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January 1941

# Fourth International

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## *WORLD WAR II-1940-41*

### **1. Collapse of Bourgeois Democracy**

*By George Stern*

### **2. March of Military Events**

*By Joseph Hansen*

### **3. U.S. Imperialism Grasps Its Destiny**

*By William F. Warde*

### **4. The Crisis in the Soviet Union**

*By John G. Wright*

*A NEW GREAT WRITER . . . By Leon Trotsky*

*OUR LENIN . . . . . The Editors*

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Twenty Cents

## Manager's Column

We hope the speed and regularity with which recent successive issues of **FOURTH INTERNATIONAL** have come off the press have not been lost upon our reading public. The determination of the staff to stabilize the publication dates of the magazine has so far borne good and substantial fruit, at a time when the most objective proof of our moving upward is to watch our fellow political publications steadily sink.

Our pride, however, need not stop at the mere mechanical accomplishment of regular and uninterrupted appearance upon the stands (and this in itself is no mean achievement, we assure you!). Our quality has been the cause for enthusiastic comment from every part of the world. Enthusiastic appreciations of the content of the magazine as a whole have been supplemented by "fan letters" to the editors and writers on individual articles.

Conditions being what they are in other countries, our co-thinkers in foreign lands have had to rely in many instances exclusively upon us for information and contact with the world revolutionary movement. They await every issue with impatience and it is our policy to supply them with ever-increasing copies of the magazine in recognition of our historical responsibility to them and ourselves. Despite the difficulties and sometimes even hazards involved, we still hear from England, Canada, Australia, Norway and Sweden; we learn that the copies of **FOURTH INTERNATIONAL** are passed from hand to hand and occasionally from city to city to be read with eagerness and interest.

Here in America the recent phenomenal development of our brother publication, the weekly **SOCIALIST APPEAL**, into a mass instrument of agitation (an accomplishment unique in the world today!) has thrown upon our shoulders an enhanced responsibility. Where the **SOCIALIST APPEAL**, as an agitational organ, has awakened a hunger in the minds of workers for a knowledge of the technique of class action, **FOURTH INTERNATIONAL** must follow through with the theoretical meat.

The days through which we live now are the most precious of our entire history and if we fail to utilize them to the maximum we will have lost a chance for which we shall pay later. Now as never before we must meet every need of an awaken-

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ing working class with the revolutionary material carried in the columns of **FOURTH INTERNATIONAL**. If we were not so violently averse to quotations we would recall right here and now that it was Lenin who said that the press is the movement's best organizer.

Some parts of the country are alert to the needs and opportunities of the times. Boston says: "We have been going house-to-house with the magazine to special contacts and have been selling them." Milwaukee reports: "We are experimenting (and getting good results) with a five-

weeks - of - the - **APPEAL** - and - a - copy - of - **F. I.** - for - 25c. campaign. That way we get the **F. I.** into **APPEAL** buyers' hands. We hope to build up a **F. I.** sale that way." Montana writes: "Had good luck this time selling the **F. I.** It was very good. Sold three to Stalinists; one of them said the **APPEAL** and **F. I.** were the only revolutionary papers that were left." Philadelphia tells us that it has resolved to try the method of house-to-house distribution and feels enthusiastic about the possibilities of extending our circulation there.

We rely heavily upon bundle-order payments to cover our publication costs, and a display of responsibility in this direction shown by any city is enough to pull us right up out of the dust and set us shining in the sun. To the top of the list this time go Minneapolis, Toledo and Quakertown, who are paid up to date on their bundle accounts and are seriously attending to the business of extending **F. I.** circulation in their cities. Four places came through with conscientious regularity on their payments during November and December: Chicago, Minneapolis, Philadelphia and Milwaukee. Chicago ran away with all honors by remitting a total of \$34.50 in the two months, much of it having been raised by means of a social affair held specifically to find the wherewithal to reduce its old debt to us.

But the medal has another side, and on it are graven the following names: Fresno, Los Angeles, San Diego, San Francisco, Indianapolis, Baltimore, Cleveland, Youngstown, Portland, Allentown, two Texas cities, Seattle. These are the ones who have paid just nothing for the last two months. These are the ones over whom we sit up nights worrying. If they don't hop around to the other side of the medal pretty quickly we shall have to start considering methods of liquidation. (We wonder, by the way, as we peruse the first four names, what has happened to that notoriously touchy west-coast pride. And with three of the names redolent of angels and saints!)

Detroit heads the list when it comes to rounding up expired subscriptions, although we cannot be too critical in this respect since there has hardly been time for most of the cities to show their stuff on this month's expirations. We do know, however, that in the first five days of January more subscriptions have come in to the publication office than normally arrive in the course of half a month.

THE MANAGER

## WRITTEN BY TROTSKY

*Manifesto of the Fourth International*

# The Imperialist War

and the

# Proletarian World Revolution

A 48-page pamphlet on—

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# FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

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## Our Lenin

By THE EDITORS

Our party is organizing Lenin Memorial meetings during this month (Lenin died January 21, 1924). These meetings are not rituals; we devote them to presenting the completely contemporary *program* of Lenin, the only program which can put an end to this war and to all wars.

This great task of resuscitating Lenin's program is made all the more necessary by the ritualistic pageants which the Stalinists are conducting under the name of "Lenin Memorial" meetings. Perhaps the best way to describe these Stalinist incantations is to recall Lenin's description of what the Social Democracy did to Marx's program:

"During the lifetime of great revolutionaries, the oppressing classes have visited relentless persecution on them and received their teaching with the most savage hostility, the most furious hatred, the most ruthless campaign of lies and slanders. After their death, attempts are made to turn them into harmless icons, canonise them, and surround their *names* with a certain halo for the 'consolation' of the oppressed classes and with the object of duping them, while at the same time emasculating and vulgarising the *real essence* of their revolutionary theories and blunting their revolutionary edge. At the present time, the bourgeoisie and the opportunists within the labor movement are cooperating in this work on adulterating Marxism."\*

Today, likewise, the bourgeois enemies of Leninism are cooperating with the Stalinists in the adulteration of Leninism. From the Pope down to Professor Sidney Hook, they insist that Stalin is the true heir of Lenin; and though they say so for hostile purposes, their assertions are grist to Stalin's mill.

The Lenin portrayed in these Stalinist meetings and Stalinist literature has about as much life in him as the grotesque mummy which the Kremlin keeps on display in Red Square. In the seventeen years since Lenin's death, the history of the Russian Revolution, the story of Lenin's life, has been rewritten and rewritten at Stalin's behest. In 1923-1926, it was rewritten to demote Trotsky and glorify Stalin and his collaborators of that period, Zinoviev, Rykov, Tomsky, Bukharin, etc. In 1926 Zinoviev and Kamenev were demoted retroactively. In 1929 Bukharin and the rest were demoted also. With each succeeding year Stalin's new exigencies dictated further alterations in the written record. With the massacre in the Moscow Trials of the generation which made the Russian Revolution, the story of Lenin's life is re-told to picture his closest collaborators as agents of German and world imperialism in 1918 or earlier! With the murder of Trotsky, who established for all time the guilt of the Stalin School of Falsification, the Kremlin's professors are spurred to add new and still newer laurels to Stalin's crown. Our children will find it hard to grasp, how such a fantastic masquerade could be conducted so solemnly.

And the Lenin that emerges from this Stalinist literature!

To those who understand anything at all about Lenin's place in the Russian Revolution, it is clear how Lenin guided the whole work of the Bolshevik party. He had a realistic understanding of his leading role. Details, administrative tasks, he left to others; his luminous mind surveyed the totality of the process and provided the broader vision which those preoccupied with specific functions might lack. He made a sharp distinction between political leadership and administration. He underlined that distinction, in his Testament—his last letter to the party—by chiding Trotsky for a "disposition to be far too much attracted by the purely administrative side of affairs." This criticism was, at the same time, the greatest tribute he could pay Trotsky: he was insisting that Trotsky must be the kind of political leader that Lenin was. This profound conception of Lenin's was one of his major contributions to the theory of leadership.

### Stalin Retouches Lenin's Portrait

But Stalin must erase it. Not only by keeping Lenin's Testament from the party—to this day it has not been published, for it concludes with Lenin's proposal to remove Stalin, as "rude" and "disloyal," from his post as General Secretary of the party. But also by creating a picture of Lenin in Stalin's image: a bureaucratic administrator.

One of the latest instances of this rewriting of Lenin's life is "The October Days 1917," by one I. Mintz, just published by the Stalinists. Let us cite one example; it would take a book to analyse all the lies in this little pamphlet.

The All-Russian Congress of Soviets was in session at Smolny the night of October 25-26, 1917 (old style calendar). The debates of that night have passed into history as one of the great landmarks of revolution. Trotsky was the spokesman for the Bolsheviks against the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries. All the great questions of revolution were at issue. Lenin was not there for the same reason that he had not been present in public for months; the party feared the counter-revolutionists would try to murder him. The booming of guns was heard in the session: the attack on the Winter Palace. With its capture and the victory of the revolution in Petrograd, Lenin emerged publicly and appeared the next day, at the second session of the Congress. During the attack on the Winter Palace, Lenin spent the night in a room at Smolny, lying on the floor on makeshift pallets side by side with Trotsky, who left from time to time to take the floor at the Congress and answer the opponents of the Bolsheviks. This story is familiar enough to all students of the revolution. The State Publishers published it in Moscow (to name but one source) in Trotsky's "On Lenin, Materials for a Biographer," published April 6, 1924.

But Stalin must erase it. For how can he explain why he,

\* *State and Revolution*, Chap. I.

whom all his minions proclaim as Lenin's co-organizer of the revolution, did not act as spokesman for the Bolsheviks at that session of the Congress? Stalin's alibi must be established—and for that, Lenin must be joined with him. So Mintz writes:

"Neither Lenin nor Stalin spoke at this sitting of the Congress. The two organizers of the victorious revolution were engaged in work of exceptionally great importance at the time. The Provisional Government had left Petrograd only a two-day supply of bread and flour, hoping in this way to make the Bolsheviks' first gift to the people—hunger. All day and all night Lenin and Stalin worked at organizing armed detachments, placing a Bolshevik in command of each, and sending them out to search the city, to scour the stations, to open all railroad cars, but to find flour or grain. And on the 26th of October the leaders of the revolution received the report: grain sufficient for ten days had been found." (*Mintz*, p. 56.)

So "all day and all night"—the day and night when the conquest of power was at stake—Lenin worked at a task which any minor functionary would have been sufficient to carry out. But Lenin must toil at this administrative task, for otherwise, where is Stalin?

We have chosen one of Stalin's secondary falsifications of Lenin's life, in order to show how the very web and woof of that life is rendered meaningless by the Kremlin's lies.

\* \* \*

## In Lenin's Name

Yet the distortions of the written record are the least important. The most terrible blows to Lenin's program are the daily *ukases* of the Kremlin. The usurpers of Lenin's mantle are his mortal enemies. In his name they perpetrate the worst crimes against his doctrine.

"The most important, fundamental thing in Bolshevism and in the Russian October Revolution," declared Lenin, "is the drawing into politics of precisely those who were the most oppressed under capitalism... The essence of Bolshevism, the essence of Soviet power is in this, in concentrating all state power in the hands of the toilers and the exploited masses." What an indictment of Stalin's regime, with its ruthless extermination of all means of expression for Soviet public opinion, its one-ticket "elections," its factory-jails, its deification of the Kremlin oligarchy!

Lenin understood that, for the masses to rule, they must have education. Hence the provisions for education in the Program of the Communist Party, adopted March, 1919:

"1. Free and compulsory general and polytechnical education for all children of both sexes up to the age of 17...

"4. All students must be supplied with food, clothing, footwear, text books and all other school accessories at the expense of the state."

Stalin has wiped this out. His final step was the *ukase* of October 2, 1940, abolishing free education and establishing child labor for those thus driven out of the schools. The Stalinist attempts to justify this starkly reactionary move read like pages out of anti-education speeches by Catholic prelates or finance-capitalists in the United States:

"The existence up to now of free education... and the extension of state subsidies to almost all the students have in some cases produced negative results. A kind of 'leveling' process took place. Both the talented and conscientious student, as well as those with little gifts and without inclination to apply themselves, used to be equally subsidized by the state... Many of our students haven't really appreciated the boons of higher education which they received without any exertion on their own part. Henceforth the situation is altered. Now, when education and institutions must be paid for, every student will approach his studies

with a greater sense of responsibility, and will understand the need of working stubbornly...

"Free education has to a certain extent lowered the value of education in the eyes of a section of parents and students. Up to now when instruction was free, many parents viewed with equanimity and indifference all facts relating to their children's lack of success. The introduction of fees... will impel even such parents to interest themselves systematically concerning how well or poorly their children are studying." (*Pravda*, October 22, 1940.)

What reactionary American opponent of mass education can improve on this argument of the Kremlin against free education?

The American hirelings of the Kremlin defend this, like everything else. In the January issue of *Soviet Russia Today*, Jessica Smith writes:

"But in the USSR one does not need to attend college to be an honored member of society. Most honored of all Soviet citizens are those Stakhanovite workers of factory and field who acquired their higher skills working at the bench or driving a tractor... Thousands of Soviet workers receive their college education while on the job or through correspondence courses. Experience has shown that the best scholastic results are achieved by those students in the higher institutions who have put in several years of practical work before attending college."

There is no crime of Stalin's that these prostitutes will not defend. And in the name of the Lenin who wrote into the fundamental Bolshevik program the principle of universal free elementary and polytechnic education for all up to the age of 17—the Lenin who wrote that in the midst of the havoc wrought by war and civil war. Twenty-one years after Lenin wrote it, Stalin finally wipes it out altogether. In spirit and most of its content, it has been wiped out for many years.

\* \* \*

## Lenin's Method

"Say what is." That was Lenin's way. Never to lie to the workers. To tell them the truth, the whole bitter truth, for only thus could victory be achieved. One has only to recall typical remarks of Lenin; they constitute in themselves an annihilating indictment of the Kremlin's Byzantine doctrine of infallibility:

"It is impermissible to be afraid to acknowledge defeats. One must learn in the experience of defeats... Were we to permit the viewpoint that the admission of defeats provokes, as does the surrender of positions, apathy and weakening of energy in the struggle, then it is necessary to say that such revolutionists are not worth a damn... And therefore it is necessary to speak flatly. This is vital and important not only from the standpoint of theoretical truth but also from the practical side. It is impossible to learn how to solve our tasks through new methods today if our experience of yesterday has failed to open our eyes to the incorrectness of the old methods."

Lenin would not for a moment delude the Soviet workers and hide from them the real situation. They were in great danger; they must be told so. The victory of the revolution in one country was not and could not be a secure victory; they must be told so. That is how he talked, for example, on the third anniversary of the revolution:

"We knew all the time and we will not forget, that our cause is an international cause, and that so long as in all states—including the wealthiest and most civilized—the revolution is not accomplished, so long will our victory remain only half a victory, or perhaps even less."

In July 1921, Lenin summarized the situation: "We have got a certain equilibrium, although extremely fragile, extremely unstable, nevertheless such an equilibrium that a socialist

republic can exist—of course not for long—in a capitalist environment.” “Of course not for long”—that was Lenin’s way: *Say what is*.

Stalin’s policy is the opposite of Lenin’s. Stalin has capitulated to the capitalist environment, to win toleration from the capitalists by serving, now one capitalist group, now another. This policy, the polar opposite of Lenin’s international revolutionary program, cannot be carried out with even lip-service to Lenin’s conceptions. Therefore, while usurping Lenin’s mantle, Stalin had to justify his own policy in words completely alien to those of Lenin. Lenin’s conception was denounced as Trotskyism by Stalin:

“In what consists the essence of Trotskyism?

“The essence of Trotskyism consists in this, that it first of all denies the possibility of constructing socialism in the USSR by the forces of the working class and of the peasantry in our land. What does this mean? This means that if in the near future the victorious world revolution does not come to our assistance then we shall have to capitulate to the world bourgeoisie . . . Is it possible when one holds such views to arouse the many-millioned masses of the working class to enthusiasm for tolling, to socialist competition to mass shock-brigadeism . . . ? . . . Deprive them of the assurance of building socialism and you will have successfully destroyed all basis for competition, for raising the productivity of labor, for seeking to become shock-brigaders.” (Stalin at the 16th Party Conference, June 27, 1930, Russian edition, p. 51).

These words reveal a world hostile to Lenin in everything. To argue that the possible truth may discourage the workers—Lenin scorned such people as “not worth a damn.” The cynicism of the task-master and bureaucrat leaks out of Stalin’s words and cannot be hidden. He “encourages” the workers, not only with lies, but with jails and firing squads. His is the world of the bureaucratic caste, which has raised itself on the temporary exhaustion of the revolution, which will fall with the resurgence of the revolution, and therefore is incapable of deeds or thoughts except those inimical to the revolution.

\* \* \*

### The Death Agony of Stalinism

There is a note of madness, increasingly more pronounced, in the Stalinist re-writing of the history of the Russian Revolution. The falsifications are ever more crude, and all the more wildly insisted upon. The gap between reality and assertion is at least as deep as that between the world in-

side and outside an insane asylum. But Stalin and his hirelings must go on trying to bridge this unbridgeable gap.

Why? Unless this is understood it is impossible to understand either the internal politics of the Soviet Union or the role of the GPU internationally. To understand it is to understand that Stalinism is in its death agony. The GPU’s murder of Trotsky was a bestial act of vengeance against Leninism; but it was one of the last acts of desperation of the doomed regime of Stalin.

Trotsky explained this just before his assassination; “There has developed on the foundation of the October revolution a new privileged caste which concentrates in its hands all power and which devours an ever greater portion of the national income . . . Stalin’s absolutism does not rest on the traditional authority of ‘divine grace’, nor on ‘sacred’ and ‘inviolable’ private property, but on the idea of communist equality. This deprives the oligarchy of a possibility of justifying its dictatorship with any kind or rational and persuasive arguments . . . The ruling caste is compelled systematically to lie, to paint itself up, don a mask, and ascribe to critics and opponents motives diametrically opposite to those impelling them. Anyone who comes out in defense of the toilers against the oligarchy is immediately branded by the Kremlin as a supporter of capitalist restoration. This standardized lie is not accidental: it flows from the objective position of the caste which incarnates reaction while swearing by the revolution . . . Lies, slander, persecution, false accusations, juridical comedies, flow inexorably from the position of the usurping bureaucracy in Soviet society.”

Lenin’s program still lives in the foundations of the Soviet Union, in the nationalized economy, in the hearts and minds of the Soviet peoples. The Stalinist bureaucracy, in its very lies and crimes, involuntarily recognizes that it has failed to extirpate the October revolution.

Internationally, Lenin’s program lives on in the program of the Trotskyist movement. Just as the totalitarian regime of the Kremlin has failed to destroy the foundations of the Russian Revolution within the borders of the Soviet Union, so it has failed in all its desperate attempts to destroy our movement throughout the world. We have buried our dead only to return all the more irreconcilably to the struggle for Lenin’s program.

Lenin’s program will be the program of the human race. Our Memorial to Lenin can be nothing less than that.

# Collapse of Bourgeois Democracy

By GEORGE STERN

Scores of thousands died in the first year of the Second World War. Nations fell. Frontiers were obliterated. But these were only the opening phases of cataclysms yet to come. The major casualty of the war in 1940 was the political system of bourgeois democracy. It has been wiped off the continent of Europe. Its remnants elsewhere in the world must soon in their turn also disappear.

Bourgeois democracy was the supreme political expression of an expanding capitalist order. With the decline of capitalism it became an intolerable overhead charge for the reactionary bourgeoisie. For a generation now humanity has been confronted with the questions: By whom is it to be displaced? By what is it to be replaced? The first world war exposed the rotting core of a social and political system that

no longer corresponded to the productive capacities and human needs of the modern world. That conflict ushered in a great epoch of social transformation, of revolution and counter-revolution.

The initial surge of proletarian revolution which arose out of the war of 1914-18 expressed the desire of millions of the exploited to put an end to capitalism and its pseudo-democratic trappings and to replace them with a socialist order based upon a world-wide proletarian democracy. This revolutionary upsurge was stemmed everywhere but in Russia. Out of the isolation of the workers’ state in Russia came the grotesque deformities of the Stalin regime. Out of the defeats of the revolution elsewhere came the prolongation of the capitalist crisis. Fresh revolutionary opportunities were presented

in the two decades following the war, in Germany, in China, in Austria, in Belgium, in France, and in Spain. Thanks to the Second International of Wels-Bauer-Vandervelde-Blum-Prieto and the Third International of Stalin-Thaelmann-Thorez, these historic opportunities were transformed, one after another, into fresh and even more crushing defeats for the world proletariat.

The crisis of German capitalism—the most intolerably acute in Europe during the post-war decades—was thus “solved” not by the proletarian revolution but by the victory of Fascism. Hitler destroyed the workers’ organizations, liquidated all democratic institutions, and embarked systematically upon the task of converting German economy into a coordinated war machine based upon the complete enslavement of the people. In the rest of Western Europe the crisis was little less acute in the ‘thirties. The effort of the working class to impose its solution was successfully thwarted by the Second and Third Internationals. The bourgeois democratic regimes passed into varying degrees of Bonapartism—government by decree and by military-police dictatorship. The new imperialist war overtook them before indigenous Fascist movements could complete the demolition of the out-lived democratic states. The unloosed hordes of German Fascism assumed this task and quickly carried it out, for the weakened, semi-Bonapartist bourgeois democracies proved totally incapable of withstanding the totalitarian onslaught.

Europe fell to Hitler. The rotten military dictatorship of Poland crumbled before him. Then Norway, Denmark, Holland, Belgium, France, and most recently Rumania, went down in turn. German imperialism undertook itself to “solve” the crisis of capitalism in Europe by transforming the continent into German domain. But in his very conquests, Hitler personifies the crisis of world capitalism. He represents the effort of the system to preserve its profits by basing them upon the total enslavement of the masses. The capitalist system as we have known it is threshing about in a suicidal agony of which Hitler is the prime manifestation. “Through Hitler,” wrote Trotsky in the *Manifesto* of the Fourth International (May, 1940), “world capitalism, driven to desperation by its own impasse, has begun to press a razor-sharp dagger into its own bowels.”

## The Fall of France

“The bourgeoisie never defends the fatherland for the sake of the fatherland,” said the same *Manifesto*. “They defend private property, privileges, profits. Whenever these sacred values are threatened, the bourgeoisie immediately takes the road of defeatism. That was the way of the Russian bourgeoisie, whose sons after the October revolution fought and are once again ready to fight in every army in the world against their own former fatherland. In order to save their capital, the Spanish bourgeoisie turned to Mussolini and Hitler for military aid against their own people. The Norwegian bourgeoisie aided Hitler’s invasion of Norway. Thus it always was and always will be.”

While Trotsky was writing those lines, the Nazi military machine was pounding its way through Denmark and across Holland and Belgium into France. In the Scandinavian and the Low Countries the ruling bourgeoisie quickly adapted itself to the new master of Europe, helping to further his conquests and contenting itself with crumbs from his tables. The “democracy” of which they had so long boasted shrivelled up and disappeared. Norway was under a “labor” government. Belgium was ruled by a coalition of labor and bour-

geois “liberals.” But form quickly gave way to substance at the orders of capital. The real rulers, the owners of land and industry, unhesitatingly grasped the small place offered them in the new Nazi “order.” Their minions in the army general staffs quickly punctured whatever resistance was offered. The world was startled by the revelation that the ruling regimes—especially the police and the military—of these much-admired “little democracies” were shot through with agents of Hitler and so-called Fifth Columnists. King Haakon of Norway and Wilhelmina of Holland fled for their lives with little coterie of jobless politicians. Leopold, at the behest of Belgian high finance, quickly laid down arms and handed himself, a prisoner, over to the new masters.

But these, it might be said, were small states, existing by sufferance in the orbits of the greater powers surrounding them. Their disappearance into the fissures opened in a continent at war was inevitable. But France—France was the great power of Europe, placed on that summit by the peace of Versailles. Its quick collapse at the first impact of the Nazi assault showed that far more was involved here than mere military preponderance. The fall of the French Republic was the fall of a political system no longer capable of survival.

French capitalism, backward in its best days, proved incapable of exploiting the victory that produced the system of Versailles. As events proved, the “settlement” of Versailles sapped the power of France and created the power of . . . Hitler. The French workers, chief victims of the permanent crisis, understood the lesson of Fascism’s victory in Germany. By 1936 they were ready to take power into their own hands. The great wave of strikes that year, culminating in the occupation of factories throughout the land in the general strike of June, placed them upon the threshold of a victorious proletarian revolution.

The French bourgeoisie was frightened and powerless. Its Fascist gangs crawled into their hiding places. The police and army were shaken, irresolute. The General Staff did not dare impose the military rule they so ardently desired. Political power in France—and indeed, the fate of the world—remained suspended in those critical days.

Stalin, whose capitulation in Germany had given Hitler a bloodless victory, was angling for an Anglo-French alliance against the Nazi Reich. The powerful French Communist Party had bound itself into the People’s Front, with the Leon Blum Socialists and the bourgeois party of Daladier. The People’s Front of Stalin-Blum-Daladier dispersed the revolutionary forces with the dire warning: “Revolution will open the road to Hitler.” With the silent and frightened acquiescence of the bourgeoisie, the Blum government put on paper sweeping concessions to the workers and dissipated the strike movement. They cut it into segments which the succeeding decree-governments of Chautemps and Daladier were able to destroy.

The Anglo-French bourgeoisie preferred the victory of Fascism in Spain to the victory of the revolution, hopeful, as the English and Americans are still hopeful of seducing France out of the camp of Hitler and Mussolini. The People’s Front regime of Blum and the French Stalinists helped strangle the cause of the Spanish workers’ revolution from without, just as Stalin, intent upon proving his worth to his prospective Anglo-French allies, helped strangle it from within.

A Soviet France would have ensured the victory of the workers in Spain, and in Belgium. It would have given impetus and leadership to the proletarian groundswell felt that year from Western Europe to the Balkans to Egypt and the

Middle East. The Hitlerite regime could never have withstood this pressure, inevitably refracted through the German working class. Doubtless there would have been war in Europe. But how different a war! The working class in arms for socialism against their capitalist masters! But Stalin above all feared such a war and the Comintern and the GPU forced the rising proletariat back to its knees.

The French workers were deceived into giving the factories back to the capitalists. The bloodless defeat in France promoted the bloody defeat in Spain. These defeats are the foundations of Hitler's military power, for they ensured the isolation of the German masses and closed the gates upon the prospects of an effective anti-Fascist mobilization within Germany itself. These defeats set the stage for the outbreak of the new imperialist war.

The French bourgeoisie had no lackeys, no means of deception, no magic wand of dispersal with which to ward off the blows of its deadly German rival. The regime of Daladier could not command or inspire the ferocious struggle of the masses needed to defeat the Fascist invasion on the field of battle and behind the fighting lines where German workers awaited—and still await—the call and the chance for action on their own account. For only a workers' France could have reached into the heart of the German proletariat and revived and nourished its struggle against Hitlerism. Only the Red Army of a workers' France could have pulverized the iron discipline of the Nazi hordes. Such is the incomparable advantage of a revolutionary workers' regime in war! The Russia of Lenin and Trotsky in 1918 and afterwards showed how such a regime can command the total devotion of the workers at home and successfully appeal to the workers of all other nations, especially the workers under the bourgeois enemy.

But bourgeois France, the France of Blum, Daladier, and Reynaud, could do neither. It barely managed to keep its own masses in chains at home. It could not dispute Hitler's mastery within the Reich. Nor, as the military impact quickly proved, could it dispute Hitler's mastery in Western Europe. The French bourgeoisie and its military high command entered the war still more fearful of the French workers than of the enemy. When French resistance crumpled before the first German drive, Weygand was rushed in to rescue the . . . general staff. Weygand, arch-reactionary and fascist, felt even more strongly than most the profound hatred and mistrust of the French masses. He went to the faltering politicians at the head of the government. He warned them the reverses were creating a situation in France comparable to that of Russia in 1917. "It must not come to that!" he warned. Capitulation was preferable to the menace of upheaval at home.

"Democratic" France still had its navy, its vast colonial forces, its still undefeated British ally. Even on ordinary bourgeois terms there was ample basis for continuing the struggle. But the rulers of France were convinced of Hitler's invincibility and even of the desirability of embracing his methods. They were not interested in defending the fatherland "for the sake of the fatherland." The emoluments of vassalage to Hitler were preferable to the uncertain stakes of continuing the war. Within a few days the aged reactionary Petain and a miserable clique of politicians bred in the bone of French bourgeois "democracy" were brought forward to carry out the necessary tasks of the transition. They signed an armistice. At their behest the French parliament voted itself out of existence. Even Paul ("fight-to-the-death") Reynaud came to Vichy to vote too. By simple decree, the watchwords of French democracy—liberty, equality, fraternity—were erased from the national

structure. Petain assumed the powers and the pose of a senile and impotent Bonaparte.

France, the cradle of modern bourgeois democracy, has today become its tomb. But the workers of France remember that their grandfathers also gave the world its first introduction to the proletarian dictatorship—and did so also amid the clatter of a German army of occupation. When the people of France raise their heads again—as they surely will—it will be not under the banner of 1789 but under the red flag of the Commune.

## Anglo-American Democracy

In France and in Western Europe declining bourgeois democracy was finished off by the armed might of German imperialism, already distilled into its Fascist form. In Britain and the United States the outlived system is being shed as rapidly as possible in preparation for the further battles of the war.

The British ruling class commands an empire which has been steadily declining for decades but which is still of enormous specific gravity. Moreover, behind it stands the power of American capitalism, the real contestant with Germany for the legacy of British world domination. Because of its great wealth and predominant world position, the British ruling class has always effectively commanded the services of a docile labor aristocracy. With the help of Bevin, Morrison, Attlee & Co., the masters of England are seeking desperately to convert their sprawling economic strength into a totalitarian instrument capable of withstanding the approaching German onslaught. Democratic institutions are the first impediments to be shed. Parliament still meets to listen dutifully to the ministers of government. The press continues to exercise, within strictly demarcated limits, the privilege of mild criticism. But the power of total compulsion already stands thinly disguised by these pretenses.

In the United States preparation for the inevitable future collision with Germany has required first of all the rapid conversion of American economy into a weapon of total war. This means, of course, a totalitarian economy. The old "liberal" capitalist economy was based upon the principle of unbridled competition. The political system of bourgeois democracy served adequately for nearly three centuries to cloak the essential anarchy of capitalist economic relations. But now this anarchy has reached its ultimate expression in the form of "total" imperialist war, a war of unified and coordinated and militarized economic plants hurled as national entities against each other. Individual capitalists have to throw in their lot with a national pool of their class interests and turn over their administration to a super-state power. But the cardinal principle of totalitarianism is the total subjugation of labor and its maintenance upon the barest subsistence level. This is to be achieved as far as possible by deception and persuasion, then beyond that by force. This is the road we have already travelled for a far greater distance than most people realize.

The peoples of England and the United States are being told that rights enjoyed under bourgeois democracy have to be surrendered in the present crisis in the interests of the "national defense." This argument is part of the process of persuasion. It is also an admission that bourgeois democracy, as such, is incapable of defending itself. The people are told their "rights" have to be surrendered now to be returned at some indefinite future time. The democratic princess is to be placed in a coma-like sleep, to be awakened by the magical kiss of some Prince Charming in a distant tomorrow. Un-

fortunately, life is not a fairy tale, despite its fantastic features. The war of 1940 has already given ample proof that bourgeois democracy cannot merely play at being dead. Where its form remains, as in the United States, its substance is steadily being drained away. No Prince Charming known to man can boast enough potency in his kiss to bring it to life again.

The struggle of the British and American working class to defend its democratic rights—its organizations, its strike weapon, its press, etc.—prevents a speedier development of totalitarianism in Britain and the United States. This process leads liberals to identify the labor movement with bourgeois democracy and to say that the stronger the labor movement is, the more virile is bourgeois democracy. In reality, however, the observation of the liberals is only a partial truth—true for the moment but false to the unfolding character of this process. A qualitative change must take place tomorrow. If today it still appears that the workers are merely demanding certain rights within the confines of bourgeois democracy, tomorrow the sharpening of the struggle for those rights will transform it into a struggle for power. The resurgence of the labor movement will result, not in increased virility of bourgeois democracy, but in nakedly posing as the only alternatives either the dictatorship of the proletariat or the totalitarian dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. The revolutionist naturally supports every limited demand of a workers' organization but while doing so he knows where the logic of the struggle is carrying the organized proletariat: to power or to fascist dismemberment.

### The Soviet Union and the Imperialists

Together with the old "liberal" capitalist institutions, the old world structure of multiple national states is also being hammered into a new shape on the anvil of totalitarianism. Fascism represents the ultimate concentration of capital on a national scale. The total imperialist war it engenders likewise implies an effort to concentrate imperialist strength on a continental and a world-wide scale. Totalitarian capitalism is trying by its own methods and in its own interests to level the national barriers which impede the operations of the profit system. In the war at its present stage it is possible to discern the outlines of three emerging imperialist blocs between and among whom the still greater collisions of tomorrow are destined to take place.

Germany has already established an uncertain mastery over Western Europe. U. S. imperialism seeks a firm war bloc of the Americas and is prepared to absorb into its camp the surviving sections of the British Empire, regardless of the fate of insular England. Finally Japan, weakest of the imperialist antagonists, is straining madly to spread its wings over the vast spaces of Asia.

Between two of these blocs and standing in uncertain relations to all of them is the Soviet Union. Isolated in a hostile capitalist world, the Russian Workers' State extruded the reactionary dictatorship of Stalin, which substituted the narrowing interests of the Soviet bureaucracy for the international basis of the proletarian revolution. It replaced the strategy of world revolution by the Utopian and reactionary doctrine of socialism in one country. It substituted over-cunning maneuvers among imperialist groupings for reliance upon the world working class. At home it deformed and crippled Soviet economy and by ruthless terror exterminated the Bolshevik party. Its mass purges reflected its instability, its total cynicism, its utter bankruptcy. It became apostle-in-chief of the status quo.

Nothing is more unsettling to the status quo than revo-

lution and through the domesticated Comintern and the dread apparatus of the GPU, Stalin broke the back of the proletarian revolution in China, in Germany, Austria, France, and Spain. Having helped bring Hitler to power, Stalin sought help against him in other bourgeois chancelleries. His courtship of Britain and France produced the People's Fronts of 1935-39. Then, as war approached, Stalin abruptly switched his bets. With characteristic contempt for the world proletariat, he entered upon his compact with Hitler, shared in the enslavement of the Polish people. He greedily snatched slops from Hitler's tables, acquiring by his permission extended outposts in the Baltic, in Finland, and Rumania.

Hitler knew as well as Stalin that the Kremlin regarded these as essential for defense against eventual and inevitable German attack. But Hitler also acquired a common frontier with the U.S.S.R. from the Baltic to the Black Sea. Moreover, in his Finnish adventure, Stalin exposed the fatal weakness of his army and his regime. As the war year of 1940 draws to a close, the Kremlin oligarchy pursues a policy of fearful waiting, more isolated than ever before, and more than ever before deprived of the support and sympathy of the world working class. Stalinist "realism"—the glory of the petty-bourgeois "friends" of yesteryear—has led the Soviet Union to the edge of the precipice where today it still hovers.

Nevertheless the Soviet Union—despite its Stalinist deformation—remains an unconquered bastion of the world proletarian revolution. As such it is to be defended by class conscious workers—against and despite Stalin—against imperialist attack. This defense rests solely in the effective preparation of the world workers' revolution which can alone save the Workers' State from extinction and rescue it from the Stalinist bureaucracy.

### Can There Be a Capitalist Peace?

Can there be a capitalist "peace"? Few, even among capitalist spokesmen, dare answer this question affirmatively. Instead we are treated to the spectacle of the Churchills, the Mussolinis, and the Hitlers competing in presenting to their peoples the mirage of a new kind of world to follow the war, a world in which present inequalities and miseries would be forever abolished. Churchill recently promised the people of Britain that after the war "the advantages and privileges which hitherto have been enjoyed only by the few shall be far more widely shared." The Rome radio quickly retorted: "Italy has been preaching the same thing for years. (Churchill) is beginning to agree with us and adhere to our fascist ideas." (*N. Y. Times*, Dec. 21) Hitler represents himself as the savior of the proletariat from the plutocratic capitalists and speaks of his war as a "war against the capitalist nations."

These rulers know that the peoples they have driven into war are filled with hatred—hatred not so much of the alien enemy as of the whole order of things which has condemned them to this holocaust. These rulers know that this hatred, today dull and passive, will tomorrow grow angry and active. A radio reporter back from England tells us that the British people he has been observing at close quarters for a year "have two obsessions: to fight on until Hitler is smashed and their wives and children are safe again; and to end England's fatal rule by a privileged class." (*Look*, Dec. 31)

The official propaganda of all the powers is compelled to speak in terms of a socialist future in order to make the barbaric present more palatable. They speak of the future, to be sure, as though it were a vaguely imagined gleam on a distant, unseen horizon. Still the necessity lies hard upon them to depict it in equalitarian terms, in socialist terms. But the

memory of the peoples is not quite so short as their rulers would like.

The imperialists presented similar panaceas to brighten the gloom of 1914-18. The promised future turned out in 1940 to be the black shadows of renewed world war. The peoples of the earth will not allow the war-makers to impose their "peace" once more. When peace comes out of today's mael-

strom, it will be a peace dictated by the exploited of the world. The war of totalitarian capitalism is plunging the world into an era of barbarism. Out of it, we are certain, the forces of the proletarian revolution will re-emerge, hardened as never before, and put humanity back on the road to the socialist society of the future.

## March of Military Events

By JOSEPH HANSEN

### The Battle of Britain

Britain, driven from the European continent, ravaged by continual waves of bombers, faced with defeat, now rests solely on the prop of aid from the United States. This aid, it is clear from a reading of America's military experts, is intended to be great enough to hamper and weaken the pretensions of German imperialism to world hegemony; but not great enough to prevent the downfall of the British Empire. But these same experts fear that, due to the lag in militarization of the United States, Roosevelt will not be able to furnish sufficient aid in time to prevent a German victory in the Battle of Britain.

The present phase of the battle of Britain is struggle for mastery of the air. Germany holds the mastery with daily increasing superiority. The air bases of Germany form a semi-circle about Britain from Norway to the coast of France, giving the German fliers much shorter distances to their objectives which in turn are concentrated in a relatively small area in comparison with the objectives of the British air fleet. A German bomber can carry three tons of bombs to the English bomber's one, the difference being made up in gasoline. The German bomber can remain for some time in the air over the objective, whereas the English bomber must dump his load as soon as possible in order not to run out of gasoline before returning to the home base. The German fleet is capable of proceeding in waves of approximately 500 planes to the British 150, which gives the German fleet a striking power of 1500 tons of bombs to the British 150 per flight, with the German planes capable of making many times more flights for the same number of planes.

This superiority of the German air fleet has resulted in terrific destruction in England—far more than the British censorship has permitted to leak out. At Coventry, center of automobile production where the Germans first began concentrating upon single industrial cities, more than 500 planes dropped 60,000 pounds of incendiary bombs and 1,000,000 pounds of high explosives for 10½ hours; that is about a bomb a minute. Such intensive bombing renders direct hits upon individual factories relatively unimportant, since electric power, gas, water, transport are so disrupted as to knock the factories completely out of service. The German attacks have so seriously interfered with production that even the conservative *U. S. News* in its November 29 issue estimated that British armament production at that time had been slowed as much as 40 percent.

Equally damaging to the British situation are the shipping losses she is now suffering. These are in excess of her losses at their peak during World War I. The Nazis have developed a new technique of sinking convoys against which the British have been unable to date to devise counter methods. The Nazis locate a convoy as it nears Ireland and then make

a combined air, surface, and submarine attack. "Whether or not the British can develop their counter-attack faster than the Nazis can develop the new technique in coordinated air-surface and sub-surface warfare at sea is the most vital problem confronting the Royal Navy," declares the December 7 issue of the *Army and Navy Journal*, a semi-official organ. It is this new danger which accounts for the British anxiety to free the Mediterranean fleet and to obtain American battle-ships as convoy guardians.

At what moment Hitler will choose to make an attempt to deliver the knockout blow to Britain through invasion cannot yet be determined. Most likely it will come after further destruction of British industry and the British air-fleet, weakening of the British Empire through a drive on the Suez Canal and possibly Gibraltar. An attempt at invasion is considered inevitable by the military authorities of all the warring nations. If Hitler waits too long, Britain can become a great danger as Roosevelt's war machine gears into top speed and utilizes the British Isles as a military base for operations in Europe. As for the technical difficulties, American military authorities are convinced that the German generals have worked out a feasible plan, probably poison gas followed by wave upon wave of mosquito boats, troop planes, etc. "It is this nightmare," according to the *Army and Navy Journal* of December 21, "which is responsible for the greater activity the United States is planning to prevent its coming to pass."

The weakened situation of Great Britain is graphically disclosed in comparative figures of steel production in England and Germany, according to *Barrons*, Wall Street economic journal, in its December 23 issue:

"Steel production is an important index of a nation's industrial power. Consequently the spread of German domination over the metal manufacturing nations of Europe takes on a significance that can be measured in more or less concrete terms . . . Germany's steel ingot output a few years ago was less than 20,000,000 tons annually. The 1939 output in territory now controlled by Germany was almost exactly twice that figure, and capacity probably is around 50,000,000 tons a year. In addition, Italy's output last year was more than 2,000,000 tons. While most of this gain has been through conquest of neighbors to the east and west, the industry within Germany has been modernizing and expanding rapidly. Its capacity shortly may reach 30,000,000 tons a year. The total of 40,000,000 to 50,000,000 tons of steel capacity now at German command is three or more times Great Britain's 1939 output . . . It compares with around 17,000,000 tons of ingot output in the entire British Empire last year."

As the *Army and Navy Journal* of December 21 puts it: "Britain is up against the inescapable effect that modern warfare depends as much on relative industrial productive capacity of the combatants as upon the strength of their armed forces."

## America as Britain's Heir

The British ruling class has turned with increasing insistence to Roosevelt for aid in accordance with the secret promises made them. To the "isolationist" group among the American capitalists, especially prior to the last presidential election, the British pointed to their holdings in the Western Hemisphere which they had managed to hold almost intact through World War I: \$350,000,000 in gold, \$1,100,000,000 in American stocks and bonds, \$1,160,000,000 in real estate, Canadian investments amounting to \$2,750,000,000 and Latin American investments amounting to \$5,000,000,000. The "isolationists" hoped to take over all these investments through sale of armaments to England before taking over the colonies when Germany had finished with Great Britain. It is now clear that Hitler played on the cupidity of the British capitalists and attempted to negotiate a peace with them on terms that would be easier than the cost of American aid. "Property groups in England," declared the *U. S. News* in its December 27 issue, "facing the alternative of peace or sacrifice of all investments to United States may press for peace. Sacrifice of all investments would leave the same question of ability to pay to be met in six months to one year."

The arrival of Lord Lothian, British Ambassador from England, who died shortly after reaching Washington, apparently increased the fears of Roosevelt that Britain might make such a peace, and pressure for aid to Britain, leaving out the question of British investments in the Western Hemisphere, was increased. Roosevelt, representing the interventionist group of American capitalists, apparently considers the defeat of Great Britain inevitable, her colonies in the Far East and Australasia, and her holdings certain to come under American control. So he is playing to utilize what fighting ability is left in Britain in order to weaken the menace rising German imperialism holds for the world-wide interests of American imperialism.

The disintegration of the British Empire finds the British ruling class not only incapable of saving itself but even of formulating its war aims. It is going into defeat with its eyes shut, responding only with automatic reflexes that take the form of repression of the working class at home and imprisonment of the leaders of the colonial peoples who take an anti-war attitude. In the December 7 issue of *The Economist*, well-known British economic journal, there is a curious editorial that attempts to answer the question which the workers of England are asking with increasing insistency: what are we fighting for?

"Too precise a formulation of war aims might well get in the way of the one indispensable condition for their realization—a British victory . . . The British people do not need to be told what they are fighting for . . . nevertheless . . . We cannot afford, during the war, to be put on the spiritual defensive, to let the Nazis have a monopoly in New Orders or to let others be convinced that our only thought is to restore an unsatisfactory status quo."

It is clear from this declaration that talk on the part of British government officials about "granting" a "socialist order" after the war is merely propaganda to counteract Hitler's propaganda and to lull the working class into fighting on blindly for their masters. *The Economist* continues with the declaration that no war aims whatsoever can be formulated until a definite attitude is taken toward the German people in the event of a British victory. Shall it be "Repression" or "Reconciliation"? asks the editorial. The journal decides that "Reconciliation" is impossible, that the German need for "economic expansion" cannot be met, and that "Repression" likewise is impossible since it cannot be carried to the extent of "sterilising the German population." Nor is a combination

of the two possible. "But we shall have to choose one or the other."

"So the question must be answered," concludes *The Economist*, "and it cannot be answered without much deeper and more prayerful thought than has yet been given to it. Without an answer, any statement of war aims is likely to be mere beating of the air."

The utter bankruptcy of British "democracy," the hopelessness of the future facing the capitalist class was underlined by Joseph Kennedy, American Ambassador to England in an unofficial interview which cost him his job although he agrees with Roosevelt's policy of aid to Britain. The interview was printed in the *Boston Globe* in November:

"Democracy is finished in England," declared Kennedy. "If we get into war, it will be in this country too . . . Great Britain is not fighting for democracy. She is fighting for self-preservation, just as we will if it comes to us . . . If we enter a war we will lose democracy . . . Everything we hold dear would be gone."

In the coming period the workers in America will discover that the Ambassador did not lie when he said more "off the record" than the trade of capitalist diplomat permits.

## Counter-Attack in the Mediterranean

The British, strangling in the grip of German domination of Europe, cast about for an avenue of counter-attack. Italy was obviously the nearest weak link in the Axis war machine. Wracked by the internal contradictions of his own regime, Mussolini himself provided the opportunity. To understand what is involved in the Greek and Libyan set-backs to the Italians it is necessary to understand the previous diplomatic moves made by Hitler—his conferences with Molotov, King Boris of Bulgaria and Foreign Minister Suner of Spain. The agreement reached at these conferences, which had the approval of Rome and Tokyo, are explained very well by the American military journals, who of course have special sources of information at their disposal.

According to the American militarists, Hitler proposed to sever the life-line of the British Empire at Gibraltar and Suez. In return for aid in attacking Gibraltar, Spain was to get part of French Morocco. In order to capture Suez, a German army was to have passage through Hungary, Bulgaria, Rumania and Yugoslavia. In return for pressure on these nations to acquiesce, Stalin was to get the Dardanelles or an outlet to the Persian Gulf. Stalin in addition was to recognize Japanese conquests in China, thus freeing the Japanese army to move south to the Dutch East Indies and Singapore, with seizure of French Indo-China and a possible concession of part of this colony to Thailand for its aid. Stalin was likewise to advise Turkey to permit a German army to cross her territory. Bulgaria was to get a port on the Aegean sea at the expense of Greece.

The army of Metaxas, badly lacking in modern equipment, almost unequipped with aviation, was considered too weak to do anything but consent to the Axis plans. It even seems likely that Metaxas led Mussolini to believe that he would not resist invasion. However, as the *Military Review*, official organ of the Command and General Staff School of the American Army at Fort Leavenworth reports approvingly, Metaxas received his military education in Germany and was even called by the former Kaiser a "little Moltke." He made a deal with the British and they prepared to occupy Crete and began landing troops in Greece.

The Italian push in Egypt, aimed at the Alexandria naval base and Suez, had bogged down along the African coast since mid-September, inviting a British counter-attack. On October 28, with lack of preparation and under other conditions, such as bad generalship and bad weather, reminiscent of Stalin's

first Finnish campaign, Mussolini launched his attack on Greece. The November 2 issue of the *Army and Navy Journal* declared it "very likely that Great Britain has ample force at hand to take care of the present situation," and in subsequent issues warned its readers of the American Army and Navy officers' staff not to be taken in by newspaper headlines playing up the "Greek" victories. The British had large forces in Greece and were deliberately playing down their own role in order to strike at Italian morale and to increase the effect of a set-back at the hands of a woefully weak nation such as Greece.

The *Army and Navy Journal* of November 23 ascribed the Italian defeats in Libya and Greece to "quality of Italian leadership both on the sea and in the air and the lack of fuel oil and aviation gasoline."

The setback of Italian forces was greater than expected. This was due in no small degree to the unwillingness of the Italian soldiers to fight; reports of their singing the revolutionary song "Bandiera Rossa" give an indication of their mood.

The British fleet likewise gained some successes against the under-plated Italian fleet whose principal value is not so much ability to carry on a sea battle as to keep the British fleet tied up in the Mediterranean, what the militarists term a "nuisance value."

In drawing the lessons of the Italian defeat, the *Military Review* declares that the Italians will launch a better prepared campaign. "... It is inconceivable that Greece can expect to continue to roll up her score of early successes," and compares the campaign with Stalin's campaign against Finland:

"The planning and the execution of the Italian campaign is highly reminiscent of the Russian campaign in Finland, and the results will undoubtedly be comparable to those of the Russo-Finnish war. Both Russia and Italy based their operations on what they considered the enemy's intentions rather than on the enemy's capabilities. Their agents in hostile territory appear to have overestimated the work done by their Fifth Columnists to create a state of unrest, coordinated opposition was not expected, and, as a result, security measures, particularly essential in mountain operations, were neglected. The consequences were disastrous, for entire divisions, both in Finland and in Greece, walked into traps from which they were unable to extricate themselves. The task of the weaker nation, in both cases, was further simplified by the failure of the invader to consider and prepare for unusual weather conditions."

This cold-blooded comparison between the two campaigns does not mention a striking difference in the reaction of the world press to the two campaigns. As pointed out in the *Socialist Appeal*, the bourgeoisie defended Finland rabidly. The entire press went into mourning with the final victory of the Red Army. The Greek resistance however provokes not more than secondary interest. The difference involved has its property roots. Involved in Finland was the socialization of the means of production—in Greece a secondary bourgeois military campaign in one corner of a World War. The world bourgeoisie understand very well that Mussolini cannot expropriate the means of production, even if he should succeed in a second campaign. On the other hand his defeat in this theater of the war is not considered of first rate importance by the opposing imperialists. *Barrons* for December 23 puts it rather neatly:

"If present plans are carried out, the United States would be able to provide tremendous aid to Britain by 1942. In view of this possibility, will Hitler try to end the war in 1941 by waging another lightning-swift campaign? If he has such a plan in mind and is conserving all his aircraft for that purpose, the defeat of Italy's land forces might not be considered a matter of vital importance, so long as Italy

remained in the war and kept its navy in operation. However ineffective the Italian Navy may be, it is still useful to Hitler because it requires the British to keep in the Mediterranean a substantial number of naval ships that otherwise would be available for the defense of the British Isles."

To the world working class what is of vital importance is the mood displayed by the Italian soldiers. For almost two decades they have borne on their backs the fascist regime of hunger, torture, assassination. Any beginnings of revolt among them can flash throughout the oppressed of the entire world as the signal for a renewal of the revolutionary wave which put an end to World War I.

## Impending Clash in the Far East

The third member of the Axis, Japan, has recently adopted a change in her diplomatic tone toward the United States; but on the economic and military front she has not changed her objectives one iota. Nor can she. Weakest link at present in the imperialist chain, she faces social revolution if she does not continue her imperialist expansion. It is true that continued expansion only heightens her inward contradictions and generates greater energy for the explosion that will eventually blow her up from within—but the ruling class of Japan, like its brothers in the other imperialist nations, closes its eyes to that prospect.

Japan must dominate her oil supply which is located in the Dutch East Indies. She must dominate Indo-China with its valuable minerals. She must control China with its vast resources. She must control Singapore which carries with it control of the Far East. Consequently she has sent to Washington Admiral Nomura, a man considered friendly to the United States. This is diplomatic camouflage. At the same time she has signed a five-year agreement with Thailand, moved troops into French Indo-China, is negotiating with Moscow for a non-aggression treaty, is talking with the government of the Netherland Indies at Java over Japan's economic interests there.

Roosevelt has answered by sending submarines, airplanes and destroyers to Singapore; by proclaiming such exports to Japan as iron ore, ferro alloys, airplanes and parts, aviation gasoline, scrap iron and steel under export license requirements, that is embargo. These moves by Roosevelt make it more imperative for Japan to move southward and thus bring the outbreak of military hostilities closer.

The withdrawals of troops in China were probably intended to show Stalin that Japan will agree with arrangements made in Berlin concerning the boundary of Japanese expansion in China. At the same time it is preparation for the move southward, or a flanking move against Chiang Kai-shek if the United States persuades the Chinese Generalissimo that American dollars are of greater personal interest to him than a treaty with Japan.

Prior to Japan's signing the Triple Alliance with Italy and Germany on September 27, the British had tried to buy her off at the expense of the Chinese people. British troops were ordered out of Peking for the first time since the Boxer Rebellion 40 years ago, and out of Shanghai and Tientsin. The British government turned over 100,000 pounds of Chinese silver in the British concession at Tientsin to Japan, and closed the Burma road over which military supplies were being sent to the Chinese soldiers.

Japan responded by moving troops into French Indo-China, a move on the chess-board of the Far East toward the loot Roosevelt wants. The October number of *The Pictorial Orient*, overseas edition of *Asabigraph*, published in English, French and Spanish, describes Japan's interest southward

with remarkable frankness, although the Japanese press is one of the most strictly controlled in the world:

"Assuming more importance with each new twist in the complicated world situation, the Netherlands Indies is being closely watched with interest by all major powers. The fabulous wealth of the islands is like a powerful magnet to the rest of the world, particularly in this day when wars are fought for rich economic stakes. And no nation is more vitally interested in the future of the rich colony than Japan, which by reasons of geographical and economic proximity is tied inextricably with it. To Japan, its tie-up with the Netherlands Indies is of tremendous importance, especially since the United States threatens to cut it off from America's vast markets and source of supplies. To offset this threat, Japan is forced to look elsewhere and the only satisfactory answer in sight is the Dutch islands in the south Pacific."

Oil, tin, rubber, nickel, tungsten constitute part of the "fabulous wealth" for which the United States will presently war with Japan. Already the Japanese government has instituted blackout drills for the major cities, apparently in preparation for a Yankee attack. On October 31, dance halls were banned, and a move instituted to popularize a national uniform to economize on material and labor in preparation for the pending war in the Far East.

The isolation of Japan, the difficulty of the language, make it very difficult to get information concerning a possible revolutionary movement. Indirectly, however, it is possible to gain an inkling of how the monstrous war strain is affecting the population. The army in China more than once has given indication of rebellious tendencies, news of which seeped into the world press. But from *Asabigraph* we can get a glimpse of what is going on behind the insular isolation in Japan itself. The November issue reports:

"One conspicuous fact in connection with the new alliance is the absence of popular demonstration and the prevalence of sober, even chastened mood which the report of the new alliance has so far evoked. In the first place the time is inopportune for festive manifestation of any sort; even birth and marriage in private life are celebrated with nothing like jubilation."

A danger sign to the Japanese ruling class of the utmost gravity!

"Country folk have been flocking to the urban industrial centers in great numbers since the outbreak of China hostilities."

Is this because of high wages in the industrial centers, or because the war strain is ruining the country districts? *Asabigraph* boasts of the efficiency of the census taken on October 1 at midnight when everyone was instructed to be at home, and prints a photograph with the descriptive caption: "At the stroke of midnight census-taking squad raids a community of tramps and beggars in one of Tokyo's parks." What poverty that produces *communities* of tramps and beggars in the parks!

The *Military Review* for December 1940 reports the following concerning Japan:

"According to investigations conducted by *Asahi*, the cost of living index in Japan for July 1940, was 253.7 (July 1914 being taken as 100). Compared with pre-Chinese War times, the price index shows an average advance of 31.9 percent, the most conspicuous item being a rise of 64.6 percent in the price of clothing. Indices for the various items as compared with July, 1937, are given below:

EXPENSE	JULY 1937	JULY 1940	ADVANCE
Food and Drink	181	261	43.8%
Housing	233	237	1.5%
Heating and Lighting	194	273	40.7%
Clothing	168	276	64.6%
Culture	186	210	13.0%
Average	192	254	31.9%

Small wonder that the Japanese people did not respond

with "jubilation" to the new Alliance. The revolution may well make its first explosion in the East before it extends to the West.

## U. S. Entry Draws Near

Chiang Kai-shek asks for a "loan" of \$200,000,000 for continued opposition to Japanese imperialism. He receives \$25,000,000 on the line with a promise of more, pending guarantees of his proper behaviour in the interests of Wall Street. Roosevelt stiffens the backbone of Petain by proposing Pershing, head of the last expeditionary army, as Ambassador to France with Admiral Leahy as actual substitute. Petain's backbone stiffens enough to dismiss Anglophobe Laval—U. S. backing means a possible better deal with Hitler. Roosevelt holds up a proposal of the Red Cross to dispatch 10,000 tons of wheat to the starving people of Spain pending assurances from Franco that he will remain non-belligerent for a while longer. "If assured that the Madrid government would not participate in the war," says the *Army and Navy Journal* for December 14, "the wheat would leave at once for distribution among the Spanish people." Finland, Norway, Holland, Belgium, Central Poland facing famine and pestilence with the prospective loss of millions of lives are denied relief although the necessary stock of food, according to the same issue of the *Army and Navy Journal*, "even if it were all seized, would be less than three days' food supply for Germany and this could have no importance in prolonging the war."

Vice-President Wallace was sent to Mexico on a "good will" expedition with the hope that he will prove a greater success in popularizing Roosevelt's regime among the Latin-American people than he did among the Middle-West farmers; and the diplomatic conversations continue for air and naval bases in Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Cuba, Costa Rica, Mexico and the Dominican Republic to supplement the bases already obtained from Great Britain. At Valparaiso the Ministry of Defense has given final approval to plans of a privately owned Chilean-United States company to build a \$5,000,000 drydock capable of accommodating the new heavy battleships which are to be added to the United States fleet. When damaged in the South Pacific in the coming battles with Japan, these battleships can be repaired without returning all the way to the home base. Opposition to these moves of U. S. imperialism on the part of the Latin-American people is being smoothed over with heavy loans to the South American dictators.

In the Far East Roosevelt is bidding for bases in Australia and New Zealand as well as at Singapore and is making heavy efforts to concentrate maximum fleet strength in the path Japan must take when she starts moving southward. He is likewise buying up Australian wool and the rubber and tin of British Malaya and the Dutch East Indies far in excess of immediate needs.

Convinced that Great Britain has been in effect defeated and can now be utilized as a base for operations against the German imperialism without fear of thereby bolstering the British Empire, Roosevelt is now sending 80 percent of U. S. combat planes to Britain, has dropped all talk of payment for munitions, and is preparing to give convoy protection for armaments being sent across the Atlantic. The militarists are definitely in the saddle after years of planning precisely for the present war:

"Ever since the first World War," declares the *Army and Navy Journal* of December 21, "the high commands of the Army and the Navy and Marine Corps have been dinning into the ears of Presidents and Congresses the basic needs

of their respective services . . . Until the current European crisis began to unfold with all its horrors, they found their disclosures disregarded, their warnings unheeded, and their estimates cut. They were voices in the wilderness lost in the clamor of pacifists for disarmament. Facing the certainty that war would come, war which would roar upon American shores, they continued year after year to plan."

And these military realists who hailed Knudsen's Roosevelt-inspired disclosures concerning the "lag" in armament production continue:

"Berlin and Rome have greeted ominously the President's arm loan program. It is in fact not new, it is merely an expansion of the policy of aid short of war to England, which the government has pursued since the outbreak of hostilities. We have turned over to the British, destroyers, planes, guns, rifles, etc. We have done this directly or through return of the material to manufacturers, who have sold it to England. Now the President has determined to do away with subterfuge, to implement openly and honestly his promises to England . . . The axis powers now will realize that there will be no strings tied to our aid to England. Her military and naval needs are made paramount . . . We will not be content to wait production to help her. We will even go so far, for example, as to purchase Danish and other merchant men tied up in American ports, and turn them over to her in order that she may not be starved into surrender. It is not too much to say, also, that if she needs additional money, that, too, will be supplied, perhaps through credits indirectly arranged by the Reconstruction Finance Corp. and the Export-Import Bank. Thus our aid to England has become direct and total, and commits us to her support until she shall achieve victory . . ."

Throughout the United States the press considers that the definitive step, which Roosevelt will take to enter the war will be convoy protection, which most of the bourgeois editorial writers advocate as an immediate necessity. Here are some typical declarations:

"Without discussing the wisdom of a convoy system or deciding whether it is necessary or practical, it can be said that such a step would bring us immediately into the war. There can be no other result from that policy." Jackson, Michigan, *Citizen Patriot*.

"High administration officials are prepared to recommend that President Roosevelt ask Congress to repeal or modify the neutrality act so that American naval vessels may convoy American merchant ships to Great Britain . . . a decision by the administration on the question of convoys for American shipping cannot be delayed long after the new Congress comes in next month." Philadelphia *Inquirer*.

"Entry of the United States into the war without reservation . . . German U-boats and airplanes are attacking British convoys . . . if the United States Navy undertook the burden of convoy duty, German U-boats and airplanes would necessarily continue the attack. Sooner or later American ships and American lives would be lost on one side, German submarines and German lives on the other. Both sides would then expand their activities to make them effective." Springfield, Mass. *Republican*.

"The time has come when the American Navy should be used to convoy merchant ships to Britain . . . is the next logical step in our program to aid England by all means short of war, and it could be put into operation immediately . . . The neutrality law also should be amended to permit American merchantships to carry goods to England. Why keep up a pretense of being neutral when we are not neutral?" Cleveland *Plain Dealer*.

"Convoying British ships would not be neutral." Milwaukee *Journal*.

"Americans who imagine that they can sit back and let the British win the war for them, while they do nothing about it except what is cheap, easy and convenient, are living in a fool's paradise. Keeping those sea lanes open is as vital an interest to the United States as it is to Great Britain, and if Americans expect it to be done they will have to put all their energy and boldness into the problem." New York *Herald Tribune*.

*The Kiplinger Washington Letter*, a high-priced inside

information service "circulated privately to business men" which "prohibits" quotation makes some sensational revelations which have not appeared in the press designed for working class consumption precisely because they explain all the recent moves of Roosevelt and the bourgeois propagandists who aid him in his program of war:

"There are times when unpleasant truths should be blurted out, and this is one of those times . . . A war-time economy is about to be imposed upon the nation, even before or regardless of actual entrance into the war. Harder work and more sacrifice for ALL . . . is to be the slogan. Here is the situation as it is viewed by our government: England is in a bad way . . . Peace or truce is unlikely . . . Our government course is fixed against anything resembling 'appeasement.' In January or February a push for peace or truce is expected. Technically and formally our government is supposed to be open minded, but essentially the official spirit or mood is strongly against it. Roughly, tentatively, three periods are in the official minds: First, from now to March, a speed-up in production, VOLUNTARY. There will be some compulsions, but main reliance will be on voluntary. Second, probably in March, a crack-down by the government in the form of a declaration of the legal state of 'imminence of war.' This would give the President practically dictatorship over everything, and would establish a war-time economy in advance of war itself . . . Third, actual overt war against the Axis, perhaps by mid-1941. This is less definite than the other two steps, but it is 'contemplated' and a 'prospect' for which plans must be rushed in the next six months. Of course most officials do not positively WISH for war, but many seem to be coming to the conclusion that it is inevitable, and that the nation must prepare as if the prospect of war were sure."

The international perspective of American imperialism, is a carefully planned entry into the World War to gain domination of the earth. At home, however, like the British and the Japanese, they do not see quite so clearly. The December 14 *Letter* says on this score:

"Outlook for years ahead is for deficits and mounting debt. No end is even faintly in sight. Even after the war (or the emergency), armament outpourings may be channeled into peace-time gov't projects to prevent a crash, to provide a bridge. And so . . . continuing deficits. To avoid a fiscal crack-up, there will be government regulation, controls of many sorts. They MAY work, but there's no way of telling. Thus the war into which we now seem to be heading will mean quite a different sort of financial and economic system after the war. No one is wise enough to know JUST WHAT it will be." (Dec. 14 *Letter*.)

But it is clear to Marxists exactly what it will be: either FASCISM with all its horrors, or a social revolution and the establishment of SOCIALISM which will forever end the regime of the bourgeoisie with its hunger, crises, wars.

## The USSR and the War

Stalin, destroyer of the October revolution, has been reduced to one of the most miserable positions in the field of international politics. Where the leaders of the October revolution, Lenin and Trotsky, published all the secret treaties of the imperialist powers and conducted the negotiations forced upon them by these powers in the full light of world publicity so that the international working class could understand what was happening and exert their pressure in favor of the Soviet Union, Stalin has engaged in secret diplomacy like any bourgeois diplomat and made secret deals behind the backs of the workers and at their expense. Not a word came out of the Soviet Union as to the nature and purpose of Molotov's conversations with Hitler in Berlin.

If Stalin acquiesced in the recognition of Japanese conquests, as American militarists believe, Japan took advantage of the secrecy and signed a treaty with its puppet Wang

Ching-wei, the terms of which, according to the December 7 *Army and Navy Journal* "far exceeded those revealed in prospect to Foreign Commissar Molotov when he was in Berlin." To show his displeasure, Stalin ordered the GPU agent who is acting as his Ambassador in Washington to call on the State department and offer them the "reopening of an American consulate at Vladivostock." It is to such utterly impotent gestures that Stalin has been reduced!

If Stalin hopes to stave off war and even make new territorial gains through converting Turkey into a second Poland, those hopes at best can be of only temporary nature. More likely, with its increasing weight on the European continent, German imperialism will itself attempt to take the Dardanelles and let Stalin content himself with a challenge to Britain and hence the United States through his acceptance of a port on the Persian Gulf. Until Hitler finally achieves his future military catastrophe, Stalin will find himself in increasing dependence upon his master and thereby in increasing danger. Hitler has not for one moment taken his eyes from the Ukraine. He will turn attention upon the Soviet Union when he has finished with Britain. Stalin may well find himself the victim of an agreement between the German and the

American imperialists before he has been given the opportunity to renounce his pact with Hitler and make a new one with Roosevelt. The danger to the Soviet Union grows with the progress of the imperialist war.

Degenerated, distorted, suffering from the totalitarian grip of the monstrous Stalinist bureaucratic growth, the USSR nevertheless remains the only nation in the world where the bourgeoisie are expropriated, where the means of production have been taken out of the hands of a small exploiting minority and nationalized. As such it remains a conquest of the workers. When the flames of World War II have engulfed the entire planet, when the imperialists scourge the face of the earth with famine, pestilence, and death, the war weary workers will turn to the example set by the October revolution. They will rise with unconquerable strength and launch the new socialist society. Their revolution will at the same time end the Stalinist bureaucracy. A new era of peace and plenty will open. The first glimmerings are already perceptible among the oppressed who have been dragooned to fight by the capitalist class of Japan, Italy, Great Britain, France and —the United States.

# American Imperialism Grasps Its Manifest Destiny

By WM. F. WARDE

Under the impact of the spreading inter-imperialist conflict, the United States shifted over from a peace to a wartime basis during 1940. The militarization speedup today reaches into all departments of national activity: domestic and foreign politics, military affairs, industry, culture, entertainment, domestic life. The people of the United States are being dressed for the slaughter.

The tremendous force mustered behind the official drive toward total war confirms the following prediction made in the "Thesis On The World Role of American Imperialism" adopted at the Founding Conference of the Fourth International in September 1938.

"While the influence exerted by the United States in the past period has been more or less 'passive,' formulated in the policy of 'isolation,' its more recent trend has been noticeably in the other direction and foreshadows its active, direct and decisive intervention in the period to come; i. e., the period of the next World War.

"So world-wide are the foundations of American imperialist power, so significant are its economic interests in Europe itself (billions invested in the industrial enterprises of the telephone-telegraph, automobile, electrical and other trusts as well as the billions in war debts and post-war loans), that it is out of the question for the United States to remain a passive observer of the coming war.

"Quite the contrary. Not only will it participate actively as one of the belligerents, but it is easy to predict that it will enter the war after a much shorter interval than elapsed before its entry in the last World War. In view of the weakness, financially and technically, of the other belligerents as compared with the still mighty United States, the latter will surely play an even more decisive role in the settling of the coming war than in the last."

This was written before Munich when European statesmen were deluding themselves and their countrymen with

promises of "peace in our time," and official opinion held that our entrance into another European war was unthinkable. At that time the Fourth International alone among the workers' parties warned the workers that, unless imperialism were overthrown by the proletarian revolution, peace could not be maintained. Here the Marxist method proves in practice its superiority over that of rival theories (petty-bourgeois pacifism, reformism, Stalinism) which disregard the material basis and insatiable appetite of capitalist imperialism.

The imperialist rulers of the United States had a far rosier picture of their prospects at the beginning of 1940 than at its close. In January they were still entranced by pre-war illusions. The lull in the fighting after Hitler conquered Poland also lulled the heads of the "democratic" powers. The actual and prospective belligerents on the "democratic" side, where policies were still being executed by pre-war politicians like Chamberlain and Daladier, still hoped against hope for another compromise.

That international situation shaped Washington's foreign policy. That sensitive microphone of bourgeois public opinion, the *New York Times*, wrote in its leading editorial on New Year's Day 1940: "We have a role to play that is as crucial as that of any belligerent, more crucial perhaps. This role is one of constructive mediator... We can stand ready to do our part in building... a lasting peace."

This same conception of the mediating role of the United States was presented two days later by the President in a message to Congress distinguished by its temperate tone and modest demands. "The world looks to us," Roosevelt declared, "to be a potent and active factor in seeking the re-establishment of peace." He requested army and navy increases, "based not on panic but on common-sense." He still talked then of a

"balanced budget" with deficits kept below the 45-billion dollar limit. Roosevelt promised to avoid "entangling alliances." He stigmatized "selfish and partisan groups at home who wrap themselves in a false mantle of Americanism to promote their economic, financial or political advantage."

Such was the President's explicit attitude in the calm before the storm which burst with Hitler's invasion of Scandinavia and culminated in June with the fall of France. Hitler's swift subjugation of Europe upset Washington's timetables and Wall Street's perspectives.

## The Transformation in Washington

The political atmosphere of Washington changed in a flash. Banished was all talk of arbitration in government circles. This was declared national treachery. "Anyone who talks of appeasement now," announced Senator Wagner of New York, Roosevelt's stalwart supporter, "is an enemy of mankind. Hitler has issued his challenge, and it is his world or ours." The doves of peace which fluttered around the Capitol in January were reported in December to be under investigation by the Dies Committee for Fifth Column activity.

Mars took over Washington. Before summer ended the authorized appropriations for military purposes grew greater than the total budget proposed in January, for 1940-41 exceeding the demands of the wildest alarmists. The legal debt-limit was raised, and the old statutory limit was actually passed by December. The Big Boys stopped clamoring for a balanced budget. After all, the money was now being spent to protect their own fat hides and not for social services like unemployment relief.

The following figures show how the government's military appropriations were made at the expense of relief projects.

	1938	1939	1940
WPA Spending (July to Nov. 30)	\$1,010,000,000	750,000,000	539,000,000
War Spending (July to Nov. 30)	\$574,277,000	571,108,000	1,481,000,000

In January Roosevelt had asserted: "We refuse the European solution of using the unemployed to build up excessive armaments which eventually result in dictatorship." In October his Secretary of Labor Perkins boasted: "The back of unemployment is being broken by the defense program." Roosevelt's solution for unemployment turns out to be little different from the European!

Instead of denouncing patrioteers, the President placed the hired hands of Big Business at his right hand in the Defense Councils while the New Deal reformists were shoved off into a corner.

Alliances with Canada, Great Britain, the Latin-American governments, Greece, China were concluded or in progress. The United States was hastily converted into England's arsenal. Instead of calm, panic and the utmost tension prevailed in high places. The Defense Commissioners are wielding the whip in a race against time. American imperialism must do more to re-arm in one year than Hitler did in seven. Thus, from January to December, the United States took a tremendous step toward converting itself from a slothful, pacifist-minded plutocracy into a Prussianized military machine bent on world dominion.

## The Blindness of the American Bourgeoisie

Unwittingly influenced by reaction, revolutionists are sometimes prone to assume that the present masters of capitalist society are virtually omniscient, that they are more firmly entrenched than they actually are, and that their lead-

ers are capable of comprehending and protecting the vital interests of their class. If this were so, revolutions would be impossible. In reality, however, the commanding staffs of the bourgeoisie are infected with an incurable short-sightedness which arises out of the hopeless contradictions of their decaying system. They do not, and cannot, control the conflicting forces of capitalism; they are controlled, and often overwhelmed, by them. All Chamberlain's efforts to avoid war were nullified by the insuperable antagonisms between German and British imperialist interests. So with the American bourgeoisie. However much, many among them may wish to escape the costs and consequences of war, their material interests impel them along that course.

In fact, the official defenders of capitalist society are often far less conscious of the necessary outcome of their activities than the revolutionary vanguard of the working class, equipped with insight derived from Marxist methods of analysis. How many times in the past decade have Trotskyists warned the petty-bourgeois democrats that their policies were not only designed to crush the proletarian revolution but would also result in the extinction of their beloved bourgeois democracy and the triumph of the Fascists! Yet the German and Austrian Social-Democrats, the French trade-union officials, the Spanish Stalinists, Socialists, Anarchists blindly persisted in their course, eventually losing not only their state sinecures and liberties but in many cases their lives.

The big bourgeoisie suffers from the same short-sightedness as the little. Marxists could forecast that the United States would willy-nilly be drawn into the approaching war; that the bourgeois democracies could not withstand totalitarian attack; and that American capitalists would have to police the world to preserve their profits and privileges. But these prospects were not so clearly discerned by the official leaders of the American bourgeoisie. They were caught napping by Hitler's dynamic rise, by the fall of France, by England's weakness. They suddenly found themselves unprepared to defend the international interests of their own class!

This episode in our national history contains two extremely important lessons for revolutionary workers. First, the "democratic" imperialists who cannot safeguard their own interests surely cannot be entrusted with the defense of the people's interests for which they have no concern. Second, if the leaders of the big bourgeoisie could not foresee or forestall obvious consequences of their position and policies in the world imperialist arena, how will they be able to prevent the social revolutionary movements being generated around them?

However, the American imperialists have learned a great deal in the past year. The series of shocks they received have impressed upon them for the first time the magnitude and urgency of their world tasks. Our plutocracy is passing through a school of experience which is progressively disclosing to its most aggressive and advanced representatives its manifest destiny: the crushing of all rivals to acquire a monopoly over the planet.

The elements grouped around Roosevelt's administration are the banner-bearers and organizers of the imperialist war program. They are arousing, instructing, mobilizing gingoistic sentiment, preparing the nation, as in 1917, to embark on an imperialist crusade. Under the cry of peace, they are girding for war; under the slogan of defending democracy, they are moving to rob the people of their liberties by instituting a reactionary wartime dictatorship; while calling upon the workers for sacrifices, they are helping the profiteers grow richer; under the cover of "national defense" they are aiming to subjugate, first South America and eventually the world.

## The End of "Isolationism"

This process of growing awareness amongst the American bourgeoisie is evidenced in the collapse of "isolationism," which at the beginning of the war seemed so strong a tendency in certain bourgeois circles and among the petty-bourgeois pacifists and semi-socialist sheep following them. The isolationist politicians failed to convert the convention of the Republican Party, its natural vehicle, to their position. They have since become steadily weaker as many of their captains have slid over to the interventionist camp. On December 21, to take a notable case, Representative Hamilton Fish, ranking Republican member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee and charter-organizer of Norman Thomas's defunctive "Keep America Out of War" Committee, renounced his opposition to the administration's foreign policy and applauded Roosevelt's provisional program of "all aid to Britain short of war." It may be added that Thomas himself is today not far behind Fish.

There remain die-hard reactionaries of the Hoover, Ford and Lindberg type who cling to the former policy of aloofness and a possible deal with Hitler. But the "isolationist" wing of the imperialists constitute a dwindling, subordinate, and relatively uninfluential segment of bourgeois public opinion. The appeasers are either echoes of the past—or omens of the future. They do not determine the current policies or immediate plans of the Washington-London Axis.

The main line of the war-party was stated by the *New York Times* in mid-December. "It has become the settled principle of American policy to give Britain the utmost possible help short of involvement in war." Britain, says Roosevelt, is "our first line of defense." The Empire (India included) is fighting our battle. On Christmas Day, Roosevelt's pastor blessed this policy by calling for a "Holy Blitzkrieg against the tyrants."

In conformance with this divine directive, the United States has become the central supply-base for England. Uncle Sam has agreed to underwrite the costs of the conflict for Great Britain, its dominions and allies. The intervention of the United States has almost expanded to the point where the flimsy reservation, "short of war," must be discarded and its participation become open and unlimited.

Meanwhile the administration is forced to act surreptitiously in many ways, especially on the diplomatic field. What negotiations have been going on and agreements concluded with Great Britain, Latin America, Spain and others, the American people are no more permitted to know in 1940 than they were in 1916-1917. It was recently revealed by Pertinax in the *New York Times* that when Petain met Hitler on October 26, Roosevelt warned Vichy that any French military aid to Germany would bring into play the Havana agreement of last July whereby French possessions would be taken over by the United States as "trustee" for the Americas. It is not Japan and Germany alone who covet the colonies belonging to the weaker victims of this war! Here is a minor instance of the widespread secret diplomatic maneuvering which is paving the way for public entry into the war and foreshadows its imperialist designs.

The militarization program which will cost more than the total national debt of a year ago, conscription, a two-ocean navy, American warships blockading German vessels in Mexican waters, joint defense conferences with Canada, the exchange of destroyers for naval bases in the Western hemisphere, the gift of three billion dollars worth of arms to England, new loans to China—these events and a hundred more of the past six months show how close American imperialism

is to plunging headlong into this war. Indeed, the *New York Herald Tribune* blurted out the truth in its editorial page on December 29: "The World War is already here."

## The Militarization of American Economy

The imperialist program requires the complete militarization of American economy. Foreign commerce already subserves the government's war plans. The granting of state loans through the Export-Import Bank to South American countries, China, and possibly Spain (to safeguard American corporate interests and ensure Franco's neutrality), the blocking of funds belonging to Hitler-dominated nationals, the curtailing of essential military supplies to Japan, the subsidizing of British arms manufactures, even the administration of relief for the victims of the war is dictated by the requirements of imperialist policy.

The process of economic regimentation at home is still in its first stages but it is accelerating daily. Knudsen and Stettinius have been appointed by Roosevelt bosses of the "defense" drive. These representatives of General Motors and U. S. Steel, Morgan and DuPont, work hand in glove with the brass-hats whose toughness toward union labor is the reverse side of their humility before such open-shop corporations as Bethlehem Steel and Ford. While the government is given legal authority to take over industry, heavy industry has already taken over the government. With the third term, Roosevelt's regime has entered a new phase. The Knudsen Deal has supplanted the New Deal.

The Knudsen Deal means that Big Business is in the saddle in Washington. Thanks to their privileged position and the benevolence of Roosevelt, his Generals, Admirals and underlings, the corporate monopolies are accumulating juicy contracts; extending their properties at government expense; obtaining priorities of materials, exemptions from taxes and relief from harassing regulations, especially the labor laws.

Labor, on the other hand, is being asked to forfeit its right to strike, to give up the forty-hour week, to refrain from asking wage-increases, to make all kinds of sacrifices for "the national welfare." If the unions insist on maintaining their rights or demand a few cents more per hour, Congressmen snarl and the administration threatens to crack down on the workers as "saboteurs." The Knudsen Deal aims to deprive the workers of all their social gains and to make them helpless cogs in the mechanism of production.

The regimentation of labor is being facilitated by the infiltration of army officers throughout the state apparatus and society. An army officer is dispatched to "settle," that is, break the Vultee strike. For the first time in our history an Admiral is made Ambassador to France and sails on a naval cruiser to impress Europe with our might. Conscription has placed a powerful weapon in the hands of the reactionary military clique to interfere in all spheres of civil life.

The economic needs and costs of the war program have yet to be measurably reflected in the sphere of consumption but higher prices and rationing are on the way. The goods and facilities diverted to arms manufacture together with increased taxes will result in a shortage of consumer's goods and a rise in the cost of living. The *Financial News* of London bluntly asserts: "The United States . . . could not exert its full weight in international affairs without a reduction of the high standard of living enjoyed by its citizens." The democrats assailed Goering when he said that guns were more important than butter. Canada has just pegged the price of butter; England has rationed it. Soon the U. S. will have to give up one for the other. The peoples of all the belligerents face the same

prospects of starvation and misery in this terrible imperialist struggle.

### What Next?

As 1940 ends, the United States has one foot over the threshold of war. When will Roosevelt decide to take the final step? That decision depends not simply on his own will and initiative but also upon the next developments in the war, especially upon the actions of Germany and Japan. If Japanese forces penetrate deeper into the South Pacific, if Germany conquers Great Britain or undertakes some other menacing move, Roosevelt will come out in the open and declare for war. His bellicose "fireside chat" just before the New Year showed that the leader of the imperialist war party is set for the showdown.

Meanwhile a powerful current of resistance against re-

gimentation is developing among the industrial workers. As the imperialists prepare to launch their offensive abroad and at home and impose their reactionary Prussian regime upon the people, the workers are surging forward on the war-boom. The core of the proletariat in heavy industry is manifesting great energy, militancy, fresh confidence in itself.

The friction between the opposing class tendencies keeps flaring up in acute conflicts which cannot be strangled by the brass-hats or their labor lieutenants, like Hillman, at least without serious and prolonged struggle. As in the Vultee Aircraft situation, the workers are even winning important victories.

Thus the workers are being forced to fight, not only for the bosses, but for themselves. To help the workers succeed in their struggles to defend their organizations, liberties, and social gains is our task for 1941.

# The Crisis in the Soviet Union

By JOHN G. WRIGHT

The 1940 Ukases of the Kremlin mirror the irreconcilable conflict between the fetters of Stalin's totalitarian regime and the needs of Soviet economic life and development. From the beginning, this conflict assumed its sharpest forms in the attempts of the bureaucracy to lace into its totalitarian strait-jacket the working class, the greatest productive force in society. The June 26, 1940 laws represent the concentrated and most extreme expression to date of Stalin's previous labor laws. To understand what is now taking place in the Soviet Union it is therefore necessary, first of all, to understand the root causes which underline these measures against the working class.

### Stalin's Labor Legislation: 1927-1940

Stalin abolished the 35-hour week and instituted the 48-hour week on June 26, 1940. One legal fiction has been replaced by another. But underlying both is a thirteen year campaign to lengthen the working day and cut wages—the Kremlin's one and only method of raising the productivity of labor which, despite the colossal development of Soviet industry, has remained at the lowest levels in the world.

The seven-hour day, five-day week was introduced by Stalin as a *political* measure in 1927, the year when the struggle against the Left Opposition (Trotskyists) reached its climax. By means of this legislation Stalin sought to lull the workers, and to demonstrate to them that their interests were as dear to him as to the Opposition. But to the mass of the workers, it remained a seven-hour day in name only. Every factory director always had and still has at his disposal a quota of several hundred thousand man-hours "overtime" and these additional hours were and are apportioned among the workers, thus lengthening the working-day everywhere beyond the "legal" limit. In the period of the first Five Year

**UKASE OF THE PRAESIDIUM OF THE SUPREME COUNCIL OF THE USSR ON THE CHANGE TO THE 8-HOUR WORKING DAY AND 7-DAY WORKING WEEK; AND THE PROHIBITION OF SELF-WILLED DEPARTURE OF WORKERS AND EMPLOYEES FROM ENTERPRISES AND INSTITUTIONS:**

... Article 5: Workers and employes who arbitrarily leave state, cooperative and public enterprises and/or institutions are remitted to court and by sentence of People's Judges incarcerated in prisons for a term of 2 to 4 months.

For stopping or skipping work without serious reason workers and employes of state, cooperative and public enterprises and/or institutions are remitted to court and sentenced by People's Judges to terms up to six months of penal labor at place of employment, and up to 25 per cent of their wages withheld.

*Ukase dated June 26, 1940, first published June 27, 1940.*

Plan the methods of "shock-brigadeism" were applied as a supplementary means of rendering labor more productive. The wages of Soviet workers, in this period of currency inflation and acute famine of necessities, were reduced to miserable rations.

With the abolition of the card system, the stabilization and unification of prices, Soviet industry switched over to piece-work wages (1935). The chase after the rouble now acquired a very real meaning, and the bureaucracy immediately utilized it as a "spontaneous" means of increasing the pressure on the working class. The

system of "shock-brigadeism," which achieved just the opposite of what had been intended, was replaced by Stakhanovism (August 1935).

**STAKHANOVISM:** In a brilliant analysis of this administrative measure at its very inception, Leon Sedov pointed out that the Stakhanov movement was in itself reducible to an intensification of labor, and to the lengthening of the working day. To set and break records, the Stakhanovists had to utilize their "non-working" time to put their benches and tools in order, sort their raw material; the brigadiers had to instruct their brigades, etc. The trend toward a longer working day was immediately apparent even from the scanty data then published in the Soviet press. Thus, on the Donetz Railway the machinists began working 250-290 hours a month, a working day of 10-11½ hours. In many plants the day off was cancelled, increasing the working hours. In other enterprises the directors themselves issued orders lengthening the hours. Cases of a working day of 10 hours, 14 hours and even 16 hours were not uncommon. "We have adduced these isolated facts" wrote Sedov in December 1935, "because there cannot be talk of any kind of free statistical data concerning the working-day in Soviet Russia. But these examples," he concluded, "indicate that the 7-8-hour working day is being

dealt blows from all sides, while the Stakhanov movement carries with it the threat of liquidating it altogether." The subsequent legislation of the Kremlin completely corroborated this prediction.

Precisely because the Stakhanov movement, under Stalin's regime, reduced itself to speed-up, longer hours, higher norms, lower piece-work rates, etc., it met with a stubborn resistance on the part of the workers. Accounts of the Stakhanov campaign in the official press presented at times the picture of a small civil war. *Trud*, the organ of the trade unions, wrote at this period: "The class struggle makes itself felt at every step." In this "class" struggle, Trotsky pointed out, the workers are on one side, the trade unions on the other.

The intensity of this struggle was from the outset reflected in the purges of the trade unions, a section of the apparatus closest to the masses and most directly affected by their pressure.

In an article entitled: "Trade Unions Re-Organized to Cope with Important New Tasks," P. Moskatov, Secretary of the All-Union Central Council of the Trade Unions wrote in 1937, when Stakhanovism was already in decline:

"Soviet trade unions are in the process of thorough reorganization... Enemies of socialism and of the working-class—the Mensheviks, the Trotskyite and Bukharinite traitors—did their utmost to isolate the trade unions from the Party. In the new conditions brought about by the gigantic growth of Socialism," continued Moskatov, "the leading trade union bodies were not up to the mark. They had become isolated from the masses and could not, therefore, lead their matured political activity, nor further a wide development of the Stakhanov movement." (*Moscow News*, Nov. 7, 1937.)

On the Twentieth Anniversary of the October Revolution, according to the same Moskatov:

"Ninety per cent of the members of the Central Committees of the Unions are newly elected. Fifty-five per cent of the chairmen of Central Committees and eighty-five per cent of the secretaries are also serving their first terms. The most capable men and women loyal to the party, are being promoted to the leadership in the Central Committees." (*Idem*)

But Stakhanovism could not get any further even with these revamped trade unions; it had to be "supplemented" by ferocious administrative measures, which came in December 1938, and with them, necessarily, another trade union purge.

A year later *Pravda* greeted ecstatically the 1939 model of trade unions which at long last included:

"The flower of the working class and of the intelligentsia of the U.S.S.R., scores and hundreds of notable people of our fatherland; the chosen of the people—Deputies of the Supreme Council of the U.S.S.R. of Federated and of Autonomous Republics; people worthy of highest awards—the orders and medals of the U.S.S.R.; the trade union 'active' which has matured in recent years, educated by the party of Lenin-Stalin." (*Pravda*, Oct. 31, 1939.)

In a brief nine months this same "flower of the working class and intelligentsia" was to be decimated (July 1940) as *darmoyedniki* (scoundrels who eat bread which they haven't earned) and *bezdelniki* (scoundrels who idle away their time).

**THE DECEMBER 1938 LAWS:** By the end of the Second Five Year Plan none of the burning problems of Soviet economy had been solved. In fact, they had become more aggravated. Stakhanovism was as complete a failure as its predecessor, "shock-brigadeism." But the myth of its wonder-work had to be maintained, because Stalin was personally compromised.

On December 28, 1938, Stalin invalidated the Soviet labor code introduced under Lenin, in December 1922. The

Soviet system of social security was likewise, in effect, liquidated. By administrative decree, the productivity of labor was increased "25 per cent," i.e., a speed-up of 25 per cent. The direct wage cuts were fixed at 14 per cent. A system of labor (fink) books was introduced to shackle the workers to the factories. Workers were to be fired on the fourth time they came late to work.

The workers themselves insisted on a rigid application of this particular clause, inasmuch as after four violations they were left free to seek employment elsewhere, easily obtainable in view of the acute shortage of labor and the urgent need of directors to fulfill their plan quotas. The 1938 measure, as usual, came into complete opposition with its own aims. Production was still further disrupted by observance of the laws. Sharper administrative reprisals were the answer.

On January 8, 1939, came another wage cut. Wage cuts aggravated the situation. Nevertheless in 1940, in the space of six months, two additional direct wage cuts preceded the passage of the June 26 laws, which themselves contained an indirect wage cut. The labor turnover sky-rocketed.

## The "Fluidity" of Labor And the Crises in Economy

In the period of the First Five Year Plan the labor turnover assumed monstrous proportions: from official estimates it can be set at 30-50 per cent. The vast influx of millions of peasants enabled Soviet industry to survive in those years. The turnover of labor in the period of the Second Five Year Plan, just prior to the passage of the December 1938 legislation rose to the almost incredible figure of 50-62 per cent. No industry can withstand such a condition. It cuts down the levels of productivity already achieved, aggravates the already acute labor shortage, disorganizes production itself, and constitutes one of the major causes for the periodic breakdowns of the plans.

The catastrophic conditions in industry in 1940—the second year of the Third Five Year Plan—reproduce, recapitulate and deepen under war-time conditions all the contradictions of the preceding stages. The current crisis creeps out in every issue of the press. Thus, *Pravda* in boasting of the successes of the latest legislation, claims the fulfillment of the plan for coal production for the first ten days in October, and in the same breath adds, "Something that hasn't happened in a long time." (*Pravda*, Oct. 24.)

P. Lomako, People's Commissar of Non-Ferrous Metallurgy, makes the same claim for his commissariat, and then exclaims: "This is an unprecedented situation for non-ferrous metallurgy." (*Pravda*, Oct. 26.)

Similar quotations can be cited at will from one branch of industry to another, through the length and breadth of the land. It is no longer "a secret" that the Third Five Year Plan has been gravely disrupted.

In the period of the First Five Year Plan the bureaucracy fixed the blame for economic difficulties, failures, and the crisis on: Mensheviks, S. R.'s, bourgeois and petty-bourgeois specialists who played the role of "saboteurs," "wreckers," "agents of imperialism," and "restorationists of capitalism" in the first infamous Moscow frame-ups. The accompanying and comparatively mild purge disrupted the economic life still further. It was only a rehearsal.

The entire generation that made the October Revolution was placed in the defendants' dock and murdered in the dungeons of the GPU as "enemies of the people," "wreckers," etc., in the second and major edition of the Moscow Trials. In the period of the Second Five Year Plan the accompanying

purge, in which tens of thousands were shot and hundreds of thousands jailed plunged Soviet industry into the chaotic condition from which it has still to emerge.

Since December, 1938, Stalin has pinned the blame on the entire Soviet working class, allegedly composed of "disorganizers of production," "violators of discipline," "laggards," and "floaters." A third edition of the Moscow Trials is now in preparation.

### **Bureaucratic Roots of Labor "Fluidity": Working Conditions**

Under the present regime the conditions in Soviet factories have been almost beyond the power of language to describe. Here, for example, is a 1940 picture painted by *Pravda* of a large textile combine near Moscow:

The factory ceilings and walls are black with accumulated lint, dirt and soot. Floors are covered with mud and filth. Remnants of stale, and, in all probability, indigestible food decorate the window sills. Delicate machine-parts litter the floor. The looms themselves "create the impression that they haven't been cleaned in a long time." In the summer the rains pour in through the skylights. "So much water leaked into some textile guilds that work had to be suspended. In order to obtain passage from one loom to the next, planks had to be laid over the water." "It is difficult to imagine," wonders *Pravda*, "how the director of the plant made the inspection tour of the guild in those days." *Pravda*, as usual, is not concerned with the question of how the workers "made their rounds." To be sure, these particular skylights were fixed but "all the defects are still to be eliminated." *Pravda* objects that in places "which still lack ventilation" the moisture—inside!—collects on the skylights, drops below, drops on the floor, on the cloth. Spots result. The premises must indeed be damp for so much moisture to condense. If there isn't enough air for moisture to evaporate, then very little must have been left for the workers to breathe—after the skylights had been repaired, i.e., hermetically sealed. The smug parasites in *Pravda* who entitle this article "Filth and Defective Goods" are concerned with more important things than air for the workers, for instance, the condition of floors: "Near the looms," they rage, "there is filth. Shuttles and pieces of cloth sometimes drop on the floor." Not a word about the workers on whom the moisture also drops, and who at all times must wade through filth. When this highly "inefficient" condition was called to the attention of the director, he replied: "Of course, we don't boast of maintaining our place in ideal cleanliness, but the condition is quite normal and tolerable (?)" (*Pravda*, October 27, 1940, the query is in the original). If such "normal" and "tolerable" conditions prevail in and around Moscow, that is, in the center, what must be the conditions in the provinces?

N. Siluyanov, Deputy People's Commissar of Non-Ferrous Metallurgy reports: "In the factory (the Karsakpaisky Copper Plant) the number of accidents to machinery has increased. The loss of labor time because of accidents and stoppages of aggregates results in disrupting the production plans. In the Balkhash plant there are likewise a great many stoppages and many accidents. In the eight months of the current year 211 accidents were recorded there. This is considerably more than last year. It has been calculated that because of the idleness of mechanisms alone, there has been a loss of 2,000 tons of copper. Why do accidents occur? 38 per cent of the accidents occurred because of gross violations of elementary rules of the technical exploitation of aggregates and mechanisms." (*Pravda*, Oct. 9, 1940.) The Deputy People's Commis-

sar refrains from calculating the number of workers maimed and killed in these accidents.

The conditions in the Stalingrad tractor plant, one of the largest and most important plants in the country, are sketched as follows: "The factory operates sporadically. In the (past) nine months, the stoppages amounted to 640,000 man-hours, including 306,000 man-hours completely 'unutilized'; and in this same period overtime 'ran to' 472,000 roubles... There were great stoppages also on the assembly lines, which led to the unfulfillment of the norms. In August, 33 per cent of the workers did not fulfill their norm." (*Pravda*, Oct. 27, 1940.) The columns of *Pravda* are checkered with similar reports.

From one day to the next, the workers dare not come late—that is a criminal offense—and they must get up earlier, for it is no excuse that the trains are not running on schedule, or the trolleys and buses are overcrowded or unavailable; they must gulp down their food during a lunch "hour" of twenty minutes if they are fortunate enough to get served in the factory dining rooms—and then they must spend hours standing idle because of the inefficient administrators, and, to top it all, work additional hours "overtime."

"Thirty-three per cent did not fulfill their norm!"—and this despite the enormous overtime, which is carefully translated into roubles to hide the actual lengthening of the working day in this particular plant. But this means that, overtime and all, one-third of the workers failed to earn their minimum meager wage! All of which leaves its impress on the most backward, the most beaten, the most subservient.

Kalinin, the President of the Soviet Union, rounds out the picture. "Comrades," he said, addressing the Moscow Party membership, "picture to yourselves, a good engineer. He has studied much; he is an educated man, he is considered a valuable worker. And when you walk into his factory, the Devil himself would break his leg. (*Laughter*)" (*Pravda*, October 30, 1940.)

A Soviet worker might well ask these gentlemen: If "you" and the Devil himself can expect to break your legs while making a tour of Soviet plants, how do you expect me to raise my productivity, or for that matter, to produce at all under these same conditions? The Soviet worker knows the answer in advance. The audience, embracing not only engineers but directors, heads of trusts, members of the People's Commissariats, laughs listening to Kalinin; but the response to workers would not be so facetious.

"Any hundred Soviet workers," wrote Trotsky, "transferred into the conditions, let us say of American industry, after a few months, and even weeks, would probably not fall behind the American workers of a corresponding category. *The difficulty lies in the general organization of labor.* The Soviet administrative personnel is, as a general rule, far less equal to the new productive tasks than the workers... The creation of the necessary elementary conditions for this (i.e., the systematic raising of the now very low productivity of labor) demands a raising of the level of administration itself from the shop foreman to the leaders of the Kremlin."

To raise the level of administration it is necessary to infringe upon the privileges and arbitrary rule of the incumbent self-perpetuating "administrators." They will cede nothing, not even in the interests of defense. They must first be removed. For this a political revolution is necessary. Meanwhile they remain and with them remains the basic obstacle in the path of any further improvement or progress.

Horrible as the conditions are in the factories themselves, the living conditions are, if that is conceivable, still worse. The overwhelming majority of the workers huddle in common

dwellings, which in equipment and upkeep are worse than barracks. In 1936 the Soviet press provided the following illustrations: "Two families live in one room. The roof leaks. When it rains they carry the water out of the room by pailfuls." "The privies are in a disgusting condition." "The workers sleep on the floor, since bedbugs eat them up in beds. The chairs are broken; there are no mugs to drink water from, etc."

In the years which have since elapsed, the "dwellings" and privies have become more dilapidated and more congested. To illustrate 1940 conditions a single passage from Kalinin's speech will suffice. "There must be less bedbugs," thundered Kalinin, "in the apartments in Moscow, etcetera. Bedbugs—why that's intolerable! That's a shame! And meanwhile there are people who occupy themselves with the question: What will man be like under Communism? What qualities will distinguish him? (*Laughter*)" (*loc. cit.*)

"In Moscow, etcetera"! If apartments in Moscow are as Kalinin crudely but graphically puts it *Klopovniki* (bedbug nurseries), it is not difficult, although nauseating, to imagine what the conditions are in the "etcetera," i.e., elsewhere under Stalin's "transition to communism."

In the supply of daily necessities, the law which operates from plan to plan in Soviet economy is: the closer to the mass consumer the worse the quality. Kalinin has the floor again: "It is necessary to say openly that we are very dissatisfied with the quality of many of our products. And the characteristic thing is that each of us swears whenever an object of poor quality gets into his hands. We ourselves, however, never wonder about the kind of products other people get from us." And why do "we" never wonder?

In Kalinin's opinion the reason is purely psychological, and to be explained by a mental quirk of "leaders of production." "How did many of them reason as a rule?" asks Kalinin, deftly changing the pronoun from "we" to "they." "They reasoned," he continues, "this way. Is it worth while stirring up scandals, sharpening relations with social organizations, quarrelling with comrades etcetera? An object, even if defective, will pass among the masses. And it did pass. Such an attitude to defective goods has sunk its roots deeply into our production." (*loc. cit.*) No wonder *Pravda* decided to print this speech of October 2 only on October 30. In spite of four weeks' careful editing, the content speaks for itself.

To obtain a minimum of necessities, Soviet workers, even the skilled, have to expend many extra hours. It is not so much a question of standing in line before the shops, as it is a question of raising "their own" cows, pigs, chickens, tending vegetable patches, etc. They will have to intensify this labor too.

Under the added pressure of war-time conditions, the shortage of foodstuffs is growing more and more acute. In October, the price of bread was increased 15 per cent in Moscow and Leningrad.

The authorities are engaged in winter time in a campaign to foster and extend "auxiliary economies" to every enterprise by next Spring. "Old auxiliary economies, which have long remained outside the field of vision of leaders of enterprises are being reestablished," boasts *Pravda*. "New ones are being organized... Up to now, the workers in Volodarsky Plant," continues *Pravda*, citing a model, "grew only potatoes. They are now preparing to plant in the Spring onions, beets, cabbages and other garden staples as well; they will raise early vegetables." (*Pravda*, October 14, 1940.) *Pravda* also advises, as a relaxation in leisure hours, the establishment and care by workers of dairies, pig and chicken farms, stocking fish in suitable ponds, and so forth and so on. Ap-

parently, only the rabbits, so hotly advocated during the famine in the first Five Year Plan, are missing.

"What a terrible robbery of human power... and what a burden of medieval digging in manure and in the earth they lay upon the workers, and yet more upon his wife and children" (Trotsky).

## The June 26, 1940 Laws

By the time the Kremlin convinced itself that Stakhanovism and the December 1938 legislation were two more exploded triumphs, World War No. 2 had broken out. In addition to cutting deeply into foreign trade and the supply of indispensable materials and machinery from abroad, the war made it necessary, especially after the Finnish experience, to divert more plants to production of munitions and armaments. Many machines installed previously had become outworn and outdated, an equal if not greater number were damaged during the reckless drive for records, let alone the damage from inexperienced and careless handling. The problems of labor productivity, and defense, always inseparable, were posed more imperiously than ever before. Stalin's answer was to convert the Soviet enterprises and institutions into virtual prisons.

Petronius relates how in Nero's time the upstart slaveholders, former freedmen drunk with power, used to hang a tablet over the gates of their establishments with this inscription:

*What servant goes forth without his master's command he shall receive an hundred stripes.*

The Kremlin Nero has inscribed over every factory, plant, mine and office—the June 26 ukase.

The ukase not only lengthens the working day, and cuts wages, but makes it a criminal offense for anyone to quit his job. The penalty for "self-willed departure" is the GPU dungeon. Skipping a day's work, or tardiness, is punishable by penal-labor terms to be served at the place of employment, plus a fine up to 25 per cent of the wages.

The previous vast migration of labor had provided a safety valve for the regime, although the Kremlin was of course unaware of it. Only unemployment drains and demoralizes human beings more than does the incessant, futile search for a slight improvement of one's lot. Unquestionably, thousands upon thousands of Russian workers, especially among the older generation and those with families, became human rags—their moral fiber torn to tatters in this chase after their daily bread and a less infested place to sleep.

Now, however, the mass of the Russian workers are being held by force in the factories. They have already served six months of their life-term imprisonment. Their sentence carries with it ever greater speed-up, worse and worse conditions, lower wages, longer hours. Within these new prison walls, they will for the first time in years really get to know one another. Their children driven from the schools by another ukase abolishing free schooling, drafted into a conscript labor force, have been enslaved together with them. At every step, at every moment whether awake or asleep, the wasteful, arrogant, ruthless vampire-bureaucracy unveils itself before the masses as their oppressor-jailer. The most advanced capitalist countries have as yet to devise a jail from which men have not planned escape and—succeeded.

The intimate connection between the 1940 purge of the trade unions, the June 26 legislation, and the resistance of the workers, was confirmed by *Pravda* itself four months later:

"It is still impermissible to say that our trade union organizations have done everything in their power to successfully

enforce the June 26 ukase. It is not only a question of the fact that in the first weeks of the enforcement of the ukase certain trade union organizations did not cooperate in exposing the laggards and their patrons, but sometimes themselves patronized the laggards... But the question is this, that certain trade union organizations up to now still carry on very superficial educational work... The entire mass trade union work has been reduced in many instances to conducting flying meetings, and readings of the ukase." (*Pravda*, Oct. 9, 1940. My emphasis.)

The officially acknowledged figure for the 1940 trade union purge was 128,000 trade union officials out of a reported total of 203,821. Why not abolish the trade unions altogether, as a public nuisance? Stalin no doubt wishes he could.

If in the period of Stakhanovism the organ of the trade unions spoke of the "class" struggle, then today the titular head of the Soviet government, the President of the U.S.S.R., comments as follows on the June 26 laws: "...The class struggle at the present time is taking place in a different direction. The struggle for the highest productivity of labor—this at the given moment is one of the main directions of the class struggle." (Kalinin's speech "On Communist Upbringing," *Pravda*, October 30.)

## The Official Balance Sheet

In January 1936 when the dizziest claims of success were being made and when Stakhanovism was envisaged as a panacea, Molotov cautiously acknowledged: "Our average level of productivity... is still considerably below that of America and Europe." Molotov abstained from specifying the extent of the discrepancy. Official figures since published clearly establish that Soviet labor productivity remains below one-fourth, and in many cases one-tenth of the corresponding labor productivity in advanced capitalist countries.

Despite the expansion of mechanization—the capital outlay for the Third Five Year Plan is greater than the combined totals for both of the previous plans—this discrepancy has become more pronounced since 1936. Kalinin, who has long refrained from speaking publicly on important issues, blurted out: "Have we greatly raised the productivity of labor in our country? I wouldn't say that we have achieved too great results in this connection." (*Pravda*, Oct. 30, 1940.)

Kalinin is merely echoing his superiors. On his lips this admission of bankruptcy is all the more damning.

It is not hard to understand why the Stakhanov movement and the December 1938 laws met with resistance on the part of the workers. With conditions in factories and living conditions remaining unaltered, all the Kremlin's measures meant only a further degradation of the masses. Instead of diminishing, the labor turnover increased. It expressed the most elementary and immediate form of mass resistance. Stalin has cut off this safety-valve, and thereby has entered into the stage of an open struggle with the working class. No other road of resistance now remains. The bureaucracy stands face to face with its mortal enemy.

## The Soviet Working Class

**PECULIARITIES OF HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT:** From its very inception under Czarism the Russian working class developed at a very explosive tempo, reflecting the rapid growth of Russian industry. The revolutionary movement in Czarist Russia had its roots precisely in this tempo of Russia's economic development prior to 1917.

**ACCELERATION OF THE PROCESS:** With the overthrow of Czarism, and especially with the inception of planned production, the formation of the working class proceeded at tempos unequalled in any other country. The vast scope of the industrialization of the Soviet Union is expressed in the

growth of its urban population. In the twelve years which elapsed between the last two censuses, the Soviet urban population advanced from 26.3 million (December, 1926) to 55.9 million (January, 1939), an increase of 29.6 million, i.e., more than doubled.

**COMPARISON WITH GROWTH IN THE UNITED STATES:** The most rapid expansion of the urban population in the United States took place in the first quarter of our century, when the urban population grew from 30.3 million in 1900 to 54.3 million in 1920, an increase of 24 million in twenty years, considerably below the figure for the Soviet Union, although the growth in America took two decades, i.e. almost twice as long.

The comparative tempos of Soviet and U. S. growth are juxtaposed in the table below:

**TABLE I**  
**GROWTH OF THE URBAN POPULATION**  
**IN THE SOVIET UNION**  
(Computed from official Soviet data)

Year	Total Number of Years	Total Increase	Average Annual Growth
Pre-Plan period (Dec. '26-Jan. '29)	2	1.3 million	.65 million
First 5-Year Plan (Jan. '29-Jan. '33)	4	12.7 million	3.18 million
Second 5-Year Plan (Jan. '33-Jan. '39)	6	15.6 million	2.6 million
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>29.6 million</b>	<b>2.5 million</b>

**IN THE UNITED STATES**  
(from figures in the *Statistical Abstracts of the United States*)

Decade 1900-1910	10	11.8 million	1.2 million
Decade 1910-1920	10	12.2 million	1.22 million
5 Years 1920-1925	5	8.5 million	1.7 million
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>25 years</b>	<b>32.5 million</b>	<b>1.3 million</b>

The urban population in the Soviet Union which recorded only a slight increase, 1.3 million in two years (1927 and 1928) makes an astounding leap of 12.7 million in the next four years of the actual unfolding of the First Five Year Plan, and in the six following years registers an even greater growth of 15.6 million. The Soviet development is represented by a steep, almost vertically rising curve. In the United States on the other hand, despite the fact that the movement from farms to cities was swelled by tens of millions of immigrants from Europe, the far more gradual development is represented by an almost horizontal line. The two tempos cut at right angles to each other. The difference between the ratios of growth is not quantitative but *qualitative*. It reflects the abyss between the respective foundations of the two social systems.

**THE NUMBER OF PEASANTS INVOLVED:** The growth of the urban population in the Soviet Union occurred primarily through the movement of peasants to the cities. History knows of no comparable migration from rural areas into modern industrial centers. The statistics relating to this movement are one of the secrets of the regime. Nevertheless it is possible to arrive at an approximate estimate: Not less than twenty million participated in this mass migration, the actual number probably being in excess of that estimate.

Indicative as this growth is of the profoundly accelerated transformation in the country's economic and social structure, there remains an additional and more significant indicator: The growth of the Soviet working class—the sole significant section of world labor that has expanded in the era of capitalist decay—considerably surpasses in tempo the volcanic

growth of the urban population. The importance of that cannot be exaggerated. The table below supplies the available data:

**TABLE II**

	At the beginning of 1st 5-year Plan (1929)	At the beginning of 2nd 5-year Plan (1933)	At the beginning of 3rd 5-year Plan (1939)
Soviet Urban Population (in millions)	27.6	40.3	55.9
Total number of workers and employes (in millions)	12.2	22.3	29.5*
Increase in Urban Population (in millions)	1.8	12.7	15.6
Increase in number of Workers and Employes (in millions)	not given	10.1	7.2

**WHAT THESE FIGURES MEAN:** The tempo of development disclosed by these figures is almost incredible, especially in the eyes of the apologists of capitalism. In the last decade eleven out of every twenty inhabitants of urban communities have been employed in industrial enterprises or state institutions, that is, the overwhelming majority of able-bodied adults. This condition, which has prevailed since the inception of planned production, must become more accentuated in the period immediately ahead, because of the institution of child labor that has now been begun by abolishing free education. It is without precedent in the history of modern industry and modern cities. Thus the numerical growth of the working class is overshadowed by its far more dominant economic and social weight in the country. The term Soviet working class is today synonymous with the term Soviet City.

**CONDITIONS IN THE PERIOD OF THE FIRST FIVE YEAR PLAN (1929-1933):** From 1929 to 1933, the urban population grew by 12.7 million while the working class expanded by 10.1 million. The two figures are so close as to be almost identical. It means that approximately sixteen out of every twenty new urban inhabitants were absorbed by industry in the period of the First Five Year Plan. Therefore, both the growth of the urban population and the growth of the working class took place almost exclusively at the expense of the villages. The peasants were uprooted from the soil and flocked into the cities. Peasant adults and youth composed the bulk of 10.1 million absorbed in industry in 1929-1933. At the beginning of the Second Five Year Plan these new recruits constituted almost half the proletarian army of 22.3 million in the Soviet Union. Because of the unprecedented tempo of its formation the Soviet working class was thus less homogeneous than any other in modern times. The lack of homogeneity of the basic class, the flooding of its ranks with semi-proletarians and peasants, whose outlook is poles apart from that of workers, *plus* the lack of revolutionary experience among the younger generation of workers, *plus* the officially fostered illusions of miracles shortly to be achieved—all this, against the background of international defeats of the working class, provided the most potent lever for the stabilization of the Stalin regime.

\*The last available figure is that issued in 1938, which sets the total for 1937 at 27.8 million. To arrive at an estimate for 1939 I have added to this figure the average annual increase in the labor force in the last few years, namely 1.7 million. Such an estimate in view of the retarded growth of the labor force (this aspect will be dealt with presently) is not very far from the actual one.

**THE CONNECTION BETWEEN STALIN'S POLICIES IN 1929-1933 AND THE EXPANDING INDUSTRY'S NEED OF LABOR:** A more harmonious development of Soviet industry, adjusted to the conditions in the country, and especially concerned with raising the material well-being of the masses, would have absorbed ever greater numbers from the country through the automatic growth of manufacture, the development of transportation facilities, the improvement in living and working conditions, shorter hours of labor, better educational facilities, the lure of companionship and amusements, and the general superiorities and conveniences of modern industrial centers as against the rural communities. Such a development, however, was precluded because of the false, ruinous policies and regime of the Kremlin. Industry was expanded at a reckless and adventurist tempo, in part to make up for the "tortoise tempos" of the preceding opportunist economic policies. The shortage of labor immediately manifested itself and became so acute that Stalin—he then made speeches—had personally to call attention to it. In the light of the recent Draconic legislation, it is by no means far-fetched to conclude that Stalin deliberately intensified his policy of "forced collectivization"—which cost Soviet economy so dearly and which took a toll of millions of peasant lives—precisely in order to drive the peasants into the cities.

**CONDITIONS IN THE PERIOD OF THE SECOND FIVE YEAR PLAN:** In 1933-1939, the working class increased by 7.2 million while the urban population leaped by 15.6 million. Undoubtedly the greater part of this increase in the early years of the Second Five Year Plan still reflected the flow of the peasants into the cities because of forced collectivization. Only nine out of every twenty new urban inhabitants were absorbed in industry in this period. Under Soviet conditions, this drop implied on the one hand the *monstrous swelling* of bureaucratic ranks—the fleshpots in the center are the Mecca of every functionary in the provinces—and, on the other, the *reduced influx* of peasants into urban centers where only degradation awaits them. The vast migration of labor acted to spread to the far-flung corners of the Union the news of intolerable conditions in industry. The peasants in increasing numbers preferred to remain on land, not because conditions there had vastly improved, as is the official claim, but because conditions in cities had worsened to such an extent that in recent years a movement has taken place in the opposite direction, i.e., from the cities to the country, especially during spring and summer months when laborers in the collective farms are at a premium. "It is well-known that in the spring and summer months the Don Basin (Soviet coal producing center) and other basins usually sharply reduced their output because of the seasonal ebb of the labor force." (*Pravda*, October 29, 1940.) Stalin chose the month of June to promulgate his 1940 laws precisely to prevent a section of workers from drifting back to the villages.

The new recruits to the working class in this period (1933-1939) numbered approximately 7.2 million, as against a total working class of 29.5 million, whereas in the preceding period (1929-1933) the new forces comprised 10.1 million out of a total working class of 22.3 million. Most of these 7.2 million newly added workers were peasants and peasant youth. However, the proportion of raw elements had dropped to less than one-fourth as against almost one-half the total labor force at the inception of planned production.

## The Soviet Working Class Today

The working class still remains very heterogeneous. But the core of the proletarians and semi-proletarians today far

outweighs the more backward strata not only socially but numerically. A profound change has taken place in the course of the last ten years.

The bulk of the 10.1 million peasants who went into industry during the First Five Year Plan have now behind them not less than six, and in many instances, as much as ten years of proletarianization. These vast bodies of men, women and children who were driven from the most backward rural areas into the environment of modern industry—and Stalinism; who then together with others swarmed across the land in search of less intolerable working and living conditions, have passed through a great and terrible experience. They know and hate the regime.

There is another equally striking and important fact about the Soviet working class. It is the youngest proletariat in history not only in point of formation, but that of *age itself*. Trotsky pointed out that in 1936 there were seven million workers under twenty-three—3,140,000 in industry; 700,000 in railroads, 700,000 in the building trades. "In the new giant factories," he added, "about half the workers are young." The oldest among them are today under twenty-seven.

The trend toward absorbing more and more youth in industry was further accentuated in the next four years. And now, by ukase of October 2, 1940, Stalin has drafted children and adolescents from 14-17 years into industry. The fact that a significant section of the proletariat consists of the youth can tip the scales decisively in determining the fate of the Russian proletariat, and the Soviet Union.

The Kremlin stands in mortal fear of the youth. In April, 1936, the Komsomol (Russian YCL) was liquidated as a political body, and the youth forbidden to participate in any manner whatever in political life. Stalin feared lest the Komsomol turn into a rival political party.

Commenting on the political expropriation of the youth, Trotsky wrote: "In 1894 the Russian autocracy through the lips of the young Czar Nicholas II answered the Zemstvos which were timidly dreaming of participating in political life with the famous words: 'Meaningless fancies!' In 1936 the Soviet bureaucracy answered the as yet vague claims of the younger generation with the still ruder cry: 'Stop your chatter!' Those words, too, will become historical. The regime of Stalin may pay no less dear for them than the regime headed by Nicholas II."

In October 1940 the proletarian and peasant youth was expropriated culturally and socially by being driven from Soviet schools and universities to form a labor reserve. The coming months may well bring with them a verification of Trotsky's prognosis.

All political and social processes in the Soviet Union take place today in the conditions and atmosphere of the second imperialist world holocaust. War speeds up all processes in the extreme. War is the supreme test of a regime. In wartime the masses become most sensitive. Days arrive in history, as Marx said, which concentrate in themselves ten, even twenty years. This applies not only to the masses struggling toward consciousness under capitalism but also to the Soviet workers under Stalin. The tiniest flicker of mass upsurge anywhere on the periphery must react with ten-fold force in the white-hot Soviet atmosphere. Stalin is as aware and afraid of this as are Hitler, Churchill, Roosevelt, *et al.*

In each new ukase, which surpasses the ferocity of the one before, the Kremlin really voices its alarm. Fear creeps into official pronouncements. In a long article intended as an "Aid to Propagandists and Agitators" *Pravda* warns that unless the ukases are fulfilled "the entire cause of completing the building of classless society and the *transition* to the high-

est phase of communism *may be threatened.*" (*Pravda*, Oct. 14. My emphasis.)

Kalinin expressed the same alarm much more bluntly and crudely: "One of two things: either we are building Communism or we are only talking about Communism, while we ourselves move toward Communism slowly and, if it is permissible to say so, waddle along, stretching and yawning. *But bear in mind that it is very risky to move towards Communism in this way. It is possible to protract too long the transition to Communism in this way.*" (*Pravda*, Oct. 30. My emphasis.) Stalin is obviously introducing an amendment to his theory of "socialism in one country" and its "irrevocable" triumph.

The Russo-Japanese war led to the revolution of 1905. The participation of Czarism in the first world war terminated in October 1917. Stalin fears that this continuity in the origin and development of the Russian revolution may repeat itself in the second world war, for the outbreak of which he bears no small responsibility.

### The "Passivity" of the Masses

The Russian working class amply demonstrated the dynamic powers lodged in it not only under Czarism and in 1917 but in the years that followed. Although composing a small proportion of the population, with its own ranks diluted by 30-40 per cent, by peasant influxes during the war, the Russian working class proved capable of overthrowing the bourgeoisie when the correct program and a capable, loyal leadership were offered them. It is not known just how many proletarian fighters fell on the battlefields of the Civil War; but unquestionably the flower of the class died defending the new fortress of the world proletariat. It was this decimated working class that carried the Soviet Union through the terrible years of reconstruction, when the newly born Workers' Republic literally tottered on the brink of an abyss, when the country's economic structure was disrupted to an extent unmatched in modern times by the years of imperialist war, civil war, Allied intervention and blockade. *Despite* Stalin, and *against* the Stalinist regime, the Soviet working class carried through on their shoulders the entire burden, first of the NEP, and then of the Plans, attaining incontestable and staggering successes, the credit for which the Kremlin oligarchy has usurped just as it usurped the conquests of October. All this was achieved in the most reactionary epoch in modern history.

If the Soviet working class remained "passive," i.e., failed in this period to overthrow Stalinism, it was not owing to the extreme heterogeneity of the class or the inhuman efforts that had to be expended in attaining these world-historic conquests, but only because they received no help from the outside. The leaders of the Second and Third Internationals strangled one revolutionary movement after another throughout the world, and finally, with the aid of the anarchists, drowned the Spanish revolution in blood—and ushered in the war. Each defeat struck at and was felt most heavily by the Soviet working class.

Misleaders and turncoats always unload their own responsibility, betrayals, and crimes on the "passivity" or "immaturity" of the masses. But in every single case the masses have given all they could give. Above all, this is true of the Russian masses. For the list of the achievements of the Soviet proletariat is not exhausted by the facts recited above. Another important, if not the most important, conquest must be included: The political struggle, as heroic as any in history and conducted under repressions unprecedented in the labor movement, of its proletarian vanguard; the struggle waged

by the Left Opposition from 1923-1929, and then continued in exile; the struggle which led to the founding of the Fourth International, and still goes on today.

The tremendous role played in history by defeated revolutionary movements invariably escapes the notice of Philistines. They see only "victories" and this, long after they have been achieved. The role and importance of the defeated Paris Commune was understood and appraised by Marx and Engels. Lenin and Trotsky understood the significance of the Moscow uprising of the proletariat in 1905. All the Plekhanovs were only able to lament it as a "mistake," something that should and could have been avoided. Yet the victory of 1917 was made possible only because the lessons of the 1905 defeat were learned, assimilated and applied by the vanguard of the Russian proletariat. Any liberal, any professor, any scribbler can repeat it today as "concrete" truth. Beyond the vision of all professors and their disciples, however, is the vital importance of the "defeated" struggle of the Left Opposition and the struggles of its heir, the Fourth International.

To be sure, the fruition of the "defeated" struggle could not have been realized in a period of reaction and defeats, when every developing movement was crushed in blood by the opponents of Marxism, by pseudo-Marxists and their allies. Nonetheless the "defeat" of the Russian Opposition will have its realization, just as the defeat of 1905 was consummated by the victory of 1917.

In the arsenal of world labor, and of the Soviet workers in particular, the great tradition, the vital lessons and program of this struggle, conducted in its initial stages by the isolated Soviet vanguard under Trotsky's leadership, constitutes the most powerful force on the road of mankind's emancipation.

In the period of the first two Five Year Plans, the Soviet workers posted signs in factories: "Hands off Our Wages!" and hung portraits of Leon Trotsky above them. They are now beginning to seek a more eloquent language in which to address the masters in the Kremlin. Stalin's GPU murdered Trotsky. But Trotsky's program will cut its way through to the Soviet masses because it is the only key with which the gates of their prison can be unlocked.



## Letter From Natalia Trotsky

December 12, 1940

Dear Friends:

Thank you for the forwarded material. Among other things I received there was also a Minority leaflet from which I learned that Comrade Shachtman continues to call himself: "Editor of Trotsky's Works." As indeed he used to be, but that was when he still belonged to our organization. However, now that Comrade Shachtman has split from us; today when the organ of the Minority polemicalizes against us covertly or openly; when individual comrades of the Minority, carried away by factional feelings and corresponding views, permit themselves to voice, without any justification whatsoever, their disregard for the personality of L.D.—I consider it necessary to state that Comrade Shachtman cannot any longer come forward as Editor of Trotsky's Works. This, side by side with another of his "callings," that of National Secretary of the "Workers' Party," is not only illogical but demagogic.

NATALIA SEDOV TROTSKY

# From the Arsenal of Marxism

## On the History of the Left Opposition

(EDITORIAL NOTE: This discussion on the history of the Left Opposition was held in Coyoacan in April, 1939. The summary (it is not a detailed stenogram) was made by Comrade Johnson; it was not checked by Comrade Trotsky.)

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TROTSKY: Comrade Johnson has studied this subject with the greatest attention and the numerous annotations I have made are evidence of the care with which I have read his memorandum. It is important for all our comrades to see our past with insistence on revolutionary clarity. In parts the manuscript is very perspicacious, but I have noticed here the same fault that I have noticed in *World Revolution*—a very good book—and that is a lack of dialectical approach, Anglo-Saxon empiricism and formalism which is only the reverse of empiricism.

C. L. R. James makes his whole approach to the subject depend on one date—the appearance of Stalin's theory of Socialism in

a single country, April 1924. But the theory appeared in October 1924. This makes the whole structure false.

In April 1924 it was not clear whether the German revolution was going forward or back. In November '23 I asked that all the Russian comrades in Germany should be recalled. New strata *might* lift the revolution to a higher stage. On the other, the revolution might decline. If it declined, the first step of the reaction would be to arrest the Russians as foreign agents of disorder. Stalin opposed me: "You are always too hasty. In August you said the revolution was near; now you say that it is over already." I didn't say that it was over, but suggested that this precautionary step should be taken. By the summer of 1924 Stalin had convinced himself that the German revolution was defeated. He then asked the red professors to find him something from Lenin to tell the people. They searched and found two or three quotations and Stalin changed the passage in his book.

The German revolution had more influence on Stalin than Stalin on the German revolution. In 1923 the whole party was in a fever over the coming revolution. Stalin would not have dared to oppose me on this question at the Central Committee. The Left Opposition was very much to the fore on this question.

JOHNSON: Brandler went to Moscow convinced of the success of the revolution. What changed him?

TROTSKY: I had many interviews with Brandler. He told me that what was troubling him was not the seizure of power, but what to do after. I told him "Look here, Brandler, you say the prospects are good, but the bourgeoisie are in power in control of the state, the army, police, etc. The question is to break that power . . ." Brandler took many notes during many discussions with me. But this very boldness of his was only a cover for his secret fears. It is not easy to lead a struggle against bourgeois society. He went to Chemnitz and there

met the leaders of the Social Democracy, a collection of little Brandlers. He communicated to them in his speech his secret fears by the very way he spoke to them. Naturally they drew back and this mood of defeatism permeated to the workers.

In the 1905 Russian revolution there was a dispute in the Soviet as to whether we should challenge the Tsarist power with a demonstration on the anniversary of Bloody Sunday. To this day I do not know for certain whether it was the correct thing to do at that time or not. The committee could not decide, so we consulted the Soviet. I made the speech, putting the two alternatives in an objective manner, and the Soviet decided by an overwhelming majority not to demonstrate. But I am certain that if I had said it was necessary to demonstrate and spoken accordingly we would have had a great majority in favor. It was the same with Brandler. What was wanted in Germany in 1923 was a revolutionary party . . .

You accuse me also of degeneration when you quote Fischer. But why did I give that interview? In revolution it is always wise to throw on the enemy the responsibility. Thus in 1917 they asked me at the Soviet: "Are the Bolsheviks preparing an insurrection?" What could I say? I said, "No, we are defending the revolution, but if you provoke us . . . !" It was the same thing here. Poland and France were using the Russian Bolsheviks as a pretext for preparing intervention and reactionary moves. With the full consent of the German comrades I gave this interview, while the German comrades explained the situation to the German workers. Meanwhile I had a cavalry detachment under Dybenko ready on the Polish border.

JOHNSON: You would not agree with Victor Serge that the bureaucracy sabotaged the Chinese Revolution, in other words, that its attitude to the Chinese Revolution was the same as its attitude toward the Spanish?

TROTSKY: Not at all. Why should they sabotage it? I was on a committee (with Chicherin, Voroshilov, and some others) on the Chinese Revolution. They were even opposed to my attitude, which was considered pessimistic. They were anxious for its success.

JOHNSON: For the success of the bourgeois-democratic revolution. Wasn't their opposition to the proletarian revolution the opposition of a bureaucracy which was quite prepared to support a bourgeois-democratic revolution, but from the fact of its being a bureaucracy could not support a proletarian revolution?

TROTSKY: Formalism. We had the greatest revolutionary party in the world in 1917. In 1936 it strangles the revolution in Spain. How did it develop from 1917 to 1936? That is the question. According to your argument, the degeneration would have started in October 1917. In my view it started in the first years of the New Economic Policy. But even in 1927 the whole

party was eagerly awaiting the issue of the Chinese revolution. What happened was that the bureaucracy acquired certain bureaucratic habits of thinking. It proposed to restrain the peasants today so as not to frighten the generals. It thought it would push the bourgeoisie to the left. It saw the Kuomintang as a body of office-holders and thought it could put Communists into the offices and so change the direction of events . . . And how would you account for the change which demanded a Canton Commune?

JOHNSON: Victor Serge says that it was only for the sake of the Sixth World Congress that they wanted the Commune "if only for a quarter of an hour."

TROTSKY: It was more for the party internally than for the International. The party was excited over the Chinese Revolution. Only during 1923 had it reached a higher pitch of intensity.

No, you want to begin with the degeneration complete. Stalin and Co. genuinely believed that the Chinese revolution was a bourgeois-democratic revolution and sought to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry.

JOHNSON: You mean that Stalin, Bukharin, Tomsy, Rykov, and the rest did not understand the course of the Russian Revolution?

TROTSKY: They did not. They took part and events overwhelmed them. Their position on China was the same they had in March 1917 until Lenin came. In different writings of theirs you will see passages which show that they never understood. A different form of existence, their bureaucratic habits affected their thinking and they reverted to their previous position. They even enshrined it in the programme of the Comintern, Proletarian Revolution for Germany, dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry for semi-colonial countries, etc.

*Comrade Trotsky here asks V. to get a copy of the Draft Programme and the extract is read.* I condemned it in my "Critique of the Draft Programme" . . .

JOHNSON: What about Bukharin's statement in 1925 that if war came revolutionists should support the bourgeois-soviet bloc?

TROTSKY: After Lenin's Testament Bukharin wanted to show that he was a real dialectician. He studied Hegel and on every occasion tried to show that he was a realist. Hence, "Enrich yourselves." "Socialism at a snail's pace." Etc. And not only Bukharin, but I and all of us at various times wrote absurd things. I will grant you that.

JOHNSON: And Germany 1930-1933?

TROTSKY: I cannot agree that the policy of the International was only a materialization of the commands of Moscow. It is necessary to see the policy as a whole, from the internal and the international points of view, from all sides. The foreign policy of Moscow, and the orientation of the Social-Democracy to Geneva could

play a role. But there was also the necessity of a turn owing to the disastrous effect of the previous policy on the party inside Russia. After all the bureaucracy is dealing with 160 million people who have been through three revolutions. What they are saying and thinking is collected and classified. Stalin wanted to show that he was no Menshevik. Hence this violent turn to the left. We must see it as a whole, in all its aspects.

JOHNSON: But the British Stalinist, Campbell, writes that when the British delegation in 1928 was presented with the theory of Social-Fascism it opposed the idea, but soon was convinced that it was correct . . .

*(It was agreed to continue the discussion. During the interval Comrade Johnson submitted a document. Discussion continues:)*

TROTSKY: I have read your document claiming to clarify the position, but it does not clarify it. You state that you accept my view of 1933, but later in the document I see that you do not really accept it . . . I find it strange that on the Negro question you should be so realistic and on this be so undialectical. (I suspect that you are just a little opportunistic on the Negro question, but I am not quite sure.)

In 1924, Stalin's slogan (Socialism in a single country) corresponded to the mood of the young intellectuals, without training, without tradition . . .

But despite that, when Stalin wanted to strangle the Spanish revolution openly, he had to wipe out thousands of old Bolsheviks. The first struggle started on the Permanent Revolution, the bureaucracy seeking peace and quiet. Then into this came the German revolution of 1923. Stalin dared not even oppose me openly then. We never knew until afterwards that he had secretly written the letter to Bukharin saying that the revolution should be held back. Then, after the German defeat, came the struggle over equality. It was in defense of the privileges of the bureaucracy that Stalin became its undisputed leader. . .

Russia was a backward country. These leaders had Marxist conceptions, but after October they soon returned to their old ideas. Voroshilov and others used to ask me. "But how do you think it possible that the Chinese masses, so backward, could establish the dictatorship of the proletariat?"

In Germany they hoped now for a miracle to break the backbone of the Social Democracy; their politics had failed utterly to detach the masses from it. Hence this new attempt to get rid of it . . .

Stalin hoped that the German Communist Party would win a victory and to think that he had a "plan" to allow Fascism to come into power is absurd. It is a deification of Stalin.

JOHNSON: He made them cease their opposition to the Red Referendum, he made Remmele say, "After Hitler our turn," he made them stop fighting the Fascists in the streets.

TROTSKY: "After Hitler our turn," was a boast, a confession of bankruptcy. You pay too much attention to it.

F.: They stopped fighting in the streets because their detachments were small C.P. detachments. Good comrades were constantly being shot, and inasmuch as workers as a whole were not taking part, they called it off. It was a part of their zig-zags.

TROTSKY: There you are! They did all sorts of things. They even offered the united front sometimes.

JOHNSON: Duranty said in 1931 that they did not want the revolution in Spain.

TROTSKY: Do not take what Duranty says at face value. Litvinov wanted to say that they were not responsible for what was happening in Spain. He could not say that himself so he said it through Duranty. Perhaps even they did not want to be bothered about Spain, being in difficulties at home . . . But I would say that Stalin sincerely wished the triumph of the German Communist Party in Germany 1930-1933....

Also you cannot think of the Comintern as being merely an instrument of Stalin's foreign policy.

In France in 1934 the Communist Party had declined from 80,000 to 30,000. It was necessary to have a new policy. We do not know the archives of the Comintern, what correspondence passed, etc. At the same time Stalin was seeking a new foreign policy. From one side and the other we have these tendencies which go to make the new turn. They are different sides of the same process . . . The French Communist Party is not only an agency of Moscow, but a national organization with members of parliament, etc.

All that, however, is not very dangerous, although it shows a great lack of proportion to say that our whole propaganda has been meaningless. What is much more dangerous is the sectarian approach to the Labor Party.

You say that I put forward the slogan of Blum-Cachin without reservations. Then you remember, "All power to the Soviet!"

and you say that the united front was no Soviet. It is the same sectarian approach.

JOHNSON: There has been difficulty in England with advocating a Labour Government with the necessary reservations.

TROTSKY: In France in all our press, in our archives and propaganda, we regularly made all the necessary reservations. Your failure in England is due to lack of ability; also lack of flexibility, due to the long domination of bourgeois thought in England. I would say to the English workers, "You refuse to accept my point of view. Well, perhaps I did not explain well enough. Perhaps you are stupid. Anyway I have failed. But now, you believe in your party. Why allow Chamberlain to hold the power? Put your party in power. I will help you to put them in . . ."

But it is very important to bring up these questions periodically. I would suggest that you write an article discussing these points and publish it in our press.

Comrade Johnson agreed that he would.

## A New Great Writer

By LEON TROTSKY

**Editorial Note:** One of the most important sections of the archives left by Leon Trotsky consists of material never published. This includes his correspondence with Lenin and other leaders of the USSR during the heroic October period and the following years, correspondence with Left Oppositionists during the battle against the Stalinist bureaucracy, and the voluminous world-wide correspondence conducted during the years of struggle to build the Fourth International. Besides this, the archives contain articles and speeches by Trotsky which have not as yet appeared in English. From issue to issue *Fourth International* will continue to publish as a regular feature this rich heritage of Marxist literature. *Fourth International* is the only magazine in the world to which this material is available.

The following article was written by Trotsky in August, 1939, after reading *The Javanese*, a first novel by Jean Malaquais. Trotsky reviews the book and calls attention to Malaquais as a great new writer. The article, submitted to various bourgeois publications, was rejected at the time. When the Goncourt Prize was awarded to Malaquais for his novel, bringing him fame and obviating the need to call the new writer to public attention, Trotsky asked his literary agent to return the article. It appears here for the first time.

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It is well that there is art in the world as well as politics. It is well that the potentialities of art are as inexhaustible as life itself. In a certain sense art is richer than life, for it can both overstate and understate, lay on the bright colors thickly or resort to the opposite extreme and content itself with the gray crayon, can present the same object in all its varied facets and shed a variety of light upon it. There was only one Napoleon—his reproductions in art are legion.

The Peter and Paul Fortress and other Czarist prisons drew me so close to the French classics that for more than three decades thereafter I became a fairly regular reader of the more outstanding recent French fiction. Even during the years of the civil war I had a current French novel in the car of my military train. After banishment to Constantinople I accumulated there a modest library of recent French fiction. It was burned with all my other books in March, 1931. How-

ever, during the last few years my interest in novels has waned almost to the point of extinction. Far too overwhelming were the events that rolled over our earth and incidentally over my own head as well. The conceits of art began to seem vapid, almost trite. I read with interest the first few volumes of Jules Romains' epic. But his later books, especially those that portray the war, struck me as insipid reporting. Apparently, no art can quite encompass war. Battle painting is for the most part downright fatuous. But that is not all there is to it. Just as overspicy cooking dulls the taste, so the piling up of historical catastrophes dulls the appeal of literature. Yet the other day I again had occasion to repeat: It is well that there is art in the world.

Jean Malaquais, a French writer unknown to me, sent me his book, enigmatically entitled *The Javanese*.\* The novel is dedicated to Andre Gide. This put me somewhat on guard. Gide has removed himself too far from us, along with the epoch he reflected in his deliberate and leisurely disquisitions. Even his latest books, interesting though they are, read rather like human records of the irrevocable past. But the very first few pages clearly convinced me that Malaquais was in no way indebted to Gide. Indeed, he is quite independent. And therein lies his strength, especially nowadays, when all manner of dependence has become the rule. The name Malaquais suggested nothing to me, unless perhaps a certain street in Paris. *The Javanese* is his first novel; his other writings are announced as books still "in preparation." Nonetheless, this first book forthwith prompts the thought: Malaquais' name is bound to be remembered.

The author is young and passionately fond of life. But he already knows how to maintain the indispensable artistic distance between himself and life, a distance sufficient to keep him from succumbing to his own subjectiveness. To love life with the superficial affection of the dilettantes—and there are dilettantes of life as well as of art—is no great merit. To love

\*Jean Malaquais: *Les Javanais* (roman): Editions Denoel: Paris: 1939.

life with open eyes, with unabating criticism, without illusions, without embellishments, such as it is, whatever it may offer, and even more, for what it can come to be—that is a feat of a kind. To invest this love of life with artistic expression, especially when this is concerned with the very lowest social stratum—that is a great artistic achievement.

### A Story About Pariahs

In the South of France two hundred men extract tin and silver from a virtually exhausted mine, owned by an Englishman, who does not wish to spend any money on new equipment. The country is full of persecuted foreigners—without visas, without documents, in bad with the police. They are not in the least particular about where they live or about safety provisions on the job, and are ready to work for any wage at all. The mine and its population of pariahs form a world apart, sort of an island, which came to be called "Java," most likely because the French are wont to describe anything incomprehensible and exotic as "Javanese."

Almost all the nationalities of Europe, and not of Europe alone, are represented in this Java. White Russians, Poles of unknown kidney, Italians, Spaniards, Greeks, Czechs, Slovaks, Germans, Austrians, Arabs, an Armenian, a Chinese, a Negro, a Ukrainian Jew, a Finn. . . . In all this mongrel crew there is but one Frenchman, a pathetic failure, who holds aloft the banner of the Third Republic. In the barracks that lean against the wall of a factory long ago gutted by fire, live thirty celibates, of whom nearly all swear in different languages. The wives of the others, brought from all parts of the world, merely enhance the confusion of this Babel.

The Javanese pass before us, every one of them a reflection of his lost homeland, each convincing as a personality, and each (at least, apparently, without any aid from the author) standing on his own feet. The Austrian, Karl Mueller, yearning for Vienna while cramming up on English conjugations; the son of Rear Admiral Ulrich von Taupfen, Hans, himself a former naval officer and participant of the sailors' insurrection at Kiel; the Armenian Albudizian, who for the first time in his life had his fill of food, and even got drunk, in Java; the Russian agronomist Byelsky, with his half-mad wife and insane daughter; the old miner, Ponzoni, who lost his sons in a mine of his native Italy and who is just as glad to talk to the wall or to a rock on the road as to the fellow working next to him; "Doctor Magnus," who left his university in the Ukraine just before graduating, so as not to live like others; the American Negro, Hilary Hodge, who every Sunday polishes his patent leather shoes, a memento of the past, but never puts them on; the former Russian shopkeeper Blutov, who says he is a former general, so as to attract customers for his future restaurant—although Blutov really dies before the action of the novel begins, leaving behind his widow, a fortune teller.

Members of broken-up families, adventurers, accidental participants of revolutions and counter-revolutions, chips of national movements and national catastrophes, refugees of all kinds, dreamers and thieves, cowards and almost-heroes, people without roots, the prodigal sons of our epoch—such is the population of Java, a "floating island tied to the Devil's tail." As Hans von Taupfen put it, "there is not one square inch on the entire surface of the globe where you might place your little foot; except for that, you are free, but only outside the border, outside all borders." The gendarme corporal Carboni, connoisseur of good cigars and fine wines, shuts his eyes to the inhabitants of the island. For the time being they find themselves "outside all borders." But that does not deter them from living after their own fashion. They sleep on pallets of

straw, often without undressing; they smoke heavily; drink heavily; live on bread and cheese, in order to save most of their money for wine; they seldom wash; they smell rankly of sweat, tobacco and alcohol.

The novel has no central figure and no trace of a plot. In a certain sense the author himself is the hero; but he does not appear on the scene. The story covers a period of several months; and, like life itself, consists of episodes. Notwithstanding the exoticism of the milieu, the book is far from folklore, ethnography or sociology. It is in the authentic sense a novel, a bit of life transformed into art. One might think that the author deliberately chose an isolated "island" in order all the more clearly to portray the human characters and passions. They are no less significant here than in any strata of society. These people love, hate, weep, remember, grind their teeth. Here you will find the birth and solemn baptism of a child in the family of the Pole Warski; you will find death, the despair of women, funerals; and finally, the love of a prostitute for Doctor Magnus, who, until then had not known women. So touchy an episode suggests melodrama; but the author goes through the self-imposed ordeal with honor.

Through the book runs the story of two Arabs, the cousins Allahassid Ben Khalif and Daoud Khaim. Breaking the law of Mohammed once a week, they drink wine on Sundays, but modestly, only three liters, in order to save five thousand francs for themselves and return to their families in the country of Constantine. They are not real Javanese, but only temporary ones. And then Allahassid is killed in a mine landslide. The story of Daoud's attempts to get his money from the savings bank is unforgettable. The Arab waits for hours, implores, hopes, and again waits patiently. Finally his savings book is confiscated because it is made out in the name of Allahassid, the only one of the two who could sign his name. This little tragedy is told superbly!

Madame Michel, the owner of a barroom, gets rich off these people, yet wastes no love on them and despises them—not only because she does not understand their noisy chatter but also because they are too prodigal with tips, come and go with too great ease and no one knows where: frivolous people undeserving of trust. Along with the barroom, an important place in the life of Java is, of course, occupied by the nearest brothel. Malaquais describes it in detail, mercilessly, but, at the same time, in a remarkably human way.

### A Miner, Now a Great Artist

The Javanese look at the world from below, since they themselves have been spilled on their backs to the very bottom of society; besides, at the bottom of the mine, too, the better to hew or drill the rock above them, they must lie down on their backs. That is a singular perspective. Malaquais well knows its laws and knows how to apply them. The work inside the mine is described sparingly, without tiring details but with remarkable force. No mere artist-observer could write like that, even if he had gone down the shaft ten times over in quest of technical details, which writers like Jules Romain, for example, like to flaunt. Only a former miner who has since become a great artist can write like that.

Although social in its implications, this novel is in no way tendentious in character. He does not try to prove anything, he does not propagandize, as do many productions of our time, when far too many submit to orders even in the sphere of art. The Malaquais novel is "only" a work of art. At the same time we sense at every step the convulsions of our epoch, the most grandiose and the most monstrous, the most significant and the most despotic ever known to human his-

tory. The combination of the rebellious lyricism of the personality with the ferocious epic of the era creates, perhaps, the chief fascination of this work.

The illegal regime lasted for years. The one-eyed and one-armed British manager, who was always drunk, would overcome difficulties with the law by treating the gendarme officer in charge to wine and cigars. The Javanese, without documents, continued to work in the dangerous galleries of the mine, to get drunk at Madame Michel's, and, whenever they met the gendarmes, to hide behind trees—just to play safe. But everything comes to an end.

The mechanic, Karl, son of a Viennese baker, leaves his job in the shed of his own free will, spends his time walking under the sun on the sand of the beach, listening to the waves of the sea and talking with the trees along the way. Frenchmen work in the factory of a neighboring settlement. They have their little houses with water and electricity, their chickens, rabbits and lettuce patches. Karl, like the majority of the Javanese, regards this settled world without envy and with a shade of contempt. They "have lost the sense of space but have won the sense of property." Karl breaks off a switch and slashes the air with it. He feels like singing. But he has no voice; so, he whistles. Meantime, there is a cave-in underground, and two are killed—the Russian, Malinov, who had presumably wrested Nizhni Novgorod from the Bolsheviks, and the Arab, Allahassid Ben Khalif. Gentleman Yakovlev, a former best pupil of the Moscow Conservatory, robs the old Russian woman, Sophia Fedorovna, widow of the would-be general and sorceress, who had accumulated several thousand francs. By chance Karl looks in through her open window and Yakovlev hits him on the head with a club. Thus, catastrophe, a number of catastrophes, invade the life of Java. The desperation of the old woman is boundless and revolting. She turns her back on the world, answers the questions of the gendarmes with oaths, sits on the floor without food, without sleep, one day, two, three days, swaying from side to side in her excrement, surrounded by a swarm of flies.

The theft calls forth a newspaper notice: where are the consuls? Why don't they do something? Gendarme Carboni receives a circular of instruction on the necessity of the strictest checking of foreigners. The liquor and cigars of John Kerrigan are no longer effective. "We are in France, Mr. Manager, and must comply with French law." The manager is compelled to telegraph London. The reply orders that the mine be closed. Java ceases to exist. The Javanese disperse, to hide in other crevices.

### **Malaquais' Love of Man**

Literary primness is foreign to Malaquais; he avoids neither forceful expressions nor vexatious scenes. Contemporary literature, especially the French, is as a rule more free in this respect than the old naturalists of Zola's times, condemned by the rigorists. It would be ridiculous pedantry to pass judgment as to whether this is good or bad. Life has become more naked and merciless, especially since the World War, which destroyed not only many cathedrals but also many conventions; there is nothing else for literature to do than to adjust itself to life. But what a difference between Malaquais and a certain other French writer, who made himself famous a few years ago with a book of exceptional frankness! I am referring to Celine. No one before him had written about the needs and functions of the poor human body with such physiological persistence. But Celine's hand is guided by embittered hurt, which descends to calumny of man. The artist, a physician by profession, seems to have the desire to convince us that the human being, obliged to discharge such low functions, is in no way distinguishable from a dog or a

donkey, except perhaps by greater slyness and vengefulness. This hateful attitude toward life has clipped the wings of Celine's art: he has not gone beyond his first book. Almost simultaneously with Celine, another sceptic became famous—Malraux, who sought justification of his pessimism, not below, in physiology, but above, in the manifestations of human heroism. Malraux wrote one or two significant books. But he lacks backbone. He is organically seeking some outside force to lean on, some established authority. The lack of creative independence has envenomed his latest books with the poison of falsehood and has rendered them unfit for consumption.

Malaquais does not fear the base and the vulgar in our nature, for, despite all, man is capable of creativeness, of passion, of heroism—and they are far from fruitless. Like all true optimists, Malaquais loves man for his potentialities. Gorky once said, "Man—that sounds proud!" Perhaps Malaquais would not repeat a phrase so didactic. Yet this is precisely the attitude toward man that runs through his novel. Malaquais' talent has two dependable allies: optimism and independence.

I have just mentioned Maxim Gorky, another poet of the tramps. The parallel suggests itself. I vividly remember how the reading world was astounded by Gorky's first great short story "Chelkash" in 1895. The young vagabond emerged at once from the cellar of society into the arena of literature as a master. In his later writings Gorky essentially never rose above the level of his first short story. No less does Malaquais astound one with the sure touch of his first venture. It cannot be said of him that he is a promising writer. He is a finished artist. In the old schools beginners were put through cruel paces—kicks, intimidation, taunts—so that they might receive the necessary tempering in the shortest possible time. But Malaquais, like Gorky before him, received this tempering from life itself. It tossed them about, beat them against the earth, chest and back, and after such a workout cast them out into the literary arena as finished masters.

And yet how great is the difference between their epochs, between their heroes, between their artistic methods! Gorky's tramps are not the dregs of an old urban culture but the peasants of yesterday who have not yet been assimilated by the new industrial city. The tramps of capitalism's springtide, they are marked with the stamp of patriarchy and almost of naivete. Russia, still quite young politically, was in those days pregnant with her first revolution. Literature lived on breathless expectations and exaggerated raptures. Gorky's tramps are embellished with pre-revolutionary romanticism. A half a century has not elapsed in vain. Russia and Europe have lived through a series of political earthquakes and the most terrible of wars. Great events brought with them great experiences—chiefly, the bitter experiences of defeats and disappointments. Malaquais' tramps are the product of a mature civilization. They look upon the world with less surprised, more practiced eyes. They are not national but cosmopolitan. Gorky's tramps wandered from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea or to Sakhalin. The Javanese know no state borders; they are equally at home or equally alien in the mines of Algiers, in the forests of Canada or on the coffee plantations of Brazil. Gorky's lyricism is melodious, at times sentimental, often declamatory. Malaquais' lyricism, essentially no less intense, is more restrained in form and disciplined by irony.

French literature, conservative and exclusive, like all French culture, is slow to assimilate the new words it itself creates for the whole world, and is rather resistant to the penetration of foreign influences. True, since the war a stream of cosmopolitanism has entered French life. The French began to

travel more, to study geography and foreign languages. Maurois brought to its literature the stylized Englishman, Paul Morand—the nightclubs of the world. But this cosmopolitanism bears the indelible stamp of tourism. It is quite different with Malaquais. He is no tourist. He travels from country to country in a manner that meets neither with the approval of railroad companies nor the police. He has roamed in all the geographic latitudes, has worked wherever he could, was persecuted, suffered hunger and absorbed his impressions of our planet together with the atmosphere of mines, plantations and cheap barrooms, where the international pariahs generously spend their meager wages.

Malaquais is an authentic French writer; he is a master of the French technique of the novel, the highest in the world, not to mention his perfection of language. Yet he is not a Frenchman. I suspected as much while reading the novel. Not because in the tone of his narrative could be sensed a foreigner, an alien observer. Not at all. Where Frenchmen appear in the pages of his book, they are genuine Frenchmen. But in the author's approach—not only to France but to life in general—you feel a "Javanese" who has risen above "Java." This is not like the French. In spite of all the world-shattering

events of the last quarter of a century, they remain too sedentary, too stable in their habits, in their traditions, to look up at the world with the eyes of a tramp. To my letter of inquiry the author replied that he is of Polish descent. I should have guessed it without asking. The beginning of the novel is concentrated on the sketch of a Polish youth, almost a boy, with flaxen hair, blue eyes, greedy for impressions, with a hunger-drawn stomach, and with the ill-mannered habit of blowing his nose with his fingers. Such is Manek Brilya. He rides the rods of a dining car out of Warsaw with the dream of Timbuctoo. If this is not Malaquais himself, it is his brother in blood and spirit. Manek spent more than ten years wandering, learned a lot and matured, but he never dissipated his freshness of spirit; on the contrary, he accumulated an insatiable thirst for life, of which his first book is incontrovertible evidence. We await his next book. Malaquais' passport is apparently still not in good order. But literature has already conferred upon him the full rights of citizenship.

*Coyoacan, D. F.*

*August 7, 1939*

*Translation by Charles Malamuth*

## The Marxist Review of Books

### *New Light on the Dialectical Theory of Nature*

By JOHN TRAVIS

**MATTER AND LIGHT.** By Louis De Broglie, Professeur a la Faculte des Sciences de Paris. 300 pp. W. W. Norton & Co., New York.

\* \* \*

"Matter and Light" is a study of the new Wave Mechanics, bearing directly upon the present major crisis in modern physics. Contrary to what one might expect of a book on physics, no mathematics is required—except for two chapters, which the author advises "can be omitted without prejudice to an understanding of the rest of the book." Despite the highly abstract nature of the subject, it is an intriguing account of the scientist's struggle to maintain a grasp upon ever-elusive reality.

In this struggle there is no rest. As, on the one hand, experimental technique becomes perfected, on the other hand reality reveals itself to be infinitely complex. Physicists are continually encountering new and more perplexing phenomena, which require fresh explanations.

The problems arising from recent experimental results have led to the development of the new Wave Mechanics. Wave Mechanics in turn has thrown modern physical theory into a state of crisis. "It is a severe crisis," writes De Broglie, "and it has shaken the entire ancient structure of our scientific knowledge . . . And it seems certain that this major crisis . . . will be the source of philosophical consequences which cannot yet be clearly perceived."

What most physicists, including De Broglie, cannot yet clearly perceive will be far clearer to a dialectical materialist. The prediction Engels made in 1885 (in the preface to the second edition of his "Anti-Duehring"), regarding the development of theoretical natural science, is now being strikingly confirmed in many branches of physics. "The revolution which is forced upon theoretical natural science by the very necessity of giving orderly arrangement to the immense accumulation of empirical discoveries is of such a kind that it must bring the dialectical character of the natural processes to the consciousness even of the most resisting empiricists. The old rigid antitheses, the sharp insurmountable lines of demarcation, vanish more and more . . . At all events, natural science is now so far advanced that it can no longer escape from the dialectical embrace."

In every chapter of "Matter and Light" nature seems to be clamoring for a conscious recognition of its dialectical character. Certain of the author's own statements actually express, though in a concrete rather than general form, fundamental propositions of the materialist dialectic.

The relativity of our knowledge is expressed in the evolution of the new Wave Mechanics out of the obstacles encountered by the old Newtonian mechanics. Newtonian mechanics was supposed to be universal, to apply to all modes of motion. But its laws were found to be inapplicable to two ex-

treme types of motion: high astronomical velocities and the motion of material particles inside the atom. The first contradiction led to the creation of Einstein's relativity theory. The second resulted in Wave Mechanics.

Does this mean that Newtonian mechanics is completely useless for physics now that it has been supplanted by these more developed theories? No. Its sphere of application has been circumscribed; its truth shown to be relative, limited. "Newtonian mechanics undeniably succeeds in predicting exactly motion occurring on the human scale, and also on the scale of celestial bodies; and the reason for this is that, for Wave Mechanics, Newtonian mechanics is an entirely adequate approximation. But when it comes to investigating the motion of the material particle inside the atom, the old mechanics ceases to have any value, while the new one allows us to grasp the sense of the new principles which the Quantum Theories were obliged to introduce."

The old mechanics was based upon the notion that waves and corpuscles were irreconcilable opposites. Light, for example, had either to be corpuscular in nature, as Newton contended, or wavelike, as Huygens had argued. Which was right? There was experimental evidence favoring both sides and so the dilemma perplexed physicists for several centuries.

The new mechanics surmounted this seemingly insoluble contradiction in a thoroughly

dialectical manner: by means of the unity of opposites. It took as its starting point the denial of the unbridgeable distinction between waves and corpuscles. It affirmed, on the contrary, that these opposites were identical!

Let us listen to De Broglie on this point. "In the theory of Matter, as in the theory of radiation, it was essential to consider corpuscles and waves simultaneously if it were desired to reach a single theory, permitting of the *simultaneous* interpretation of the properties of Light and of those of Matter. It then becomes clear at once that, in order to predict the motion of a corpuscle, it is necessary to construct a new Mechanics . . . in which the motion of a corpuscle is inferred from the motion in space of a wave . . . Meanwhile it will no longer be possible to consider the material corpuscles, electrons and protons, in isolation; it will, on the contrary, have to be assumed in each case that they are accompanied by a wave which is bound up with their own motion." And De Broglie, one of the chief authors of Wave Mechanics, was

able to state in advance "the wave-length of the associated wave belonging to an electron having a given velocity."

Then De Broglie discovered at one stroke the law of the transformation of quantity into quality and the transformation of things into their opposites. "In proportion as the quantum of radiation increases, new properties appear; a fact which would become exceedingly important if the principle were to be confirmed that radiation, whose quantum exceeds twice the absolute energy corresponding to the mass of the electron, can become transformed into two electrified corpuscles of opposite sign."

In the old physical theory matter and light were treated as opposites. Now they are seen to have "a far greater structural resemblance between them than had formerly been suspected." The physics of matter and the physics of radiation have now, each, been invaded by the aspect of the other, first "the corpuscle invaded the wave aspect of Light"; and now "the wave has invaded the corpuscular aspect of Matter." Here is objective evidence of the dialectical law of

the interpenetration of opposites, all the more valuable because it is presented by De Broglie in an involuntary and unconscious manner.

De Broglie is a physicist, not a philosopher, obviously puzzled by the general theoretical problems raised by the recent developments in physics and incapable of solving them. His confusion and helplessness reflect the bankruptcy of the old philosophical schools tied up with capitalist society.

By proceeding dialectically the creators of wave mechanics were able to rescue physics from one blind alley. Now, unless they acquire the instrument of dialectical materialism, they run the risk of landing in another. The dialectical character of the historical process manifests itself as clearly and forcibly in nature as in society. In view of this inability of bourgeois philosophies to overcome the crisis of modern physics, scientists have nothing to lose in adopting the philosophy of dialectical materialism—and they have the world to gain!

## The Good Will International

By CARL O'SHEA

SEVEN MYSTERIES OF EUROPE, by Jules Romains. Alfred A. Knopf, New York; 253 pp., \$2.50.

\* \* \*

World president of the P.E.N. club, dramatist, poet, ex-professor of philosophy, author of a formidable panoramic novel of Europe, Romains now reveals to his readers that for fifteen years he has also been a volunteer statesman, diplomat and adviser to kings and prime ministers.

Romains tells us he knew personally most of the French politicians—Daladier, Delbos, Bonnet, Reynaud, Herriot, Laval, He knew Gamelin and Weygand. He knew Spaak and Henri de Man of Belgium. Others whom this Man of Good Will worked with are Rosenberg, Goebbels, Ribbentrop, Q t t o Abetz, and the Spanish mystic, Salvador de Madariago.

How did Romains come to walk and talk with statesmen and kings? "The spectacle of the last world war filled me with horror," he tells us. "I came out of it with one conviction: We must at all costs avoid any renewal of such atrocities. Many people thought as I thought; thinking, however, carries no obligation. But this is the vow I made, a solemn vow: 'I swear I shall always do everything in my power to prevent the outbreak of another war.' . . . As I had a very practical imagination, I considered forms of action, personal and direct. . . . I came to think that to affect events in any way, if you are not in a position of authority, it is not enough to have access to public opinion; you must also have access to those with power and authority and be ready at a decisive moment personally to

intervene in their decisions. I called that: 'Action in vital points.'

How the liberals look to those with authority, how they shun the masses!

In 1938 Romains writes Daladier a letter, urging his friend to assume dictatorial powers. It is a period of great unrest. The workers are restless, seeking to regain the ground lost since 1936. A new general strike is in the making.

Romains steps into the breach. He arranges with Daladier to make a nationwide broadcast directed against the strike. "I wrote that Appeal to the Nation and put my whole heart in it . . . My appeal was received with immense enthusiasm throughout the nation; there were a few insults from the Communists . . . In all sincerity, I believe that it helped Daladier's position in the country, and had a good deal to do with the failure of the general strike . . ."

But the strike started. Romains tells us how anxious he was that Daladier crack down on the strikers; how, on November 29th, he wrote the premier to "Hang on and don't give in on a single point."

The next day Daladier tells him: "I did hang on, Jules Romains; it's over and I won."

A great victory for our Man of Good Will. "From that day, my relations with Daladier were most affectionate."

Romains lets us in on the secret that he is not alone. Heavens, there are Romains all over Europe, a sort of International of Mushbags. "X," he tells us, of a Belgian politician whom he later identifies as Henry de Man, the ex-Socialist, "was one of the members of a kind of order of chivalry

which was recruited little by little throughout Europe; a completely ideal order, alas, without a constitution, without a recognized leader, without regulations. Every one of these men had made for himself more or less the same vow as I had in the past—to work at preserving peace in the world—and all believed, as I did, in the method of personal action on vital points. It was the name of 'Men of Good Will' that they sometimes used for themselves, half seriously, half jokingly."

Romains went strolling in Paris on Christmas Day, 1938. He watched "the good people of Paris walking along the streets, many with small parcels in their hands. I thought: *They are off to family dinners. They have no idea that five or six of us are plotting to try to keep peace for them and for their children—the peace they love so much more than they realize.*"

What a priceless view of the liberal soul! But alas, the "moral elite" in whose hands rested the fate of Europe, were overcome by the forces of Evil.

Romains uses this incident to point a poodlish moral for his readers: "The fact that in the end this war took place just the same is frightful and humiliating. But now, of course, the democracies must win it; first because they did everything to avoid it."

Later Romains gets a bad let-down when one of his ace Men of Good Will, de Man, turns up at the head of the Belgian government of fascist appeasement. "He had a certain mistrust of democratic methods, a belief in action, personal, direct and even secret, and a taste for authority," explains

Romains; but de Man was just like Romains, and every other member of the Good Will International. There's a cop in every liberal.

Romains finds himself forced to confirm our thesis that the ruling classes of Britain and France feared proletarian revolution more than they feared Hitler.

But how he hates to admit this! "I almost ruled it out of this series of articles for two reasons. First, at a time when England, left standing alone, is fighting magnificently for the freedom and honor of the world, I should not wish to say a single word which might cast doubt upon the admiration and affection I feel for her, or which might diminish in the slightest the wave of active sympathy which is carrying this continent (America) towards her."

Romains goes on to recall how in 1936 and 1937 he occupied himself with the Spanish war. To defeat Franco? To combat the fascists? To rally the French workers in support of their Spanish brothers? Not at all!

"My guiding thought—and it was Delbos', too—continued to be: 'Always, everywhere, we must work to lessen the risk of war. The totalitarian powers are apparently trying to use Spain to start a fight and, in any case, to sap our strength. Let's not fail into their trap! . . . But the English game didn't always seem exactly clear to us either. 'Would they like a victory for the Spanish republicans or for Franco?' Delbos would say, 'I can never find out.'"

But Romains is not disillusioned with his friends in England. The only thing wrong with England was that "she did not listen with sufficient reverence to the dictates of that 'English conscience.' I think she is listening to them now. May it not be too late for her to save the world this time!"

Chapter five finds Romains on the way to Nazi Germany, invited to deliver a speech to the Nazi youth.

Romains even anticipates your question: "What in heaven's name were you doing there in November, 1934, with your ideas and your past?"

He explains that in 1934 he had assumed the leadership of the French youth, uniting almost all the groups in the July Ninth movement.

"So it came about that the leader of the Croix de Feu volunteers and the leader of the Young Patriot volunteers were included in my group. Seated opposite them at the same table would be the young leaders of trade unionism, Socialism, radicalism. If these men didn't fight, there could be no fight; for it wasn't the old men in each group who would be the first out in the streets. I had civil war under lock and key for several months. And that in itself was something."

Indeed it was. When socialist revolution was the only possible course that could have defended France and defeated Hitler.

So Romains, looked upon by the Hitlerites as a possible coming French leader,

goes to Berlin to lecture to and meet with the German fascists. He even brings fascist leaders to France and arranges clandestine meetings for them with the French youth of the Right. All the most innocent stuff imaginable, you understand. Strictly good will work!

His Man of Good Will among the Nazis is Abetz, today military dictator over conquered France. Abetz and Romains solemnly weigh the Nazi leaders, to estimate which among them are possible Men of Good Will. Alfred Rosenberg? Goebbels? Ribbentrop? Perhaps Hitler?

Philosophizing on his trusted friend, Abetz, who has "betrayed" him, Romains concludes: "To remain a man of good will within such a system (as fascism) was like trying to keep a vow of chastity in a brothel."

Romains now approaches his closing chapter. By his own confession, he has done what he could to break strikes in France. He has lectured in fascist Germany and lent what prestige he could to the fascist regime. He has smuggled young German fascists into France to meet with the leaders of the French youth. He has worked to block French aid to the Spanish anti-fascists. He has banked everything on the kings and the statesmen and the Pope and Roosevelt. Now he undertakes to tell us "Who Saved Fascism?"

Romains has a distinction he wishes to make clear to us. "Yes, we can blame Chamberlain, Daladier, others. Yes, we can blame England . . . But in heaven's name, don't let's lose sight of the fact that in one case the whole fault was lack of suspicion, of hardness, or of promptness in answering threat by threat, violence by violence; while in the other case, the crime in question was positive, deliberate, long premeditated. Between the responsibility of the former and the responsibility of the latter lies the entire abyss of human morality."

What a view of the sated and the ravenous imperialists!

His concept of the League of Nations is equally atrocious. "At the cost of millions of dead in 1914-18, at the cost of all the suffering accumulated and handed down by the Great War, and all sorts of racking mediations, humanity had reached a result of extraordinary moral import—war had been declared taboo."

Twenty years ago such a statement would have been a vicious lie. Today it sounds just funny.

Oh, of course, Romains says, I know— "Even earlier there had been very serious violations of the taboo—like Japan's attempt against China at the end of 1931, or the Chaco war in South America." But the League had not taken a stand in those cases, and Romains justifies that too. "It's by trumped-up excuses that taboos have often been preserved."

He was of course in the thick of the fight. "I wished to make contact with some of the men heading the League, with the spe-

cific purpose of assuring them that the moral elite of France did not share the attitude of part of the Parisian press, notoriously in the pay of the Fascist government."

Certain French intellectuals, it seems, had published a manifesto defending Italy's rape of Ethiopia.

"We had immediately answered their insolent text. I had drawn up the counter manifesto, with the help of Louis Aragon...."

Here is Romains' first mention of his work with the Stalinists. And it reminds us again of the terrible crime of the Third International in befuddling the masses with its Popular Front crap and elevating poodles like Romains in the eyes of the workers.

Later Laval is conferring with Romains again, telling of his recent journey to Rome where he had seen the Pope and Mussolini.

"Our interview went very well," tells Laval. "With Mussolini I recalled my youth as a Socialist; he recalled his too. That immediately created a common ground between us, something dear to us both."

Priceless scene!

Romains then gives an ecstatic picture of the League of Nations meeting in February, 1935. He saw it as "the dawn of an immense hope, the starting point of a new era." He describes the shining eyes of the French and British statesmen; he tells of Delbos' belief that Mussolini was licked and ready to commit suicide. Later came the Hoare-Laval agreement, to blast the hopes of the poodles. Romains, leader of the moral elite of France, allots the blame to those who saved fascism.

"Summing things up, the answer to the question 'Who saved fascism?' must be: First of all, Pierre Laval . . . in the second place, broadly speaking, the English conservatives blinded by their terror of Bolshevism; and last, as accessory, the little dynastic plot of which Leopold was the spokesman."

Read Romains' book and you will see why the bourgeoisie keep hundreds like him to parade before the youth and the workers, to decoy them away from the class struggle and the revolution.

All the American poodles who reviewed this book—without exception—are embarrassed by Romains. They say he didn't see "realities," he didn't understand. They realize that he makes the Good Will International look so terribly bad.

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