

**The New**  
**INTERNATIONAL**

***FOUR PORTRAITS  
OF STALINISM—II***

**By Max Shachtman**



***How Europe Aided the U. S.***

**By Albert Gates**



***The Need for Politics***

**An Editorial**



***The Diary of Victor Serge—II***



**Editorials — Book Section — Articles**

**35c**

**January-February, 1950**

# MEMO

## THE NEW INTERNATIONAL An Organ of Revolutionary Marxism

Vol. XVI, No. 1                      Whole No. 140  
January-February 1950

With this issue of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL we appear, as you see, in a new format. We believe that our readers will appreciate the greater convenience—in carrying while reading and in fitting the NI into bookshelf space—of the new size. Although format is a minor matter in a periodical such as ours, we hope that it will find favor among our readers.

We are somewhat less happy to report that with this issue we are also starting bi-monthly publication. Our regular readers are aware that The New International has been unable, during the past year, to maintain its planned frequency of publication. Many difficulties have contributed to upsetting our schedule, among them our unwillingness to publish an inferior magazine in content and makeup.

We hope to return to ten copies a year, and eventually to monthly publication just as soon as possible. In the meantime, we can guarantee our readers regular appearance of the magazine, and what is even more important, an improved magazine. We believe that the additional time we now have for preparation, and a strengthened editorial board, will result in extending the quality of the magazine. We are confident that this, in turn, will increase both the circle of our literary contributors and of our readers.

Because of rising costs we are compelled to do what all periodicals and newspapers, with infinitely greater resources than we ever hope to have, have done—raise our rates. With this issue the cost of a single copy of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL will be 35c. The subscription rate will remain the same, \$2.00 per year. Present subscribers will receive their full quota of issues and all new subscribers will be accepted under the rate indicated above.

L. G. SMITH,  
*Business Manager*

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# THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

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## EDITORIALS

### The Need for Politics

The past decade, apart from its tremendous political developments, has seen a significant shift in the political temper of American life. The over-all political scene has been marked by the rise of a sickly neo-liberalism, a liberalism intimately tied to the development of state bureaucracy, semi-permanent war economy, and the welfare-garrison concept of the capitalist state. On the part of large masses of people, the support of this neo-liberalism has been motivated by a lack of faith in the ability of unrestricted capitalism to provide a healthy economy and by a wish for increasing services and legislative reforms. But it has been a catastrophe of this period that just as this increasing politicization, primitive to be sure but still significant, has been taking place among sections of the middle class and the working class, there has occurred a severe disintegration of political commitments and interests among intellectuals and radicals.

It is possible to trace this disintegration in three distinct though overlapping stages. First, the movement away from Marxism which began in the second half of the 1930's; then, the loss of interest in political theory as a whole (who does not remember the numerous ex-Marxists who promised to develop substitute conceptions and, in the press of writing OWI leaflets or composing articles for *The New Leader*, never managed to get around to it?); and thirdly, the loss of interest in politics as such. Everyone is familiar with this latter phenomenon: the world-weariness of people who gave as much as two of their best college years to the movement; the guilty contempt of those who learned, so to speak, their ABC's in the movement and then, having used it as a stepping stone to a personal career, would mumble about "values," "morality," and "reconsiderations." Everyone is familiar with the heroes of yesterday who discovered the flaws of Marxism and then, as if in revenge, retired to the glory of trade-union flunkeydom, publicity composition and city planning.

As for ourselves we reiterate the need for politics: politics as an inevitable necessity under the present circumstances of society. Without politics, there can be no solution of the problems that threaten to destroy what is left of modern civilization. Without politics, the private islands of escape are certain to be blown into nothingness by the realities of the modern world. Without politics, the only future, no matter how uneasily pleasant the momentary interregnum of quasi-prosperity, is war, totalitarianism, death. Either we shall attend to politics—or it will attend to us.

There has probably never before been a time in 20th century American life

when the radical political atmosphere was so atomized. Not only is there the visible flight to rotten compromise and ancient utopias; almost all political life, of no matter what radical variety, seems on the decline. Dwight Macdonald's *Politics*, a whimsically entitled magazine which served certain journalistic uses skillfully until its editor attempted to work out new political programs, has ended its existence. *The Modern Review*, which recently announced ambitious plans for revival under more sophisticated Social-Democratic auspices, has folded up—and in view of the Social-Democratic resources and “connections,” it is hard to believe that its demise was due to financial reasons. The organ of the Socialist Party, a sad little sheet for so boastful an organization, is of an abysmally low intellectual level; and in any case is merely awaiting the happy day when the Social Democrats will allow it to cut its throat. And the *Fourth International* is trapped in its sterile, almost ludicrous sectarianism, its gross stupidity of the “finished program,” and its stubborn unwillingness to allow reality to affect its thinking.

We say these things less in anger than in sorrow, for the disintegration of these radical journals is due, not to the growth of some healthier tendency, but to the decline of the radical movement as a whole. But we feel, nonetheless, that there is today a great need for a journal which shall view world events and intellectual developments from the viewpoint of Marxism—ready to battle intransigently for its ideas, yet generous in spirit and objective in tone, willing to consider and reconsider all questions once more. (Our objection, incidentally, to those who say that all aspects of Marxism must be reconsidered is less to their statement of wish than their failure to do anything about it.)

What is above all necessary is the reconstitution of a radical milieu; an arena of discussion and controversy, clarification and challenge. To this end, *The New International* rededicates itself anew, and extends an invitation to all socialists, both those who agree with its general position and those who disagree with one or another of its views, to contribute to its pages. In our new format, which we hope will make for more convenient reading, and our new frequency of appearance, which will result in about the same quantity of printed material over a given year as was possible before, we shall speak for the need for politics, for theory, and for Marxism.

## Classified Democracy

Without much fanfare, one day the Attorney General, a man presumably well enough versed in constitutional law to find his way to the Supreme Court bench, published a list of organizations which he decided to classify as “subversive.” No need for an accurate and scientific definition of a term with such insidious implications. No legal measures were proposed. The government was simply publishing information for citizens, just as it lists organizations engaged in charity pursuits, associations for the advancement of foreign trade, missionaries abroad. But care was taken to broadcast this information as widely as possible.

“Classified” organizations soon found it just a little more difficult than before to rent halls for public meetings or offices, especially in smaller com-

munities. Recourse to legal action was impossible for there was no one to take to court. Classification seeped first into government bureaus. Members of classified groups or those suspected of being associates of those who were alleged to be members, even those who long, long ago signed an innocent election petition, found themselves under investigation, some discharged. The infamous case of James Kutcher, the legless veteran, fired from his lowly filing clerk job in the Veteran's Administration for membership in the Socialist Workers Party, is well known. Dismissal axes dropped quickly on members and sympathizers of classified organizations working on government projects classified as “confidential.”

Most infuriatingly, while civil rights are chipped away, no law has been passed, no statutory disabilities imposed, no jailings, no prison terms, no trials. Where local and state ordinances are adopted, the Attorney General's list, which is incorporated into no law, is included.

Classified organizations can find no way to get off the list, although the Attorney General kindly offers to hear their representatives, not with a view to removing them from the list but simply to allow them the consolation of knowing that they have exhausted every futile possibility. It is impossible to discover how or why any group was classified, or for that matter, why any were omitted; all such information is classified as confidential and the Attorney General will not be tricked into revealing it. Incredible as it seems, thousands of people have been tried without a trial, found guilty of a charge which is not defined, and sentenced to punishment which is announced piecemeal as time goes on and whose limits are nowhere discernible. To grapple with these mysterious workings is to try catching a candle-cast shadow on a black pavement in a murky alley.

And now, democracy by classification filters into the factories. Men are discharged because they are alleged to be associated with “classified” organizations; they cannot be permitted to work in departments or shops turning out materials classified as “confidential.” By swift and easy extension, men are fired regardless of the nature of their work. Wright Aeronautical demanded and won, over the protests of the local union, clauses incorporating these procedures into its contract with the UAW. Most recently, the Stewart Warner Chicago plant summarily discharged shop stewards who refused to sign loyalty oaths prepared by the company.

In the trial of Judith Coplon and Valentin Gubitchev, Judge Ryan must mull over FBI evidence, admittedly obtained by illegal wire-tapping, to decide on the validity of the entire proceedings. But worker victims of classification, accused of no crime and, unlike the FBI, guilty of nothing illegal, are convicted in star-chamber processes. Evidence? Has it been gathered by legal or illegal means, reported by maniacs, turned in by company agents paid by the piece, manufactured by skilled artisans? No one can judge; such information is “classified.”

But even the most authentic evidence, gathered by most moral methods, can prove only that the victims are members of groups which are not illegal but merely politically unorthodox and hence cannot demonstrate the criminality of the worker who is to lose his livelihood. Ordinary courts presumably punish malefactors who can be proved guilty of crimes. The secret-police, FBI,

and security regulations punish those who are guilty of nothing, except political opinions. Consequently, the efforts of well-meaning people, who hope to prevent an arbitrary working of the eerie security machinery by demanding fair hearings for the accused, break against the wall of the Attorney General's list, arbitrary justice epitomized.

Facts deny consolation to those who want to believe that this process is to be employed only against Stalinism. Even if this were the case, its malicious character would be evident. But it is now clear that the gears of classification are cut to drag in socialists, union militants, and ordinary dissenters.

We witness the revival of blacklists and yellow-dog oaths, applied to the country as a whole as well as the union movement. Unlike its employer counterpart in days of crude union-busting, new blacklists are government-inspired and initiated, more refined, more subtle, with a more "philosophical" justification, and far more dangerous precisely because the whole power of the state reinforces them.

The innocent list of information has gone a long way; the methods it represents are firmly fixed. There is no end to what can be "classified" as confidential. Government bureaucrats working behind a curtain, unchecked by legislative bodies, have unlimited latitude for their imagination. What logical or legal obstacle prevents some inventive genius from perfecting this device, until "classification" for "suspicion" catalogues groups and individuals on lists held in secret, never made public, and enforced in unexplained and unpublicized purges. American democracy would never stand for such a thing? It has swallowed a big dose already.

Why are we apparently slipping so smoothly into a "classified democracy," America's analogue of "peoples democracy"? It is not hard to understand. The greatest bulwark of civil liberties is the powerful labor movement, whose own rights are in jeopardy. But the prime mover is not an arrogantly reactionary administration, openly anti-labor, but the Democracy of Harry Truman. Labor officials do not speak out because their tongues twist with honeyed words for the Fair Deal administration which they support. The most far-sighted labor leaders see danger ahead, but a misplaced loyalty to Truman forces them to turn their eyes. They are only sowing the wind.

## China Policy at Work

The Republican Party's campaign over Formosa has done more than put its reactionary leaders out on the edge of a very precarious limb. The blast of accusations of "treachery," "betrayal" and "Munich" let loose by Hoover, Dewey, Taft *et al.*, would appear to have transformed itself into welcome ammunition in the hands of the Truman administration.

Not only is there something hypocritical in witnessing these traditional champions of "isolationist" policy proposing immediate intervention by American naval and military forces to defend and occupy an island much more obscure and remote to the American people than Europe itself, but it is hard to imagine anything more laughable than the sight of Senator Taft discovering the right of the Formosan people to self-determination. The Republican leader-

ship thought it could not miss a splendid opportunity to cash in on the Truman administration's gigantic failure in its China policy, but ended by tightly tying the "knot of confusion" around its own throat. Its leadership could not decide whether it wanted an open intervention in the most high-handed imperialist fashion, to bolster up the pitiful Chiang, or whether noble Wilsonian idealism was its answer. Secretary of State Acheson who, despite the licking he has had to accept from the Chinese Stalinists, has some understanding of what is happening and has a half-worked-out policy and strategy in mind for American imperialism, was easily able to ward off these clumsy attacks.

Facing reality is always a good starting point, and from the standpoint of American policy Acheson has had the capacity to face two fundamental realities in the world of the East.

1. The knell of white man's imperialism, rule and domination has sounded. The day when a telegram could announce the "landing of the Marines," or the arrival of a "punitive expedition," or the "shelling of a city by naval forces"—that day has departed. Whatever hope Truman retains of saving something from his China débâcle would be destroyed by any precipitate move which would solidify anti-imperialist hatred as never before. In fact, much of the tactics employed by Chinese Stalinists in needling the American government surely has such purposes in mind and, in turn, reveals how the twin souls of Titoism and Russian Stalinism dwell within the single body of Stalinist China.

2. If the world has ever seen a bankrupt, hopeless and spiritless régime, it is the tiny remnants of Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang system. What idiocy it would be for American imperialism to bind itself, in the slightest way, to the numbered days of this remnant! Both the character and the dismal perspective of this criminal crew has long been understood in Washington. Acheson, to be sure, would quickly overlook the social and moral degeneracy of this feudal-landlord-bourgeois "government" if he thought it had the slightest hope of carrying on a sustained war with the ultimate chance of a return to power. But who believes this? Is it even possible that Taft-Hoover-Dewey hold out such a hope? Do they actually cling to the incredible belief that Chiang and his Madame can yet make a comeback? In any case, the responsible molders of American foreign policy have definitely decided that the liquidation of Chiang and whatever remains of his policy is not only inevitable, but desirable from the viewpoint of future American policy. The man is only an embarrassment and an encumbrance now.

With the complete conquest of China by Stalinism, what kind of a perspective remains? If we understand and accept the fact that the "revolt of Asia" in general, and the destruction of Kuomintangism in particular, have altered the picture as a whole, then it is easier to understand the confused and often contradictory policy of American policy makers. They are largely improvising and attempting to find their way in a changed Oriental world. Men like Acheson understand a little of what has happened, but the tactical and strategic responses their understanding permits are shaped and influenced by their imperialist outlook. At bottom, they must attempt to answer one question: given these fundamental changes, how shall American imperialism now function in the Far East?

Although they have no thoroughly worked-out answers, it is possible to see already the beginnings of a "grand strategy." It is far different from the im-

pulsive and not-to-be-taken seriously proposals of the Republican leadership. In the first place, disturbed as they may be by Stalinist advances in Asia, the truly responsible spokesmen for American imperialism know that these victories are not conclusive, considered internationally. The struggle for Western Europe still commands major emphasis and will continue to do so. Stalinism cannot expect any Formosas in the West, as the example of Berlin long ago indicated.

Secondly, despite the noise, exchange of protest letters, closing of consulates, etc., the U. S. fully intends to do business with Stalinist China. The difference between Washington and London over the issue of recognition of the Mao régime was a matter of propriety and tactics, and American recognition—if not *de jure*, then *de facto*—will come. In what other possible way could the U. S. expect to exert any influence upon the development of this new régime, to encourage whatever Titoistic tendencies may exist, etc? If Russian Stalinism offers to China the dubious prospect of absorption of its outermost border regions, and a primitive agrarian exploitation of what remains, then American imperialism will surely snap up this opportunity to offer a brighter perspective to the Chinese Stalinist government involving capital, machinery, trade and commerce. Far from a hands-off, isolating policy, this demands the renewal of full relations, in all spheres.

Finally, just as the European Marshall Plan implied a policy of containment of Stalinism by the creation of a powerful Western bloc, so Acheson conceives of an Asiatic containment policy, by the creation of a strong Asiatic bloc based upon India, and including Indo-China, the new East Indies régime, etc. In passing, we might note the obvious effect that a cold-blooded occupation of Formosa would have had in such lands as India, Burma, etc. From Acheson's standpoint, it will be difficult enough as it is to create an Asiatic bloc against Stalinism because of the whole history of white imperialism. Caution must be therefore exercised to an even greater degree. Acheson's eyes are fixed upon Jawarlalal Nehru, not Chiang Kai-shek and his consort.

This, it seems to us, is the broad strategy American imperialism now has in mind. The sweep and scope of change in the Far East has been particularly striking by contrast with the Western world. One of the prime tasks of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL in the future will be to probe and analyze the new Asiatic world from a socialist viewpoint.

# How Europe Aided the United States

## Aspects of the ECA Commerce Commission Report

In recent decades Europe has given to the United States a great deal more than a synthesis of its varied culture. Ever since the first World War liquidated the strong foreign capital holdings of the bigger European powers in this country and lifted the United States from the position of a debtor nation to the world's creditor, Europe has been paying dearly to the bourgeoisie of this country for the privilege of being exploited by it. The degree of this exploitation has scarcely been noted by the American bourgeois ideologues, and not at all by their isolationist colleagues, for the notion current in this country is that Uncle Sam is freely handing out dollars almost for the mere joy of giving. Nor have the Marxists always fully understood the real significance of America's new rôle as world economic dictator and exploiter, or the manner in which Europe has paid for American economic development.

The Report of the Commerce Commission of the ECA, issued in October, 1949, is therefore an illuminating document since it details the extensive exploitation of the European market by the United States over the past thirty years. This it spells out in such concrete terms that it supplies the necessary empirical evidence to bear out Trotsky's old thesis that the United States was putting Europe on economic rations.

\* \* \*

From July, 1914, through the year 1948, the United States exported goods and services to the value of \$270 billion. In the same period, it imported a total of \$169 billion, leaving a favorable trade balance of \$101 billion. A considerable part of this was for war goods and services. Yet the production of war goods and services has become an increasingly permanent and normal feature of modern capitalism. However, even if we omitted the war years, the following ratio would still remain:

For the years indicated below (exclusive of war years), exports reached the high figure of \$170 billion as against imports of \$118 billion, leaving an export surplus in favor of the United States of \$52 billion, which accrued to private American capitalism. Divided into distinct periods, the Report shows the profits of this favorable trade balance to be:

1919-22	—————	\$11.5 billion
1923-29	—————	7.5 billion
1930-40	—————	7.5 billion
1946-48	—————	25.5 billion

Note carefully that, while the war years are eliminated, the figures for the years 1946-48 indicate that a qualitative change has taken place in U. S.-European relationships expressed in the overwhelming American economic domination over a part of Europe with a declining and dislocated economy. It is true that this tremendous favorable balance was assisted by the Marshall Plan, but it is likewise true that this relates to trade only with Western Europe and not the whole continent as was true in all the years prior to 1946.

So far as the total period of 1914 to 1948 is concerned, the favorable trade

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balance averaged nearly \$3 billion yearly. Fully aware of the real trend of European capitalism, the Report cites the higher averages of the current post-war period: "In 1946, however, our export surplus was \$7.8 billion; in 1947 it ran to \$11.3; in 1948 it was \$6.3 billion."

If the above figures reflect American profits sucked out of Europe, the following figures, if only for the present post-war period, indicate the converse position of western Europe in this one-sided relationship. The Western European deficit in trade with the United States appears in this way:

1946	—————	\$4.2 billion
1947	—————	5.4 billion
1948	—————	3.5 billion

"If their overseas dependencies—formerly dollar earners—are included," says the Report, "the corresponding deficits were actually somewhat larger (\$4.5 billion in 1946, \$5.7 billion in 1947 and slightly more than \$3.5 billion in 1948)."

Compared to war expenditures or American production during and after this war, \$101 billion, including the war years, does not seem to be a large total sum, but one has to bear in mind first of all European living standards and productivity, and not modern warfare or modern war production. Compared to American production of less than \$100 billion during the 20's, or the \$32 to \$72 billion in the 30's, one can really see that for Europe, the loss of \$52—\$101 billions to the United States contributed not a little to a lowered standard of living for the people of the Continent and Great Britain.

#### **Accentuated But Not Caused by Wars**

How did Europe pay for this overall trade deficit of \$101 billion? While the figures of the report seem not quite to coincide, they nevertheless show the avenues traveled to meet the heavy demands of American exporters, behind whom stands the mighty government in Washington.

Private remittances accounted "in a perfectly normal way for about \$10.5 billion or one-tenth of the total excess of \$101 billion. The flow of long- and short-term private capital abroad, heavily concentrated in the 1920's, accounted for another \$10.5 billion more or less. In addition, *foreigners had to send us gold and liquidate their holdings of dollar assets* to an aggregate amount exceeding \$15.5." (All the italics are mine—A.G.) The International Monetary Fund and International Bank for Reconstruction and Development contributed more than a billion. Finally, almost \$68 billion was contributed by the government of the United States. This was divided into \$49 billion in grants and \$19 billion in loans. Of the loans, the greater part was made between 1912-22, rather than 1941-48.

No wonder, then, that the Report opens with a staccato first sentence: "World trade is fundamentally out of balance."

The Report continues: "The trade of the United States with Western Europe, and with the world as a whole, is so badly unbalanced that *in our own interest* we must seek a *fundamental solution* of this recurring problem." The authors of this amazing document are correct in observing that "the wars have accentuated but not caused the trend" toward American economic supremacy over the world. This observation, as it is developed in the report, becomes an

annihilating indictment of capitalist society itself, for in seeking solutions to this economic obstacle to world progress, the report shies away from a "fundamental solution" and come up with contradictory and half-waf measures, which in themselves point to the need for a socialist reorganization of society.

If it is true, as it undoubtedly is, that the wars merely accentuated the trend referred to, it is likewise true that the wars did not in themselves cause the present plight of European capitalism. In a social-historical sense, the very occurrence of the two world wars evidences the beginning of the decline of world capitalism, no matter if in this decline, the United States, coming late upon the world economic scene, prospers in the midst of a decaying capitalism. Great Britain, the oldest of the great powers, for example, exhibited many signs of economic senility even before the First World War broke out and she showed them most importantly in an outmoded industrial plant and in static productivity. While in the case of Great Britain we had the leading power in the world beginning its descent, in the case of Germany, the first rival of the United States, we had a rising economic power unable to break through an already divided world which barred her access to the sources of imperialist enrichment.

The two wars sealed the fate of world capitalism. If we are unable yet fully to grasp this historical fact, those who follow us will see it all too clearly. Certainly, the wars wrote an end to the economic, and therefore the political and military, power of Great Britain and Germany, and to Japan and Italy as well. France, too, has been reduced to a second-rate, or even a third-rate country economically. Joined to these facts, is the rise of Stalinism as a world power, and the expansion of the non-capitalist areas of the world, which have narrowed even more the possibilities of economic expansion and prosperity for Western Europe and the capitalist world as a whole. It is precisely this constriction of the areas of the capitalist world which stimulates the completely conscious drive by the United States for world economic domination and renders the proposals of the ECA impotent to solve the present crisis on the world market.

\* \* \*

The imbalance in world trade is another way of saying that capitalism is today dominated by one nation, the United States. If that is true (it happens to be the fact) how shall some semblance of balance be attained? As the Report poses the problem, how can Europe, or any other part of the world, pay for American exports to reduce the present imbalance and create a greater equality between the nations in this interconnected and interdependent world in which the market plays so decisive a rôle in balancing the national economies?

Since the United States is the one rich and solvent nation, how, as the Report accurately states it from a capitalist point of view, can "we" buy more from Europe to enable the Europeans to pay for their present trade, or better yet, even increase our exports to and imports from Europe? Here is where the officials of the ECA meet rather insurmountable difficulties.

In writing of this problem, Paul G. Hoffman, ECA Director says:

Britain and several other European countries lost permanently their overseas investments during the war. Moreover, they lost, though perhaps temporarily, most of the dollar revenues from shipping, insurance and brokerage.

... sharp losses of dollar income to Europe result from the physical disruption



and loosening of political ties in the Far East, accompanied by the development of synthetic materials in the United States. American purchases of rubber, silk, tin, jute and other raw materials from the Far East have only partially recovered since the war, and the flow of dollars available to Europe through triangular trade has been correspondingly reduced.

Within Europe itself, East-West trade has shrunk to an extremely low point and there are no prospects of its revival in the immediate future, at least. The Marshall Plan, put in motion for the purpose of reviving the Western European economy and thus achieving a combined economic-political advantage over the Stalinist bloc of nations, has not wholly accomplished either task. While assisting in the unquestioned revival of the economies in the member-nations, it has not closed the dollar gap or made it easier for Europe to pay for this revival. This is due in large measure to the rapacious way in which American capitalism has made Europe pay for the Plan. Only those who saw and continue to see in the Marshall Plan a purely altruistic attempt of the United States to save the European people, are unable to understand the economic effects of a scheme calculated to increase America's share of the Western European economy. The Plan itself guaranteed in advance the conditions complained of by ECA because, as the Report says, it widened the dollar gap, reduced Europe's ability to pay and contributed heavily to a disruption of the trade balance.

This is indeed a strange society, is it not?, that finds its separate nations improving their economies, modernizing their plants, increasing their productivity and yet remaining unable to achieve a genuinely prosperous life. The subordination of West Europe to the United States is so secure that its revival has resulted in an improvement of the profit position of the American bourgeoisie, and indirectly the wage position of the working class here. So, we ought to remember at least this much: American prosperity in the last thirty years has rested to a significant degree upon a declining economy in Europe, upon the latter's subordination to the United States and worsening of the position of the European masses.

\* \* \*

It was not on the basis of the celebrated "American ingenuity and inventiveness" alone that U. S. industrial power grew. Always present was a very co-operative national government which helped directly and indirectly in the growth of industry by grants of land, capital and resources. There was and remains the iniquitous protective tariff which enabled American capitalism to freeze out foreign competitors and to soak the citizens for its products. The same protective tariff, accompanied by wartime and post-war inflationary prices, has actually been a powerful barrier to European trade with the United States, and given the stipulations of the Marshall Plan, has forced Europe into this unfavorable trade relationship.

Again, who has paid for this enrichment of American enterprise engaged in foreign trade? The report says that the "government's grants and loans to foreign countries have in effect been *unconscious subsidies* to American export industries." Obviously this was not only to export industries, for given the integrated nature of the economy and the high tariff, this "unconscious subsidy" was passed along to a wider group of industrial and financial enterprises. In an economic sense, then, what has actually occurred is that the European

and American people have paid for this prosperity of an American capitalism which at all times was underwritten by the government itself.

To bring about a change in this one-sided relationship, the ECA and its directors have presented a program to relieve Europe of some of its economic burdens, and to seek a new equilibrium in foreign trade which has today become the life-blood of capitalist well-being. In a paraphrase of the famous remark attributed to Hitler, "We export or we die," the ECA declares, "We must buy in order to sell. If we do not import we will soon be unable to export." The proposed program can be summarized as follows:

1. Achievement of an international trade balance at a high level, rather than a low one. (The Report makes the point that the dollar gap could have been closed without UNRRA and ECA, since the plans accentuated it, but it would have been closed at a low level of trade, with these countries unable to purchase goods in great quantities. The reverberations on the American economy, under these circumstances, could have been catastrophic.)
2. Loosening state controls over trade throughout the world, and as an afterthought, it is added, "maximizing private initiative."
3. Raising the living standard in Western Europe to provide a greater market for American goods, since a shrinkage of that market "will have a depressing effect on living standards in the United States."
4. Maintenance of ample markets for the United States.

Here, then, is the dilemma which confronts the U. S. To maintain its present rate of production at least the present level of exports must continue. That would not suffice, however. For the expansion of production, an even higher level of exports is required. But it is already obvious that a saturation point has been reached in the ability of America's debtors to continue the present unfavorable relationship. To resolve this dilemma, the ECA proposes an "integration" of the West European economy, an abolition of its trade barriers, the opening of its markets for free trade, and a rise in productivity and the mass market on the basis of "free enterprise."

In turn, it also proposes that the United States remove its trade barriers by reducing or eliminating the high protective tariffs to enable a greater influx of European goods so that these countries may pay for the enormous American export, or any increasing export. Also, means must be found for permitting these European nations to participate in other areas of world trade.

If the United States does not permit a greater influx of European goods, trade with the Continent will drop precipitately, producing an immediate negative reaction in American production. To make possible this increase in imports, it therefore insists on a removal of existing trade barriers, and it insists on it all the more since it has already made the same kind of demands on Europe.

Already American capitalist interests have balked at this demand of the ECA. At a meeting of the National Retail Dry Goods Association, Mr. Hoffman found it necessary to condemn public appeals to "buy American" as economic nonsense "indulged in only to cloak an underlying demand for protection of industries," as the NEW YORK TIMES reported it. To placate American industrialists, Hoffman added that the U. S. dollars spent abroad today would be back in the United States in sixty days. And if that is true, then what

real meaning is there to ECA recommendations? On the one hand, ECA demands that more goods be bought from Europe so that it may conserve dollars, close the dollar gap, and thus purchase more goods, while on the other hand, its director promises businessmen that if they send dollars to Europe, these would return to the U. S. within sixty days!

So while ECA believes that in the total interest of American capitalism some of its components will have to take small losses, this will not come easy. ECA wants (1) an increase of U. S. exports, (2) an increase of West European exports, (3) a greater participation of all West European nations in the world markets at large, and (4) an increase of U. S. exports and foreign investments in all areas of the world,—and all of this in a declining capitalist society and a shrinking capitalist market. These measures are required, says ECA, in order to end the Marshall Plan and ECA, which in any case is under severe attack at home and abroad, and cannot continue indefinitely.

### **Premises of an "Integration" Program**

"The job can be done," says ECA. Of this, we have our grave doubts. Hoffman's pressure for "integration" of the West European economies meets with the stiff resistance of those nations. Like ECA and Hoffman, these nations proceed from the point of view of "national sovereignty" and in accordance with the Report's plea for a revival of "free enterprise" and a revival of "competition" with each other. But these premises produced the present situation in the world economy. To insist upon these premises today, in view of the complete triumph of monopoly capitalism and the tendencies toward statification, is in contradiction to the inherent tendencies themselves, and more concretely to the demand for "integration," if one takes the ECA Report seriously. It doesn't help Hoffman's case in Europe when he points out that the difficulties conjured up by the government officials there are not serious if the will is there, since the United States was unable after great difficulty to achieve uniform traffic laws for the several states!

As a matter of fact, integration of Western Europe on the premises demanded by ECA, would merely simplify American economic penetration of these countries, and create an even more unfavorable trade balance so long as the prosperity of the United States rests precisely upon such an imbalance. There is hardly a European who does not know this.

Any serious improvement in the economic existence of West Europe and Great Britain will have to come from other directions and through a fundamental departure from capitalist production and competition. The real hope for West Europe lies in genuine Western union, in a real unification of their economies so that these peoples may be in a position seriously to resist American economic exploitation, which can only guarantee a Europe on a static or low economic level, and Stalinist bureaucratic collectivism which would only enslave the masses.

This, we believe, is what is indicated by the ECA report. It is at present a record of American capitalist accumulation at the expense of the well-being of the European masses.

ALBERT GATES

## **Four Portraits of Stalinism**

*Reviewing the Books of Duranty, Shub, Wolfe and Deutscher*

*(Continued from last issue)*

We can turn now to two studies that merit serious consideration. In each case, the author was formed intellectually in the revolutionary Marxist movement and acquired his political experience in it. Both of them have since quit it, moving away from it in opposite directions. Even so, they pay it an involuntary tribute. That little which they retain out of what they learned in it suffices to elevate their works to a plane that is simply beyond the reach of such denizens of the political lower depths as the other two writers with whom we have just dealt. But it does not suffice for the problems they set themselves to resolve: the elucidation of the social forces that made possible the triumph of the Bolshevik revolution, those that brought about its defeat and produced the victory of Stalinism.

These are not easy problems—which is the first thing to acknowledge. They will not yield an easy answer—which is the first thing to rule out. It does not follow from the admitted complexity and even uniqueness of the problem that it is unsolvable. The exceptional difficulties can be surmounted with the aid of scientific method. Among other things, this requires that the social forces referred to be properly connected with one another, for there is a close, even inseparable, connection between them. But—without paradox—it is impossible to ascertain and establish their real connection unless they are first separated and distinguished from each other by ignoring, or at least reducing

to proper proportions, the superficial and secondary similarities and picking out the essential characteristics of each, bearing in mind that even these "essential characteristics" are not (cannot be) fixed and absolute but are themselves conditioned by the concrete circumstances of their evolution. Then and then only can the different social forces be connected meaningfully in such a way as to make clear the degree to which their relationship is harmonious or antagonistic.

The ability to proceed in this manner, along with the art of generalizing from relevant facts recorded with scrupulous honesty, is the minimum, but far from negligible, qualification of a social scientist and political writer. To demand such high standards of those who practise in the field of society and politics is not one whit less warranted than to demand corresponding standards of the medical men who practise in the field of diagnosis or surgery.

The demand is likewise warranted in the case of the two books under review. Whether, like Wolfe, the author calls his work "a biographical history" or, like Deutscher, "a political biography," they have this in common: a political analysis which pursues a political aim. No one can object if their work is judged accordingly.

### **Bertram D. Wolfe**

The reader of Wolfe's book is at a certain disadvantage. The volume, *Three Who Made a Revolution*, is only the first of a contemplated trilogy. It brings the "historical biogra-



phy" to the outbreak of the First World War and ends abruptly with the quotation of *Seven Theses on the War* which Lenin presented to a small group of Bolsheviks early in September, 1914. The period of the war, the year 1917, the unfolding of the Bolshevik revolution and then the rise of Stalinism are left for the two volumes to come. The author's views on the basic problems of the Russian Revolution and counter-revolution are therefore not set down as systematic conclusions from the main events themselves. They are only indicated or suggested in the parenthetical projections, so to say, which are made in comments on the period in which these events germinated.

Through no fault of the author, who cannot be reproached for not dealing in one book with all the questions that three books are needed to cover, the reader is left with judgments not elaborated to the extent to which, presumably, they will be when the final volume of the series is at hand.

But the parenthetical comments are as adequate for our needs as they must have been for the author's. The indications and suggestions may not be rounded and complete, but the basic points of his views are plain enough.

Wolfe sets forth his aim early in the book. Writing of the effects of the first revolution of 1917 in loosening all the bonds of the people, except the bond of war, he adds: "Why freedom did not come to flower and fruit in that swift growth is one of the tragic problems with which we shall have to deal." If that were the only problem to be dealt with (actually, it is the only real problem Wolfe deals with), it would justify not only one or three but a dozen volumes and the work of a lifetime. It is not too much

to say that this is *the* problem of our time. Not one serious political question but is related to it or dependent upon its solution—its solution not in the realm of theory, or not alone there, but in the realm of action.

#### **Sociariy work**

Only a gross incomprehension of the social problem can challenge or deny the validity of this statement. As for ourselves, we take it for granted. Socialism, human freedom, cannot advance except at the expense of Stalinism; it can triumph only by destroying it utterly. Anything that contributes to clarifying the socialist understanding of Stalinism, to helping in the socialist struggle against it, is a welcome addition to our arsenal.

If, to take an extreme example, it would really be proved now, looking back upon all the properly arranged facts with a fresh but objective eye, that this totalitarian monstrosity has its natural origins in Bolshevism or even Marxism in general, it would be insane fanaticism to cling to the ideas of Lenin or Marx. The socialist movement does not exist to serve their ideas; they are worth defending only if they serve the socialist movement, but certainly not if they serve only to usher us into a new slavery.

Man is not made for the Sabbath, the Sabbath is made for man. But before we can even think of deserting the tradition and theoretical structure of socialism to build a new one from cellar to attic, we would have to see that proved, and thoroughly! Up to now, nobody has proved it. Nobody, we think, will. This notwithstanding, we unhesitatingly and unreservedly agree that, in view of the present outcome of a revolution that was carried out in the name of the ideas of Marx and Lenin, the whole history of the Russian revolutionary movement (and

not it alone) bears examination and reëxamination with a critical mind that eschews all hero-worship, all blind subservience to tradition, all dogmas and . . . all superficiality.

In the reëxamination undertaken by Wolfe, the reader is immediately impressed — especially after a trip through the effluvia of Duranty and Shub—by its serious scholarship. It is not exhaustive and is not meant to be, but there is not, to our knowledge, a single other work in the world that gives such an extensive and detailed survey of the pre-1914 Russian revolutionary movement, its ideas, its problems, its leaders and its conflicts. The immensity of the research into original sources is matched by the carefulness with which the important material is presented. Errors of fact are very few in number and, on the whole, of minor importance. The solidity with which the facts are mustered enables the author to breach all sorts of myths and falsifications. The products of the Stalinist lie-and-myth factory take especially heavy blows, for most of which the author acknowledges his debt not only to Souvarine but especially to Trotsky's autobiography and his unfinished biographies of Lenin and Stalin. In passing, almost, other legends receive the treatment they deserve. (For example, Alexinsky's invention about Lenin's love affair with "Elizabeth K." which Shub swallowed so avidly, is dismissed in a contemptuous footnote.)

Unfortunately, the gratification that should be felt about such a work is vitiated by the method which the author employs in his analysis. It results in a completely erroneous and misleading appraisal of the Russian revolution and leaves the reader no more enlightened about the "tragic problem"—the rise of Stalinism—than he is after reading Shub's book. It is a

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harsh thing to say about a work which is so distinguished from the tawdriness and vulgarity of Shub's, but to say less would be to say too little.

#### **Misleading Method**

Wolfe describes the positions taken before the revolution by the Mensheviks, the Bolsheviks and by Trotsky.\* But, he adds:

What actually happened would not fully justify any one of the three positions. History, a sly and capricious wench, would show that she had yet other tricks up her sleeve. The unity of all oppositional forces would indeed suffice to overthrow the Tsar and set up a democratic republic (the formula of the Mensheviks plus Lenin). But Lenin, who in 1905 had been in favor of entering a "provisional revolutionary government," would refuse to enter: and the Mensheviks, who had regarded such a coalition with the bourgeois parties as impermissible "ministerialism" or opportunism, would take a leading part in the Provisional Government. Further, revolutionary will and a power-centered party organization would suffice to overthrow the republic and set up a minority dictatorship (the formula of Trotsky). But it would not suffice to bring into being a world revolution and a socialist society (the further expressed calculation of Trotsky and Parvus, and the unformulated hope of Lenin). In short, History—with that capital H which these men who knew her every intention were prone to use—would decide neither for Axelrod—

\*For a work which seems so conscientious in the checking and cross-checking of historical data, Wolfe's book is surprisingly remiss in coupling the names of Trotsky and Parvus as it does throughout, and making them jointly responsible for the theory of the permanent revolution. That Parvus exerted a great influence in the shaping of Trotsky's unique theory, is a fact. But the theory remained unique to Trotsky and was at one time Parvus' own theory only superficially or tangentially. This is shown clearly enough by Trotsky himself, in greatest detail in the booklet, *The Permanent Revolution*. Is it possible that Wolfe did not familiarize himself with a work of such key importance? Or is it possible that after reading the work he still permitted himself to bracket Trotsky and Parvus? In either case, the result is a bad blurring over of the precise position taken by Trotsky.

Martov, nor for Trotsky-Parvus, nor for Lenin-Trotsky, but for yet another variant, undreamed of by any, the chief embodiment of which would be that third one of our protagonists, Joseph Stalin, whom we are shortly to introduce into our story.

This will serve to introduce us to Wolfe's style: the polite mockery, the faint air of condescension, the misplaced irony, the elderly skepticism toward the Russian Revolution and its leaders which is so fashionable nowadays. Not unrelated to it, but more important, is Wolfe's method. We are struck in the above quotation, first of all, by the obvious anachronism. If, as Wolfe goes into such special detail to show, Trotsky, if not Parvus, was such a vehement adversary of Bolshevism, from as far back as 1903, precisely because of the "power-centered" character of its party organization, it could hardly have been an element in his formula for setting up "a minority dictatorship" or in his calculation of what would suffice for a world revolution and a socialist society.

In the second place, neither Lenin nor Trotsky nor *anyone* else in the Marxist movement could even have thought in the terms ascribed to them by Wolfe, terms which are, in a sense, ridiculously meaningless. Revolutionary will, Lenin and Trotsky always had. But it never occurred nor could it occur to them that that would suffice to set up a dictatorship of any kind, let alone bring about a world revolution and a socialist society. It would not suffice even if it were coupled with a "power-centered party organization," for Lenin, at least, had such an organization early in life. If it is argued that Wolfe does not mean just any "power-centered party organization" but only one which has, in addition to revolutionary will, a cer-

tain amount of strength, then his case is even worse off. For it should be obvious that to achieve this strength (which would certainly have to be more-than-trifling for so by-no-means-trifling task as a socialist revolution in Russia *and* throughout the world), the party organization would first have to win the support of large social forces. And it should be no less obvious that such support could be won only in times when social developments reached a revolutionary tension that would impel these forces to give their support to the avowedly "power-centered" party. That the quintessential and decisive importance of these social forces for the revolution (bourgeois or socialist) was always obvious and central to the thinking of Lenin and Trotsky is so clear from the numerous quotations which Wolfe himself adduces from their works that his reference to their views as to what would "suffice" is incomprehensible. Rather, it is comprehensible only in terms of Wolfe's own tendency to ignore the power and significance of broad social forces, whose interests and conflicts make up history—with or without a capital H, slyness or caprice. His attention is centered almost exclusively upon disembodied ideas and programs, including those that were "unformulated."

### **Hub of His Argument**

In any case, we know now that the sly and capricious wench, in playing tricks with the Russian Revolution, decided in the end for the variant of Stalinism which was not even dreamed of by any of the early revolutionists in spite of their absurd belief that they knew her every intention. Let us allow that the reference is an acceptable literary liberty and that it does not mean to say that Stalinism is a prod-

uct of historical caprice. The problem still stands of "why freedom did not come to flower and fruit," and literary flourishes do not suffice for the answer. Wolfe has an answer. His first volume already indicates it clearly. The final variant was undreamed of, in one sense. But in another sense it was dreamed of and predicted, even brilliantly predicted. How? In the warnings that each of the three outstanding leaders of Russian Marxism gave against the course of the others.

Wolfe starts with Lenin and Trotsky, early in the century. Lenin insisted upon the need of a highly-centralized party of professional revolutionists. It would introduce socialist consciousness into the working class which, if left on the level of spontaneous struggle, would be unable to rise above a mere trade-union consciousness. Against Lenin's "organizational principles," Trotsky wrote the warning that "The organization of the party will take the place of the party itself; the Central Committee will take the place of the organization; and finally, the dictator will take the place of the Central Committee."

Trotsky insisted that the tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Russia could be solved radically only if the struggle were led by the proletariat, supported by the peasant masses, but that the revolution would encounter the hostility not only of the Czarist bureaucracy and the landlords but also of the "liberal bourgeoisie." In the struggle it would therefore pass over into a socialist revolution in the very course of solving the tasks of the bourgeois revolution. Against this theory of the permanent revolution, Lenin put forward the idea of the "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry."

Just as Trotsky was concerned with

democracy in the party, Lenin was concerned with democracy in the country as a whole. "The proletariat constitutes a minority. It can only command a mighty overwhelming majority if it unites with the mass of the semi-proletarians, the semi-property owners. . . . Such a composition will naturally reflect itself in the composition of the revolutionary government," Wolfe quotes Lenin as writing. And also: "Only the most ignorant people can ignore the bourgeois character of the present democratic revolution. Only the most naive optimists can forget how little as yet the masses of the workers are informed of the aims of socialism and of the methods of achieving it. And we are all convinced that the emancipation of the workers can only be brought about by the workers themselves; a socialist revolution is out of the question unless the masses become class-conscious, organized, trained and educated by open class struggle against the entire bourgeoisie. . . . Whoever wants to approach socialism by any other path than that of political democracy will inevitably arrive at absurd and reactionary conclusions both economic and political." These two warnings, concludes Wolfe, have an organic connection with each other and contain the explanation for what actually happened years later, that is, the triumph of Stalinism. It is worth quoting in detail:

Thus, in 1904 and 1905, did the two future collaborators solemnly admonish each other of the dangers of minority dictatorship in the Party and the State. Who can doubt in the light of subsequent

\*This does not look very much like a belief that "revolutionary will and a power-centered revolutionary party organization would suffice" for a world revolution, or even a socialist revolution in Russia. If, as Wolfe writes, this was Lenin's hope, it was indeed . . . unformulated.

events that each of them at that moment had a brilliant prophetic vision of the dangers in the other's approach? But when they joined forces in 1917, each withdrew his warning against the other. Trotsky accepted Lenin's party machine; Lenin accepted Trotsky's "absurd, semi-anarchist view that the conquest of power for a socialist revolution can be achieved immediately," and Trotsky's conception of a minority "proletariat dictatorship," or more accurately, a single-party dictatorship. This fusion was the most natural in the world, for there is an indubitable structural and psychological connection between minority dictatorship in the Party and minority dictatorship in the State. Both are based upon the same assumption: namely, that a self-selected elite or vanguard, properly armed with expert knowledge (Marxism), and properly credentialed by a lifetime of experience and devotion, can dispense with the toilsome and hazardous democratic process, and still avoid the "absurd and reactionary conclusions," the dangers of "personal dictatorship," the pitfalls of totalitarianism, and the corrupting potentials of absolute power.

One more segment is needed to complete the hub of Wolfe's analysis, from which radiate all the important spokes of his argumentation, to which he tries to fit in as much of his documentation as possible. This segment relates, again, to the Russian peasantry. The Populists (Narodniks) and their successors, the Social-Revolutionists, represented an "indigenous peasant socialism." Lenin, it is true, "was almost alone [among the Marxists] in his sensitivity to the peasant question, and constantly engaged in thinking about it." But Marxism, in Russia, at least, was apparently doomed to anti-democratism because

... most important of all—according to Lenin and his co-religionists—the mind of the Russian peasant was not "naively socialist" at all, but "naively bourgeois," or rather, "petty bourgeois," the mind of a small proprietor on-the-make. It was this distrust of, and unconscious antagonism toward, the peasant majority of the

Russian nation which would, in the end, sterilize all Marxist protestations in favor of democracy. For, how can you have democracy where there is no trust in the majority of those who make up the nation?

This disastrous distrust of the peasantry led, or contributed to, the ruin of the revolution. Yet, Wolfe discovers, this too was predicted. At the Stockholm Congress in 1906 of the united Russian Social-Democracy, the Menshevik program of municipalization of the land was countered by Lenin's proposal for nationalization of the land. Plekhanov took issue sharply with Lenin. He pointed out that in the history of France and England,

... the wide sweep of the revolution was followed by restoration. . . . True, not the restoration of the remnants of feudalism. But in our country we have something that resembles these remnants, to wit, the fact that the land and the tiller of the soil are tied to the state, our own peculiar form of "land nationalization!" And, by demanding the nationalization of the land, you are making the return to this type of nationalization easier, for you are leaving intact this legacy of our old, semi-Asiatic order. . . .

It is all very plausible, even ingenious—this explanation of Stalinism. Elements of it have enjoyed their days of popularity among all schools of anti-Bolshevism. Wolfe is superior to most of them in that he has given his explanation a more rounded and systematic character. But although he enjoys all the advantages of time over the three blind men whom he chides for their lack of coordinated foresight, he makes lamentable use of the hindsight which is within the power of anyone living almost half a century after the blind ones uttered their speculations about the future. For Wolfe's explanation is plausible only at first sight, and even then only if the glance cast over it is speedy. It is

specious and flimsy from beginning to end, and shows that scrupulous scholarship does not always go hand in hand with analytical perspicacity. Indeed, it is positively astonishing that in order to explain why Stalinism and not freedom came out of the Russian Revolution, he has selected and combined the very predictions that were *not* confirmed by events, and did not even have very much to do with the events that actually took place in Russia from 1917 to the present day! Now that we know Wolfe's opinions, let us see what value they have.

### **Lenin's View and Trotsky's**

We will start with Lenin's "warning" against Trotsky's theory of the permanent revolution.

The February (March), 1917, revolution took everybody by surprise, Trotsky less—far less—than anyone else, but him too. If the 1905 revolution is called a rehearsal for 1917, that is true only in the most general sense of the word. In 1905, the Soviets were few in number, isolated pretty much from the peasantry, without serious effect upon the army and navy. Above all, they were pitted not against a bourgeois-democratic regime but against the Czarist autocracy. In 1917, the situation was radically different.

The revolution took place spontaneously, and embraced all the toiling masses—workers, peasants and millions of both in uniform. The bourgeoisie, its "democratic" wing included, did not lead the revolution. but unlike the 1905 days, when it kept its lips closed and its hands in its pockets, it sacrificed the Czar in order to preserve the rule of the classes on which Czarism rested, much as the German bourgeoisie was to do with the Kaiser a couple of years later. Once the Czar was done for, the bourgeoisie sought

to *take over* the leadership of the revolution, not in order to carry it through but to harness, domesticate and emasculate it. It did not for a moment cut off its alliance with and reliance upon the Czarist bureaucracy, the Czarist military machine, the Czarist landlord class. Was that inevitable? No, not in the American colonies or in France at the crossing of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. But we are dealing with semi-feudal Russia of 1917, to which the old patterns of bourgeois revolutions did not apply.

From the start of the revolution, the Russian bourgeoisie faced a new phenomenon for the first time in history, one that had been only very dimly foreshadowed in 1789 and 1848: an advanced, modern, compact proletariat, totally organized in new and very remarkable formations, the Soviets; closely combined with a vast peasantry organized in the same kind of formations; both combined in turn with millions of Soviet-organized soldiers and sailors no longer automatically obedient to command; and this entire huge mass in a triumphant revolutionary mood, confident about its irresistible strength, convinced of the justice of its demands and impatiently exigent about their speedy fulfillment. Their demands, summed up, were: peace, land, bread, and a representative democratic government that would guarantee them.

Thus was lifted for a moment the curtain that obscured the future. It was a prevision as brilliant as that of Lenin when he warned Trotsky of the consequences of an undemocratic revolution and minority party government, and that of Trotsky when he warned Lenin of the dangers inherent in his hierarchical, centralized, undemocratic party structure. They were like three blind men who grasped three different parts of an elephant. Marxists contend that their meth-

od of sociological analysis enables them to predict the future. If these three Marxists' prophecies could but have been added together, and acted on together, they would indeed have constituted a brilliant example of foresight and forewarning.

Every single one of these demands, invested with a power and stormy passion that is generated only in revolutionary times, ran counter to the interests and desires of the bourgeoisie. Add together all the programs and predictions written about the coming Russian Revolution before 1917 and multiply them many times, and they are as nothing by the side of this decisive fact. To whom else could the "democratic" bourgeoisie, itself so tiny and weak in Russia, turn for aid and comfort against this turbulent mass than to the reactionary forces in Russian society? If it is brilliant predictions we are interested in, the most important one for a historical biographer to note and underline is the one that was shared by Lenin and Trotsky: the Russian bourgeoisie is not a revolutionary class and the revolution will have to be carried out without it and against it.

### What Really Happened?

When the revolution actually took place, writes Wolfe, "Lenin accepted Trotsky's 'absurd semi-anarchist view that the conquest of power for a socialist revolution can be achieved immediately,' and Trotsky's conception of a minority 'proletarian dictatorship,' or more accurately, a single-party dictatorship." But elsewhere in his book Wolfe writes almost eulogistically about "Lenin the democrat." He adds, "For, up to his seizure of power in 1917, Lenin always remained by conviction a democrat, however much his temperament and will and the organizational structure of his

party may have conflicted with his democratic convictions."

What impelled this life-long democrat to abandon his convictions overnight and to swallow whole the "dictatorial" conception he had fought for a dozen years? His temperament and will, the will to seize power no matter what? But that temperament and will he had in 1905 as well as in 1917. The organizational structure of his party? But the party and its "structure"—the big bulk of the articulate leaders of the party machine—opposed his new "Trotskyist conception" in 1917, and Lenin had to fight his way through in his own party for the policy he put forward after arriving in Russia. Yet there is an explanation, even though Wolfe leaves us without one, or at best, with the superficial kind so popular among "psychobiographers."

In 1917, all the theories about the Russian Revolution was put to the most decisive test. By the side of the provisional government stood the Soviets, directly representing the revolutionary people. Their authentically representative character was acknowledged almost universally; the Mensheviks and SRs referred to them as the "revolutionary democracy"—no less! The demands of this revolutionary democracy cannot possibly be called into question. But it was precisely these demands that were continuously sabotaged by the provisional government, which was tantamount to sabotaging the tasks which the democratic revolution was called upon to perform. And the Mensheviks and SRs? They were part and parcel of the provisional government. They shared responsibility for a regime which succeeded only in arousing the hostility of the workers, soldiers and peasants.

For years, Lenin argued that the

revolution would establish a "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry." But no polemical attack could compel him to be consistently specific about the relationships between these two classes in the democratic dictatorship or about the relationships between the political parties that would represent them in it. When the revolution finally occurred, the formula proved to be disorienting and worthless. The revolution took on an unexpected form—not of a revolutionary provisional government in conflict with Czarism, but of a revolutionary democracy (the Soviets) in growing conflict with the provisional government run by the bourgeoisie.

Lenin was no dogmatist. To the dismay of his own comrades, he discarded his old formula. The most he would say for the "democratic dictatorship" in 1917 was that it was "realized in the dual power"—that is, in conditions of the antagonistic co-existence of the provisional government and the Soviets—and even then only "in certain forms and up to a certain point." But precisely because a duality of state power is in its very nature precarious, creating a state of tension, uncertainty and instability which society cannot long endure, the living social forces, the classes, all of which are at white heat in the revolution, are forced to intervene quickly and decisively in order to turn the scales in one direction or the other. In the person of Kornilov, the bourgeoisie sought to crush the Soviets. The lash of the counter-revolution whipped forward the revolution. With a final surge, the workers and peasants overturned the discredited provisional government and established the power of the Soviets.

In actual life, Lenin's old formula could not achieve the purpose of guar-

anteeing the democratic revolution which he had assigned to it. He saw that the dual power in which the formula was partly realized meant in reality the subordination and thwarting of the aims of the revolution: the provisional government was able to maintain its anti-democratic regime only by virtue of the authority with which it was clothed by the collaborationist representatives of the revolutionary democracy—or by crushing the Soviets. The democratic revolution could be guaranteed only by the Soviets taking over all power. The Bolsheviks led in this taking of power, not because revolutionary will and a power-centered party organization sufficed for that purpose, but because, in addition, they won the freely-given support and leadership of the Soviets. In championing the struggle for all power to the Soviets, Lenin was indeed abandoning an obsolete formula, but not by a hair's-breadth did he violate his democratic convictions.

### What Life Proved

The Bolshevik government which was set up was confirmed by the two Congresses of the Soviets, representing the workers, soldiers and peasants. These Congresses adopted the decrees by which the basic problems of the democratic revolution were formally resolved or by which the seal of approval was placed upon the actions of the masses (the peasants in particular) who were carrying out the revolution of their own accord. Again it was Trotsky's analysis that was confirmed.

The most thoroughgoing measures to carry out the democratic revolution were taken only when the proletarian party took over the state power with the active support of the peasantry. It is noteworthy that the Bolshevik regime *did not immediately propose*

any specifically socialist measures, and even though Lenin "accepted Trotsky's conception" of a proletarian dictatorship, the regime did not contemplate such measures. In fact, Lenin wrote specifically against them throughout 1917. But the revolution itself is a fast teacher that has little tenderness for formulas. The Mensheviks almost ruined the revolution by their dogmatic insistence that the bourgeoisie must be at the head of it and not be "alienated" by too imperative demands of the people.

And long before the tragedy of Stalinism, it should be remembered that there was the tragedy of Menshevism, whose loyalty to its doctrine brought it into collaboration with a reactionary bourgeois regime and into opposition against what it had itself called the revolutionary democracy. If the Bolsheviks finally proceeded to take socialist measures (confiscation and nationalization of the means of production and exchange), it was because they found these anti-capitalist actions indispensable to the defense of the conquests of the revolution. Lenin accepted Trotsky's conception only in the sense that he accepted the logic of the class struggle, accepted it just as the bourgeoisie and landowners accepted it.

The latter launched an armed struggle against the Soviet power not because it had already carried out a socialist revolution, but precisely because it was carrying out the democratic revolution—to be sure, with all the social implications that Trotsky had so penetratingly foreseen.

### **The Peasant Aims**

The armed struggle aimed at depriving the peasantry of the land which the Soviet revolution had conquered for them, to destroy the Soviet

power that guaranteed this conquest. The same armed struggle picked up the banner of the Constituent Assembly, not because it had or could become the watchword of democracy in Russia but precisely because it could be nothing but a cover for destroying the democratic conquests. Even the Mensheviks, or some of them, came to understand this important fact, at least in words. A year after the revolution they would formally acknowledge that even with new elections the Constituent would be converted into a weapon of the counter-revolution and not of the revolution; wherefore they formally abandoned the Constituent as an immediate fighting slogan because it threatened the achievements of the revolution.

To defend land to the peasants and peace to the land, both of which were directly imperilled by the bourgeoisie and their monarchist and imperialist allies, the Bolsheviks were forced to take measures against them which, in their very nature, were socialist. Lenin's earlier "warning" was *not* confirmed! His old argument that the democratic revolution in Russia would not weaken but strengthen the domination of the bourgeoisie, proved to be wrong. His fear that if the revolution went over to a socialist attack on capital, that would interfere with the democratic revolution, proved groundless, and Trotsky was right in foreseeing that only such an attack could protect the democratic revolution and those it was intended to benefit first and foremost—the peasantry. Had the old Leninist theory that the revolution could (or should) stay within the framework of capitalism and go no further, been imposed—as the Mensheviks tried to impose it—the revolution would not even have gone as far as bourgeois democracy.

But were not the Bolsheviks thereby obliged to establish a "minority 'proletarian dictatorship,' or more accurately, a single-party dictatorship," as Wolfe writes? Yes and no, depending on what the question really aims to ask. Wolfe seems to be as aware, today, of the equivocal and unrealistic character of Lenin's old formula of a "democratic dictatorship" as Trotsky was from 1905 onward. He writes that Lenin's forecast "changes from page to page and from article to article, becomes a restless spark leaping up and back between the fixed points of his dogmas and his will. It is no longer a formula but a series of rival hypotheses, competing *perhaps*." The hypotheses simply did not materialize in the revolution itself.

### **Expediency or Principle**

To carry through the democratic revolution to the end, the Bolsheviks could not find a single political party with which to share government power. The Mensheviks, like the "big" peasant party, the SRs, were with Kerensky, and the peasants had to take the land without them and against them. That is why the November Congress of the Peasant Soviets, even though convened by the right wing, endorsed the Bolshevik regime and turned down the proposal for a coalition government with the SRs. There were, it is true, the left-wing SRs. After the Peasant Congress, the Bolsheviks unhesitatingly established a coalition government with them. Jointly, they dispersed the Constituent Assembly. But shortly thereafter the unstable nature of even the left SR party revealed itself.

The Bolsheviks decided in favor of signing the onerous peace treaty with the Germans. The left SRs insisted on "revolutionary war" in face of a peas-

antry that could not be mobilized for so hazardous an enterprise. With colossal irresponsibility, the SRs plunged into the adventure of trying to overturn the Bolsheviks by armed force. They failed, and it was not long before they vanished as a serious political movement. The peasantry was incapable (not on the books, perhaps, but in the life of the revolution) of producing a political party of its own at once independent of the proletariat and of the bourgeoisie, let alone a party capable of carrying through the revolution. In proving this again, the Russian Revolution confirmed the analysis which Marxism made of the peasantry in modern society, and which Trotsky in particular applied with incomparable penetration to the position, role and prospects of the peasantry in Russia.

Wolfe is familiar with Trotsky's analysis. He also gives, more or less, the views of the Marxists and the Narodniks on the Russian peasant. His own attitude is interesting. He asks: Were the Narodniks right in regarding the peasant as a primitive socialist, or were the Marxists right in regarding him as a petty bourgeois or would-be property-owner? Wolfe himself does not answer his questions! He does not take the sociological analyses made by the Narodniks, or the Marxists in general or Trotsky in particular, and subject them to an analysis of his own, so that one or the other may be confirmed or a substitute for both of them presented. In face of the immense importance of the peasantry in the Russian Revolution and in all the disputes which preceded it, this omission is almost unbelievable, unless it is borne in mind that the concrete analysis and juxtaposition of *social forces*, class forces, does not seem to exist anywhere within the range of



Wolfe's interests. When he writes rather disdainfully about the Russian intellectuals that they had "a common belief in the sovereign efficacy of ideas as shapers of life," he is not far from describing his own belief, to which must be added his belief that intentions and desires are even more important than ideas.

With such an approach to the problem, it is not surprising that he finds no need to base his examination upon social forces or at least to relate it inseparably to them. He simply points out that, given their views on the peasantry (the validity of which remains untreated), the Marxists looked upon the peasants with "distrust and suspicion," which opened the way for ... Stalinism.

### History's Lessons

This "distrust and suspicion" did not, however, prevent the Bolsheviks from becoming the most vigorous leaders of the peasants in the struggle for land. It did prevent them from entertaining illusions about the peasantry. "Peasant" demagogues have played upon the prejudices of the rural masses of all countries in order to turn them against the socialist movement since the earliest days of the *Communist Manifesto*. This game has never been anything but reactionary. And all the sympathy, real or assumed, which is extended to the peasantry does not change the social fact, underscored again and again in all modern history (latest example: China), that the peasantry is capable of tremendous contributions to social progress but also of no less important contributions to social reaction. The first, only if it allies itself and follows the leadership of a progressive urban class; the second, when it follows the leadership of a reactionary urban

class. *Nowhere* has the peasantry, by itself, acting independently, been able to take the leadership of a nation, organize the life of society and keep the reins of government in its own hands. For that, it is *socially incapable*, as has been proved over and over not only in the modern West but in the backward, overwhelmingly agrarian countries of Asia as well. It simply suffers from a social position which Marxism, at any rate, did not create, but an understanding of which is indispensable to the eventual elimination of all classes.

Without concealing their views on this score, the Bolsheviks therefore appealed to the peasants for an alliance with the revolutionary working class in the Soviet régime, and the appeal was answered enthusiastically. But it was not an alliance between equal classes and it could not be. Every worker, for example, had the right to five times as many votes as the peasant. From the standpoint of formal democracy, this is surely indefensible. But from the standpoint of the real struggle for the defense and preservation of the revolution, it was entirely justifiable. (We say: justifiable, but not necessarily justified, an important distinction we will deal with later.) To believe that the democratic revolution could have been carried out and its achievements maintained against the hordes of world reaction, or that the Russian nation could even have been held together as an economic and political unit, if the peasantry had been at the helm and charted the course, is to reveal a fixation which, however democratic it may seem, makes for an extraordinary immunity to the influence of social reality. The leadership of the proletariat could be replaced only by the domination of the bourgeoisie and the landlords,

and that meant death to the aspirations of the peasantry. It was an exceptionally backward peasant who failed to see this in 1917. That the leadership of the proletariat in the alliance involved a "minority dictatorship," is incontestable. Equally incontestable, however, is the fact that the peasantry, voluntarily and democratically, chose this leadership and the party which most clearly expressed it.\*

But how did this "minority dictatorship" lead to Stalinism? If "single-

\*This Wolfe cannot deny. He admits that "the land-hungry peasants, above all the peasant-in-uniform, the peasant-under-arms, would assure victory in his [Lenin's] side." He scoffs, however, at the idea that the Bolsheviks set up a dictatorship of the proletariat, referring with his misplaced irony to the fact that the leadership of all the Russian unions was not won by the Bolsheviks till after the revolution. "The 'dictatorship of the proletariat' had to be set up in 1917 against the will of the majority of the organized proletariat." This looks bad, especially if it conjures up in the reader's mind the spectacle of the dictatorship of the proletariat being set up in the United States against the will of the majority of the proletariat organized in the CIO, the AFL and the other unions, a good 16,000,000 of them. However, it only looks bad, especially as Wolfe puts it. The trade unions played a comparatively negligible role in both of the 1917 revolutions and in the period between them. The reasons for that require more space than is here available. But the fact remains. At the beginning of 1917, some weeks before the Czar was overturned, the combined membership of all the unions in Russia was estimated at only 1385 members! After the February uprising, a big increase took place, but the trade-union membership as late as June, 1917, was just less than 1,500,000 members. Even by January, 1918, the membership figure for the trade unions barely passed the 2,500,000 mark. In 1917, the Mensheviks dominated many of the unions, perhaps most of them. But compared with the unions, the Soviets—the workers' Soviets—were ten times more representative, ten times more democratic, a hundred times more active, important and decisive politically, for they embraced virtually the entire working class and occupied a position which the trade unions could not hope to achieve under the conditions. In the workers' Soviets, the Bolsheviks had gained the decisive majority before October. To contest this, is impossible. To omit reference to it is, however, quite possible, for how otherwise could a writer be ironical in the wrong place?

(January-February, 1950)

party dictatorship" means nothing more than the fact that the government administration is entirely in the hands of one party, that is far from reprehensible in itself and does not make the government a dictatorship in the invidious sense Wolfe gives it. The Truman administration is one example of single-party rule; the present British Labor government is another. The principles of democracy are not violated in either case. If Wolfe uses the term to mean that the party in office allows no other party to exist legally, that is another matter. It is true that after a few years in power, the Bolsheviks deprived all other political parties of legal rights and existence. But that in itself enlightens us very little. What we need to know is what prompted the Bolsheviks to act as they did, and what action they should have taken instead. On this score, the critics of the Bolshevik revolution seldom go beyond angry but incoherent mutterings. The Bolshevik régime was established by a revolution, the most profound and convulsive in history. Yet it is hard to recall one revolutionary government in all history that was more democratically established, that received a more direct endorsement by such authentically representative popular bodies as the Soviets. Hardly set up, the new régime was assaulted by reactionary armies, by calls for insurrection, mass disobedience and sabotage against it. A revolutionary government, like any other, for that matter, has both the right and duty to defend itself, just as every individual has the right and duty to choose his side in an armed conflict and to take the consequence of his choice. This defense includes the right, exercised for centuries to the dismay only of philistines, to deprive the armed opponents of political lib-



erty. The bourgeois parties took up arms against the Soviets and combined openly with foreign foes of the régime who subsidized them with arms and funds. So did most of the Mensheviks and the right-wing S.R.s. The left-wing S.R.s and even some of the anarchists also challenged the Soviet régime with arms in hand. Would the North have allowed a Confederate Army sergeant to open a recruiting office in New York in 1862? What *should* the Bolsheviks have done? They placed these parties outside of Soviet legality. Should they have wagged a reproachful finger at them instead? There were undoubtedly many excesses and injustices and even outrages committed against oppositional parties, as is the case in all revolutions. But on the whole, the Bolsheviks had no choice, unless capitulation is considered a choice. If, at the end of the most savage and exhausting civil war in modern times, the Bolsheviks emerged not only in power but as the only legal party, it is positively grotesque to trace the responsibility for this condition to the Bolsheviks or their "conception." It makes sense, on the contrary, to say that the bitter opposition which the Mensheviks and S.R.s offered to the Soviet power—the handiwork of the revolutionary democracy—created a situation in which the Bolsheviks were left to head a "single-party dictatorship."

Our viewpoint is the very opposite of Wolfe's, and it is ours that is borne out by the real course of the events in Russia—and the rest of Europe. To Wolfe, the eventual tragedy of the Russian revolution was caused by the very fact that the Bolsheviks led the working class to the socialist seizure of power. To us, the tragedy was caused by the fact that such violent and ex-

hausting attempts were made in Russia to undermine and torpedo the socialist power and that the attempts to seize power in the more advanced European countries failed.

However, as we pointed out in these pages a few years ago, since the non-Bolshevik parties were outlawed because of the rigors and exigencies of the civil war, that is evidence enough that no universal principle of revolution was involved. It is here that the Bolsheviks, before the advent of Stalinism, made a crucial mistake. Necessity was turned into virtue, imposed expediency into principle. Where they had begun with the view that it was perfectly in order—as it was—for one party to be in the government and the others in critical opposition with all legal rights that would enable them to replace the government party democratically, they shifted to the indefensible view that there was indeed room for all sorts of parties in Soviet Russia—as Tomsky, we believe, put it—but with only one in power and all the others in prison. Looking backward now, it seems clear to us that the Bolsheviks would have strengthened their position in the country, facilitated the restoration of Soviet democracy, which was almost completely crippled during the civil war, and enormously facilitated their work among the socialist workers of Europe, if they had declared, at the end of the civil war, when the régime had consolidated its position, that all other political parties would thenceforth enjoy all the rights and privileges of political activity provided only that they renounced counterrevolutionary activity and abided by the elementary norms of Soviet legality. It should even be added that the failure of the Trotskyist opposition to champion this policy weakened its own fight for

party democracy and workers' democracy more generally. What was permissible and necessary under conditions of fierce and open civil war, became pernicious after the civil war came to an end. And there is no doubt in our mind that it contributed greatly to the withering away of the Soviets as the democratic organs of popular rule and to the subsequent rise of the Stalinist reaction.

### **The Main Cause**

But to see in this anything more than a contributing cause to this rise, is to lose your sense of proportion. The main cause must be sought in the conflict of big social forces and their respective strength. By their own strength, the Russian proletariat, leading the peasantry, was able to make the revolution and crush the forces of imperialist and "democratic" counterrevolution. More than that was not asked or expected of it by anybody. Left in isolation to its own restricted resources, the proletariat had to decay, and with it the revolution itself decayed. The exact nature of the degeneration, the forms it would finally take, were unclearly foreseen—understandably so—by the Bolshevik leaders. But they were right, alas, a hundred times over, in foreseeing that the revolution would certainly degenerate if it remained isolated in Russia, left in the lurch by the rest of Europe. Again, it is not the fact that the workers took socialist power that produced Stalinism, but the fact that the other European workers did not take power. Is this a singularly "Trotskyist" explanation of Stalinism, is it perhaps a theory devised to whitewash the régime of Lenin-Trotsky? All that Trotsky did was to invest this explanation with irresistible sweep and unshakable roots. But it was not his alone. In

his history of the Russian Social-Democracy, the Menshevik leader, Theodor Dan, commenting on the resolution adopted under Martov's leadership by the Menshevik party conference in Russia in December, 1918 (that is, under the elevating influence of the German revolution), writes these interesting words:

It [the Menshevik conference and its political resolution] nevertheless did put forth the conception that the revolutionary development in Europe also shows the Russian revolution a road out of the blind alley: the Russian revolution and the immense economic resources of Eastern Europe served as rear coverage for the European revolution; "on the other hand, however [Dan is quoting now from the resolution], with the raising of the productive forces of Europe which would be achieved by a socialist reorganization, the Russian revolution would find a point of support for its own natural resources and the reconstruction of its economy, without having to pay for it by its economic enslavement and the impoverishment of the masses of the people.

There is much to be said against the Mensheviks and even against their 1918 resolution. But there is more wisdom and understanding in the words we have just quoted than in ninety-nine per cent of what is written nowadays to explain the phenomenon of Stalinism, especially by latecomers to the ranks of anti-Bolsheviks!

Wolfe takes note of the fact that

Even in 1917, he [Lenin] countenanced a "temporary" minority dictatorship in Russia only because he was convinced that the Russian example in the midst of the war would end the war on all fronts by worldwide revolution, thereby solving the problems of Russia's backwardness by a solution on a world scale.

But the note is brief, made in passing, not significantly related to the further development of the Russian revolution. It is as though the words

were written down in half-sleep, without forethought or afterthought. Yet they give us the real key to what happened. For if the European revolution *did not* solve the problems of the Russian revolution, and the Russian working class *could not* solve them with its own forces, the problem remained to be solved by another social force. By the bourgeoisie? Impossible! The urban bourgeoisie of Russia, the authentic capitalist class, had been driven out of the country or wiped out at home by the revolution and the civil war. Theoretically, such a bourgeoisie might have solved the problem—if only it had existed; but its disappearance was not an accident. The petty-bourgeoisie of the countryside, the peasantry? With all due respect to it, it could not solve its own economic problem, let alone the problem of the nation. And since the problem could not be solved on a capitalist basis or on a socialist basis (the socialist solution required international coöperation and still does), it had to be solved on another basis altogether.

### Social Forces Decided

What is instructive and really illuminating is to trace the way in which Stalinism actually rose. The Russian problem, so correctly described in the Menshevik revolution, boiled down to the problem of accumulation. Here we come to a paradox, not literary but profoundly social: the workers' power in Russia, even in the already attenuated form of a dictatorship of the Bolshevik party, stood as an obstacle in the path of accumulation precisely because, on one hand, genuine *socialist* accumulation was impossible under conditions of an isolated and backward country, and, on the other hand, workers' power was incompatible with any other kind of accumula-

tion. This power, then, had to be shattered. Running through the whole history of Stalinism, which is likewise the history of a tremendous economic accumulation (not progressive, but reactionary), is an increasingly successful drive to shatter the power of the Soviets, then the Soviets themselves; to shatter the power of the Bolshevik party, then the party itself; to shatter the power of the workers, then the workers themselves, so that the reconstruction of the economy had to be paid for by "economic enslavement, impoverishment" and political serfdom.

And what was the first big social force which the rising bureaucracy enlisted in its drive to smash the workers' power? The peasantry, particularly its upper strata! The first important period of the rise of Stalinism runs from 1923 to 1929. It is precisely the period of the mobilization of the peasantry against "Trotskyism," against the "permanent revolution," against the proletarian, internationalist, revolutionary and democratic wing of the Bolshevik party. If Trotsky's "conception" of the permanent revolution led to the victory of Stalinism, nobody noticed or noted it down at the time, least of all the Stalinists. They were too busily engaged in the reactionary campaign against the theory of the permanent revolution and its proponents. How will Wolfe explain, in future volumes, that it was under the sign of the theory of the permanent revolution, to which he ascribes such a doleful outcome, that the Russian people made the socialist revolution and rose to the highest heights of democracy; and that it was under the banner of struggle against the theory that the Stalinist reaction made its first public and sinister appearance in the country? It will be interesting to

see if the explanation rises at least a little above the level of ingenious juxtaposition of ancient and irrelevant polemical quotations. Or, if there are to be quotations, let them be concretely related to the social reality, which is above all else the reality of social conflict. The reality was this: In the fight "for the permanent revolution," the peasantry played a progressive rôle in Russia. They followed the leadership of the revolutionists of the city, the proletariat, and thereby took a long step in their own economic and political advancement. But in the fight "against the permanent revolution," the peasants played a reactionary rôle; they followed the leadership of the counterrevolutionists of the city, the Stalinist bureaucracy; they

(To be concluded.)

helped it to crush the proletariat by first crushing the revolutionary vanguard; and they had to pay for it with their own subsequent enslavement on the land. The disfranchisement and yoking of the peasantry was not a product of the "Trotskyist" struggle for socialist power, but of the Stalinist struggle against Trotskyism. Thus, in the very defeat of the "permanent revolutionists" was the validity of Trotsky's analysis of the nature and rôle of the peasantry confirmed again, confirmed tragically but confirmed.

Lenin's "warning" in 1905, to which Wolfe attaches such exciting meaning, proved to be irrelevant to the real march of events from 1917 onwards. As an explanation of the rise of Stalinism, it is a patent absurdity.

Max SHACHTMAN

## A Letter From David Shub

The Editors,  
THE NEW INTERNATIONAL,  
Long Island City, N. Y.

Gentlemen:

In the December issue of your periodical, you published a defamatory and libelous personal attack on me by Mr. Max Shachtman presented in the guise of a review of my Lenin book. Enclosed herein is my reply. I should like to be advised promptly regarding its publication date in your magazine. Should you for any reason feel disinclined to publish my answer to this defamation of character in full, I would appreciate being notified at once, so that I may make whatever arrangements the situation requires.

Sincerely yours,

David SHUB

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Mr. Shub's reply to my review of his book arrived too late to be included in the current issue of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL. In the coming issue, however, it will be printed—and in full—since, far from feeling disinclined to publish it, we decidedly relish the opportunity to give our readers another authentic and even more extensive sample of Mr. Shub's writings on Lenin so that they may again judge whose character has been defamed and under what guise that has been done. With it, also in the next issue, we will print our comment on what Mr. Shub now has to say. If the comment does not satisfy Mr. Shub's requirements, it is comforting to feel that they will satisfy requirements of a higher and more important kind.

Max SHACHTMAN

# The Relevance of Marxism

## In Reply to Henry Judd's Article

“. . . what is our theory, but merely the tools of our action. These tools are our Marxist theory because up to today we have not found better tools. A worker is not fantastic about tools—if they are the best tools he can get he is careful with them; he does not abandon them or demand fantastic non-existent tools.”—Leon Trotsky.

In August, 1949 THE NEW INTERNATIONAL published an article by Henry Judd entitled “The Relevance of Trotskyism,” the essence of which is that the ideas of Trotsky have no relevance to the problems and needs of the world socialist movement of today. Proceeding from the undeniable premise that there is a crisis in the socialist movement, Judd attributes to the theoretical conceptions of Marxism the principal cause for that crisis and asserts that the “traditional conceptions of Marxism” are today invalid. He then sets himself “the modest [!] task of introducing the subject and indicating some of the broad problems that must be considered.” But what follows is an illogical, contradictory and thoughtless essay.

The crisis of Marxism, caused principally by the nationalist degeneration of international social democracy, the Russian Revolution and the Communist International, is far advanced. The process has been a long one, and the downward trend has not yet been turned in the opposite direction. Consider for the moment that for the first time since the formation of the Second International in 1884, no powerful influential and significant world socialist organization exists. At most one finds only scattered groups throughout

the world, each of them trying in its own way to reconstruct the Marxist movement. This is the truth! To deny this, or to affirm the contrary, would be sheer self-deception calculated to produce only confusion and harm in the workers' movement.

The objective conditions for socialism have been long over-ripe; the subjective prerequisites for a decisive social change are, however, absent. As a consequence, the social crisis assumes forms of the degeneration about which Marx and Engels warned repeatedly. In the absence of a powerful socialist movement, the degeneration of society, both in its capitalist and Stalinist forms, creates new political problems whose solution demands a continuous application of intelligence, armed with a revolutionary theory. This is, in effect, a task imposed upon all revolutionary socialist organizations, those that are fully conscious of the problems and those that remain conservatively hardened against any changes.

Since the human mentality is the most conservative element in society (a factor often noted abstractly by Marxists but seldom remembered in the elaboration of their programs), the adaptation of movements and individuals to changing objective conditions is always difficult. Where the need for change and re-adaptation is understood and accepted (for example, the ISL), this need is met thoughtfully and carefully. Even those who remain most rooted in old ideas or out-lived conceptions change their views and programs. But in the latter case, this is accomplished not consciously but rather blindly and incompletely

under the persistent pressure of objective events and not always honestly. The tendency to adhere to old ideas, good or bad, is far stronger than the will to change.

## The Need for a Sweeping Change

In the article by Judd we are told that a sweeping change is needed in the theoretical basis for the socialist movement and a new program designed that will coincide with the real problem of our epoch. The world has changed so fundamentally in the past 25 years and produced so many new problems for the socialist movement that the old program of Trotskyism and Marxism must be replaced. But Judd offers no alternatives yet. He has merely set himself “the modest task of introducing the subject and indicating some of the broad problems that must be considered,” because of his “belief that it is high time to begin such a reconsideration, and partly by the fact that certain efforts in this direction have already been made with unfortunately disastrous results.” This should have been a warning to Judd. But alas, he did not heed it.

Unfortunately, the modest task which Judd sets for himself of “introducing the subject and indicating some of the broad problems” is not enough by far, because it has already been introduced and indicated many times before and more concretely by other critics of Marxism. Judd's contribution, however, the product of a belated “awakening,” has also been made with disastrous results. Moreover, the manner in which Judd has opened this discussion is a highly questionable one. He has proposed that the socialist movement abandon its theoretical program in order that a new program may be elaborated without the inhibiting influence of old theories and practices. In this way he

avoids a responsibility that is unquestionably his: to offer in place of the old, either a new program, indications of a new program, or concrete alternative propositions. Judd offers nothing at all! He merely says:

There must be a conscious sense of crisis and open recognition that the past, in terms of program, approach and attitude, has failed and collapsed. There must be a collective will among the leaders of progressive Marxism to grapple with new problems, and to experiment freely, even in an empiric sense.

Now, then, since the process of rejection of ideas is accompanied by a simultaneous emergence of substitute or alternate conceptions, it is obvious that such rejections do not take place in a vacuum. Judd suspects that this is true for in the very beginning of his article he demands of other critics, whom he unjustifiably places in a category different from himself, a sense of responsibility.

If politics is the struggle of “alternative programs” [he writes] it is easy to see how hopelessly afled are these people [the critics of Trotsky, Lenin and Bolshevism] who search the past and strain after flaws and mistakes. Explicitly or by indirection, after they have pounced upon the historical fault of Marxism, or the Russian Revolution, they suggest what the correct way should have been. Be it classical Social Democracy, or Menshevism — its Russian expression — or even the road of liberalism—it is clear that these critics cannot evade the responsibility of an “alternative program.”

“If these critics who ‘pounce upon the historical fault of Marxism’ . . . cannot evade the responsibility of an ‘alternative program,’” neither can Judd. But that is precisely what he has done. Oblivious to what he has just written, Judd proceeds to justify his own evasion of responsibility. In the discursive paragraph following his annihilating attack on other critics, Judd becomes both the defender and at-

tacker of revolutionary socialists and "progressive Marxists." He adds:

In so far as revolutionary socialists [we assume he means the Independent Socialist League, since no others are indicated] have concerned themselves with new problems of theory and practice since 1939 (and it must be admitted that this concern is at its lowest ebb since the beginning of Marxism), their efforts have been directed toward the creation of a new program, within the broad framework of Marxist and socialist principles. [We are not sure yet whether this is good or bad, since the author has it both ways in his article.]

Not too much progress has been made, it must be admitted, but those who raise the demand that the critics of orthodox Marxism must produce their program [Judd is evidently talking about himself], both in broad outline and detail, fail to understand the actual process by which alternative programs are worked out at crucial moments in the history of Marxism.

Here, then, is a key to Judd's position, and there are several questions involved which supply an answer to what it is he wants. It is obvious that in an effort to excuse himself from the responsibility he demands of others, he points to the experience of the ISL. But he is not on safe ground there.

### How the World Has Changed

In the first place, the ISL never rejected the theories of Marxism and never set itself the task of writing a new generalized or basic program that should serve for a new movement of socialism: It considers the basic theories of Marxism, extended and revised by the successive generations of Marxian theoreticians, to be correct. What it did was to apply the critical and revolutionary methods of Marxist theory to some of the basic problems of our time, most strikingly, too, in relation to the character of the Russian state and the meaning of Stalinism, and during the war to the national question and the struggle for

democracy. When, during the great struggle with the Cannonite SWP and Trotsky over the "Russian question" and the war, comrades of the ISL, in rejecting the theory of the "workers' state" and the "unconditional defense of the Soviet Union," did not yet have an alternative theory, they at least *indicated* their thoughts and the direction in which they were moving. This dispute, while it concerned fundamental conceptions of Marxian theory, was within the orbit of generalized socialist doctrine, not out of it, nor against such doctrine. So far as the national question is concerned, there too, what was involved was the resurrection and modernization of a series of theoretical conceptions which had receded into the background of the socialist struggle following the first World War.

Is this what Judd is trying to do? Let us see. Most critics of Marxism, Leninism, Bolshevism, or Trotskyism, state not only what they reject in them, but what it is they are for. Thus it is relatively easy to debate with them, to reject or accept their criticisms. One cannot do the same with Judd. To grasp his ideas is like trying to hold on to loose jello in a hot sun. He writes:

... within the past 25 years our whole world has so changed, from every conceivable point of view, social, cultural, psychologic, etc., that the relevance of the past, its criteria, examples, and illustrations, has dropped catastrophically. Is this not a bald fact? The marking-off point has been, of course, the Second World War and its aftermath, during which the most traditional conceptions of Marxism, expressed at that moment in the theories and program of Trotskyism, were found to be lacking!

We repeat: "... the most traditional conceptions of Marxism ... were found lacking." We see that it is not really a question of the "relevance of

Trotskyism" at all, it is a question of relevance of Marxism! Why then did not Judd proceed with the source of our inadequacies, namely Marx himself? No matter. Let us get on.

Has our world changed drastically within the past 25 years? Undoubtedly. Has it changed socially? No doubt. Culturally? That also. And psychologically? Granted. It would follow that all of this is a bald fact! Now, then, what does it all mean? Concretely, in what ways has the world changed socially, culturally and psychologically to invalidate the program of Marxism? But since politics is always concrete, our friend swiftly leaves us at this point with a parting remark: "... the relevance of the past, its criteria, examples, and illustrations, has dropped catastrophically."

Nothing at all remains for us even as a starting point: no theory, no practice, no criteria, no examples, no illustrations. This, mind you, is the empiric sense of reality! This is scientific! This is objective! We have blackened out a part (what part?) of history and now we can begin anew. But where shall we begin? You must have patience. You must understand that these things require time. You must understand "the actual process by which alternative programs are worked out at crucial moments in the history of Marxism. ... There must be a conscious sense of crisis. ... There must be a collective will ... grapple with new problems ... experiment freely ... even in an empiric sense." And if you insist upon asking Judd, what is different socially, culturally, psychologically in the world today (and we think we know at least some of the things that are different) you will get the following answer: "[the] creation of a new program is a painful, tedious and difficult process. ... One has to make one's way past those who repeat

the past and are smugly content with this ..."

### What Marxists Have Done

It is a *fact* that every epoch in capitalist development has ushered in new problems, demanding new criteria, reducing, though not obliterating, the significance, the examples and illustrations of the past. For revolutionary Marxists, each challenge of the changing epochs, brought with it a corresponding effort to test their theories and to attune them to the changing times. Marx and Engels did not leave a dogma. They furnished the working class with a scientifically grounded theory of capitalist development, a program for the struggle for socialism and a weapon of criticism. Their starting point was a penetrating and annihilating criticism of capitalism and an analysis of the inevitable collapse of its economy which would in turn produce the endless crisis of the social order. Socialism was an objective necessity to save mankind. And they provided a general program to meet the requirements of a class struggle produced by capitalist class society. Theirs, then, was the first program of scientific socialism which helped more than anything else to create the modern working-class movement.

Obviously, much of what Marx and Engels wrote for the struggles of the latter half of the 19th century could hardly apply to the 20th, but the essential theories which they developed have been proved correct again and again during the struggles of this century. It would be impertinent to our readers to belabor a point so obvious. But we have to ask Judd: what traditional conceptions of Marxism are found lacking today? Is it its analysis of capitalism and its critique? Its theory of the state? The nature of the class struggle and the character of the

fight for socialism? No answers! So we really do not know what Judd has reference to on that score and we do not know what to argue against specifically.

The many generations of Marxists have experienced their own struggles over theory and program. In rejecting revisionism they verified the Marxian view of the development of capitalism from its national to its imperialist stage. When the Second International, which contributed so much to the popularization of the Marxian program and organized the modern proletariat for the first time, succumbed to the pressures of the greatest crisis then known to capitalism, World War I, the Marxian movement was revived once more by re-evaluation, alteration and extension of its main ideas. The same process was inevitably induced by the degeneration of the Russian Revolution and the emergence of Stalinism. Trotsky alone initiated the struggle in defense of Marxism and revolutionary internationalism. His contributions to the theory of socialist construction and the nature of Stalinism, despite the final failure of the latter, provided the *key* for a further development of Marxian doctrine and are of enormous and lasting importance.

The enrichment of Marxian theory has been unavoidable, consistent and continuous. The successive generations made their contribution, not by rejecting the basic Marxian conceptions, but by utilizing their rich content. Therefore all the numerous additions and modifications of the Marxian theory and program, find a connecting thread, indicating the continuity and relatedness of its revolutionary ideas. 1905 did not repeat identically the experiences of the Paris Commune; 1917 did not repeat identically the experience of 1905. Nor will the

future repeat identically the experiences of yesterday. Each new period will bring with it a new series of factors, new problems to solve and will require new ideas to meet them. But just as each new event contains similarities to and is connected with events preceding, and in turn influences the events to follow, so too, the ideas related to these events have a similarity and a continuity, and this being the case, old ideas and programs have a relative validity. What the revolutionary Marxist must do is to test the validity of his theory in general, to sift from it what is outlived and wrong, and to relate it to the concrete problems which confront him.

We adhere to the basic conceptions of Marxism because they have proved again and again to be the most efficacious tool in our theoretical structure and because their essential elements have proved to be true. No better set of ideas has been shown to be superior to Marxism—and not because no attempts have been made to think of better ones. On the contrary, the attempts have been countless. But all of them have failed dismally. Judd's failure will be even more ignominious because he has not done as much as the anti-Marxist critics; he offers no alternative to what he proposes to discard completely. He stands in a gap.

### **The Failures of Trotsky**

After devoting a good third of his article to explain the reasons for his ambiguity and to justify his particular evasion of responsibility in failing to present an alternative program to Marxism and Trotskyism, Judd finally gets down to a specific criticism of the latter. In about three pages of *THE NEW INTERNATIONAL* he examines the relevance of all the theoretical and political contributions of forty years of revolutionary activity of the out-

standing Marxist of our time. So Judd arbitrarily reduces Trotsky's contributions to five: the evaluation of our epoch, the transitional program, the revolutionary socialist party, the permanent revolution, and tactics and strategy. The introduction to the "concretization" of his "modest task" consists of an indictment of the self-styled "orthodox Trotskyists" of the practically defunct 4th International and the Cannonite SWP. This is his first point, and we shall see how our friend fares.

Trotsky did not leave a great movement behind him. His heirs are epigones (again, the reference is to the self-styled "orthodox Trotskyists"). They are "bankrupt cliques" with a "bureaucratic ideology." Why did Trotsky, "such a magnificent leader of such heroic and bold proportions, leave behind him such a short-lived movement which stumbled from one disaster to another and has now definitely collapsed?" One could ask the same of Marx and Engels. Why did they leave a Second International, and such heirs as Bernstein, Kautsky, MacDonald, Bauer and Wels? And why did Lenin leave what subsequently became the Stalinist, and such heirs as Stalin, Molotov, Manuilsky and Vyshinsky? Our scientist, who is fully aware of the importance of the psychological, as well as the unknowable quality and quantity of the subjective factor in politics, answers: "A large part of the answer, of course, lies in the false perspectives which his movement inherited from Trotsky."

It would seem that Trotsky is mainly responsible for the ills outlined above. But with the method characteristic of the article, Judd also writes: "How fortunate for this great socialist and revolutionist that he cannot be estimated in the terms of his 'heirs'!"

If Judd's thesis is correct, why not? If his theoretical conceptions are so false and produced the shambles Judd describes, why shouldn't "his organization" and "the political leaders and spokesmen Trotsky left behind" be worthy of his name? The logic of his thinking and the subtleties of his conclusions escape us for the moment.

Exactly what in Trotsky's program produced this complete bankruptcy, assuming that it is he alone that produced it and that the objective situation had nothing to do with it? Judd continues: "Trotsky had a rounded, internally clear and consistent view of things. Proletarian revolution was at the heart of it, just as belief in the simplistic 'dialectics' of Engels was at the heart of his approach to science."

The last sentence is indeed a wonder to behold. The relationship of its two parts may be obscure to ordinary minds. But perhaps Judd sees some deep connection between Trotsky's belief in the proletarian revolution and his belief in the "simplistic 'dialectics'" of Engels which determined his approach to science. Note well, too, that the word dialectics is put in quotes! That creates the proper suspicion that there must have been something mystical in Trotsky's method of thinking in this age of the triumph of science. And if Engels' dialectics was "simplistic" in the pre-Einstein era of science, Judd appears to convict the belief in proletarian revolution of "guilt by association" in a single sentence. We await with impatience Judd's explanation of the meaning of this obscure and *moderne* statement.

Trotsky, it seems, believed in 1938, when the program of the 4th International was formulated, that the epoch in which we lived, choked with economic crisis and mass unemployment,



threatened with a catastrophic world war, was profoundly revolutionary and that the "central need was for revolutionary leadership and a revolutionary party." To make matters worse in the opinion of Judd, he "had a rounded, internally clear and consistent view of things." Little could be worse than that, obviously, for therein lay Trotsky's failure and retrospectively Judd has found the "flaw." Bearing in mind his comment about Engels "simplistic 'dialectics'" and how it affected Trotsky's attitude toward science, we must conclude that if Trotsky were not so affected he would have presented us with a one-sided, unclear and inconsistent view of things. But, here again, we must admonish Judd in the same way that he chided his other critics, that he is "denying the dynamics of history" and "attempts to pass a sterile judgment on the past."

Did Trotsky have a right to see the epoch as a profoundly revolutionary one in 1938? Were not all the preconditions, save one, present for a profound social change? Did he have a right to expect that another devastating war would or could usher in the revolutionary struggle for socialism? Even many bourgeois leaders looked for the same thing. And if he saw the prospects of a new social explosion, was he not correct also to see that the central need of the times was a revolutionary leadership and a revolutionary party, without which we cannot hope for a fundamental social change? The only thing that makes sense in Judd's remarks is that he no longer believes in the "traditional Marxist" conception of the rôle of leadership and a proletarian revolutionary party.

Was it Trotsky's overestimation of the revolutionary curve that caused his movement to collapse? Better yet,

why should an overestimation of the revolutionary curve produce such utter and complete bankruptcy? There is really no scientific reason why this had to follow. It may have produced a defeat for his movement, but again, it did not follow that this overestimation should have crushed the movement, especially since this movement had little opportunity to participate in any great struggle.

Trotsky was fully aware that the revolutionary socialist movement was missing from the scene. He was just as aware that without this quintessential factor, no successful struggle for socialism was possible. But given the factors of capitalist decay and degeneration and the mood of enormous dissatisfaction among millions of workers and middle class elements, he felt that a great social explosion could produce swiftly the organization that would make the struggle for socialism possible. And this is what he sought to achieve, to find a bridge over which the masses could travel from their incurable dissatisfaction with society to the struggle for socialism. It was the search for such a bridge that produced the transitional program.

But the bankruptcy about which Judd writes was in this case, at least, not due to overestimation of the revolutionary potential. As a matter of fact, the 4th International never even got started. A more pertinent question to have posed was whether Trotsky did not prematurely attempt the construction of a new international, whether his failure to correctly evaluate Stalinism did not preclude a growth of the 4th International. That's what is pertinent. However, in rejecting Trotsky's "rounded, internally clear and consistent view of things," what does Judd say about the period between 1938 and 1946? What

kind of period was it that we lived through and what could Trotsky, with superhuman foresight, have elucidated as the program for the socialist movement?

We learn that because Trotsky had this "rounded, internally clear, and consistent view of things . . . he fought so bitterly against those who tended to upset his well-worked-out theoretical program with either doubts or outright challenge on such matters, for example, as the 'Russian Question.'" It was this failure which, in turn, led to Trotsky's "failure to grasp the profound changes occurring not only in the structure of world society, but in the source of revolutionary activity itself, i.e., socialist mass and class consciousness. Any movement which clung to the Trotsky perspective was bound to end up in that state of political paranoia, marked by a phantasy-world existence, which we see in his followers today."

There are several propositions involved in these remarks. First, if the Second World War "marks a definite transition between two epochs" then Trotsky could not possibly have foreseen the new epoch since he was assassinated before this war was fully under way. If the transition occurred when he was no longer with us, therefore he could not possibly have dealt with the problems which it presumably raised. This task obviously falls upon the shoulders of those Marxists who live after him.

But Judd may reply that it was Trotsky's false position on the Russian question which prevented him from foreseeing this new epoch. Then, how about those who had a correct position on Russia? Why didn't they foresee it? Why didn't Judd himself foresee it? No matter, he sees it now. In that case, let us find out what it is.

Judd returns to the theme that the concepts of classic Trotskyism cannot be "of much assistance based as they are upon the existence of a mass socialist consciousness, forever expanding under the lash of experience and the teachings of the vanguard party. Perhaps the outstanding difference between the past of Trotsky and our present is the absence of this mass of human beings in whom socialist consciousness, to one or another degree, existed." We are beginning to get a hint at what he is driving at. The terms "socialist mass and class consciousness" begin to take on some meaning. The sense of Judd's remarks are that these factors are no longer capable of emerging, therefore, the struggle for socialism, no less, must begin elsewhere. Let us recapitulate: There is no socialist consciousness. There are only "great masses of socially conscious people." If there is no socialist consciousness and no prospect of its arising in this new "retrogressive-collectivist" epoch, how can there be a socialist party? Obviously a socialist party can exist only where there is socialist consciousness. It follows, does it not, that if there are only great masses of socially-conscious people and "they are probably more numerous than ever and offer us a clue to the kind of program required," we must have a new type of party. If this is not what Judd means, pray then what does he mean? And if it is what he means, would not human progress be aided at least a little bit if he were to say so in plain English?

He goes on to say that those socially-conscious, as distinguished from the socialist-conscious people, "desire a new life, they are against war, they have hopes and aspirations often concrete in form." Socialist consciousness "lies in self-consciousness and aware-



ness; a state of understanding in which the worker himself realizes that his and his alone is the task, that *he* is the creator of the revolution and socialism."

Good, more or less. How does this relate to the relevance of Trotskyism in our time? Presumably Trotsky believed that we were dealing with an international working class that had reached a high state of socialist consciousness and therefore the epoch was invested with revolutionary consequences, and therefore a transitional program was required as a bridge to these socialist masses.

But if we were dealing with a *socialist* working class then no bridge was required to raise it above the level of mere dissatisfaction. A socialist working class would not be merely dissatisfied with its conditions; it would be consciously organized for socialism, and a transitional program for such a working class would be superfluous.

Trotsky did not believe in spontaneity as the central feature of the socialist struggle and he did not believe the working class comes automatically by its socialist awareness. He knew as well as any that the older generation of European socialists was destroyed, but he counted on the disintegration of capitalism to produce the necessary conditions for the creation of a new socialist mass. In his mind the transitional program, among other considerations, was to act as a catalytic agent in the reestablishment of a socialist cadre and a socialist following.

Because Trotsky and his Marxist predecessors did not believe socialist consciousness arises automatically, he understood the necessity for a party and leadership. All Marxists recognized the class struggle as a vast school of socialist education, in which the

working class, by its own experiences and the intervention of the conscious socialist vanguard, reached the level of socialist consciousness. So long as capitalism exists, so long as an exploitive society resting on industrial production exists, so long as a working class remains indispensable to modern production, the necessity of socialism will remain. And if that is true, then there are no other means by which the working class can emancipate itself except through its own organizations, economic and political, and its socialist formations, constituted as a vanguard and leadership of the class at large.

If Judd is saying anything by this reference to the socialist mass, class consciousness and social consciousness, he is saying that under the new conditions brought about by the recent war the proletariat is no longer the leader of the socialist struggle, that other classes are *equally* as important, and the emancipation of society will proceed through some new means. This is so because neither the masses who follow the Labor Party in its alteration of British society nor the millions of workers who follow Stalinism are socialist (they are corrupted or primitive ideologically).

The new socially-conscious *people* (is it an accident that Judd uses this non-class and unscientific term?) offer us the clue to the kind of program we need: against war, for a new life and . . . hopes and aspirations often concrete in form. If true, that at least would be more than Judd has in his mind — something concrete. But we have no reason to believe that Judd knows anything about it.

What hopes and aspirations do they have in concrete form? The need for social change, or just an improvement of their conditions under the existing

social orders? It makes a difference, you know. And what are the hopes and aspirations of the British workers when they support a Labor Party that nationalizes so large a segment of capitalist economy? What are the hopes and aspirations of those hundreds of thousands of workers who follow Stalinism because they believe this plebian, anti-capitalist but enslaving movement will improve their lot? Here, too, you look in vain for an answer.

History, however, does provide you with some answers, even though Judd rejects the criteria, examples and illustrations of the past. The Russian Revolution is thus far our most outstanding revolutionary and socialist experience. It reached its zenith in the struggle of the masses around the very simple slogans of Land! Peace! Bread! Not very "socialist" slogans, were they? Yet they contained in essence the hopes and aspirations of the Russian proletariat at a specific point in the historical position of the country, and it was a vanguard party which understood these hopes and aspirations and translated them into slogans of action which were realized only by a revolutionary Marxist ("Trotskyist") party and a socialist revolution.

How shall socialists now mobilize these socially-conscious people who desire a new life, who are against war and whose hopes and aspirations often are concrete in form? In an all-inclusive organization of the people? With a leadership, with a vanguard, or without them? What shall the program of this new movement be? What will be the nature of this organization? We are afraid you will wait in vain for an answer.

Now, as a matter of fact, it is true that the transitional program worked out by Trotsky in the middle of a

world economic crisis, where a war threatened, assumed the revolutionary potential to be higher than it really was. He even thought that the class struggle in the United States was more highly developed than it really was, or is at this time. Not all American Trotskyists agreed with Trotsky. This, too, is a known fact.

The transitional program for the United States was in the nature of things a compromise of ideas. But if that program is examined today, not even Judd could assert that it was an unrealistic program. The most important element of that program was the adoption of the slogan of a labor party! How do we stand with this slogan? Is it good or bad? Is it not an indispensable requirement for the development of even a socially conscious American working class? And would not such a party signify a tremendous ideological growth of the American working class? How about the slogan of a sliding scale of wages and a sliding scale of hours? Cannot this slogan be utilized in many forms in various periods of development? What about the slogan of "open the books!"? Does not this slogan have a tremendous appeal to large segments of the working class? Was it not the outstanding feature of the General Motors strike of two years ago, and will it not again become an increasingly important issue in the struggle between the monopolists and the workers and their unions?

What is also wrong with Trotsky's transitional program, says Judd, is that Trotsky, in his revolutionary perspective, hoped that it would become the "tactical and strategic means by which the Fourth International was to become the 'World Party of the Socialist Revolution.'" No, Trotsky sought more than that, even though

there would be nothing wrong in it. He sought to create a program that would raise the masses above the struggle for minimal demands. Any socialist organization, reformist or revolutionary, has a minimal and an end program (except the SLP). The transitional program was intended by Trotsky (it was not his invention, by the way) as the bridge to the end goal of the socialist revolution and workers' power.

Since his revolutionary perspective was false, because it didn't happen that way, Judd says we must have a new transitional program "but not one directed exclusively at proletarian and vanguard revolutionary elements, aiming to define the relations between class and vanguard party." You see the problem today is vastly different. There is no vast proletarian consciousness. There is only a socially-conscious people. "The gap to be bridged is much wider and deeper," says Judd, "than that between party and class. It is no longer a gap of inner class relationships, but rather a gap between the working class as a whole, together with its socialist consciousness [didn't we read only a moment ago that it didn't exist any more?], and the rest of society."

First of all, the revolutionary socialists never believed that socialism was dependent upon the proletariat alone. Quite the contrary, they always knew that without the support of the lower middle class at least, a socialist transformation of society was not possible. The Marxist movement always sought to align the whole of society against the monopolistic bourgeoisie and its allies, and that is one of the reasons why the Marxian program in its concrete aspects incorporated an enormous breadth of ideas and propositions. So do the transitional programs

as they are applied to country after country, even when they overestimate the revolutionary potential.

### **A Non-Class Party?**

What Judd proposes is a non-class party to close the gap between the working class and the rest of society, because the working class is no longer the most powerful force for a socialist change. Which force is? The middle class? The intellectuals? The farmers? All of them together? Good; suppose it is all of them together. Who will lead the struggle? Who will play the most active, most decisive role in this coalition of forces? Or doesn't that matter? Judd does not even treat with this question which poses itself automatically from the sweeping disposition he makes of the working class.

Judd is running around in circles, for no sooner has he finished with the above profound pronouncement, than he adds:

A new program must concern itself with the problem of resurrecting socialist consciousness and thereby beginning to regain for the working class its rôle—now lost—as leader and emancipator of society.

So he does want the proletariat to resume its rôle. Why he wants it to resume its rôle when the Second World War changed everything, introduced new factors, disposed of the old Marxist program which was based precisely on the theory of the leadership of society by the proletariat is difficult for us to understand.

We think we see a clue to Judd's inability to say anything concretely and to give readers some point of contact with him. He has disposed of the "traditional conceptions of Marxism"; the Second World War disposed of all previous "criteria, examples and illustrations." Given that, where does one

begin to write a new program? Says Judd, the problems of a new program "go back to the origins of Marxian socialism itself, rather than resting upon the long Marxist tradition." Back to the origins! Owen? Proudhon? Weitling? Moses Hess? Or Fourier and Saint-Simon? If Marx cannot help us, neither can Trotsky or Lenin, since their programs rested on traditional Marxism. Then the only sense the above remark has is that a new theory and program should be constructed on the historically-rejected concepts of utopianism, or the vague socialism of Marx's predecessors and contemporaries, whom history has already dealt with rather conclusively.

### **The Role of the Party**

In his article Judd leaves for his last point the question of the "revolutionary vanguard party." We prefer to reverse the order and consider it ahead of the question of the permanent revolution since the issue is already related to his discussion of the transitional program, where he supplied us with some of his conceptions of the problem. The question of the party—now, let us see. No, "it is not the case in any appreciation of Trotskyism. Trotsky accepted the Leninist party, to be sure, but he did not contribute much to what he took over. In fact, his main concern with the rôle of the party as such dealt largely with its inner degeneration (*The New Course*, etc.) and his struggle against its bureaucratism." That's all!

But what did Trotsky say about it in *The New Course* and in innumerable articles? Well, dear readers, Trotsky proposed to "continue in the Leninist tradition" and to discuss it "would take us far afield and must therefore be left aside except to remark that whatever Trotskyist 'parties' exist today are but bureaucratic

caricatures of even the Leninist conception." And again: "A true Trotsky-created party has never existed (and never will), which makes it still more difficult to talk concretely about Trotsky's conception of the party." And Judd is through. One might well ask: Why did you raise the question at all?

As a matter of history, Trotsky did embrace Lenin's main conceptions of the vanguard party, but he accepted them with a considerable emphasis of his own. These views, expressed so vigorously and instructively in *The New Course* in 1923, were the groundwork for material which Trotsky wrote over the succeeding years on questions which Lenin could not possibly have dealt with.

The fact that the Fourth International never developed beyond its founding conference, or that Trotsky's self-styled heirs are more nearly Zinovievists than anything else on the organization question, does not invalidate his conceptions of the party. Suppose these conceptions, and those of Lenin, are invalidated on their own ground? Then Judd should quit humming and say so, stating his reasons for his views. We are certain that many new things can be said about socialist organizational principles and practices—and they have been said seriously by others—but Judd's criticisms are nihilistic. Nothing else is offered.

### **The Permanent Revolution**

So we come now to the most absurd part of Judd's article, the theory of the permanent revolution. In five short paragraphs he dismisses the theory to which Trotsky devoted a lifetime, and which is undoubtedly his most brilliant contribution to Marxian theory and, we must add, perhaps the most brilliant elaboration of a rev-

olutionary conception since Marx's time. Trotsky did not lack, as Judd nimbly writes, "the opportunity to develop it in its fullest and most rounded form, [though] his life work was permeated with the tactics and strategy upon which his theory was based."

Trotsky, as any serious student of socialism knows, wrote voluminously on the question of the permanent revolution, and perhaps more on that single question than on any other. A very thick volume could be compiled of these writings. The old Communist League of America issued a small book by Trotsky entitled *The Permanent Revolution*. This dealt with the theory in general but related it to the struggle against Stalinism and the meaning of the theory in relation to the Russian Revolution and the colonial question.

His pre-1905 conceptions of the theory were set down in his now famous and long essay, "Toward a Labor Dictatorship," which appeared in the American book, *Our Revolution*. His *History of the Russian Revolution*, which is permeated with the conception, also contains an appendix on the historical references of the theory. Many of the writings on the fight against Stalinism deal with it, and the other writings on revolutionary strategy and tactics, as Judd acknowledges, flow from the theory. What is more, he developed the theory more completely and with greater skill than on any other question.

### **What the Theory Contained**

The theory of the permanent revolution was not, as Judd implies, directly or most importantly related to the colonial question, although Trotsky did apply it to that field and most perspicaciously, too. The theory originated with reference to the nature of the Russian Revolution and the char-

acter of the state power of the working class. It had three fundamental aspects and we quote from it at length to refresh the memory. The theory of the permanent revolution pointed out

. . . that the democratic tasks of the backward bourgeois nations in our epoch led to the dictatorship of the proletariat and the dictatorship of the proletariat puts the socialist tasks on the order of the day. In that lay the central idea of the theory. If the traditional view was that the road to the dictatorship led through a long period of democracy, the theory of the permanent revolution established the fact that for backward countries the road to democracy passed through the dictatorship of the proletariat. By that alone democracy does not become a régime anchored within itself for decades, but rather a direct introduction to the socialist revolution. Each is bound to the other by an unbroken chain. In this way, there arises between the democratic revolution and the socialist transformation of society a permanency of revolutionary development.

The second aspect of the "permanent" theory already characterizes the socialist revolution as such. For an indefinitely long time and in constant internal struggle, all social relations are transformed. . . . Revolutions in economy, technique, science, the family, morals and usages develop in complicated reciprocal action and do not allow society to reach equilibrium. Therein lies the permanent character of the socialist revolution as such.

The international character of the socialist revolution, which constitutes the third aspect of the theory of the permanent revolution, results from the present state of economy and the social structure of humanity. Internationalism is no abstract principle, but a theoretical and political reflection of the character of world economy, of the world development of productive forces, and the world scale of the class struggle. The socialist revolution begins on national grounds. But it cannot be completed on these grounds. . . . The international revolution presents a permanent process, in spite of all fleeting rises and falls.

The above is merely an indication of the ramifications of the theory. We wish that space permitted us to quote

several pages from *The Permanent Revolution* which deal exclusively with the colonial question to illustrate whether or not Trotsky understood the problem of backward "imperialist wards." Judd himself is forced to acknowledge that

In our epoch, he [Trotsky] maintained, those tasks formerly associated with the bourgeois-democratic revolution (national independence, unity of the country, agrarian solution, etc.) could only be solved by a proletariat in power. In the sense that a *progressive, democratic and socialist* solution of such tasks can be achieved only by the proletariat, Trotsky's theory remains entirely true and valid. But we know now that, in the form he presented it, it is no longer adequate and its proposed tactics and strategy are largely obsolete abstractions.

So that while Trotsky's theory remains entirely true and valid so far as the tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution are concerned, his proposed tactics and strategy are "largely obsolete abstractions." A pity that Judd did not explain himself concretely. In any case, let us ask the question: Why? The answer is that "imperialism is an abstract and absolute force in Trotsky's theory." An abstract . . . and absolute . . . force! Where?

What does Judd mean? Does he mean that Trotsky had an abstract conception of imperialism and believed it to be an absolute force because he did not believe that Stalinist Russia was an imperialist nation? That his conceptions of capitalist imperialism were abstract, or that he believed it to be an absolute force? Trotsky's failure, or the failure of his theory of the permanent revolution, we are told, is the result of his inability to foresee Stalin's triumph in China and to write about it, to provide us with a theory for the struggle against Stalinism in the colonial areas of the

world. He also failed to foresee "the changes in imperialism itself." The changes within imperialism, particularly since the war, "have been of such a significant nature that this alone has altered the whole problem of colonialism."

### **The New Problems**

Let us take the first of these problems, the Stalinist triumph in Asia. Unquestionably this has posed new problems to the Marxist movement. Trotsky, not being clairvoyant—even if he had had what we consider to be a correct position on the Russian state, he would not have been able or called upon to foresee this—could not possibly have dealt with the problems created by a Stalinist advance into China and the expulsion of the capitalist and imperialist regime. What then happens to his theory of the permanent revolution of China? If the kernel of its ideas presented above is fully understood, then it is obvious that the revolutionary process must continue in China under Mao, as it does in Russia and the satellite nations in Europe.

The imposition of a Stalinist regime may make the struggle more difficult because of the nature of Stalinism, but the necessity for socialism is not at all abolished by the existence of this new social force. It is the task of the Marxists in our time to apply the essential meaning of the theory of the permanent revolution to this problem and to provide the program for struggle against the new enslaving state. In achieving this, you will find that Trotsky's theory will be found helpful in more ways than just the "spirit of approach, its audacity," though these are by no means unimportant factors.

What about India and Indonesia?

Was not Trotsky wrong when he denied that such colonial countries could achieve their independence without an insurrectionary struggle led by the colonial proletariat? They have actually achieved this without much of a struggle at all in the case of India, and in the case of Indonesia, with a halting, inconclusive battle. No, in Indonesia, they actually lost the battle or were stalemated.

Yet two great imperialists, Great Britain and the Netherlands, "voluntarily" surrendered their rule over India and Indonesia, and Britain "gave" Burma its independence. Why did they do that? Because of the changes in imperialism, as Judd suggests? What kind of changes? No answer. The answer, however, is an obvious one.

The Second World War crippled the power of the British and the Dutch, made it virtually impossible for them to engage in a protracted war with these large colonial nations, for continued hold on them would have meant permanent war. So the decline of two imperialist powers resulted in the release of political rule over two of their holdings.

These changes took place in the Second World War. How then could Trotsky concern himself with them in his "concentration upon immediate issues within the national-revolutionary movement itself (as, for example, in his writings on China)," which were written five, ten and fifteen years before the outbreak of this war? So Judd adds: "In terms of a mechanical application of Trotsky's theory, it is impossible to conceive of an independent India." Precisely! In terms of a mechanical application—but even here Judd is not on strong ground. It is true that neither he nor any other Marxist believed before the war that

colonial independence would be granted without a struggle. But that is not what the theory of the permanent revolution is predicated upon. In his book on the question, *Trotsky does not speak of this at all!*

In the fourteen-point summary of his book, Trotsky merely says:

2. With regard to the countries with a belated bourgeois development, especially the colonial and semi-colonial countries, the theory of the permanent revolution signifies that the complete and genuine solution of their tasks, *democratic and national emancipation*, is conceivable only through the dictatorship of the proletariat as the leader of the subjugated nation, above all of its peasant masses.

3. Not only the agrarian, but also the national question, assigns to the peasantry, the overwhelming majority of the population of the backward countries, an important place in the democratic revolution. Without an alliance of the proletariat with the peasantry, the tasks of the democratic revolution cannot be solved, nor even seriously posed. But the alliance of these two classes can be realized in no other way than through an intransigent struggle against the influence of the national bourgeoisie.

Let us consider for a moment the question of India. Has there been a "complete and genuine solution of their tasks, democratic and national emancipation"? One could hardly say that and still realize that an extreme danger of war exists between India and Pakistan. Is there genuine democracy in India for the masses? Has the agrarian revolution, *the most fundamental aspect of the democratic revolution in a backward or colonial country*, been achieved? Why, it has not really even started! Does Judd know this to be the fact? He should and does. He is a close student of the problem, and we haven't the slightest doubt that he could write voluminously about the failures of the Nehru government, the "socialist" regime,

and its record of dismal failures in carrying out the democratic revolution because it is a bourgeois regime and nothing else. Will Nehru carry out the democratic revolution? We are sure that not even Judd will affirm this.

India is not the living negation of the theory of the permanent revolution; it is the living affirmation of the theory. The solution of the colonial question under the "new conditions" created by the war, will follow more generally Trotsky's conceptions than any other we know of. This much is true: the theory has to be amended and extended to answer the problems that are really new. But that is something altogether different from what Judd has done.

What about Trotsky's other contributions? Were there any other except those which Judd chose to pick? We think so. His contributions to the Russian Revolution, in theory and practice, remain a lasting monument to revolutionary thought and action. Moreover, he set these down in so many of his writings that they serve as a permanent guide to the future socialist cadres.

In the degeneration of the revolution, Trotsky provided us with the first lessons of that development, and in the struggle against Stalinism his writings and the fight he made, likewise are lasting contributions to the theories of socialism, socialist construction and the nature of the state power of the working class and its tasks.

The appearance of the phenomenon of German fascism and the problems it created in relation to the national question, the united front, the general struggle of the proletariat against totalitarianism, are likewise

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an imperishable part of the contributions made by Trotsky.

The greatest failure of Trotsky was his inability to evaluate Stalinism correctly—although toward his last days here, too, we know that he was considering the possibility of a radical revision of Marxism on the Stalinist state and Stalinism in general. What would have been the result of such a new study, we cannot tell. But it is important to see that he was at work on it, and we would like to think, by what he did write and print, especially his penetrating, even if conditional, appraisal of the theory of bureaucratic collectivism, that we would have found common ground with him.

It goes without saying that in forty years of revolutionary activity, many things that Trotsky wrote turned out to be wrong. To expect otherwise would be silly; it would require a belief in Trotsky as a superhuman force. Like all great leaders and like the genius of the proletarian revolution that he was, he made many mistakes. But even though a total evaluation of such a leader must consider his mistakes as well as his positive contribution, in the case of Trotsky there is, in our opinion, no room for argument about his enormous and lasting contributions, theoretically and practically, to the socialist movement. It is upon the tremendous theoretical contributions of Marx and Engels, and their finest representatives, Lenin and Trotsky, that the new movement for socialist emancipation will arise.

Our friend Judd accomplished this much at least. By his amorphous illogical and thoughtless essay, he directed attention once more to the fundamental correctness of the Marxian program. Does this mean that there are no new problems for us to solve? Does this mean that the world is the

same today as it was in Marx's time, or Lenin's or even Trotsky's? Not at all. Who has said so? And on whose authority? We are well aware that many new problems remain to be solved. We grant too that the problems of today are exceedingly complex, and more difficult of solution than any that ever confronted the working-class movement in all its history.

We have never denied their existence or regarded these problems lightly. They are indeed tremendous. But, after saying all of this, what should we do about them? Judd has supplied one answer: abandon everything we have ever stood for, begin anew without regard to the past and its experiences and lessons, begin at the very origin of Marxism, begin, begin—with what . . . no one knows. Not a very enticing proposal, nor one calculated to produce anything worth while.

But wait, we are not yet through.

After all that he has written, our friend, logical and scientific, burdened by no obsolete views or dogmas or even by a belief in the simplistic dialectics of Engels, and who is certain that all the traditional conceptions of Marxism have been uprooted and cast aside by the developments in modern society, is nevertheless fully confident of the future. Splendid! But why? Because he's a born and incorrigible optimist? No; at least not only because of that. Then why? Well, because . . . "The general framework of Marxist and socialist thought still exists, but in a changed world." Thank God, everything is crystal clear at last.

How does one characterize such an article? It is not a very fruitful attempt to provide an alternative, to grapple with what is real. It is political jabberwocky. It is a "mood piece," and its mood is indigo.

ALBERT GATES

## The New World Union Federation

Historic London's County Council has just seen the birth of a new trade-union international. Ironically enough, the hall where the new International Confederation of Free Trade Unions came into being also served as the stage for the first pronouncements of the WFTU (World Federation of Trade Unions) in February, 1945.

Forty-eight million organized workers were represented at the Congress by 260 delegates from 53 different countries. A fact of greatest significance was the complete participation of the American trade unions, with the AFL, the CIO, and the United Mine Workers of America represented. From the point of view of numbers, the new International begins impressively. The same cannot be said of the objectives it sets for itself—of which we shall speak later.

But first, we wish to briefly review the course of events which finally led to the creation of the new International.

From its very first moments, the organic cohesion of the WFTU was revealed as forced and artificial. The *modus vivendi* established under the sign of a "sacred union" between the Stalinist trade unions and the reformist trade unions could not long endure. The activity of the WFTU was paralyzed by the latent crisis, which was hastened and aggravated by the creation of the Cominform in October, 1947. The strikes that erupted in France and Italy two months

afterward, obviously inspired by Moscow and appropriately dubbed the "Molotov" strikes, were a new cause of disintegration.

In March, 1948, London was the scene of a conference of trade-union federations of the countries receiving Marshall Plan aid, in which the American AFL and CIO participated. The Conference centered on the problem of defending the Marshall Plan against Stalinist attacks, and at the same time constituted a reply to the "Molotov" strikes. The split in the WFTU thereby became a virtual fact.

In October of 1948, the British Trade Union Congress demanded that the WFTU Secretariat suspend all activity. A few months later, in January, 1949, the rupture was an actual fact: the CIO, the British Trade Union Congress, and the Dutch Federation withdrew from the WFTU.

The regroupment of the non-Stalinist trade-union federations followed. A preliminary conference was held in Geneva in June. The process of gestation culminated in the recent London Congress.

The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions has scattered to the four winds a declaration of its purposes and tasks. The new International's Charter of fundamental demands consists of a defense of democracy—the formal democracy of a capitalist régime in full force—and we already know the utmost that such a régime can give—and in the raising of the working class' standard of living. The trilogy—Bread, Freedom, Peace—constitute and sum up this program.

An examination of the documents prepared by the founding Congress does not reveal any intent to infringe on the bases of bourgeois society. The fundamental aspiration of the workers' movement for more than a century tended toward the socialization of the means of production. The ICFTU has forgotten this, just as it has forgotten to mention the historic necessity to realize effective structural reforms in the actual capitalist process of production. There is not the least mention of the demand for workers' control, one of the manifestations of authentic economic . . . democracy.

According to the program of the ICFTU, the proletariat's mission is reduced to improving its living conditions, subject *in eternum* to the régime of wage labor, without posing the problem of destroying the all-persuasive power of the great international trusts that rule over bread . . . freedom . . . and the peace . . . of the peoples.

"Our objective," the Declaration says, "is the establishment of a world system of collective security. Therefore we accept defensive regional agreements within the framework of the United Nations against the dangers of aggression by dictators."

Another aspiration underlined is that of "reinforcing the organizations of the United Nations, and of its specialized institutions for the pacific solution of international problems."

It defends the policy of participation in all the organisms of international collaboration, such as "the International Organization of Labor, the Economic and Social Council, the World Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, the European Organization of Economic Cooperation, the World Bank, etc."

With such an "interventionist" program, the new International is well on the way to becoming the captive of the policies of American and European

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imperialism to the obvious injury of the interests of the working class, of its bread, freedom, and peace.

The ICFTU has risen to challenge the WFTU and Stalinist totalitarianism. However, the bourgeois institutions of the United Nations are not the best trenches from which to defend the demands of the working class.

The development and strength of the new International can signify a defeat of Stalinist influence in the ranks of the working class on one condition: that it hold high the banner of defense of the sacred interests of the proletariat in its great struggle for its own emancipation and that of all humanity. And it is undeniable that it can not succeed in this unless it acts with complete independence in respect to the institutions tied to the employer-state as well as the police-state.

Consequently, the "constructive" mission the reformist trade unions (new style) have set themselves is neither the most correct nor the most adequate for the purpose of freeing the working class from the criminal influence of Stalinist totalitarianism.

Walter Reuther, one of the most dynamic, most serious, and most promising figures on the American labor scene, has quite correctly said that the only effective way to attack Stalinism is by tenaciously and consistently defending the interests of the working class. In essence, this is the heart of the matter. The unrestrained demagoguery of the Cominform can only be counteracted by taking the lead in the struggle against capitalist exploitation and for a socialist peace. Not by falling into an all-too-easy dependence on a reactionary anti-Communist line which is fundamentally reactionary and anti-working class.

Notwithstanding our criticisms, we must continue to pay attention to the activities of the new International. And by virtue of its anti-Franco declarations, to see what will be the result of its promises of solidarity formulated in London with so much enthusiasm and emotion.

Paris, December, 1949

PEDRO BONET

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## The Diary of Victor Serge - II

*Portraying the Men and Events of Our Times*

### Reiss, Krivitsky, Bastich, Others

Dec., 1937.

Have lived for a month in a stifling atmosphere of crime, full of mystery and revelations.

In July, Sneevliet informed me that a secret agent of Stalin, set up in Holland, from where he directs his operations, had decided to quit secret work. S. knew him from a long time back but has not run into him in years. "Ludwig" [Ignace Reiss] has been stunned by the execution of Kamenev and Zinoviev, by the atmosphere of terror which he has found at Moscow, by the decorations—the Order of Lenin—granted to the secret service men who have participated in the execution of Old Bolsheviks. Ludwig has warned us that a decision to use terror against the opposition abroad—against us—has been taken. We decided to ask for a public statement from him, which will permit us to have confidence in him and will put him under the protection of public opinion. Sedov is also of that opinion.

1st of August. I gave a lecture to the Pou group of the Ecole Emancipée<sup>1</sup> in a meeting hall near the Bastille. I broke the menacing news contained in the "Ludwig warning." (Published an article under that title.)

August. Sneevliet has arranged a meeting with "Ludwig." L. sent us his statement, which is forceful and vehement. The Committee of Inquiry on the Moscow Trial is publishing it. S. had arranged a meeting with L., who is in hiding, at which we three will be present: S., Sedov and myself. Sedov postponed the meeting.

1st Sept. S. met me at the Rotonde, Boul. Montparnasse. He came from Amsterdam to meet L. No more time can be lost. L. is hiding in Switzerland, very much in danger; we have to arrive at some decisions with him—first of all in order to attempt to guarantee his security. If Sedov could not or did not wish to come we decided to leave without him for Rheims on the 5th. Sedov informed us he was sick. On the 5th we leave for Rheims. Appointment with L. in the station lunchroom at ten o'clock. Place a poor choice. The lunchroom was small, deserted, badly lit, several doors and obscure exits could be used in an assault against us.

We waited for an hour in vain. We wandered through the town. "It's strange," said S., "Ludwig is a model of promptness. . . ." We drank some champagne in a bar. A young blonde woman came in with her escort. S. talked to me about the young people of his party killed in Spain, of the successive suicides, of his two sons. The one who recently committed suicide reproached him for not showing an active enough solidarity with the anti-Nazi refugees whom the Dutch government is interning or turning back. "But I don't have the means!" said S. desperately. We talked about the mistakes of L. T., who is striving to create the Fourth Inter. without national sections worthy of

1. At that time a left minority of the teachers' union.

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the name. We concluded that neither the idea of a party nor the idea of an International should be played with.

A second appointment with L. at the post office at ten o'clock in the morning. We didn't have the feeling of being followed. The town is provincial; at night the streets are deserted.

On the 6th, nobody at the post office. Uneasiness. We went to see the bombarded cathedral, which seems to have been licked by immense flames. At noon while waiting for our train at the station I bought a paper and noticed a paragraph saying that two days before a man named Eberhardt, a Czech, had been found riddled with bullets on the Chamblandes road near Lausanne, and that he had carried a railroad ticket for France in his pocket. There was no doubt. S. left for Switzerland, I returned to Paris, I informed the Committee of Inquiry, gathered together in a cafe, Place de L'Odéon. On the 13th we drew up a press release, explicit and giving the identity of Ignace Reiss. General silence in the press. Bergery of *La Flèche* promised to publish it, and did. The silence is broken.

The 15th of Sept., in a little hotel near the Gare de l'Est, S. and Elsa Reiss, her child (around ten years old). Elsa, her lips constantly trembling, her eyes filled with tears—grey-blue eyes, an oval face, rather full. By luck she escaped poisoned chocolates brought by G. S. The police consider her in danger and, while we are untangling the threads of the crime, it has been recommended to S. by telephone that E. R.'s hotel be changed, taking maximum precautions. A Polish comrade, sent by Sedov, is coming.

Elsa said that a secret agent went to see me in Brussels—something was in the wind. He spoke of me with a sort of enthusiasm to Reiss and Krivitsky, who both knew me personally. The agent: Bastich.

Two or three days after my arrival in Brussels—from Moscow—therefore around April 20th, I was with Boris Pokitonov in a cafe on the Boulevard Anspach. We were on the enclosed terrace; I noticed a well-dressed gentleman with intensely dark eyes who sat down near us. I felt uncomfortable and mentioned it to Boris P. The gentleman came over and introduced himself: Bastich, whom I had known at Vienna in '23-'25, militant of the Balkan Federation. Dr. Vlakoff its leader at the period of the assassination of Todor Ponitza. B. was then a revolutionary Bohemian, one of the survivors of the Serbian organization which had organized the assassination at Sarajevo; at the same period that I met him I met Mustapha, a member of the same group, but more influential, and Colonel Bojin Simich, friend of Dragutin Dmitrievich, who was shot at Salonika. There was also Kussovatz, a young Montenegrin. B. told me he was living in Geneva, and that decided me not to keep the appointment which he asked me to make. If B. is living in Geneva, travels, is well-clothed, I said to myself, he is engaged in some shady political business which is best kept at a distance. I did right. The idea of the GPU did not occur to me. . . .

Beginning of Nov. Someone telephoned Gérard Rosenthal, asking for a meeting with us. Elsa thinks that it is Walter—a friend of Reiss, who shares his feelings, an old secret agent himself. "You surely know him," she said. Meeting the 11th of Nov. at Gérard's near the Gare St-Lazare. Gérard's law office adjoins his father's doctor's office. Elsa S., Sedov, Gérard, myself. A little man in a gray overcoat, with a thin, sharp face, wrinkled, nervous,

entered. I recognized Walter, from a lecture on Fr. lit. which I gave in '27 (?) at Leopold Auerbach's in the Kremlin at Moscow, I believe. He then came to see me at Leningrad with Brunn (Ilk) and a third person (Reiss). All three were leaving on missions; we drank some good wine and jokingly founded the Society of Future Political Prisoners.

Brunn-Ilk had been a friend of mine in Austria—our vacations on the shore of the Wörtber See, at Maria-wörth, at the foot of the Karawanken Mountains. He then directed the secret service in Yugoslavia—where he was imprisoned—in Hungary, in France. K. tells me that B. I. was one of his agents. Was decorated with the Order of Lenin. Sympathized with the Opposition, had the courage to come to see me at Leningrad after my expulsion from the party and my first imprisonment in '28. On behalf of Trilisser, head of the secret service, he had offered me the post of councillor to Chiang Tso-lin in Manchuria. I refused, saying that I did not wish to belong to a state apparatus which would probably be called upon to play a deadly role in the repression (1925-26). Now Elsa enlightened me on his end. Charged with opening up discussions with nationalist officers in Germany, he assigned one of the most devoted Ger. Communists, Kippenberger, to remain close to General von Bredow; at Moscow, after the execution of Zinoviev, he was given the job of preparing the secret trial of Kippen.; he declared that he was innocent and refused to continue the preparations. Was sent on leave to a rest home in the Caucasus and was soon shot along with his wife. Stories like that are taking place one after the other.

The discussion with Krivitsky was stormy. He acknowledged that he had been aware of the preparations for the assassination of Reiss and tried vainly to warn Reiss at the time of his visit to Paris. He couldn't talk to him over the phone, but he kept calling the hotel and when Reiss would say hello he would hang up. R. was bound to understand. In a cafe at the Exposition he had been present at a meeting called by a special envoy from Moscow, where the execution had been decided upon. He avoided taking on any specific task. He claimed to have saved Elsa, whose disappearance he had been told to organize. He said to Sneevliet: "I have an agent in your party, but I don't remember his name. He saw you in such and such a month, he came to your house, he has seen you at the office." S. burst out: "You miserable bastard! You know all their names. I for one don't believe in poor memories! What's his name?" K. shook his head slowly: "I don't know; there are too many names." He said also: "There are so many agents surrounding you that I find it extraordinary being in safety among you." His face is gray, shriveled, calm, his profile reminds me of a fish. We decided to aid him, to try to legalize his presence in France. He does not want to make a public statement.

"I am not going over to the Opposition; I consider its politics utopian. The USSR, despite all its crimes, remains the great force for progress. I will not betray it in any way. I do not want to participate in crimes any more, that's all. I won't give any information to the French authorities. I do not go back to M., knowing that I would be shot. It was right at the station that I took the decision not to go back, and it was one hour afterwards that I telephoned you."

## Agabekov

February 20, 1938: In '35 (I believe) Agabekov published a book which is a very extraordinary document of betrayal and informing. A top functionary of the secret service of the NKVD in the Near East, he denounced all his agents and stoolpigeons in Persia, Greece, Egypt, Turkey. Professors, deputies, churchmen, postmen. . . .

N. P. V . . . r knew him and drew a detailed portrait of him.

Rather ugly, of an oriental type—Turk—A. showed up one day at the *Poslednye Novosti*<sup>2</sup> with a statement breaking with the USSR, which was published. Feared being shot down on any street corner. The next day when he arrived for his appointment at five o'clock at the editorial offices, two French detectives were waiting to take him to the police station for questioning. He turned pale, begged that someone go with him. Well received by Monsieur Pasquier, he picked up his confidence. He noticed that the curtains in the office reminded him of those in the office of Trilliser at Moscow. Questioned, he replied quite willingly, saying things which were startling. A French attaché at Istanbul was his agent. All the Egyptian diplomatic correspondence was read by his subordinates, etc. He was promised that things would be straightened out, but meanwhile he was temporarily taken to the Belgian frontier. He made the trip in profound anxiety. This expulsion was made on the demand of F. P. B., doubtlessly an old secret agent from the time of the Kutypov<sup>3</sup> affair. (I no longer know who F. P. B. is.)

His reasons: he fell in love with a little English woman who was giving him English lessons at Istanbul. He confessed his profession to her and promised to renounce it. She accompanied him to Paris. They got married at Brussels.

A remark: "I bought men just as you buy rugs."

At the Square Arts-et-Métiers he suddenly asked a Russian newspaperman who was accompanying him:

"How do you manage to live on a volcano without noticing it?"

Reply: "It will go on quite a while yet, you'll see."

Was said to have sympathized with the Opposition in '23 when Zinoviev came to speak against Trotskyism to the personnel of the political police. A minority of 40 per cent remained firm "but basically we all were sympathetic."

As chief of the secret service for the Near East, was living at Istanbul as an established Iranian businessman, with a considerable bank account. In leaving, kept only 1,000 pounds sterling, which he considered as being due him. At Constanza there was an attempt to kidnap him, a man was killed, he had the GPU agents arrested.

In Rumania, exploited the Siguranza [political police] by exposing secret services which he organized himself. Having made contact at Brussels with Russian émigrés of the "Eurasian" group who were willing to offer their services, hired them for the USSR through a certain Dumbadze. Sent one into Rumania with detailed instructions. At the same time notified the Siguranza of the arrival of a secret agent. Informed Prague of the agent's trip through.

2. Paris paper of the late Russian conservative leader, Prof. Milyukov.

3. Former Czarist general, head of white émigrés in Paris, kidnapped in notorious case, presumably by GPU.

Turned over copies of the reports he received. The "agent" escaped, but A. had made around 100,000 lei. The old Burtsev figured out all this intrigue and got indignant: "That adventurer has manufactured an entire false GPU!" A. said cynically: "Why worry about the Siguranza?"

Lives like a bourgeois in Brussels, adores his wife, plays the stock market.

## Rossi

July, 1938. When the trial of the POUM was announced, went to the offices of *Populaire*: Magdaleine Paz, Angelo Tasca (Rossi). Lively discussion: they neither wished, nor were they able, to do anything. M. P. shows good will, is indignant, but feels powerless. The editorial board is not informed, is hostile to the extreme left, some influential members of the staff do not wish to enter a struggle against the Communists, even indirectly.

Rossi, excited and discouraged, attacked me:

"We have staked too much on moral force. You can lie, kill, multiply deceits and, as against us, appear correct before the working class. Look at that old bastard Cachin<sup>4</sup>: how many shameful actions, and how he is acclaimed! Their party is stronger than ours after years of rotten actions."

I: "Everything will turn out all right some day."

(How do I know?)

Rossi: "Yes, and it is perhaps you and I who will pay the costs of straightening out the accounts."

In short: What does one crime more or less in Spain matter? Exhaustion. Don't bother people from whom there is little to be gained. In the case of R., profound discouragement resulting from his experience with the Comintern.

M. P. is going to gather the signatures of writers. An attempt will be made just the same to get a short paragraph in *Populaire*.

It is a question of the existence of a group of comrades.

## Anton Ciliga

July 19, 1938. Saw Ciliga again, after having thought him lost: the foolishness of going to Yugoslavia. He got back from Belgrade, saved by his Italian passport and his reputation as a writer. Big, awkward, pale, glasses, brown hair, the air of a perpetual student who is beginning to get old.

Portrait of Yugoslavia: under control of the fascists, Italian and Ger. Slavophile elements, even the reactionary ones, are Francophile and pro-Soviet. The Communists, influential and persecuted, have organized demonstrations for Yvon Delbos.

Arrested, A. C. asked to be put in touch with a lawyer. The warden of the Belgrade prison told him: "You're lucky we haven't broken your back. No lawyers for Communists here."

False confessions were demanded of him on "the Moscow conspiracy."

Yugoslav Communists whom we knew in Russia and who were imprisoned in Yugoslavia, have revealed the whole activity of the party and the Comintern. Everything is known. (Probably broken by torture.)

Incident witnessed: in a corridor, a man who had gone through a beating

4. Marcel Cachin, leader of the French Stalinist party. Tasca himself is a former leader of the Italian CP who turned Social Democrat.

was soaking his swollen feet in a pail of water. Policemen were helping him stand up.

The warden of the prison threatened to smash A. C.'s ribs and break his back with a club. You die quickly from it after being moderately sentenced to three years' imprisonment. "*I gatov chelovychik!*" (And the good fellow is taken care of!)

Attitude of A. C.:

"I'm a political man, not a stoolpigeon.

"If you kill me it will create a scandal. Moreover, I am Italian."

"I won't say anything, even though you hold me for sixty years instead of sixty days.

"If you try me I will say that you tried to extract false confessions from me." Freed.

He is preoccupied with theoretical problems, is oriented toward an original form of libertarian syndicalism.

### The Klement Affair, Krivitsky

July 20, 1938. Rudolf Klement (Adolphe) kidnapped from his home. Gérard R. has written me: "His meal was ready on the table, nothing had been touched. . . ."

Meeting at the Café Madrid, Boul. Montmartre, with Walter (Krivitsky). He is nervous, gray, wrinkled, suspicious, stares at people uneasily, feels hunted, takes fright at everything. I questioned him on the Klement affair. He knows nothing. "The GPU certainly, but I can't figure it out at all."

W. K.: "Are you convinced that Klement was not himself always a member of 'our service'? Since Trotsky is rushing to form an organization for which history offers no base whatsoever it is in reality 'we' who must form it. . . ."

He spoke of the secret service as if he still belonged to it: "we."

I replied that I knew Kl. sufficiently well at Brussels to be reasonably convinced of his honesty. Sectarian and devoted.

W. K. (satirically): "Reasonably! You are naïve. If he was really influential he had to be an agent—or the work was badly done."

"All right, I think that the work was badly done."

He relaxed, told me he is being looked for. "In the end, they will find me." Complains of the nervousness of his wife. Then:

"Ah, if I had been listened to in '23! 'We' now would have Göring and we would be masters of Germany. We got together—the secret agents in Ger.—after the defeat of the insurrection. Nobody believed in the future of the little Nazi Party: schematic Marxism. I said: Everything is possible; in any case one of the leaders of this party must be ours. I proposed to place a man we could count on in it, a former officer, decorated and everything, a striking man—he would quickly have become one of the top-flight Nazi leaders. . . . He was given another role."

"But aren't there others in the Nazi Party?"

W. K.: "Obviously, but not on the top level. . . . Göring is, just the same, not with us. My man would have occupied Göring's place; he was much stronger."

Demoralized, egocentric, overwhelmed by little professional deformations,

frightfully sad, W. W. believes only in the omnipotence of the secret service, and the fear of assassination dominates him.

Returning to the Fourth Int., W. K. spoke to me about "Trust," that organization of counter-revolutionary "White" officers created abroad and in Moscow in '22 and '23. The GPU shot all of them, including the organizer, its agent, "for having used methods of police provocation."

### Brandler (Dzerzhinsky, Stalin, Semyonov)

December, 1938. We got together in the cafes of the Boulevard Montparnasse. On his large head he wore a black beret with the sides turned up like a burlesque magistrate's cap. He has a thick body on short legs, bent to one side; he is as deformed as a hunchback without being a hunchback. A great deal of malice in his look, an ironic and familiar tone. Laurette pleased him. "Ah, there are still pretty women among us!" he said with satisfaction. "I thought the emigration was to be doomed to the curse of not having any . . ."

The politics of his group, the CPO, cautious in regard to the USSR and full of reservations. He does not seem to despair of reforming the regime—either wishing to treat it cautiously in spite of everything or, in a demagogic sense, wishing to treat the masses cautiously who believe in it. But I was sharp and he did not get deeply involved in the discussion. The execution of Bukharin has overwhelmed him, destroying perhaps his last illusions.

We preferred to talk over memories. We used to get together at Moscow, in times of clandestinity, at the Lux, at L.'s, or at Duret's with Engler (Thalheimer was present). . . . The wife of L. was a stoolpigeon.

On Dzerzhinsky: "I had dinner one time at Kharkov with Dzer. and K. Radek. Dzer. related that during the red terror he had sometimes employed a subterfuge which consisted of publicizing executions which had not taken place. The effect was produced and lives were spared. . . . Dzer. said: 'Our Chekists are part saint and part assassin. . . .' Radek asked him brusquely: 'And you—what do you think you are? Saint or bandit?' Dzer. got pale, tightened his lips, got up from the table and went out."

On Stalin: "In regard to the affairs of the German CP. I had several cordial talks with him. He was simple, occasionally jovial, familiar, full of common sense and good peasant craftiness. . . . Rather likeable, attracting confidence. Very good fellow, seemed very well balanced. I cannot understand these hecatombs. . . . He must have lost his head."

B. thinks that in the Reiss affair, as well as in the Barcelona crimes, can be recognized the hand of Semyonov, that Sov.-Rev. terrorist who distinguished himself during the civil war in preparing assassination attempts against Bolsheviks, made a complete confession during the trial of the S-Rs in '22, went into the service of the CP, was charged with special missions—very special. "He must be basically a sadist, a professional terrorist, a systematic half-insane person." Easy to identify: lobe of one ear torn, bullet would below it. "He was in Spain. While being questioned, comrades noticed a man who had these wounds, sometimes on the right cheek, sometimes on the left, they say, and I do not know myself which is the good cheek."

VICTOR SERGE

## BOOKS IN REVIEW

### Dangerous Radicals

TWO FRIENDS OF MAN, by Ralph Korngold. Little, Brown, 425 pp., \$5.

The American past has recently been so diluted with liberal water that it begins to seem like a long record of ineffectuality and compromise. It is therefore pleasing to have this book, a full-scale biography of the two leaders of nineteenth century Abolitionism, William Lloyd Garrison and Wendell Phillips, who were distinguished precisely for their intransigence and readiness to defy popular views. Ralph Korngold has soaked his book in the Abolitionist atmospheres; his sympathies are, in the best sense of the term, Jacobin, and his book shows a tactful use of a materialist approach to American history which, because it does not vulgarize and oversimplify, is extremely welcome.

Korngold has centered his book on the personalities of the Abolitionist leaders, but since the contrast between Garrison and Phillips involves a major cleavage of perspective within Abolitionism, his approach is fruitful. Garrison was primarily what we should now call a propagandist: he edited the great Abolitionist paper, *The Liberator*, and served as organizer for the loosely-bound but nonetheless fiery American Anti-Slavery Society. An extraordinarily courageous man who was nearly lynched several times by Boston mobs, Garrison was the first to make popular in America the program of unconditional abolition of slavery. Yet he was a man of decided intellectual limitations, whose anti-slavery feeling lacked any larger or controlling social context and who mixed his Abolitionism with a variety of such semi-crank notions as prohibition.

### Views on Civil War

Phillips was something else. Where Garrison had come from a poor family and had had only a limited education, Phillips was one of the last and best of those Boston patricians who took seriously and selflessly the notion of "public service." He was capable of serious in-

tellectual generalization and eager, above all, to relate the seemingly isolated problem of slavery to a total pattern of social life. So long as the slavery question was unsettled, the two leaders could work together for their common end, and with regard to some tactical problems Garrison's greater flexibility of maneuver was perhaps more useful than Phillips' intransigence. But after the Civil War the distance between the two became clear: Garrison considered the fight for Negro freedom over, while Phillips, who grew more radical with age, insisted that the Negro problem involved more than the juridical abolition of slavery and required for its solution the economic rehabilitation of the Negro on the land. Phillips saw the need for an agrarian revolution in the South during the Reconstruction period; had his "harsh" program been carried out the entire cast of American history would have been changed for the better. But while it was to the interest of Northern capitalism to destroy slavery in the South, it feared the consequences of a fundamental democratic revolution in Southern agriculture at a time when the Northern labor movement was beginning to arise.

Phillips soon moved beyond the bounds of consistent Jacobinism or left-wing Republicanism. In his old age, after he had expended his considerable fortune in almost reckless charity, he joined in the formation of a short-lived Labor Party in Massachusetts and ran as its candidate for governor. To what extent he became a socialist is rather a moot point, not quite clarified by Korngold, but it is clear that he was at the very least moving toward socialism. Most important of all, he had come to understand the inter-relatedness of social phenomena: he saw that slavery, low wages, women's suffrage were problems arising within a common social context and comprehensible only against the background of an expanding American capitalism. The man who could have basked in the popularity of yesterday's radicalism became universally hated as a dangerous radical—which, indeed, he was.

Perhaps the most interesting section of

Korngold's book is his discussion of Phillips' position during the Civil War. Unlike Garrison, Phillips was strongly antagonistic to Lincoln, dredging up Lincoln's unsavory record on slavery, denouncing him for his failure bluntly to proclaim an end to slavery, and calling upon the North to prod Lincoln into transforming an inept military campaign into a dynamic revolutionary-democratic war. (Phillips called Lincoln a "first-rate second-rate man.") It is interesting to notice the similarity between Phillips' position and Trotsky's *vis à vis* Russia during the period in the mid-1920s when Trotsky put forward the famous "Clémenceau thesis." When denounced for criticizing Lincoln, Phillips replied, much like Trotsky, that his platform called for a more vigorous prosecution of the war against the South, possible only if it were transformed into a revolutionary crusade against slavery. There can be no question that Phillips' spirited agitation during the Civil War (he spoke to crowds of 40,000 and 50,000 regularly and was acknowledged the outstanding orator of his day) was a major factor in forcing Lincoln to announce the Emancipation Proclamation.

### Tonic for Our Times

What impresses one most about these men is their immense courage, their readiness to face mobs and jeers and calumnies with dignity and humor (Phillips' family tried to have him sent to a lunatic asylum when he became an Abolitionist!). They were, in their day and not only in their day, American radicals; and their radicalism took an uncompromising turn. When the Constitution was invoked to justify the Fugitive Slave Act, Garrison and Phillips publicly denounced the Constitution, and Garrison burned it at a public ceremony. So far as this reviewer can ascertain, Garrison wasn't even put on a "subversive" list, and since there were then no telephones his couldn't be tapped. . . .

Perhaps the only serious criticism a non-specialist can make of Korngold's book is that in his eagerness to show the immediate actuality of Abolitionism he has not analyzed with sufficient methodological rigor the ideas behind it. For such analysis the reader is urged to turn to the chapter on Phillips in Richard Hofstadter's *The American Political Tradition*. But Korngold's book is a bracing

tonic for our times, a reminder of the resources of American radicalism.

R. FAHAN

### A Service to Labor

LEFT, RIGHT AND CENTER, by Sidney Lens. 445 pp. Henry Regnery Co. \$4.00.

Somewhat belatedly we should like to comment on one of the few worthwhile labor books published in 1949. Sidney Lens' analysis of the conflicting forces in American labor is a genuine contribution to any serious understanding of America's trade unions.

Lens' penetrating observations of business unionism, his critique of CIO class collaboration, his devastating exposé of Stalinism's reactionary labor role, have not sold the book, but have doomed it to almost total disregard in the labor movement. It is true, of course, that *Ammunition*, the UAW-CIO monthly publication, did review it favorably, but that was an exceptional incident, even for the UAW-CIO, some of whose leaders have since learned to fear if not respect the power of ideas in books.

Among the many popular misconceptions which Lens destroys is one relating to racketeering in the union movement. Lens takes some of the notorious cases of recent years such as the Willie Bioff-Hollywood movie czars' agreement, and penetrates to the basic roots of this scandalous condition which is treated in the daily newspapers as if it were a sin confined solely to unionism. "The source of racketeers in the labor movement, then, is obvious," Lens concludes his chapter on "Racketeers and Their Allies." "Such men could hardly last five minutes without direct connivance of an employer or of a city political machine or both. They couldn't stay in business for a moment unless they could provide additional profits for unscrupulous employers or benefits for a political machine."

In rather compressed style, and thus perhaps unavoidably doing a certain injustice to the period, Lens sketches the history of radical movements in the labor movement, giving appropriate credit to the socialists and Wobblies of other days. But it is difficult to believe that on second thought Lens would write so sloppy a sentence, in dealing with the Stalin-Trotsky struggle, as this one: "The

difference between Trotsky and Stalin as day to day politicians at that time (1923-27) can probably be summarized by the fact that, whereas Stalin knew how to agree with anything 'in principle,' and then cut the heart out of it in practice, Trotsky, who fought viciously on matters of principle, yielded like a lamb in most matters of practice." Fortunately, the book as a whole avoids such insupportable assertions.

So little seems to be known today of the mass struggles which preceded the emergence of the CIO that Lens' section on the "Turning Point and the New Deal" deserves to be very widely read. It simply isn't true that the Stalinists led the big pre-CIO fights and that John L. Lewis and Franklin D. Roosevelt organized the CIO. The facts are there to see, and Lens presents them. However, we must quarrel with one important political opinion which Lens states in evaluating that turbulent epoch in labor history. "The sands of time were running low for those elements in the AFL leadership who recognized that the Green policy was incapable of checking the advance of radicalism. After three years of turmoil, growth, strikes and confusion, the Committee for Industrial Organization was formed in 1935 precisely for that purpose." This is more than mere over-simplification. It gives a lop-sided viewpoint on the historic importance of the CIO—and underestimates John L. Lewis nearly as much as a shoddy work like Saul Alinsky's *John L. Lewis* overestimates him. But this is an old quarrel between Lens and ourselves, and it should not be permitted to detract from the over-all value of his book.

We think a real service to the labor movement would be done if a nation-wide discussion in union circles could be started on Lens' ideas for the labor movement. These proposals are (1) amalgamation of the craft unions into an industrial structure; (2) unity of the AFL, CIO, railroad Brotherhoods, independent unions, etc.; (3) establishment of flexible councils of workers elected from related plants, related industries, or related geographical points; (4) rearming the city central bodies in both the AFL and CIO with the autonomous rights at least to conduct local organizational campaigns and give active guidance in local strikes; (5) creation of unions for the unemployed—both on relief and work projects

—with the united federation of labor; (6) formation of an educational alliance of progressive, socialist, and semi-socialist elements within the unions, whether AFL, CIO or independent, as a counterweight to both Stalinism and business unionism. This last point we think particularly important.

As an active man, an unaffiliated radical, and an author, Lens has done his share to contribute ideas toward a further advance of the union movement. His book consequently merits serious attention.

WALTER JASON

## Trapped in Emptiness

MEANING IN HISTORY, by Karl Löwith. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1949.

Antiquity did not develop a theory of progress. It viewed history as a cycle of birth, growth and death comparable to that observed in natural phenomena. Only in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, under the impact of changes wrought by early capitalism, was a theory of progress first articulated by such thinkers as Fontenelle, Vico, Turgot and Condorcet. By the end of the twentieth century the concept was hardly challenged.

World War I delivered the concept a crippling blow, somewhat mitigated by the promise of the Russian Revolution. The world economic crisis of the '30s, the rise of fascism, the degeneration of Russia, World War II, and the menace of an atomic war almost completely compromised the concept—to the point where it can hardly be said to exist outside of socialist circles, and even there it has been radically reformulated.

### Essentially Banal

Karl Löwith, the author of *Meaning in History*, is one of the survivors of the German professoriat which came to maturity during the unstable Weimar republic. He writes with considerable scholarship, skill in exegesis, urbanity, and epigrammatic provocativeness—all of which, unfortunately, is not sufficient to hide the banality of his essential ideas. Recently a professor at the Hartford Theological Seminary, he now teaches at the New School for Social Research in New York City, the happy diversity of

whose staff is bound together by a sophisticated anti-Marxism.

Of all the concepts of history covered in this volume, Löwith finds himself in accord with the ideas of Jacob Burckhardt, the well-known nineteenth century historian. That is to say, Löwith can find no meaning in history, only continuity. "To the critical mind," he states in opening this collection of essays, "neither a providential design nor a natural law of progressive development is discernible in the tragic human comedy of all times." This lack, however, is of no real "consequence to a genuine Christian faith in God, as revealed in Christ and hidden in nature and history." Wisdom consists "not the least in disillusion and resignation, in freedom from illusion and presumptions." Man's "planning and guessing, his designs and decisions, far-reaching as they may be, have only a partial function in the wasteful economy which engulfs them, tosses them, and swallows them."

Working his way backwards in history, Löwith attempts to show that modern theories of progress are basically only successively secular translations of Jewish-Christian eschatological hopes, of belief in future fulfillment. The examination begins with Marx and progresses through Hegel, Proudhon, Comte, Condorcet, Turgot, Voltaire, Vico, Bossuet, Joachim, Augustine, Orosius, and ends with the Biblical view of history.

Löwith bases a good deal of his indictment of Marxism upon the *Communist Manifesto*, whose inspiration he views as deriving from Jewish messianism and prophetism. It is, "first of all, a prophetic document, a judgment, and a call to action and not at all a purely scientific statement based on the empirical evidence of tangible facts." In Marx's doctrine surplus value corresponds to original sin, the proletariat to the chosen people, the bourgeoisie to the children of darkness, the revolution to the last judgment, the communist society to the Kingdom of God. In sum, it "is only in Marx's 'ideological' consciousness that all history is a history of class struggles, while the real driving force behind this conception is a transparent messianism which has its unconscious roots in Marx's own being, even in his race. He was a Jew of Old Testament stature, though an emancipated Jew of the nineteenth century who felt strongly anti-religious and

even anti-Semitic. It is the old Jewish messianism and prophetism—unaltered by two thousand years of economic history from handicraft to large-scale industry. . . ."

### Genetic Fallacy

We are dealing here with an example of the genetic fallacy. Assuming that everything Löwith says is true, to explain the origin of Marx's ideas is not necessarily to refute them. Marx's theories might well be true even if they originated whole or in part out of Christian-Jewish eschatological thinking. Here Löwith was obligated to review the startling verifications of Marx's economic, political, and social insights in the history of the real world—as Löwith did with the random, unsystematized thoughts of Burckhardt, with whose ideas he is sympathetic. Marx's insights were based upon a wealth of empirically derived data, which is not examined at all. It is, after all, upon the material in *Capital* that Marx's case fundamentally rests.

In general, Löwith's inspection is made on the ideological level, to the exclusion of material factors. If the Christian-Jewish messianic trend was as decisive as Löwith suggests, it is legitimate to ask why the origin of a theory of progress was deferred until the rise of early modern capitalism. Material factors would seem to have been decisive. Finally, assuming that there are eschatological elements in Marx (derived, say, from French socialist theory) another question poses itself: just what are their specific weight as against other, and more secular, factors?

In dealing with nineteenth century figures like Hegel and Comte, where religious antecedents are not only obvious but admitted by the theorists as well, Löwith's insights are more authentic. Applied to earlier thinkers his erudition and his analyses are useful in elucidating the thought of periods when almost all ideas had a religious investiture. Since the death of Marx and Engels a mass of historical writing has been done which has, for obvious reasons, not been assimilated by the socialist movement. Löwith's work does something toward closing the gap.

But as far as illuminating the modern dilemma is concerned, he has hardly a useful thing to say. His work here is



anti-Marxism of a more distinguished order than the usual domestic run, but basically he is no more original.

At the risk of being accused of possessing the mentality of the *terribles simplificateurs* whom Löwith inveighs against, it is difficult for the reader not to conclude that Löwith's essays are a product of that culture which Burckhardt foretold would be caught between "the emancipated working class from below and the military hierarchy from above."

"Disgusted by contemporary history," say Löwith, articulating his own belief as well, "Burckhardt escaped to Italy to write his *Cicerone* and to collect material for *The Age of Constantine*. . . . Feeling that minor amendments would not do when the whole social body is in anarchy, he resolved to retire into a sort of Stoic-Epicurean privacy."

It is the classic confession that a line of thought has reached a dead end.

JAMES M. FENWICK

## "Righting" History

LA LUTTE DE CLASSES SOUS LA PREMIERE REPUBLIQUE, by Daniel Guérin. (Vol. 1, 511 pp., Vol. 2, 472 pp.) Collection "La Suite des Temps," NRF, Gallimard, Paris.

The problem of writing history from a Marxist and revolutionary viewpoint is hardly a new one, although a field in which, unfortunately, little progress can be noted. On the one hand, those few efforts to set up scholarly Marxist societies or institutes for historic research have either petered out for reasons beyond the control of their initiators, or degenerated into reactionary and propagandistic centers of little or no value, as is the case with the famous Marx-Engels Institute. From another angle, the capacity and possibility for "objective" and meritorious Marxist history has never been subjected to a definitive test since those few who have made contributions in this field have been men of such outstanding talent and ability that, so to speak, their very personalities and creativeness made success inevitable and their works worthy of study.

Thus in the field of historic writings Marxism has several great historians to its credit (Marx, Engels, Mehring, Trot-

sky, Pokrovsky, Kautsky), but no substantial, well-developed school of historians exists or has existed. This may argue well for the insistence of Marxism upon the relationship between history and the making of history, but it cannot convince those who question Marxism as a science of society capable of writing a penetrating, revolutionary history of that society.

Daniel Guérin, author of *Fascism and Big Business*, and a long-time militant in the socialist movement of France, devoted five years to his elaborate, two-volume history of the French Revolution as seen from the standpoint of its inner class forces and struggles. While accepting the remark of the well-known French writer Raymond Aron to the effect that objectivity does not mean impartiality, but *universality*, it is questionable whether Guérin's achievement will rank high in the field of Marxist history.

It is regrettable that Guérin's work has not received the attention it merits, if only for the thought and reflection it provokes on the problems facing revolutionary historians. THE NEW INTERNATIONAL has likewise erred in not recognizing the energy, devotion and care which Guérin has given to this absorbing task of reevaluating the Great Revolution. While we cannot hail the results of the author's work with equal conviction, it must be recognized that the effort made by Guérin has much to teach us.

It is not the intention of this review to give a detailed or critical account of the two volumes. For those interested in such a review, by a scholar and specialist in the field, we refer to the work of R. R. Palmer of Princeton University (in *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. XIX, No. 4, December, 1947). An evaluation of Guérin's sources and an estimate of his critical polemics against the classic analysts of the French Revolution (Michelet, Jaurès, Mathiez, etc.) may be found in the article of this reviewer who approaches the work from the standpoint of modern historical scholarship. We shall concern ourselves here only with the manner of approach and the spirit in which Guérin has carried out his work.

### Proletarian Historian

It must be said in all frankness that Guérin's execution leaves much to be desired. He has given us a splendid exam-

ple of sectarian and doctrinaire historical writing carried out to such a degree that, at times, one feels he is reading a fantastic anachronism. Guérin describes himself as a "proletarian historian" whose purpose it is to analyze the Great Revolution from a proper "class" view. No previous historian has done this; no one has applied Marx's concept of the permanent revolution (later developed in Trotsky's theory) to an understanding of the 1789-93 period. Michelet wrote his history from the viewpoint of a "moderate democrat"; Jaurès was actually a "bourgeois republican" whose work failed to reach the level of good Social-Democratic history; Mathiez was blinded by his petty-bourgeois ideology which led him to glorify and misrepresent Robespierre—i.e., the petty-bourgeois leader of the revolution.

These men have written "bourgeois" history; Guérin sets out to write "proletarian," revolutionary history which he sadly interprets to be Marxist history. The hero of his work is the *sans culotte*, the *bras nu*—the proletariat. But since Marxist history has a class and revolutionary objective, Guérin does not spare us his conclusion. The French masses today must reject the French Revolution as it was; it did not constitute a step toward their ultimate liberation. "*An authentic Marxist analysis should contribute to detaching the modern proletariat from the bourgeois orbit, by showing the false light in which the French Revolution has ordinarily been presented to it and revealing that even at that time, though in rudimentary forms, the struggle was engaged between rich and poor.*"

It is clear from both context and general tone that by "struggle" Guérin means the *main* struggle. In fact, at one point Guérin insists that the same problems, in essence and content, exist today!

### Confusing Revolutions

This approach—to put it mildly—dominates these two lengthy volumes. But it assumes a specific and detailed form. It is true, as the author tells us, that we may much better understand a former revolution in the light of a later one. Properly understood, the experience of the Russian Revolution helps us to penetrate the nature of the French Revolution more rapidly and with greater ease. But if we wish to transpose the content, terminology, situation and conditions of

the latter to the former, then, far from understanding, we end up in a monstrous distortion and an absurd caricature of what we are studying.

This, regretfully, seems to have been the result achieved by Guérin. He confuses Marx's early formulation of the "revolution in permanence" with Trotsky's elaborate working out of the conception; he confuses primitive, ideologically weak and undeveloped *san culottes* of 1789 (or rather, to be more exact, a small leftist *vanguard* of this broad, indeterminate and embryonic class) with the Bolshevik-led proletariat of Czarist Russia; he fails to understand that the divisions within the ranks of the bourgeoisie (Jacobin vs. Girondin, etc.) were of far greater importance to the French Revolution than divisions within the ranks of the working class; he fails to understand the difference between the narrowly commercial and plundering aspects of the foreign wars engaged in by revolutionary France and their objectively historic results in battering down feudalism, etc. In a word, Guérin looks at the French Revolution from the position of a man who would examine the stars by doubling over and sticking his head between his legs. The rush of blood to the head (in Guérin this takes the form of angry indignation directed at the bourgeois leaders, Robespierre, Saint-Just, Danton, etc.) would tend somewhat to influence what is seen.

### Error in Method

How well it would have been for Guérin to have paid attention to Engels' remarks on the Marxist technique of writing history, or to have taken the examples set by the great Marxists! Engels pointed out that Marxism, far from oversimplifying and denaturing the process of writing history, required an analysis, synthesis and fitting into a whole of an infinite variety of facts, forces and currents; that the basic tenets of Marxism were levers and instruments for sifting, ordering and organizing the material of history so as to give a broad, overall view not with the impossible aim of achieving an alleged "objectivity," but a *universality*—i.e., the place of this or that event or happening in the history of mankind. In this respect, of course, every Marxist (except Guérin) has understood the French Revolution as one of the most progressive, revolutionary



and glorious events in human history. To say that a Robespierre is a "reactionary" because he was not Lenin or Trotsky is to make a mockery of Marxist methodology. May we merely note that even Guérin recognizes that the death of Robespierre marked the definite halting of the revolution's progress, *even* in bourgeois-democratic terms.

Is it necessary to say that an embryonic struggle, a foretaste of the future class struggles of 1832, 1848 and 1871 already existed within the context of the French Revolution? Surely recognition of this situation cannot have been the compelling factor in the arduous labors of the author. Jacques Rous, the *Enragés* and Herbertistes, Babeuf and his supporters all take their place in the history of the revolutionary working class, but let that be a properly understood place. The fatal error in Guérin's methodology is his effort to impose the criticism, standards and possibilities of the Russian Revolution upon the French Revolution.

Henry JUDD

## Germany Surveyed

LES TEMPS MODERNES, Nos. 46-47, August-September, 1949. Special Issue on Germany, 374 pp.; Director, Jean-Paul Sartre, 30, Rue de l'Université, Paris vii.

This brief review is only to bring to the attention of our readers who have a reading knowledge of the French language what is surely the most valuable survey on contemporary Germany yet produced. In this double number of *Les Temps Modernes*, the magazine published by Sartre—incidentally, one of the best socio-literary magazines produced in the world today—has assembled a series of articles and documents on Germany which give the reader a collective, overall view of that land. The outstanding merit of this work, edited by Elie Gabey, is the fact that it is entirely the product of German authors, journalists, critics and writers.

The issue is divided into three sections: War and Resistance Movement; the Occupation; and Germany: Year Zero, a section containing a cultural and sociological survey of the country today. There are articles on the type and quality of the German resistance movement,

written by participants who objectively weigh its failure; studies of German soldiers in action and German occupation techniques; reports on the politics of occupation, including some written by SED members and supporters; and, finally, studies of German literature and its new problems, the "Jewish question" in Germany, German contemporary science and art, including an article on the revival of psychotherapy and psychoanalysis since the end of the war.

To single out a few of the outstanding articles is not easy, but we may mention Hugo Buschmann's article on the resistance movement; a study of German refugees in Germany by Marnix (who estimates there are now 14,000,000 refugees within the Western zones); Otto Hess' piece on how the Stalinists took over the University of Berlin; Eugen Kogon's excellent study on German reactions to the problem of the concentration camps, and many interesting pieces on problems of German art, literature, etc. Nor should we neglect to mention a fascinating study by Hilde Thurnwald, a trained sociologist, on family life in Berlin.

The editor of this issue has done well to include several pieces written by German Stalinists. The reader is once more struck by the leveling effect that Stalinism has upon both thought and style. The resemblance between Stalinist "intellectuals," no matter how diverse and unrelated is their respective national origin, is something deadly to behold.

The diversity of opinion and attitude of those Germans who live in the Western part of divided Germany is, under the circumstances, a sign of recovery and health. Many viewpoints, ranging from liberal and religious intellectuals to Social-Democrats and revolutionary socialists, are represented.

It would be impossible to comment on all that is contained within this issue except to repeat that it is unquestionably the best study of Germany yet to appear. This is the real Germany, seen from within! Copies may be obtained by writing to the address of *Les Temps Modernes*, listed above. HENRY JUDD

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