign of popular emancipation. Today, the Chinese soldier in a uniform of shorts, shirt and tie and the emancipated Chinese woman in slacks and blouse symbolize a new freedom.

For centuries the Chinese people have borne the heavy load of taxation for a bureaucratic landlordism and an expanding military, civil and party bureaucracy. The taxation envisaged for a bureaucratic capitalism will only increase this load. The Chinese people have been actively engaged in a struggle for national liberation from Western as well as Japanese imperialism for half a century. They have reached the

stage where further concessions to "friendly capital" strikes both at their pride and their stomachs. Japanese conquest of British colonies in Asia has reduced the white man's prestige in China and increased the Chinese sense of their own potential power.

Everywhere the struggle is for the creation of a new world to supplant the old. Even Chiang must speak constantly in terms of revolution and pose as the revolutionary leader.

Today the conflict between Chiang Kai-shek's old world and the new world vaguely present to the masses takes the amorphous forms of resentment and passivity. In the flux of the post-war struggles this contrast will be sharpened into vigorous conflict. For nearly half a century the Chinese ruling class has been able to deflect the rebellion of the Chinese masses to a struggle against the foreign invaders. Today the foreign enemy is Japan; yesterday it was the Western powers. Tomorrow the Chinese people will have engaged the forces of every imperialist power. No people can capture the admiration of the whole modern world and not demand the opportunities commensurate with its sacrifices. (*To be continued.*)

RIA STONE.

# In Stalin's Prisons - III

## A Hunger Strike Under the GPU Regime

[Continued from Last Issue]

To close this chapter, I will describe briefly the men who were my prison comrades for eight months.

In Hall No. 12, the first three bunks from the door were occupied by Yugoslavs. The fourth by the right-wing Trotskyist Akopian, former political commissar of the Red Army. He came from a family of workers and had a communist brother. Although he followed the political discussions with interest, he took no active part in them, occupied as he was with perfecting his knowledge of mathematics, physics, etc.

His neighbor—the Georgian, Shaliko Gochelashvili, member of the Comsomol and son of an old non-party miner was a young man of lively and serious mind who devoted himself zealously and skillfully to the study of labor problems. It was all the more striking to see him defend obstinately the conception of the dictatorship of an élite minority.

The space on the side was reserved to Cherepakhin, the only supporter of Zinoviev in our prison. A former Leningrad worker, he had been a political commissar in the Red Army during the civil war. At the time of the activity of the Zinoviev group, he was studying at the Tolmachev Political and Military Academy in Leningrad. He claimed that the dictatorship of the proletariat had given way to a "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry."

"A dictatorship, no doubt," I objected, "but wherein is it democratic? Besides, this dictatorship is not exercised by the workers and the peasants, but to their detriment."

But he explained to me unshakably that the correct, dialectical analysis confirmed his theory. He occupied himself a great deal with philosophy, with Hegel in particular. According to Hegel, Lenin and Cherepakhin, there was a democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants in Russia—and so much the worse for the facts.

There were also two "Decists" in our hall—Prokopenya and Fateyev. The former had been a worker in Moscow, the latter a worker at first and then a student. In the neighboring hall there was a third Decist—Mikhail Shapiro, a Kharkov factory worker. The Decists had split into two opposing groups at the time: the "state capitalists" which claimed that the régime of the USSR was state capitalism and that the bureaucracy formed the ruling class in it—and the petty bourgeois, who regarded the Soviet régime and the bureaucracy as the expression of a petty bourgeois state.

My Decist neighbors belonged to this second category. They were congenial fellows, but I did not succeed, in spite of many discussions, in understanding how they harmonized their theories with the obvious facts—with the open warfare of the bureaucracy against the petty bourgeoisie (collectivization and "de-kulakization"). "Thermidor," the counter-revolution of the petty bourgeois, had triumphed, to hear them, at the moment when the opposition was expelled from the party, that is, in the winter of 1927. Yet, two months later, the bureaucracy declared war upon the peasants. . . .

The young sailor, Vigon, former member of the Comsomol, was a Trotskyist of the left. Too young to bear up under several years of privation, he left prison half unbalanced.

I have already spoken of the two left Trotskyists, Densov and Gorlov.

Khashchevatsky, the official representative of the right Trotskyists in our walking group, was a perfect pedant; what made up the capital of Bolshevism—audacity and sweep—were obviously alien to him. Quite different was another Trotskyist, still further to the right, Kiknadze. An old Bolshevik, the latter had long been a revolutionist, whereas Khashchevatsky had never been one at bottom. Another "rightist" who made up our walking group, Tsivtsivadze, had once been assistant chief of the GPU of Georgia, which was headed by the re-

nowned Kote Tsintsadze, who had since come over to the opposition. Tsivtsivadze had retained the haughty demeanor fitting for an ex-representative of authority. It was with the severity of a superior that he addressed the inspectors and turnkeys, and I am not too clear as to why they tolerated this attitude.

In the neighboring Hall No. 11, the tone was set by the "center," under the leadership of a Kharkov Trotskyist, Abramsky, an alert and cultured but fairly superficial person.

As to Antokolsky, relative of the celebrated sculptor, and Lobkovsky, former secretary of Rykov, they were modest, hard-working and self-effacing men. They were constantly occupied with copying documents: Antokolsky for the right and the center, Lobkovsky for the left.

Out of the seven workers in the adjacent hall, there was only one convinced "rightist": he was Rappoport, a tailor, sympathetic and poised, forty years old, tuberculous. Doroshensko, a Leningrad worker, and Yoffe, an émigré worker from Lithuania, belonged to the left, but each in his own way: Doroshensko was always ready to make a tumult, whereas Yoffe regarded everything with a serenity tinged with skepticism. Fomkin, a young textile worker from Ivanovo-Voznesensk, represented the rebel worker type whom the weighty industrial machine had not yet broken. He was of course of the left.

There were three other workers whose names I have forgotten. One of them was from Leningrad, the others from White Russia. The first did not belong to the opposition, but had got himself sentenced to a year in prison for complaining to a comrade, during the military maneuvers he was taking part in, of the tough life of the workers. The two workers from White Russia took an active part in the discussions and disputes that took place during the walks. One question was close to their hearts: why does the Opposition occupy itself so little with workers' problems, why is it so permeated with the bureaucratic spirit? The reproach in itself was warranted, but they surrounded it with fairly suspicious commentaries. It was only later, in exile, that we understood the reason for it: the two cronies were common *agents provocateurs*.

In connection with *agents provocateurs*, a right Trotskyist—let us call him N., for I do not remember his name—former member of the Comsomol in the Ukraine, then a student in the University of Moscow, began to develop a theory that no comparison ought to be made between the *agents provocateurs* of the bourgeois police and members of the Opposition who, after having capitulated, reported everything they knew to the GPU or even proceeded to "work" in the Opposition upon the orders of the Chekists. Stalinists and Trotskyists are at bottom two factions of the same party, which is not the case with communists and the bourgeois power. Don't we find it normal when a Stalinist comes over to the opposition and tells us everything he knows and sometimes even remains in the ranks of the Stalinists so as to be able to keep us informed?

This philosophy deeply moved my friend Dragich. "That's spy-Bolshevism. What has that to do with the revolution!" he exclaimed. What revolted him above all was that N. claimed that "that's how it always was." During the civil war the same tactic is supposed to have been applied to the Social-Revolutionists, the social democrats and the anarchists. Dragich declared war upon the theories of N. and addressed himself to the Old Bolsheviks of the Opposition, asking them to settle the debate in its "historical" part. They replied that

in their time it was never a question of anything but a political evolution, that newcomers were never asked to engage in the trade of stool-pigeons and *provocateurs*. As to the internal affairs of their former party, they told only what they wanted to. To be sure, there were cases where shifters accepted the task of working in their former organizations for the benefit of the Cheka—the GPU of the time—but those were individual, and moreover, rare cases. There was no system and provocation in the days of the civil war.

After this declaration, Dragich demanded the expulsion of N. from the ranks of the opposition, for such theories threatened to demoralize it. The "Right Collective" to which N. belonged, refused, claiming that while N.'s opinions were wrong, they nevertheless remained within the limits of a "tolerable deviation."

Of course, we had the right to suspect N. of acting on behalf of the GPU in sowing moral confusion in the Opposition. But nobody had proof—Dragich no more than the others—nor even any indications. In the long run, it was perhaps nothing more with N. than an abstract theory developed to its extreme consequences. In any case, the episode explains many things in the life of the All-Russian Communist Party and its opposition. Let us not forget, by the way, that in those days capitulators and stool-pigeons were not yet asked to supply fraudulent "information," as it is practiced today in the most monstrous manner.

Among the members of the Opposition who belonged to our walking group, there were two former factory directors of working class origin. Lokhmacnev had been at the head of a metal works in the Donbas, and Marcus, of a small plant in White Russia. They belonged to the Trotskyist right wing group, but they were so imbued with the bureaucratic spirit that I was quite surprised to find them in the ranks of the Opposition. It took me many years of cohabitation to resolve this enigma: Marcus was too humane to accept the unspeakable sufferings that the régime imposed upon the workers. From his somewhat primitive conception, the régime should have been able to reconcile the interests of the bureaucrats with those of the workers. It was the only motive that impelled him to the ranks of the Opposition.

As to Lokhmachev, he belonged to the "Workers' Opposition." In 1929, the local group to which he belonged displayed some activity by allying itself with the "Decist" group: that's what brought Lokhmachev to prison. He soon "capitulated" and his prison sentence was commuted to a sentence of exile. The philosophy of Lokhmachev, like that of all the leaders of the "Workers' Opposition," could be summed up as follows: "All is lost, the working class is silent, we too must be silent." In the spring of 1931 we saw the arrival in prison of the first group of "capitulators" who had proved unable to "adapt" themselves entirely. Two of them—Sadovsky and Lozovsky—were part of our walking group. These people continued to regard themselves as "capitulators," supporters of the general line, and so we demanded that they separate from us; which they did. They soon reached the figure of twenty to thirty, and formed a walking group of their own. I had the impression that a part of these "capitulators" systematically practised hypocrisy: having renounced the open opposition of the Trotskyists, they seemed to think it necessary to disguise their secret activity by public and solemn testimonials of loyalty to the general line. This was the tactic of the I. N. Smirnov group.

## VI. A Hunger Strike

The pacific course of our political discussions, of our splits and new fusions, was abruptly interrupted by a sharp conflict with the administration that absorbed all our strength for several months.

It was toward the end of April. The Ural winter storms which made all walking impossible, even in the well-sheltered prison court, had just abated. The snow fell, the days grew longer, the sun began to shine. It was spring. Prison life became more bearable. Suddenly, several rifle shots were heard. . . . A Red Army sentinel had just fired on the prisoner, Gabo Yessayan, standing near the window of his cell. Yessayan's lungs were pierced. The Isolator stirred and throbbed like an anthill. Everybody immediately agreed that such an act could not be tolerated. Indignation waxed greater when we learned the antecedents of the affair, which proved that the attack was premeditated. In fact, for some weeks the sentinels had been threatening to shoot at prisoners at the slightest occasion. The latter had sent one of their "elders" to complain to the prison director, who replied: "It's the only language you understand," thus showing that the sentinels had only conformed to the director's orders.

One after the other, the walking groups decided to begin a hunger strike that very evening as a protest. A strike committee was elected, composed of the right Trotskyist, Dingelstedt, the left Trotskyist, Kvachadze (who, afflicted with dysentery, was later replaced by Densov), and the "Decist," Sayansky. We proclaimed our strike aims: (1) removal and punishment of the prison director, Bizyukov; (2) guarantees against new attacks; (3) liberation of the wounded Yessayan so that he could take care of himself; (4) improvement of the legal position of the prisoners and better food.

The hunger strike began that very evening. We sent back to the administration all the food that we possessed. The strike committee received dictatorial powers; it immediately telegraphed Moscow and decided that some fifteen comrades, seriously ill, should begin the strike only three days later. All private correspondence between the prisoners or with relatives must cease. All the necessary steps were taken to inform the oppositional circles in Moscow.

More than a hundred and fifty prisoners participated in the strike. Some of the sick began the strike at the same time as the others, out of solidarity. Three days later, all the communists, amounting to 176 prisoners, were on strike. The socialists too issued a protest against administration abuses. Some anarchists participated in the strike out of a feeling of comradeship.

On the third day the prison doctor presented himself, but we refused to receive him. Some of the prisoners fell gravely ill: cardiac crises, dysentery, etc. The day after the proclamation of the strike, bad news stirred the entire prison: one of the prisoners, Vera Berger, at the end of her strength, had gone mad. The following day she was taken out for transfer to the insane asylum in Perm. That made one victim more. . . . The strike continued, with clenched teeth, in silence and in order. The fifth day, second case of madness. But it stirred us much less than the first, for the madman, or alleged madman, Victor Krainy, had been a little under suspicion before this. Was it staged by the GPU to demoralize us and to collapse the strike? Krainy was taken away, but we knew nothing of his destination, which only strengthened our suspicions. Naturally, I cannot say anything definite, for it is quite possible that the unfortunate was a victim and not an agent of the GPU.

There were eleven or twelve of us fasting in our hall. Some continued to read, to speak, to move about, others remained abed. I noticed that hunger depressed the active and resolute people much less than it did the others. My subsequent experiences with hunger in the USSR confirmed my opinion that resistance to hunger is primarily a question of will power.

The administration took a temporizing attitude. At the end of a week the director showed the strike committee a telegram from Moscow announcing the early departure of an inquiry commission of the GPU. It would take it a good eight days to reach our forsaken corner, so the director proposed that we stop the strike while waiting.

The proposal was accepted almost unanimously by the "strikers." There were only two or three who suspected a maneuver on the part of the administration.

The strike suspended, we were put on a special feeding régime before returning to the normal. This brought us to May First, which we celebrated with meetings and songs, each walking group on its own. We stuck up pictures of Trotsky surrounded by all sorts of political slogans. The inspectors protested against such heresies, we had to come to blows in the prison court under the uneasy eye of the prisoners glued to the windows, but everything ended all right. The various Trotskyist groups wanted to telegraph their best wishes to their leader in exile, but the sbirri refused the dispatches, saying: "We do not transmit wishes from counter-revolutionists."

Of course, the socialists and anarchists also celebrated the revolutionary holiday. All the windows were draped with red flags, the prisoners had made up red insignia that we wore in our buttonholes. The paradoxes of Soviet life: one holiday, under one flag, on two sides of the barricade. . . .

The May First celebrations and the supplementary rations we received on this occasion were drawing to a close. Days and weeks passed. No inquiry commission. . . . The administration claimed that the commission had been kept back by an unforeseen affair. At the end of two months, the prisoners lost patience: at the beginning of July, we declared a second hunger strike. To the astonishment of the GPU, it was carried out with just as much unanimity as the first. The objurgations of the director, who brandished a new telegram announcing that the inquiry commission was already on its way, did not change our views. The seventh day of the strike, the commission finally arrived, but we continued the strike nevertheless, firmly resolved not to interrupt it before having received satisfaction.

Two of our comrades—in good health—who had ceased the strike on their own initiative, were excluded from our little society. One of them, Avoyan, ended by "capitulating"; the other, Assyrian, promised that in the future he would give proof of a model solidarity and after three months we allowed him to return to the communist "collective."

The behavior of another prisoner, Kiknadze, deserves being noted. Even though he was not in agreement with the second strike, he behaved in a model manner and fasted like the others. Meanwhile, his wife arrived from Moscow and transmitted a message from Ordjonikidze, his old comrade in battle. Upon receiving this message, Kiknadze decided to "capitulate," but waited loyally for the strike to terminate, and participated in it to the very end. . . .

• • •

The inquiry commission was composed of three persons. Andreyeva, sub-director of the secret political section of the College of the GPU, was in high charge of political prisoners.

She had the peculiarity of remembering the biography of several thousand militants belonging to various communist and socialist parties. She persecuted them with an obvious pleasure and managed almost always to separate husbands from wives, children from parents, in prison or in exile. The second member of the commission was named Popov. He was chief of the penitentiary section of the GPU. His brigadier mustache was in harmony with his function. The third—I do not remember his name—fulfilled the functions of an attorney-general. He was a Polish communist, former railroad worker, who was distinguished from the other commission members by his more polite, more “European,” manners.

Andreyeva began by declaring that the GPU recognized no collective organ as representative of the communist prisoners and refused to deal with our committee. Dressed in the Chekist uniform, shod with heavy boots, wearing a stern air, she entered the halls of the striking prisoners her hair in the wind. But instead of discussing with her, the prisoners referred her back to the strike committee. Next day, Andreyeva changed her tactic. Dressed elegantly in a suit of black cloth of the best cut, perfumed, wearing stylish shoes and flesh-colored silk stockings, she tried to begin negotiating with each one of us separately. This succeeded no better than before, and weary of it all she began negotiating with our committee.

The negotiations dragged on for days. Andreyeva declared that most of our demands would be satisfied, but that the hunger strike would have to be stopped first: the GPU cannot give in to coercion. The prison director, Bizyukov, would not be removed, but the soldier who had fired would be turned over to the courts. She promised to publish an order authorizing us to stand in the window embrasures. She promised several other improvements in the régime, especially better food. She promised, finally, that the victim of the shooting, Yessayan, would have his prison sentence commuted to the penalty of exile and that he would be given medical treatment.

The strike committee demanded further that it be specified that no reprisals would be made against any of the prisoners for participating in the strike. Andreyeva promised this orally but refused to do it in writing. One last question remained to be solved: should we insist on the recall of the prison director? The opinion of the committee was divided. It was decided to proceed with a vote of all the “strikers.” The majority expressed itself in favor of conciliation, the minority bowed, and our second strike, which had lasted eleven days, ended as disciplinedly as it had begun.

The GPU kept the promises made by Andreyeva, but it knew how to take its revenge in another way: six weeks later, thirty-five prisoners who had participated in the strike were transferred to the Suzdal Isolator. Among them were adherents of the three main political groups of our prison: right Trotskyists, left Trotskyists, and “Decists.” The left Trotskyists—who had showed themselves especially resolute during the strike—had to suffer more than the others. The most noteworthy among them, Densov, Kvachadze, Pushas, Dvinsky, were transferred to Suzdal. The same with the members of the strike committee, with about one exception. As to Yessayan, the wounded man, who should have been freed, we learned later that he had simply been transferred to the political prison of Chelyabinsk.

Six months later, the GPU began to exercise its cruelties at Verkhne-Uralsk itself. . . .

## VII. Political Repression in the USSR

The hunger strike of the summer of 1931 had unfolded calmly and had gained a certain success. This was an exceptional fact in the chronicle of Verkhne-Uralsk. The attempts to fight which had taken place before, in the summer of 1929 and in February, 1930, as well as that of December, 1933, which I still have to mention, were repressed by force.

It would be well to give the reader a rounded idea of the political repression that raged in the USSR: the arrest of oppositional communists represented as a matter of fact only a stage in the history of this repression. The communists were after all the victim of the régime that they themselves had installed. The revolution had begun by destroying its enemies, the bourgeois and the landed proprietors, then it assailed its socialist and anarchist allies, and to finish off, it began to strike at its own children, the communists.

\* \* \*

I was not a little surprised to learn that the penitentiary régime at Verkhne-Uralsk had constantly grown worse for the past several years. The socialists who had already been imprisoned once in 1925 told me that at one time the cells remained open the whole day, so that the prisoners could visit each other, go for walks in the court whenever they pleased, and hold meetings there. It was the prisoners themselves who regulated what they did with their time; the visiting hours and the hours of silence had to be respected. The prisoners were separated from the world, but kept a certain liberty. In all, it was the régime set up in 1850 by Napoleon III at Belle-Ile, a régime that Blanqui knew before his celebrated escape.

Then the GPU introduced the “new régime” and closed the cell doors. The prisoners, socialists and anarchists, promptly called a hunger strike, but it was repressed by force. Stalin proved less liberal than Napoleon III. But Stalin is not the only one involved. Little by little I learned that in the days of Lenin and Trotsky the repressions aimed against the socialists and anarchists had grown to the extent of the advance of the country’s pacification and that during the worst dangers of the civil war they had been much more benign. It is beginning with 1921, when the civil war ended and the NEP began, that the revolution, finally triumphant, established the régime of limitless persecution. What is the logic of this reverse evolution?

The words “political repression” of “political” prisoners or exiles applies in the USSR only to socialists, to anarchists, to oppositional communists. They alone have the right to a political prisoner’s régime. But they make up only an infinitesimal minority, several thousands, a few tens of thousands at the most, compared with the millions of prisoners or exiles all sentenced on political grounds even though the state power does not acknowledge this quality. These millions of condemned are treated like common criminals and they are sent to forced labor. If there is any modification of this régime it applies only to the intellectuals who are called upon to direct the servile labor.

These condemned may be divided into six fundamental categories: the former rulers, people punished for sabotage, the peasants, the “religious,” the members of the national oppositions, be they democrats or communists, and finally the workers.

The first category embraces the members of the former families of the aristocracy, of the bourgeoisie, the tradesmen, the ex-officers, the former police commissioners, etc. During the Five Year Plan a hundred or two hundred thousand of

them were deported, maybe more. In any case, the figure I give is a minimum.

The few dozens of thousands condemned for sabotage were non-party intellectuals.

The complete collectivization and the "de-kulakization" yielded three hundred thousand collective farms on the one hand, and on the other, several million exile peasant families. In our prison, the number of peasants deported was estimated at between five and ten millions. The real "kulaks" among them hardly represented a fifth of that number, the remainder being in reality peasants in moderate or proletarian circumstances who had manifested their discontent in one way or another. This mass increased further during the "purging" of the frontiers of the USSR. All along the western frontier, a zone fifty kilometers deep was almost entirely emptied of its inhabitants; all along the frontiers of Manchuria and of Korea, whole districts were deported to the Siberian back country.

There was no driving out of masses of workers during the Five Year Plan. During the spontaneous demonstrations in the factories, the GPU would seize the most active individuals and send them to forced labor or into the concentration camps on the charge of "economic counter-revolution" or by declaring them "bandits" or "kulaks." It is thus that after the "hunger march" organized by the workers of several textile factories of the Ivanovo-Voznesensk region, of Vychug and elsewhere, it was considered enough to exile two workers, one of whom was secretary of the Comsomol cell and the other non-party, and to send a score of others to a concentration camp. As a preliminary precaution, the demands of the workers were satisfied. *Izvestia* published an article "unmasking" the calumnies of the English paper that had dared to speak of a hunger march in Ivanovo-Voznesensk. Two months later, we welcome to our prison comrades who came from exile and who had seen there with their own eyes the unfortunates sentenced for having taken part in this very march. . . . The number of these workers exile for "individual crimes" may be estimated at several tens of thousands.

A foreigner would find it hard to understand the attitude of the victims themselves. They did not in any way pose as champions of a political cause, still less as opponents of the régime. On the contrary, they dreamed of nothing more than getting themselves readmitted to the society as it existed, to find work, to earn money, to deserve being set free. This tendency led to the following paradox: the workers and peasants remain at the lower rungs, while the members of the classes designated as "abolished" or "hostile" receive favorable treatment, enjoy privileges, and are on good terms with the representatives of the state power.

Let me cite two examples. In the Ukht-Pechersk concentration camp, those sentenced for sabotage—engineers, doctors, economists, agronomists—live in comfortable villas, alongside of the communist authorities, and enjoy a food supply that is adequate, even if not variegated. The workers, miners and masons, the former peasants and those sentenced for common crimes live like animals in mud huts and eat just enough to keep alive. They are overloaded with work and die like flies of scurvy and other illnesses.

Here is another example. A superb automobile highway is being built "according to the last word in American technique" across the terrible *taiga*, or virgin forest, from the Bay of Nogayev on the Pacific Ocean to the Kolima River, which flows into the Arctic Ocean. At the same time, the river is being straightened out and rendered navigable in order to

assure a link between the two oceans. Under the surveillance of the GPU, engineers condemned for sabotage direct the labor done by deported peasants as well as by a certain number of free workers. The engineers receive high wages. Thus, in 1935, the head engineer received 3,000 rubles a month. The condemned engineers live with the heads of the GPU and the party, and together with them form a sort of élite caste in this Arctic desert. This élite does not mingle with the "middle layer," composed of functionaries and condemned; as for the humble workers of peasant origin, be they free or prisoners, they have no contact with their superiors.

This little world had to receive, following the killing of Kirov, a group of "*ci-devant*" exiles who included some former princesses of the highest rank and other members of the old aristocracy. They were immediately received into the élite, employment was found for them as secretaries and stenographers, they were invited to the family evenings and the pleasure parties. Soon to arrive was the renowned singer, Utesov, of Leningrad, condemned for reasons of a private nature; he promptly organized a theater with the aid of the "*ci-devant*." This theater absorbed the funds allocated to "cultural needs" of the colony. Who should have the right to culture if not the authorities? At the end of six months, most of these "ex-ladies from on high" had remarried—for the third or fifth time—with "sabotagers" or functionaries of the GPU or the party. One more year and they would be eligible for freedom. After my liberation from Verkhne-Uralsk, I had the occasion to meet one of these ladies. She described to me, not without pleasure, the pleasant life that high society led in this lost corner of the Far North. But when I questioned her about the conditions of the peasants who worked there, she had nothing to tell me; it had never chanced for her to mingle with them.

I learned what interested me from the mouth of workers who had worked from 1932 to 1934 on the Kolima River. One of them was assigned, with six hundred exiled peasants, to the work of constructing a wharf midway along the river. At the end of two winters, a score of peasants were the sole survivors, the others having died of cold, hunger, scurvy. There was nothing exceptional about this. In another section of the interior, almost all the exiles were dead within a single winter, the GPU "not having had the time to provide adequate nourishment." As to the free workers who had hired out of their own accord, they were systematically robbed of their wages, and their demands remained without effect. It is on the backs of these workers that the administration sought to realize its savings. . . .

As to the "*ci-devant*," if they, even though condemned, found a way of joining up with the communist directors and the technician-élite, what can be said of those among them who remained at liberty? From what I saw in the USSR, I can state that if one-third of the ruling classes of old Russia perished or emigrated, the two-thirds amalgamated themselves with the new ruling class born out of the revolution.

[Continued in next issue]

A. CILIGA.

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# Socialist United States of Europe-II

## Another Viewpoint in the Discussion

[Continued from Last Issue]

Germany is the key to the European revolution. This is true not only because of the specific weight of the German proletariat in European society. It is also true because the collapse of Hitler will engender a revolutionary situation in Germany and simultaneously in those countries where the collapse of the German military removes the main obstacle to the revolutionary action of the masses. Revolutionary actions by the masses will be most difficult precisely in those countries where the fall of the German military is accomplished by, or if the armed forces of Germany are speedily replaced by, the armies of the bourgeois and Allied imperialist "liberators." It can be put forward almost as an axiom: the more the masses are enchanted by "national liberation" and the struggle for bourgeois "democracy," the easier will it be to put them under the domination of their bourgeois and imperialist "liberators."

By the same token, the revolutionary struggle of the German workers will be obstructed to the extent that "national liberation" and the struggle for bourgeois democracy comes forward to derail them from the struggle for soviets and the socialist revolution. At the present time in Germany the advanced workers should come forward more and more with the demand that the German soldiers be withdrawn from the occupied countries, where they are used to oppress their class brothers in the other nations. It will be the duty of the American, British, French, Czech, Polish, etc., workers to come forward with a similar demand if the armies of their nations are used to oppress the German workers. This is the essential corollary to the struggle for socialism in all the countries of Europe.

### The Socialist United States of Europe

The coming collapse of Hitler, which will affect all the European countries to one degree or another, will at the same time, compel the Allied imperialists, together with Russia, to use every means to crush the struggle for socialism. This gives a new concreteness to the slogan, the "Socialist United States of Europe." The attempt of the peoples to realize their long-cherished aspirations will be countered at every turn by the bourgeoisie and the imperialists, and their parties among the working class. They will not stop at drowning the revolution in the blood of the workers.

Hence the strategy of the Fourth International—the Socialist United States of Europe—may, in the concrete situation of a revolt threatened by the superior forces of the bourgeoisie and the imperialists, find its only solution in a ringing call to revolution to the workers in the neighboring countries. The content of this call would be the Socialist United States of Europe as an immediate action slogan of the highest importance. This is the living way in which we should determine the efficacy of the Socialist United States of Europe both as a strategy and as an immediate tactic, and not mechanically according to the dictum that the masses must first "have at their disposal independent national states." In the concrete circumstances, the "national liberation" of the bourgeois state may still not be accomplished and, even if it were, the masses have never yet had at their disposal a bourgeois state. There is no hard

and fast line between the Socialist United States of Europe as an action or as a propaganda slogan. The Socialist United States of Europe must be our real strategy in Europe today, and not "national liberation" and the fight for bourgeois "democracy." This strategy will more and more assume an immediate tactical form providing we engage in the class struggle and the fight for socialism rather than swim with the nationalist and "democratic" current.

### The Bourgeoisie and the Nation

"The bourgeoisie never defends the fatherland for the sake of the fatherland. It defends private property, privileges, profits. Whenever these sacred values are threatened, the bourgeoisie immediately takes the road of defeatism."

The high point of bourgeois defeatism was the summer of 1940, just after the fall of France. And yet even then the bourgeoisie was not so removed from its private property, privileges and profits that it was possible to say that the proletariat represented the nation. History has taught us that at least for the advanced countries the proletariat represents the nation only when it has achieved workers' power.

Monopoly capitalism at no time wishes to surrender any of its privileges or profits to a foreign conqueror. If its armies suffer a crushing defeat by the armies of a rival imperialism then the monopolists will attempt to conclude that bargain with the conquerors as to their place in the new state of affairs which will best safeguard their profits and positions of privilege. They will then await the future and rise to the defense of their state again when new forces come forward which make possible a recouping of what they have lost, plus an opportunity for new profits and plunder.

Whatever may have been the ultimate aims of German imperialism, it is a fact that it raised to full production, by and large, the native industries of the occupied countries in order to supply the tremendous needs of the German war machine. If anything, the ultimate aims of German imperialism could only make the native monopoly capitalists feel more insecure and more willing to assume the rôle of defenders of the nation.

The "two hundred" families in France and in the other countries are hardly in the position of an oppressed class, nor are they non-existent. However, this does not mean that they are not for "national liberation." They would certainly like to reverse the cartel arrangements in their favor, besides having the untrammelled opportunity to enslave completely their own native and colonial peoples, not to speak of whatever loot can be gotten from being on the side of the Allied victors.

That is why the only element in French society that is hopelessly compromised as defeatists, as lackeys of the Germans, are the Lavalists and their "plebian" fascist friends, the Doriotists. All the rest, from de Gaulle to Giraud to Pétain, are defensists, "national liberators," but each plays this part differently, according to the circumstances in which he finds himself.

The representatives of the U. S. State Department conspired with the Pétainists to produce the "hero" Giraud and the "villain" Darlan on African soil in order to help prepare

the American victory. In the glory of this enterprise, in which Darlan was to be embraced by the "hero" Giraud himself, it was hoped that Darlan might retrieve some of his vanished honor in order that both he and Giraud—the men of the two hundred families—might take over the strategic and commanding positions of the "national liberation" movement outside of France.

American imperialism is ready to produce temporary disappointments in order to reinstate the reliable forces of reaction as a native and not alien element of their own nation. Thus the policy of Darlanism and Badoglioism. At the same time the popular de Gaulle is permitted to attain political hegemony of the French Committee of National Liberation, providing the large, growing, modern French army, which will be the spearhead of "national liberation," besides the instrument of law and order, remains in the hands of Giraud.

Despite all the political chaos and clashes of politicians, the essential links in the chain of "national liberation" are as follows: the "national liberation" underground bloc, which is tied to the de Gaulle French Committee of National Liberation, which is tied to Giraud, who is tied to Pétain and French monopoly capitalists, who are tied to Allied imperialism. It is through this chain that the exploiting classes and their representatives in their rôles of leaders of the armies of "national liberation" intend to reestablish completely their chains over the masses.

### **The Proletariat and "National Liberation"**

Proletarian hegemony in the "national liberation" movement never existed, and can exist even less now. Just as in Italy the proletariat can establish its hegemony over a revolting movement only when this movement is directed against capitalism itself. The workers are compelled to create their own armies, and their ultimate success will depend to a large degree upon the extent to which they can undermine the armies of imperialism. Otherwise, when it is a national, that is, objectively bourgeois, movement, it is the resources, the strength, of the bourgeoisie and the tremendous backing of imperialism on that outside that assure the hegemony of the bourgeoisie in the movement. The masses are then clearly the dupes who rush to the chains which will enslave them.

On the basis of "national liberation," national unity in France encompasses the classes to such a degree that "the erstwhile popular front looks like a sectarian left-wing bloc in comparison. The rainbow of national unity ranges from extreme red to the darkest purple of the monarchists and fascists. The man whom the U. S. State Department chose to handle its contacts for the invasion of North Africa was the ultra-reactionary Lemaigre-Dubreuil, who is the head of the French Association of Taxpayers, a big business lobby financed by the banks; who worked hand-in-glove with the Comité des Forges, the steel trust, possessing property in Austria and Axis countries, and who led the fascist riots in Paris in 1934.

The "war cry of national freedom" is the essential platform of the united underground movement. It is the slogan which we are told must become the "most important of all the democratic demands that can be made." The reactionaries, the monarchists, the fascists are also for "national liberation," and, remaining true to their ideals, their "national liberation" does not exclude fascism, military dictatorship, nor monarchism. We must remember that it is the bankruptcy of "democracy" which gives rise to the most reactionary régimes. "National liberation" can mean not only the enslavement of

the masses by "democratic" capitalism, but also by fascist capitalism.

Politically, the war cry "first oust the German invader!" means subordination of the class struggle to the primacy of national unity. In May-June, 1941, before Hitler's attack on Russia, the French working class was lifted out of the stupor engendered, among other things, by the fall of France, by the magnificent three-week general strike of 40,000 miners in northern France. This action, which was not organized by the Stalinists, was directed against the French mine owners. For that reason it was sabotaged by the de Gaullist leaders, who viewed it as a violation of the national front and as a subordination of the first and main task: the ousting of the German invader.

This must be the line of the "national liberation" front! And if ousting of the Germans were the chief task, they would be absolutely right. They are just as right as Roosevelt is when he demands class peace from those who believe in the primacy of the American war effort. When the workers go out on strike, though they may not realize it, they are fighting against the imperialist war. When the French miners went out on strike, they were fighting, consciously or not, against "national liberation" and for a socialist France. In the strike, the French workers opposed the front of the French bosses, the de Gaullists, the French police and the German foremen, with the French and German main forces of repression in the background. Paradoxically enough this unity of the French and German capitalists served to promote the future "national liberation" of the French bourgeoisie.

To be the champions of "national liberation," to see it as the main task, means to accept aid, from whatever quarter, that will make its achievement real. Thus it is only natural for the underground, militarily to match for the occupying forces of the German conqueror, to look to the outside, to the armies of Giraud and the Allies, as the chief instruments of their "national liberation." It would be a poor champion of "national liberation" who would try to counsel against this and if the masses were intoxicated with "national liberation" they would look upon him as an enemy spy in their ranks.

Only to the extent that the Marxists rid the masses of their nationalism and are the foremost participants and leaders in the class battles for socialism can the workers understand the real nature of the class enemy and the imperialist "liberators." Only in unceasing class struggle carried to its highest stages can the workers prepare their forces against the existing and approaching counter-revolution. To say that the masses want to get rid of the foreign oppressor first and that they will then come to terms with their own oppressors is to be the victim of a mood that can only result in foregoing the preliminary and essential building up of the class forces and prevents the systematic weakening of the class forces of the enemy, native and foreign. It does not make possible that favorable relationship of forces which ends in victory.

### **No Support to the Partisans!**

The Partisan movement started out as revolts for true self-determination against reactionary Greater Serb oppression, against the rich landlords, bankers and clergy who remained in Yugoslavia and were protected by German imperialism. In the first stages of the Partisan movement the Nazis and the reactionary Yugoslavian classes presented themselves to the masses as class enemies. It was only natural that Mikhailovitch should find himself closer to the Hitlerites than to the revolting people. As the Partisan movement came under the con-

trol of the "national liberationists," whose chief and first task was to drive out the Germans, social liberation became an increasingly smaller part of their program. Thus on December 15, 1942, the Partisan Constituent Assembly listed as its principal tasks: "the development and the strengthening of the already existing unity of the front and rear; the organization of supply to the People's Liberation Army and to the guerrilla detachments; the strengthening of the work of the people's liberation committees; the safeguarding of personal freedom and property; the raising of the cultural level of the people, the organization of social welfare and the public health protection services."

This program omits completely any real attack on capital, which is the basis for national unity. It embraces all the classes and the clergy, except for the Great Serbian ultra-reactionaries, monarchists and politicians, and is the logical counterpart of the Partisan tieup with the Allied and Russian imperialist camp. In June, 1942, the Partisan Conference of Yugoslav Patriots could say:

The liberation struggle in Montenegro, Boka and Sandjak against the fascist imperialist robbers is a *component part* of the struggle carried on by the peoples of Yugoslavia, enslaved peoples of the European states as well as by *our allies*—the USSR, Great Britain and the USA. (Our emphasis.)

In addition to this, the Partisan General Headquarters issued the order on May 15, 1942, that the "Partisan authorities, on the basis of the decisions of the National Liberation Front, will shoot everyone who is proved to have attempted to form *no matter what kind* of armed units, aside from Partisan units which are under the command of the general headquarters of the Slovenian Partisan Units." (Our emphasis.)

On the basis of their "democratic" program the Partisan leaders negotiated with the ultra-reactionary Mikhailovitch in order to include him in the national front. The nationalism of the Partisan movement which has led it into the Allied imperialist camp is now so devoid of any basic attack on Yugoslavian capitalism that it is not excluded that the representatives of Greater Serb oppression may yet come to terms with Tito. However, this is not the decisive thing. What is important is that the derailment of the class struggle in favor of the national struggle prepares the bridge which will sooner or later reinstall the reactionaries of the old or new variety in the commanding positions of Yugoslavian society.

Clarity on the question of "national liberation" would have permitted us to see at least a year and a half ago the tieup between the Partisans and the Allied imperialists. Now Tito has been made a marshal and given command over the Balkan sector of the Allied offensive. Now that the Yugoslavian masses see "national liberation" as close to achievement, are we to tell the advanced workers of Yugoslavia to cease being the champions of "national liberation" and to fight against the combined "liberating" forces of Tito and his Allies? How far will such "champions" of "national liberation" get? The experience of Yugoslavia teaches us that the policy which prevents us in the name of being against "sectarianism" from doing our duty and swimming against the current ends up in a desperate and belated attempt to overcome the fully developed torrent and leads to the completest isolation and to catastrophe.

"The defense of the national state, first of all in Balkanized Europe—the cradle of the national state—is in the full sense of the word a *reactionary task*." (*War and the Fourth International*, 1934.) This is the key to our policy in Yugoslavia. The advanced workers can only fight for a socialist

and federated Yugoslavia as part of the Socialist United States of Europe.

The advanced workers enter as the most active participants in every class and social struggle of the oppressed Yugoslavian nationalities. The overwhelming peasant character of Yugoslavian economy dictates a policy of linking up the peasant struggles with the fight in the factories, mills and mines in order to develop proletarian hegemony over the entire struggle. The advanced workers of the factory and field base themselves on the committees in the factories and the committees in the village and try through them to organize the independent class action of the oppressed against the German and native exploiters. This will break the stultifying national front and lead to the creation of the independent armed force of the people fighting against the class unity of German imperialism, Mikhailovitch, Tito, Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill. The mass support of the latter will be undermined by a class program for the oppressed who now follow them. In the specific Yugoslavian conditions the ultimate victory of the masses can be achieved by linking the fate of the oppressed workers and peasants to that of the European workers and peasants through the slogan of the Socialist United States of Europe.

### The Class Tasks of the Proletariat

In all the countries of Europe, the proletariat and the masses engage increasingly in class actions against the capitalists, foreign and native, and their forces of repression: the great miners' strike in Northern France, the general strike in Holland, the great steel strike in Belgium and the general strike in Luxemburg, the mass demonstrations, work stoppages in all the occupied lands, armed resistance, revolts and revolution! In Germany, totalitarianism has not prevented the demonstrations of women, of students, the mutinies and desertions of soldiers, the sporadic strikes and stoppages, in which the German workers solidarize themselves with foreign workers of all kinds. Terrific is the significance of twelve million foreign workers in Germany and the ever-growing defeatism of the German workers from the standpoint of internationalism and the Socialist United States of Europe.

It would be no exaggeration to say that thousands of class actions over wages, prices, higher rations, shelter, fuel, against brutality, for free speech, press, assembly, against labor drafts, for labor organization, freeing of prisoners of war and also political prisoners, adequate protection from the ravages of war, etc., have occurred over the face of Europe to refute completely the unwarranted statement that without "national liberation" the advanced workers will be isolated from the masses. As though it were possible to separate a worker from his factory and from the conditions of his oppression and from all who are victims with him! Not for a single moment does the class struggle stop. We see, rather, that its momentum increases to the drama of soviets in Italy. It is not at all a question of isolation for those who are ready to participate in the front lines of the class battles. On the contrary, the problem is one of seeing the direction of events, of not lagging behind, of not being caught unawares, of not having to make a disastrous retreat, of swimming against the initial current in order to ride with the flood of the future.

It would be foolish to deny that the masses are affected with the virus of nationalism. It is so not only with "national liberation" but also when they rush to defend "their" country against an imperialist invader and when they look to the armies of imperialists for their "liberation." Through the abstraction, the nation, the bourgeoisie mobilizes them to de-

fend the very concrete capitalist chains which enslave them. When the worker defends "his" country or fights for "national liberation," he thinks he is defending what little he has against those who would deprive him of that. At the same time he may think that he is also fighting for a better future.

However, when everything is reduced to the concrete struggle, when the worker fights for the specific things that he holds dear, that concrete struggle negates the defense of the abstraction. Thus, every concrete class action for higher wages, for better conditions, for unionism, against the rising cost of living, for democratic rights, for all the demands in the struggle for socialism is a blow against the war for imperialist profits and capitalist exploitation.

In the same way the French miners' strike, the strikes of the Belgian, Dutch and Norwegian workers, the class struggles and manifestations of the Yugoslavs, the Poles and the German workers are a negation of "national liberation" of the capitalist state and a promotion of the fight for a socialist fatherland.

The advanced workers are therefore interested in these specific class actions which alone can turn the masses away from their nationalism and lead them toward socialism.

Whatever forces we have should be in the factory committees, legal or illegal, which prepare the class actions for higher wages, better conditions, fewer hours; against speedup and the dragging of workers to work in Germany; for unionism, for democratic rights, and political organization, etc. We should participate in and help organize every manifestation, economic and political, against native and foreign capital and its forces of repression. We should help to prepare all the forces, including the arming of the workers, for the clashes with the enemy and the greater battles of tomorrow. On these independent class issues we can make united fronts with all workers' organizations and groups who wish to participate in these specific actions.

We do not allow ourselves nor the workers to become exhausted in nationalistic acts of assassination and sabotage which can only lead to reactionary results. We base ourselves primarily on the lower organizations and the committees in the factories. The bourgeoisie, the Croix de Feu "national liberationists," the de Gaullist, Stalinist, socialist, trade unionist and liberal leaders will attempt to sabotage the class actions of the workers. This essential disruption of the unity of the classes will expose the reactionary character of the "national liberation" and "democratic" front and reveal that the program of "ousting the German invader" is only a means of completely shackling the workers to the chains of the native capitalists and imperialism.

### **Revolutionary Fraternization Versus "Ousting the Invader"**

We are not for "ousting the German invader," but for revolutionary fraternization with the German soldier on the basis of class brotherhood and the international struggle for socialism. *The German soldier, who is away from his loved ones, who is sick of the war and frantic over the safety of his own family subjected increasingly to terrific holocausts from the air, is more and more open to the class appeal against the warmongers in both of the imperialist camps. This and not national hatred and threats to kill him, or appeals to come over to the side of the national enemy, will undermine the German workers in uniform. The German soldier is not interested in a free capitalist France nor a bankrupt "democratic" France. He is interested in the only kind of a France that can help and promote by example his own liberation. He*

*is interested in a socialist France which will not permit the Allied invaders to crush a socialist Germany. The German soldier should naturally abhor the rôle of a mercenary against even a capitalist France, but he will join forces only with a revolutionary France. Revolutionary fraternization is possible only on the basis of the class fight for international socialism. It is the only way to prevent the unity of German and Allied imperialism against the French, the German and the European revolutions.*

The struggles in Europe and the revolution in Italy are evidence of the increasing vitality and combativity of both the younger and older generations. The problem is therefore that of a revolutionary party and its creation in time to lead the proletarian revolution.

In view of the relative smallness of the revolutionary forces it is necessary to pose this question correctly. We recognize that this or that uprising may end in defeat, owing to the immaturity of the revolutionary leadership, and to the preponderance in this or that situation of the forces that are moved in against the revolution by the capitalist counter-revolutionary intervention. However, it is not a question of a single uprising, but of an entire revolutionary epoch.

A young revolutionary party must have this outlook. History will provide enough opportunities for it to test itself, to accumulate experience and to grow. The faster the vanguard is formed, the more the epoch of bloody convulsions will be shortened. The question of tempo and time-intervals is of great importance, but it does not change our general historical perspective nor the direction of our policy. Our conclusion can only be to organize the proletarian vanguard with **tenfold energy.**

Those who are pessimistic refer to what they consider are the sad consequences of the last war. But the last war gave birth to the October Revolution and a series of revolutions in Europe and the colonies. Furthermore, the economic position of the imperialist states, including the United States, is infinitely worse today and the destruction of war is infinitely greater. There is every reason to believe, therefore, that this time there will be a much more decisive reaction on the part of the workers and the army. The Italian revolution broke out when the main imperialist protagonists were not yet exhausted. The decisive military clashes are still ahead. Their resulting wreckage will confirm the warning of the Italian indicator of revolution.

In numbers, and especially in preparation, the revolutionary forces of today possess infinite advantages over their predecessors of the First World War. They are the direct heirs of bolshevism in its flower. They have absorbed the tradition of the October Revolution and the experience of the richest historical period between two world wars.

War speeds up enormously the political development. Those great tasks which only yesterday seemed long years, if not decades, away, are looming up directly before us. Programs, including "sub-historical" ones, which are based on habitual peacetime conditions, will inevitably remain dangling in mid-air.

If with our small forces we did not hesitate before the war to propose a revolutionary program for the Chinese Revolution, for the defeat of Hitler, for the French Revolution, for the Spanish Revolution and for the Second Imperialist War, why should we falter now? Did we not then also have the problem of creating the revolutionary vanguard? But we did it not only because the revolutionary program was applicable to the situation, but also *because this was the only way to*

*build a revolutionary party.* Do we no longer agree with Trotsky in his advice to Andres Nin, whose pessimism regarding the lack of revolutionary forces led him to support the popular "democratic" front in Spain? Trotsky wrote Nin:

We have few forces. But the advantage of a revolutionary situation consists precisely in the fact that even a small group can become a great force in a brief space of time, providing that it gives a correct prognosis and that it issues correct slogans in time. (Letters on the Spanish Revolution, June, 1931.)

A revolutionary situation has already come out of the war in Italy and many more will follow. The revolutionary forces are much greater than they were in 1931. There is absolutely no room for the pessimism which sees the revolutionary party created only in the "democratic" period, and still more incredible, with a "democratic" program.

The imperialists' fear of the revolution has to no small degree imparted to them a frantic desire to woo Stalin as the arch instrumentality for heading off and betraying the coming revolutionary wave. Bankrupt imperialism needs to corrode the working class movement from within, and Stalinism is that corrosion par excellence. While Russia's victories and Stalinist activity in behalf of "national liberation" have permitted Stalinism to become the chief claimant for the support of the workers, it is no less true that the openly counter-revolutionary rôle of the Stalinists in Poland and the Baltic countries, and their stand against socialism in Italy which they will repeat in all the European countries leaves the Trotskyists as the sole claimant for the support of the workers in their inevitable bid for socialism as the only way out.

The counter-revolutionary record the Stalinists have piled up for twenty years, and the increasing integration of Stalin with counter-revolutionary imperialism will make it less and less possible for the workers to separate the two from their common counter-revolutionary schemes, and is bound to impel the workers toward the Trotskyists.

If, among the Polish workers, there are more Trotskyists than ever before, if among the Italian workers who were crushed for twenty-one years under the yoke of fascism there arises overnight a Trotskyist party which alone stands for socialism, can we not believe that the German workers, too, have thought over the reasons for their enslavement?

The Trotskyist movement is growing, and will grow faster than ever as a result of the shocks and shambles of the imperialist war. Revolution will accelerate that growth. Whoever wishes to do so can discredit himself with pessimism, but we say with Trotsky: "...One should not proclaim victorious the enemy who is still a long way from victory." Whoever wishes to can compromise himself with the struggle for the restoration of the capitalist states and capitalist "democracy." We say with Trotsky:

The program of the Fourth International states that the freedom of all European nations, both large and small, can be secured only within the frame of the Socialist United States of Europe. We look ahead and not backward!

San Francisco, January 1, 1944.

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## **BOOKS IN REVIEW**

### **Men and Coal**

**MEN AND COAL, by McAlister Coleman.  
Farrar & Rinehart, New York, N. Y.**

The continued "strategic withdrawals" of labor's leaders from the battlefield against inflation and exploitation would, if complete, have marked an ignoble chapter in labor's history for the year 1943. The Philip Murrays and William Greens exhibited panicky generalship before the sweep of events in this crucial year. However, one indomitable army saved the day. And tragic defeat was turned into a strengthening of the lines. In fact, inspired by the example of the coal miners, the railroad and steel workers held their defenses against the hammer blows of inflation and political double-crosses by false allies.

The battle between labor and capital was joined, as they say in the military communiqués. At this writing, the sturdy work of the coal miners, assisted by the revitalized steel and railroad workers, appeared in a sound position to hold against any further attacks. It is never an accident when well-trained troops and experienced generals do a good job. Practice makes perfect, or at least tends toward perfection.

If you want to know the training school of the coal miners, and its leadership, if you want to analyze the merit of its obstacle courses, its "wartime maneuvers," you can find out a good deal in the book by Coleman. Labor has its own unforgettable memories. The Ludlow Massacre, Bloody Herrin, the Mingo County March, Harlan, Ky.—these are names that will never be forgotten in labor's sagas of its mighty struggles. For here coal miners starved and died, and fought and won, and lost, and returned again to rebuild their "line," the union, the United Mine Workers of America, until it became the strongest defense of the coal diggers, and a bulwark for the entire labor movement.

Death on the picket line, and death in the murky black underground. Life in a concentration camp (the company town) and life as a cruel oppressor of the downtrodden—such was the psychological milieu of this army of coal miners under the conditions of this ruthless and lawless industry. Coleman does a good job of bringing out this background of the present mentality and opinions of the coal miner. For coal, as a lifeblood in capitalist industry, suffered the vicissitudes which only a planless, blind and profit-seeking economy can give to a valuable raw material and its diggers from the earth. Read about the utter bankruptcy of the coal barons, and the sufferings of generations of coal miners at the hands of these tyrants, one of whom epitomized perfectly their whole philosophy when he said, in response to a question about the factually proved miseries of the coal miners: "They don't suffer! Why, these people can't even speak English."

Out of such turbulent circumstances only one kind of union leadership could arise, a hard-boiled, tough-minded crew of the "get-things-done" school. John L. Lewis is the supreme expression of this kind of union leadership. Lewis is the man who learns only the hard way. His whole life testifies to it. His earlier philosophy, expressed in his brochure, "The Miners Fight for American Standards," is simply the other side of the coin of the coal barons' pragmatism and

ruthlessness. And that is precisely why he took such a beating—and the coal miners such defeats—in the epoch of the golden twenties, the zenith of American capitalism. For precisely during this time was the full power of the ruling class hurled time and again against the front line of the American workers, the UMWA. It was the period of bitter inter-union struggle which Coleman unfortunately treats too gently. “No question but that Lewis’s way was that of a dictator, as charged, but his enemies had no better way out of the problem of holding together an organization of men fighting desperately in the dark against seemingly insuperable odds.” Of course, some of Lewis’s union opponents were hardly different. Farrington, for example. But to wipe out the whole history of the splendid struggle of the coal union militants for a democratic union, and for some of the ideas which Lewis adopted ten years later—like industrial unionism for all basic industries—is to substitute the well-known brush of whitewash for analytical and valuable treatment.

The UMWA was reduced to less than 60,000 members during this period. Despair ruled in the thousands of coal towns, and life was a matter of “be born, work, suffer and die” for thousands of families. The bleak life of the coal miners is portrayed much better, incidentally, in Korson’s *Coal Dust on the Fiddle* than in Coleman’s description of this existence. Korson, whose book is worth reading to get the “feel” of the coal miners and coal mining, didn’t make this the major aim of his book either, thereby perhaps adding to its very effectiveness.

The year 1929 awoke everyone in this country from the dream-world so glibly painted by Hollywood, the press, the radio and the endless after-dinner speakers. It was a rude shock to John L. Lewis. And it stirred the coal miners again to restlessness and discontent. And then came 1933, when the entire nation was paralyzed, and the Roosevelt Administration talked radical.

Lewis, the opportunist, saw his chance. How he capitalized on it is an old story, retold by Coleman. The miners’ union grew to over 400,000. Lewis had learned also that only if steel and other basic industries were organized could the UMWA hold its gains, for Wall Street was merely recovering its breath, and more battles were to follow. The idea of the CIO grew from this conviction, fortified by the tragic experience of the mass-production industry workers in the archaic AFL craft union set-up. Lewis, the strong man of the AFL hierarchy, soon became the even more powerful oppositionist. The CIO was organized in mighty struggles in which the financial sinews and experienced leaders were furnished time and again by the coal miners to supplement the resurgence and fighting spirit of the working people, who contributed the sit-down as a “secret weapon” which demoralized the enemy.

But leopards don’t change spots, and only geniuses are capable of absorbing the lessons of this brilliant chapter of labor history. The old “make-a-deal-with-your-friends” philosophy, which was the Maginot-Line mentality of the AFL leadership, was still part and parcel of the Lewis mentality, which he instilled in the freshly-won recruits to the CIO movement. So when Lewis, after a series of skirmishes with Roosevelt, broke with the Administration, he stood almost alone, and a rather pitiful figure at that, back in the camp of the Republicans. His previous allies, the Stalinists (whose rôle is underplayed in Coleman’s book), deserted him, and the coal miners’ union, run with an iron hand, took the lonely road. Of course, on all the union issues against the chiseling

of the employers, and the treacherous actions of the so-called friend of labor, the Administration, Lewis was correct.

However, the coal miners had learned one thing above all things, as Roosevelt pointed out at his press conference on December 29 in the White House. The coal miners know that everything they have gained in the last twenty years was through their union, and that is why they stick to it, despite everything. Lewis was determined to keep this fact true, and the coal miners, as the cost of war poured on their shoulders more and more, supported Lewis in fighting for wage adjustments to offset partially the rapid rise of inflation.

The story of the 1943 coal miners’ strikes against the evils of inflation and the high cost of living, is the highlight of Coleman’s book. The coal miners’ case is given to the reader. And this is a good service to the labor movement. In 1919, when the conditions in the pits became unbearable, the coal miners pulled a nation-wide strike. Lewis retreated before the dictates of the other Democratic President, Woodrow Wilson. “I will not fight my government, the greatest government in the world.” In 1943 the coal miners, as usual, and as to be expected, closed down the mines to fight for the justice of their case. In 1943, Lewis fought the Roosevelt régime, outsmarted it and won a distinct victory, with all the weight of the capitalist world against him. Here, then, is a cycle whose course is worth tracing, but which is not done well—a serious defect of the book.

Perhaps the greatest tribute paid to the coal miners for their resistance to the attacks of their enemies is the adoption of their tactics by the railroad and steel workers. And the sudden conversion of the CIO and AFL leaders to John L. Lewis’ “pressure tactics” and his save-the-union-movement-first concept speaks eloquently of the miserable character of these “Kentucky Colonels” as leaders of labor’s army.

Out of the struggles of the coal miners, and the subsequent victories of other industrial workers, comes again the fresh lesson of self-reliance, self-confidence, and the “hold-that-line” battle cry that rallied labor in this hour of need.

Q.

## European Labor And Fascism

THE TRAGEDY OF EUROPEAN LABOR, by Adolph Sturmthal, Columbia University Press, New York.

Honest self-appraisal is not an easy task. Nor is it easy to draw the lessons from great social events, whether they be victories or defeats. It is a monumental task to relearn and reteach the valuable lessons of the October Revolution, to wipe out the vast stock of myths, legends and ghastly lies that twenty years of Stalinism have built around this supreme achievement of the world working class to date. But at least, in that study one thing is revealed: the revolution did triumph. Labor did take power as the historical justification of the prognosis of Karl Marx. Yet, when one turns to the history of the European labor movement since the First World War, more difficulties present themselves. Only defeats were the final experience of the working class despite many brilliant attempts to change the course of history.

Professor Sturmthal presents for consideration his theory—the lessons he drew from the disaster that overtook the labor movement in country after country—and it deserves careful

consideration, for it is attractive, not to say seductive. And those people who are interested in building a tomorrow for the war-engulfed generations of today have to be rigorous in examining the past, not only because it remains with us today, but because it can teach the lessons for tomorrow.

Sturmthal's thesis is the following: "I intend to show that European labor, far from 'mixing in too much with politics,' was not sufficiently political minded and hesitated to accept real political responsibility commensurate with the political and social pressure which it exercised. It was this fact, more than anything else, which caused the downfall of European labor and at the same time of European democracy, since both perished by the same process. . . . The bitter feuds within the working class organizations had little reference to the basic weaknesses of European labor's actions—the lack of real political participation and constructive thinking on basic social problems."

In outlining his thesis he further charges, after sketching how vastly imposing the political structures and edifices of the European labor movement were, that "all this, however, was largely surface activity. Scraping below it, we would find, well hidden in the maze of political action, but determining its content, the same pressure-group mentality that is characteristic of American labor. For most socialists, and most communists after 1923, socialism was a distant objective which had little influence upon present-day action." They had primarily a pressure group mentality. And while the form of the pressures was different from those employed by American labor, basically the content was the same. European labor was not so different than that in the USA.

#### WHOSE FAILURES WERE THEY?

Of course, to support such a theory one must deal with what Sturmthal calls "Leninism," which to him is the doctrine of Lenin and not the masquerade of Stalinism in the cloak of Leninism. Lenin's penetrating analysis of the pressure group mentality which characterized the entire social-democracy is given proper credit, but then Rosa Luxemburg—defenseless against her numerous anti-Leninist friends—is brought to bear as an authority against the Leninist concept of building a fresh revolutionary movement, known as the Third International, which would crack through the old-line mentality and lead the workers to victory.

"The lesson of the Leninist failure in Central and Western Europe," says Sturmthal, "should have been plain to any Marxist. It was that no organization could defeat the powerful economic and social forces which had turned the labor organizations into pressure groups. Political maturity depended upon the recognition by labor that its interests required institutional changes in society. Not before the facts had demonstrated to the large working masses themselves the extent to which their immediate interests required basic reform could labor develop into a genuine political movement."

Consider the German revolutions of 1918 and 1923, and the collapse of the labor movement in 1933, the British Labor government, Austria, Italy and the Popular Front. Through this thesis you have a pat explanation. Even more, you have set the historic responsibility for the failure on labor. Surely that must be comforting, at least to the tired, bankrupt refugee "politicos," who, after all, did their best, didn't they, against this pressure-group mentality? Besides, it affected them too, only because "powerful economic and social forces"

created this mentality. A man can't rise above his historic environment. That must be plain even to you dogmatic Marxists. Yes, we hear all this and more from the lips of the Sturmthals today.

Now it is our turn to take the floor and ask a few questions. Was not the "pressure-group" mentality of the Social-Democrats in Germany responsible for the failure in 1918? A decisive majority of the working class was ready to seize power. They tried. But we anticipate the heckler. What about 1923? Why didn't the Bolsheviks take power in Germany then? A fatal error, we reply, but two wrongs don't make a right. Comes our critic again. It just proves that the so-called revolutionists had only a pressure-group mentality too. Not so fast, not quite so fast. Didn't the—yes, we have to mention his name, even though Sturmthal's book tries to ignore him—other great leader of the October Revolution, Leon Trotsky, seek to instill will power and drive into the leaders of the German Communist Party?

#### BOLSHEVISM OFFERS THE WAY OUT

To be sure, Trotsky lost this struggle as well as many others. In each case it was the conservative and counter-revolutionary weight of Stalin's machine and the social-democracy that combined against "Trotskyism," with a boldness and audacity which were never used against class enemies. Otto Bauer, to whom the book is dedicated, did his share too. For what was the story of each successive social crisis and the failure of revolutionary victory? It was a failure of leadership. That's where the heart and soul of the pressure-group mentality rested. At each turn of history, in Germany, Austria, Italy, France and Spain, has there been any evidence—no one has dared to forge it—that the masses weren't willing to sacrifice and die in the struggle for power? And each time, the "generals" called off the war and the foot soldiers were left leaderless against a well organized and attacking enemy.

Today any military claim of blaming the soldiers for defeat is laughed out of court. Soldiers always fight when given leadership. The generals have the responsibility for the strategy and the tactics. When they are good, success is probable. As a friend of the "labor generals," Sturmthal attempts precisely this alibi for the defeats in the class struggles in Europe.

It takes the peculiar gall that one can only associate with those people who cover themselves with the holy cloak of "scholarship" to attempt to pass that one off on the working class. Even in these dark days of a Second World War, where truth takes such a horrible beating, enough is enough. Make all the criticisms you want about failures, but at the right people. The theory of "superimposition of a world revolutionary staff" is just the old cry of the frightened social-democrats, who feared struggle above all other things. It was precisely Lenin who was against artificial leadership, superimposition, and "dictatorship over the masses." There is a little brochure which Sturmthal ought to read: "Left-Wing Communism: an Infantile Disorder." Lenin does a better job of demolishing precisely those concepts which Sturmthal seeks to attribute to him than does the honest professor.

There is a great lesson to be learned from the tragedy of European labor: Pressure mentality isn't enough. Any leadership with that basic concept is doomed. There is only the road of the October for victory.

WALTER JASON.

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