
February 1945

Fourth International

CIVIL WAR IN GREECE

By THE EDITORS

The Campaign to Conscript Labor

By C. Thomas

LABOR PARTY OUTLOOK *By Wm. Simmons*

REVOLUTIONARY PERSPECTIVES *By Frank*

MINNEAPOLIS LABOR CASE . . . *An Editorial*

Twenty Cents

Manager's Column

We welcome S. Struthers, our new Detroit agent. In the first letter to us a description is given how Detroit intends to increase monthly sales of **Fourth International**.

"I am now in charge of selling **FOURTH INTERNATIONAL** in Detroit. Sales have been lagging and we would like to make our members and sympathizers more conscious of the magazine. In order to do this I would like to have a talk prepared in advance so that when our bundle orders come in I can give our visitors and members a summary of the contents. I wonder if it would be possible for you to send me a copy of the F.I. every month as soon as it comes off the press."

An excellent method for utilizing back issues of **FOURTH INTERNATIONAL** is reported by H. Mason, Detroit: "We started a new policy that looks like it will prove successful. We have on hand a number of back issues of **FOURTH INTERNATIONAL** which we have started selling at meetings dealing with a particular subject in the magazine. At a small union meeting the other night our agent sold three copies of the October issue with the UAW Convention article in it."

Other branches will undoubtedly be able to duplicate Detroit's success.

The steady rise in newsstand sales has resulted in an all-time high for Los Angeles. Al Lynn, our agent, reports:

"Enclosed you will find a check in payment for the December issue of the F.I. This was another record-breaking issue for us. We had placed 65 copies on our three downtown stands; in the last week we found that they had all sold out and we placed another 6 copies of which 4 more were sold. This is the first time in our history here that these three main stands all sold out... Could you please send us another 10 copies.

"Latest reports show another 13 F.I.'s sold on the Hollywood stands, 1 on an East Side Stand, and with San Pedro still to report. We have made another record."

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Sandy Robertson, our New York agent, also reports record-breaking newsstand sales for the December issue: "Three of the biggest stands sold out completely and one of the dealers said it was too bad he didn't have more magazines because a lot of people were looking for it. The dealer on a 14th Street stand said that the December

issue must have been something very special because it sold so well."

Toledo has ordered bound volumes of **FOURTH INTERNATIONAL** and **THE MILITANT** for "as far back as they are available." These bound volumes are for the Toledo Branch library.

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of **FOURTH INTERNATIONAL** and **THE MILITANT** beginning from 1938 up to date. The material contained in these volumes is invaluable for an understanding of living Marxism. No branch library is complete without a full set. Don't put off getting these bound volumes; send in your order today.

A reader of **FOURTH INTERNATIONAL** in Canada wants to make certain that he gets a bound volume for 1943. He sent us \$4.50 to cover costs, stating: "Please set aside the 1943 volume of the F.I. for me. Someday the ban will be lifted." The Canadian postal authorities, we might explain, still prohibit the entry of Trotskyist literature into Canada.

Another reader, at present in Egypt, also wants the bound volumes: "I hope sometime to buy bound volumes of the magazine and to that end would welcome from you details and prices (postpaid to England) of bound volumes of **FOURTH INTERNATIONAL** which are still available.

"I have sent off money by airmail for future orders of literature. No doubt you have already received and dealt with my request that you put my friend in Teheran on the mailing list for **THE MILITANT** and **F.I.** I would like you to take payment for that from the money as well as the cost of the following new subscriptions for friends of mine in India."

Appreciation for the F. I. is expressed in letters from below the Equator.

South Africa: "We are ever so thankful for **FOURTH INTERNATIONAL** which has been coming through pretty regularly. Thus far we have received the July, August and September issues. If possible, will you increase our bundle to twelve copies for there is such a great rush when the F.I. gets here."

Uruguay: "...In conclusion we repeat our request that you continue to send us **FOURTH INTERNATIONAL** and all your publications, as far as possible, for they interest us intensely. You may be assured that your material will be discussed, will be studied, and will be distributed among the best of the youth who are left and among the workers."

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FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

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THE MINNEAPOLIS LABOR CASE

An Editorial

Last October, 6 of the 18 Minneapolis labor prisoners were released from Danbury and Sandstone penitentiaries. On January 24, the remaining 12 in Sandstone and Alderson were paroled. They have returned home after serving 13 months as America's outstanding class-war prisoners in the Second World War. *Fourth International* welcomes them back to their posts and salutes them for the exemplary way in which they upheld the best traditions of revolutionary socialism.

Fourth International likewise hails the many individuals and the 600 labor organizations, representing more than four and a half million workers, who supported the case. The contributions of these workers and liberals tided over the families of the 18, made more endurable the time the prisoners spent behind bars, and above all demonstrated to Roosevelt and his aides that they cannot deprive labor militants of their civil liberties with impunity. The solidarity of labor in fighting this frameup was one of the bright spots in a year marked otherwise by the further entrenchment of reaction.

The prosecution of the 18 Trotskyist leaders arose out of the struggle between the Trotskyist trade union leadership of Minneapolis and the Northwest with its program of militant labor action and the Tobin bureaucracy, determined to swing the union movement behind the Roosevelt war machine. When Tobin appealed to Roosevelt for aid, the latter immediately ordered Attorney General Biddle to launch the prosecution against the Trotskyists.

There was, however, a more fundamental reason for the prosecution. The Minneapolis labor trial was an indispensable part of Roosevelt's preparations for the second world war. His political objective was to behead the only serious opposition to his war program. In this, Roosevelt was simply following in the footsteps of his predecessor, Woodrow Wilson, who framed up during the first world war Eugene V. Debs, the great Socialist agitator and "Big Bill" Haywood and the other leaders of the I.W.W. Wilson's aim was to behead working class opposition to his imperialist program and to strengthen the hand of his faithful "labor" lieutenant, Gompers. Such were also Roosevelt's objectives, on the eve of plunging the country into the second more terrible world slaughter. Roosevelt wanted to do away with the Trotskyist leaders because they constituted the only possible polarizing center for working class opposition to his criminal war plans and aims. And he wanted to strengthen the hand of his loyal "labor" servitors, the Tobins, Greens, Murrays and Hillmans against all possible anti-war repercussions inside labor's own ranks.

While Roosevelt persecuted the Trotskyists in America, Churchill persecuted their co-thinkers in England, India and Ceylon. At the same time, on the continent, Hitler was shoot-

ing every Trotskyist who fell into his clutches; while Stalin, even before the outbreak of the war, was "purging" Trotskyists by the thousands. Thus world reaction formed an unholy combination to exorcise the spectre of working class revolution. For despite their tremendous power and the enormous resources at their disposal, these criminal rulers of mankind know on what a volcano their regimes rest. They fear above all the crystallization of an authoritative leadership capable of welding the working masses and organizing them for revolutionary action.

The Minneapolis case became in the United States the starting point for a whole series of repressive measures against the labor movement. The Minneapolis labor prisoners were sentenced on the very day that the United States declared war. Immediately afterwards, repressive laws, decrees and rulings followed thick and fast: wage freezing, job-freezing, work-or-fight orders, the Smith-Connally anti-strike Act, etc. The Smith "Gag" Act of 1940 under which the Trotskyists were convicted has since been utilized by the Roosevelt administration in other cases. It has even been used against Harry Bridges, the rabid Stalinist patriot who advocates continuation of the no-strike pledge after the war. The struggle to free the 18 became from the beginning a struggle against the whole reactionary drive of the war dictatorship which aimed to throttle the labor movement. It involved defense of all the basic rights of labor won over generations of hard struggle.

The Civil Rights Defense Committee performed a magnificent job in mobilizing the working class against the Minneapolis frameup. It carried the fight right up to Roosevelt's Supreme Court. The CRDC gathered thousands of signatures for a petition to the President demanding an unconditional pardon for the 18 prisoners. It brought the true facts and the significance of the Minneapolis case to millions of workers. It enlisted ever growing support. It broke the conspiracy of silence of the capitalist press. The widespread activity of the CRDC incurred the enmity and aroused the fears of Tobin and the Stalinists. They joined forces in a vicious campaign to slander the labor prisoners and turn the labor movement against them. Their campaign, however, failed ignominiously in its main purpose of disrupting labor's solidarity in the case.

The CRDC now announces that the fight goes on to remove the Smith "Gag" Act from the statute books and to restore the civil rights of the 18 Minneapolis labor prisoners. If labor were to mobilize its million-numbered ranks and force Congress to repeal the Smith "Gag" Act, all talk of placing the working class in the straitjacket of a national service act would vanish overnight. The Congressional timeservers of Wall Street would begin speaking more softly and acting less

brazenly against the working class. As from its inception, the fight of the Minneapolis labor prisoners is the fight of all labor.

Today Roosevelt appears as a master of destiny, with the fate of millions in his hands. Like his junior partner, Churchill, he feels free to arrest the Trotskyist leaders, slander them and throw them in prison. Roosevelt is riding the wave of imperialist war. But the sheer fact that he selects Trotskyists for persecution is evidence of his innate fear of the program of revolutionary socialism. Even from the heights he sees a tidal wave rising angrily and ominously, a tidal wave that in the end will sweep over and smash to bits all the flotsam and jetsam of imperialism. This tidal wave is the

socialist revolution now already visible in Europe.

Tomorrow, the masses, disillusioned by the war, will remember the Trotskyist leaders who told the truth in the face of jails, concentration camps and firing squads. They will come to the program of Trotskyism by the millions. The names of the persecuted Trotskyists will then shine in history beside the names of labor's brightest champions. But the names of Roosevelt and his bootlickers will become a curse and a by-word. They will appear only on those dark pages reserved for the sinister and frightful butchers who turned against their fellow men and drove them into the slaughter pens of imperialist war.

Our people, our movement will come into its own.

CIVIL WAR IN GREECE

By *THE EDITORS*

1. Greece Up To The Metaxas Dictatorship

Greece is undoubtedly among the most backward and poorest countries of Europe. For over a century it has been condemned to the status of a semi-colony of the major European Powers. Foreign kings have been imposed on the Greek people and have exercised their oppressive rule for the benefit of the foreign bankers and the small clique of Greek capitalists and landowners. The Greek people have been ground down under a terrible weight of poverty. The per capita income of the average Greek is 17% that of the average British income. The wealth of the country has been skimmed off by the western bankers and the Greek capitalists. Little remained for the masses. But despite the economic backwardness and extreme poverty, Greece gave birth, as the present civil war testifies, to one of the most dynamic and revolutionary working classes of Europe. The Greek workers, deeply courageous and self-sacrificing, stepped forward, after the last war, as the leader, the only possible leader of the masses in its struggle for progress and emancipation. The revolutionary movement is developing in Greece with such vigor, it can be safely predicted that regardless of what difficulties and setbacks may be in store, Greece is destined to play an heroic part in the great European revolution, in the struggles of the European peoples for their emancipation.

The history of modern Greece as an independent state dates back less than 120 years. Under the inspiration of the great French revolution, a wave of nationalism swept over Europe at the start of the 19th century. Beginning with the Serb revolt in 1804, national revolution blazed for a century in the Balkans, finally sweeping Turkey back to the western defenses of Constantinople in 1913. The Greeks, who preserved their national consciousness and culture for over 800 years under Turkish rule, raised the banner of revolt against the Ottoman empire in 1821. The Greek War of Independence, which dragged on for over eight years, evoked the greatest enthusiasm and won the wholehearted support of revolutionists and liberals throughout Europe. England, France and Russia, anxious to bring the revolutionary war to a close, finally came to an agreement with the Sultan in

1829 to recognize a small independent Greece, a fraction of present-day Greece, with a population of no more than 600,000.

The new tiny Greek state was certainly launched in an inauspicious manner. The vast majority of Greeks still lived outside its borders. The financial situation was desperate. Greece already owed the sum of \$15,000,000 to the British banks. The financial debt was further increased by the expenses of the long war with Turkey. Another loan had to be floated in 1833 to set the country on its feet. The oppressive taxes leveled on the peasantry by the new government drove many to take to the hills. Brigandage, which has a long history throughout the Balkans, once more took on serious proportions.

The three "Protecting Powers" who had underwritten the new state immediately began hunting around for a suitable king for the country. They first offered the crown to Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg, who later became King of the Belgians. But he declined. The Allied diplomats finally settled on Prince Otho of Bavaria, 17 years old when he ascended the newly-created Greek throne. Of course, the Greeks had not fought for eight years a bloody costly war to exchange the Turkish Sultan for a 17-year old Bavarian Prince. The three "Protecting Powers" assured the Greeks, however, that a constitution would be promulgated. This promise, like so many others, was never kept. The National Assembly, which was supposed to draw up the constitution, was never summoned. The country continued to be ruled as a royal dictatorship by a Regency of 3 Bavarians.

The Revolution of 1862

The Greek people were bitterly disappointed that their overthrow of the Turkish oppressors had brought them not freedom but the dictatorial rule of Bavarian princes, acting as clerks for the British, French and Russian ruling classes. In 1843, a new revolt spread over Greece and forced King Otho to call the National Assembly and promulgate a Constitution. This too remained largely a dead letter and 20

years later in 1862, a popular revolution forced the King off the throne. Otho abdicated and left Greece on a British warship.

The three "Protecting Powers" promptly set to work to find a new king for the Greeks. Their choice finally fell on Prince William George of Denmark, also 17 years of age. As continued financial support to Greece depended upon acceptance of the Monarch, the Greek National Assembly approved the decision. To soften the blow to the Greek masses, who had just staged an anti-monarchist revolution, the British Government announced that along with the King they would cede to Greece the Ionian island, and the three "Protecting Powers" likewise undertook to remit \$20,000 a year from the interest of the loan of 1833, which sum, however, was to be added to the King's Civil List. Now that the new king was safely installed, the British bankers floated a new loan for Greece. To underline the country's utter subservience to the Powers, the Treaty of 1864 expressly laid down that any one of the three Powers might send troops into Greek territory with the consent of the other two signatories. The consent of Greece was not necessary.

Here was the balance sheet of thirty years of Greek Independence: the Greek nation encompassed no more than a fraction of the Greek people and it was hopelessly bankrupt and mortgaged to the British bankers. In truth, its independence was largely fictitious. It was in reality a semi-colony of Britain, France and Russia, forced to tolerate the rule of a foreign prince imposed upon it by its bond-holding "liberators" or as they dubbed themselves in those days, the "Protecting Powers." The history of Greece epitomizes the fate of all the Balkan peoples as indeed of all small nations — the impossibility for small nations to achieve under capitalism real independence, as distinguished from formal political independence.

Greece, like the other Balkan nations, was caught in the web of the struggle for Empire on the part of the major Powers. England and France, fearful of Russian expansion toward the Mediterranean, fought Russia in the Crimean war to prolong the existence of the Turkish Empire, and thus perpetuate Turkish oppression of the nations in the Near East. It was the studied diplomatic policy of England and France that the Turkish Empire had to be preserved for the maintenance of "stability" and the proper "balance of power" in Eastern Europe. Czarist Russia, the "prison-house of peoples," despite its territorial ambitions, likewise feared and betrayed the national revolutionary movements in the Balkans. Thus, for over half a century, the Powers thwarted all attempts on the part of the Greek people in Crete, Thessaly, Epirus, the Aegean islands etc. to unite with the mother country. Again and again they dispatched their fleets to prevent secessions from the Turkish Empire. This century-old conspiracy of the major Powers to prevent the small nationalities of Eastern Europe from attaining national independence; to artificially prop up the Turkish Empire, "the sick man of Europe"; to play off the Balkan countries one against the other, the better to keep them subservient, has gone down in western diplomacy under the euphonious title of the "Eastern Question."

By the 'eighties, a new factor had entered Greek politics: the emergence of a capitalist class becoming richer and more powerful than the landowners. Trikoupi, Greece's first great capitalist statesman, came to power in 1882. Greece experi-

enced a brief period of capitalist expansion, a pale reflection of the enormous progress of capitalism in western Europe. With the aid of British capital, the railway system was extended, the Corinth Canal was opened, new public works were begun. By 1893, the bubble had already burst. A devastating economic crisis swept Greece, resulting in the first large scale emigration to the United States. Four years later, the revolution in Crete against Turkey and for unification with Greece brought on Greece's war with Turkey. For thirty years, Crete had been fighting to reunite with Greece but had always been thwarted by the "Powers." The 1896 revolution in Crete produced a wave of nationalism in Greece; Greek troops were dispatched to the island and Greece was soon at war with Turkey. Greece suffered disastrous defeat. Turkish troops occupied Thessaly for a year. Greece lost its strategical positions along its northern frontier and was forced to pay the huge indemnity of \$20,000,000. The Turkish war made complete its vassalage to the European bankers.

Financial Bankruptcy

From 1833 to 1862 Greece was barely able to pay back short-term loans and to meet the interest on its indebtedness contracted during the War of Independence and in 1833. From 1862 to 1893 the effort to meet interest due the foreign bond-holders together with the annual budget deficits led to complete bankruptcy. Greece was no longer able to meet the interest payments and set aside the amounts called for to pay off the principal. The disastrous war of 1897 finished off the process. The European bond-holders declared that the payment of the Turkish indemnity could not take priority over their bond payments nor would they grant another loan unless the three "Protecting Powers" guaranteed it. This time, in guaranteeing the new loan, the "Protecting Powers" stripped Greece of its sovereign powers. An International Finance Commission virtually took charge of Greek finances and guaranteed payment of the war indemnity and interest on the National Debt. Crete, whose national revolution led to the Graeco-Turkish war, was put under International control, with the island divided into British, French, Russian and Italian spheres. Greece's humiliation was complete.

Ten years later, the Greek capitalists made an heroic effort to convert Greece into a modern capitalist state. The emergence of a strong bourgeois class in the Near-East and the growing rivalry and conflict of the Western imperialists brought to a climax the century-old struggles of the Balkan peoples. In 1908, the Turkish Committee of Union and Progress (Young Turk Movement) composed of the secondary army officers and supported by the Turkish bourgeoisie issued a Pronunciamento and forced the establishment of Constitutional government in Turkey. The rise of Turkish nationalism gave birth to a new oppression of the Greeks and Armenians in Turkey. Economic boycotts were organized against Greek merchants and ship-owners, some of the wealthiest of whom resided in Constantinople, Smyrna and the interior of Asia Minor. The Greek capitalist class, both of Greece and Turkey, alarmed at this development, embarked on their heroic attempt to reunite Greece and hurl the Turks out of Europe. The following year, 1909, a "Military League", in imitation of the Young Turk movement, was organized in Greece and under threat of a coup d'etat demanded a Constitutional government of the Greek Monar-

chy. The court camarilla capitulated. 1910 marks the beginning of Constitutional government in Greece. The Military League called the Cretan national revolutionist, Venizelos, into Greece, to head the government. Venizelos, who dominated Greek politics for the next two decades, became Greece's capitalist statesman *par excellence*. He founded the Liberal Party, the authentic party of Greek capitalism, which now began to rule in its own name.

The Venizelos Reforms

Under Venizelos the government was reorganized from top to bottom along modern capitalist lines. The "spoils system" was abolished, civil service was reformed, agrarian reform was introduced with the division of the feudal estates in Thessaly. Foreign experts were called in to reorganize Greek finances: a British naval mission reorganized the navy, a French military mission reorganized the army. Education was made free, compulsory and universal. A new public works program of road and railway construction was begun. The capitalists, under Venizelos, were striving mightily to create a modern capitalist state.

Two years later the Balkan Alliance between Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria was sealed and the three countries hurled their armies against Turkey. The Turkish army was crushed. Then in 1913, Greece in alliance with Serbia fought the second Balkan war against its ex-ally, Bulgaria, for the lion's share of the spoils and again Greece emerged victorious. Venizelos became a national hero. Greece had grown to a nation of 6,000,000, ten times its original population. Greece now included Crete, most of the Aegean islands, the Epirus, Thessaly and even parts of non-Greek Macedonia. The struggle for Greek unity was almost complete. From 1910 to 1915 Greek foreign commerce increased from 300,000,000 to 500,000,000 drachmae. From 1910 to 1913 the revenues of the Greek government increased by a third.

But all this progress was illusory. It did enrich a small clique of Greek bankers, merchants and shipowners. But it only burdened the already impoverished masses with new taxes and finally plunged Greece into more terrible hunger and crisis. The Greek capitalists could not raise the standard of living of the Greek masses. They only deepened the country's bankruptcy and its subservience to Western Imperialism. The Greek and Serbian victories in the two Balkan wars dislocated the "balance of power", strengthened nationalist aspirations inside the Austro-Hungarian and Russian empires and hastened the outbreak of the World War. Greece was soon occupied by Allied troops. Venizelos, representing the big capitalists, wanted to bring Greece into the war on the Allied side, determined to swim in the sea of imperial intrigues and Big Power conflicts. Just as the Greek capitalists were able to create Greater Greece by means of the two Balkan wars, so now they believed the providential opportunity had arrived to realize their program of Pan-Hellenism, the recreation of a Hellenic empire stretching from Constantinople to the Adriatic. King Constantine and the court camarilla, convinced of Germany's eventual victory, decided to pursue a more modest course and maintain Grecian neutrality during the War of the Giants. Realizing that Constantine could not be pressured into acquiescence in his plans, Venizelos set up a parallel National Government in Salonika, and proceeded with the help of Greek and Allied bankers to set up a new National Army. By 1917, the "Pro-

tecting Powers" gave de facto recognition to Venizelos' "revolutionary" government and demanded the abdication of King Constantine. They suddenly reminded themselves that the king had violated his oath to rule as a Constitutional Monarch. The Allies designated his son, Prince Alexander as successor.

Venizelos returned to Athens at the head of French Negro troops. His first act was to suspend the Constitution and rule by Emergency Decrees; a cloud of spies and informers descended upon the country; the prisons were filled with "political suspects"; Greece was placed under Martial Law. The capitalists began to rule under a scarcely disguised police-dictatorship, the main method of their rule for the ensuing 23 years.

Under the leadership of Venizelos, the Greek capitalists made the fateful gamble to realize their dream of a modern Hellenic Empire. All of Greece was used as a counter in their desperate game. When the Allies signed their Armistice with Germany, the war first began in deadly earnest as far as the Greek masses were concerned. Venizelos sold the Greek army to the British imperialists to prove his "reliability" and "cooperativeness." He sent 100,000 Greek soldiers into the Ukraine to fight with the forces of General Denikin against the Soviet Government. Then in May 1919 Venizelos, spurred on by Lloyd George, ordered Greek troops to occupy Thrace and Smyrna. The Greek army was soon pressing on to the interior of Asia Minor. Venizelos was pushed forward by the Allies at the San Remo Conference to force Allied terms upon Turkey. In return Greece was promised a further enlargement of territory. The war between Greece and Turkey dragged on. It had already cost \$300,000,000 and an enormous number of lives. The newspapermen were remarking cynically that the English at Asia Minor were determined to fight to the last Greek.

In 1922, the French imperialists now at conflict with the British and viewing Greece as simply the tool of British imperialism, armed the Turkish army and enabled it to annihilate the Greek forces. There began the Turkish massacres of the Greek population in Asia Minor and the expulsion of about three-quarter million Greeks from Turkey. To prevent any further atrocities, Greece and Turkey arranged by treaty an "exchange" of populations. Greece was utterly ruined. The country had been at war almost uninterruptedly for ten years. It was hopelessly in bankruptcy. The National Debt had grown to fantastic proportions. The drachma was worthless. The poverty-stricken country of 6 million people was suddenly inundated by the arrival of one and a half million homeless, starving refugees. So ended the great "adventure" of the Greek capitalists.

The Graeco-Turkish war brought to a close the period of Greek irredentism. For a hundred years Greek political life was dominated by the "Great Idea", the aim of annexing the "unredeemed" Greek lands and establishing a united Greek state. It was for this that the people had permitted themselves to be bled white. Now bourgeois Nationalism had bankrupted itself. The Greek bourgeoisie no longer possessed even a glimmer of a progressive mission.

A new factor had entered the arena of Greek politics; the working class. Inspired by the Russian revolution, a very influential Communist movement sprang up in Greece. (The Social Democrats were never a very important force in Greece.) The trade unions began growing very rapidly

and came under the influence of the young Communist Party. The old battle cries of Nationalism, Republicanism and Constitutionalism now began giving way before the new problem of Greek politics — the struggle between labor and capital. The bourgeoisie, mortally frightened by the red spectre began to unite its ranks. The old political lines between Monarchists and Republicans became more and more blurred. Coalition governments composed of both factions became the rule. Whether under the Republican or Monarchist facade, the capitalists could carry through their program and maintain their rule only by dictatorship and bloody terror. No sooner did the working class enter the political stage as an independent force, than the bourgeoisie turned savagely reactionary. The alliance with foreign imperialism became a life and death necessity for the preservation of its rule over the rebellious masses. Bourgeois democracy was a luxury that the Greek capitalists could no longer afford.

The Economic Crisis

Ever since 1920, Greece has been in the throes of terrible economic crisis. The trade balance sheet had a standing deficit of at least 50%. One quarter of the national income was paid out yearly to meet the National Debt; another 20% for the military establishment, another 14% for the upkeep of the governmental bureaucracy. The already high taxes were enormously increased. The cost of living sky-rocketed. The capitalists shifted the full burden of military disasters, foreign loans and the upkeep of a huge military establishment onto the shoulders of the already overburdened and impoverished masses.

The Greek masses answered the attempt to drive them down to inhuman levels by militant class action. The Greek working class is relatively small — 400,000 in a country of 7,000,000 people. Greece remains primarily an agricultural country whose peasantry is one of the poorest in all Europe. But even in agricultural Greece, the proletariat quickly stepped forward as the leader of the peasantry and the oppressed masses as a whole. The trade unions embraced one-quarter of the proletariat, about 100,000 with the majority of the unions under the direct influence of the Communist Party. There also grew up a strong peasant cooperative movement, embracing approximately 250,000 members. There existed a number of left agrarian parties but the Communist Party won the dominant influence even among the poor sections of the peasantry. The economic crisis produced a raging political crisis, which reflected itself in the extreme instability of the governmental superstructure. From 1920 until the Metaxas regime in 1936, one political regime followed another with the greatest rapidity. And as none of the bourgeois political parties could find sufficient support in the masses and quickly exhausted themselves in the struggle with the difficulties growing out of the economic bankruptcy of Greece the army again emerged as the regulator of political life. Scarcely a year went by without a coup d'état or a threatened coup d'état.

The Greek masses reacted violently against the war and the dictatorship, and decisively defeated Venizelos at the polls in the 1920 election. A plebiscite was rigged up and King Constantine was recalled. Three years later, in an attempt to deflect the anger of the masses and shift responsibility for the tragedy of the Greek defeat in the war with Turkey, Col. Plastiras (who heads the present government)

at the head of a Military Junta forced the abdication of King Constantine and executed the key Monarchist leaders as punishment for the 1922 disaster. The new King George II was forced to leave the country and in 1924, a new plebiscite was held and the Republic proclaimed. The Republicans and Monarchists united to rule under the Republican banner. But even this unification could not produce stability in the government, as governmental shifts and combinations were powerless to mitigate the economic disaster. The following year, General Pangalos staged a coup d'état and set up a dictatorship. A year later, appeared a new "strong man", General Kondylis, who organized a new coup d'état. The capitalists then attempted a new government headed by their old leader Venizelos. But to no avail. The Greek crisis continued to grow worse. By 1930, as the economic crisis convulsed the whole world, Greece was choking to death. Over one-quarter of the entire working class was unemployed. The cost of living in 4 years had increased twenty-fold, while wages had only increased twelve-fold. The people were starving.

The Greek masses began fighting back. Between 90 and 100,000 workers took part in strikes, which largely bore a political character. Simultaneously a peasant movement against taxes spread throughout the countryside. Armed clashes between strikers or insurgent groups of peasants and the Gendarmerie became commonplace. Venizelos replied by passing a bill suppressing the Communist Party and the so-called revolutionary trade unions. (The Stalinists split the Greek trade union movement during the Third Period.) The press was muzzled and the first Emergency Bill for the Security of the State was passed, which inaugurated the practice later to become notorious under the Metaxas dictatorship of banishing tens of thousands of workers and peasants to the barren Aegean islands by simple executive order.

Return of the Monarchy

The thoroughly frightened Greek bourgeoisie came to the conclusion that the king was indispensable for the creation of a "strong government." The Greek bourgeoisie had come to such a pass that they could no longer rule without a "crowned idiot" heading the State. Kondylis, a former Republican general, staged a new coup d'état in 1935. He immediately banned all public meetings and suppressed the papers that opposed his dictatorship or the return of the king. The whole staff of *Rizospastis*, the Stalinist daily, was arrested and exiled. A new fake plebiscite was stage-managed by the army and it was soon announced that 98% had voted in favor of the monarchy. (The Kondylis plebiscite became an international joke.) King George II returned to Greece. Venizelos, who had previously come to an agreement with the king, specifically called on his Liberal Party not to oppose the Monarch. To round out the picture, the Stalinists, hot on the trail of carrying out the policies of the Seventh World Congress of the Comintern sent a delegation to King George II whom they hailed as a "guarantee against Fascism and against any authoritarian regime." King George received the delegation and was given assurance that the Communist Party had decided to function "within the framework of the present regime."

The new elections of January 1936 resulted in a parliamentary deadlock. The Venizelist and anti-Venizelist combinations won 142 and 143 seats respectively in the Chamber of Deputies. The Communist Party with 15 members

held the balance of power. Meanwhile a strike movement was spreading throughout the country. The bourgeoisie alarmed by the growing class struggles at home and with the events in Spain and France staring them in the face determined to wipe out once and for all the menacing working class movement. The word went down that no combinations should be made with the CP parliamentary fraction, that a "strong government" was necessary. The King appointed Metaxas, a Monarchist general, whose party had won the smallest number of seats, seven, in the election, to head the government. The Chamber met in April and overwhelmingly voted to prorogue for 5 months empowering Metaxas to govern by decree. The bourgeoisie flung this provocation into the face of the labor movement prepared to crush the opposition which they knew would follow.

From April to August 4, when Metaxas proclaimed his dictatorship, events moved rapidly. The tobacco workers, numbering 45,000, considered one of the most militant sections of the Greek working class were on strike for higher wages throughout northern Greece. On May 9 a general strike was called in Salonika in sympathy with the tobacco workers. Metaxas promptly issued an Emergency Decree mobilizing railwaymen and tramwaymen under military orders. Troops were sent out against the demonstrators in Salonika. The crowds appealed to the soldiers and *fraternization began between the soldiers and workers*. The Gendarmerie were then called out and shot into crowds. 30 demonstrators including 2 women were killed. The day has gone down in Greek labor history as the "Black Saturday" massacre. Next morning 100,000 attended the funeral of the murdered men and women shouting "Revenge." The Greek working class always revolutionary, was now surging forward. The revolutionary tide was rising hourly. Preparations were immediately announced for an all-Greece strike. The strike demands were: Liberation of everybody arrested; Pensions and indemnities for the victims of the terror; Dismissal of the guilty officials; Withdrawal of the Emergency Decree; Resignation of Metaxas and his cabinet. The following day, the general strike had already spread throughout northern Greece. Metaxas ordered the fleet to Salonika and redoubled the terror. Thousands of workers were arrested and summarily exiled to the penal islands. The "revolutionary" unions were outlawed and union funds declared confiscated.

The Trade Union Congress

In July the Social Democratic trade union bureaucrats, thoroughly frightened by the turn of events, agreed to conduct with the Stalinists, who headed the so-called revolutionary trade unions, a joint struggle against Metaxas' dictatorial decrees. A joint Congress of the Unitarian Trade Union Federation ("revolutionary") and the General Trade Union Federation (reformist) was held in Athens on July 28. The united session of the Executive Committees announced their decision to call a one-day protest strike in Athens on August 5 and as against the previous threat to call a general strike, appealed to the workers throughout Greece "to hold themselves ready" for a general all-Greece protest strike if the government rejected the workers' demands. This was exactly the moment for which Metaxas had been waiting. On August 4, one day before the scheduled protest strike, he placed machine guns on all the main street intersections in Athens, abolished Parliament, banished the working class

leaders and proclaimed the Dictatorship. Within a year, 13,000 political exiles were reported living on the barren Aegean islands while thousands more were in the prisons awaiting decision on their cases. Five drachmae (cents) a day were allotted the prisoners for their subsistence. Thousands died from cold, hunger and the polluted water. Doses of castor oil were fed workers to extort confessions. Ancient forms of torture were again revived. "Liberty," Metaxas proclaimed, "was a 19th century illusion."

The Greek working class was decisively defeated in 1936 and was unable to prevent the imposition of the Metaxas dictatorship because of the criminal policy of its Stalinist leadership. It is unquestionable that in 1936 Greece was in the throes of a revolutionary crisis. The Greek workers were prepared to overthrow capitalist rule and join hands with the peasantry to form a government of Workers and Farmers. The Communist Party dominated the whole working class movement and likewise enjoyed strong support in the countryside. It was known at the time of the Salonika general strike in May 1936 that both the soldiers and sailors in the fleet were very sympathetic to the workers' cause. All the major strike movements of 1936, moreover, were under the direct leadership of the Communist Party. Yet Metaxas was able to impose his bloody dictatorship with hardly a struggle. What is the explanation? It can be summed up in a few words: the fatal policy of the People's Front. For over five years, the Greek Stalinists in common with the Stalinists throughout the world, had disoriented and disorganized the Greek labor movement with their suicidal ultra-leftist policies of the Third Period. They were instrumental in splitting the trade union movement. They wore out the Greek masses by their adventurist tactics. By 1936, on instructions from the Comintern, they had made an about face and began their ultra-opportunist course of the People's Front. Instead of organizing the workers for *decisive revolutionary* action and working to draw the peasants of the countryside into the struggle, throughout the fateful months between April and August 1936, when the working class was in deep revolutionary ferment, the Stalinists busied themselves with a campaign to force the Liberal Party to organize with them a People's Front. The Liberal Party, however, had heard its master's voice and turned down the Stalinist offer. They were busy easing the way for Metaxas. The Stalinists wasted the whole six months in these criminal negotiations — six months that should have been employed to mobilize the broad masses for the revolutionary assault on the capitalist government. Just as in Spain, bourgeois democracy had become an illusion, a reactionary snare in Greece in 1936. The only alternatives were Metaxas or Soviet power. There existed in Greece in 1936 no third alternative.

The Stalinist Betrayal

Sklavanos, leader of the Stalinist Parliamentary fraction, explained in an interview just a few weeks before Metaxas proclaimed his dictatorship that Greece was not in a revolutionary situation (!); that moreover, Greece had many feudal vestiges and would first have to make a democratic revolution before the country was ready for Socialism; that the task of the Greek proletariat was to forge a bloc with the liberals — the People's Front — to prevent the formation of a dictatorship and to uphold democratic rights! That was the program of the Stalinists in 1936.

Small wonder that Metaxas was able to crush the workers' movement and impose with hardly a struggle, his bloody rule.

It must be further remembered that Greece is a small country. As present events testify, working class international solidarity and aid is a life-and-death question for the Greek masses and the success of their revolution. In 1936, the Stalinists, with the aid of the Social Democrats, effectively strangled the revolutionary struggles of the masses in Spain, France and elsewhere in Europe by means of their perfidious People's Fronts. It was therefore a foregone conclusion that Reaction would likewise triumph in a small country like Greece.

The Trotskyist movement, which went back in Greece to 1928, had a correct revolutionary program to meet the

situation. The Trotskyists, however, split in 1934 and their forces were too weak in 1936 to challenge the Stalinists for the leadership of the labor movement.

Although it attempted to copy in every respect the Mussolini and Hitler regimes, the Metaxas dictatorship never enjoyed any mass support. Despite Metaxas' "social" demagoguery and his mountebank performances (he called himself "the first workman and the first peasant of Greece"), the Metaxas government, from its first days to its last, was nothing more than a police-military dictatorship. Metaxas' regime which lasted four years — it collapsed after the invasion of Greece in 1940 — based itself on armed force and murderous terror. Even so, it lasted as long as it did only because of the temporary exhaustion and disorientation of the Greek working class brought about by the 1936 debacle.

2. The Greek Civil War

Hitler's "New Order" was a streamlined organization for the purpose of exploiting to the limit Europe's resources, economy and manpower for the benefit of the Nazi war machine. To the insoluble crisis that wracked Europe before the war was added the grinding exploitation of Nazi oppression. This exploitation became most unbearable at the perimeter of European economy, in those countries where capitalist industry was least developed, where slim peace-time reserves were soon exhausted by the demands of a total war. As a consequence the standard of living quickly plummeted into the abyss of starvation. The strain was greatest in the countries like Greece.

Grim starvation drove the Greek proletariat and peasantry to revolt against the German conqueror. The Gauleiters ruled by the bayonet and concentration camp. The Greek bourgeoisie collaborated with the Nazis from the very beginning, provided them with Quisling rulers, preserved "order" and ran the state apparatus with virtually the same personnel as under the Metaxas dictatorship. In return the German overlords gave them the compradores' reward, a share in the profits. As we have already demonstrated in the preceding section, the Greek bourgeoisie was collaborationist from the first hour that the proletariat became an independent force on the social arena. The German conquest merely required their adaptation to the new master.

The resistance movement in Greece rose to mass proportions without—and against—the bourgeoisie. The masses were no less hostile to Churchill's collaborationists in Cairo than to Hitler's Quislings in Athens. The decisive force in the resistance movement was the working class. This working class predominance is partially revealed in EAM's program for nationalization of the railroads, public utilities and banks. More significantly, EAM's methods of action are thoroughly proletarian in character. It was demonstrations and general strikes in Athens and Salonika that prevented the mobilization of slave labor to Germany, halted conscription for the German army and forced an increase in the bread rations.

Behind the proletariat was ranged the vast majority of the toiling masses, poor peasants and ruined middle class. EPON, the EAM youth organization, according to *Nation* Correspondent Michael Clark, has an estimated membership of 500,000. The mutinies in Alexandria showed that the decisive section of the Greek navy and army supported the

EAM. Anthony Eden credited EAM with the support of 75% of the Greek people; the London *Times* credited it with 90%. In addition, its organized military force, ELAS, probably far better armed than the Bolshevik Red Guard of 1917, was strong enough to put 25,000 armed men into action in Athens against the British "without stripping other regions under its control."

The Stalinists, who since the Russian revolution, have played the predominant role in Greek working class politics, easily emerged as the leader of the new mass movement. The old Venizelist Liberal Party, which in the past enjoyed widespread middle class support had split up. Its right wing had gone over to the monarchists, its left wing to the EAM. The Greek masses were burning with revolutionary determination and wished to prepare the overthrow of all their oppressors—Nazi and Greek. Instead of providing the mass movement with a revolutionary program, similar to the Bolshevik program of 1917, and preparing the masses for the seizure of power, the Stalinists steered the movement into the blind alley of People's Frontism. The Stalinists, who enjoyed virtual hegemony of the mass movement, joined with a lot of petty bourgeois politicians, lawyers, professors, who had neither mass following nor influence, and artificially worked to limit the struggle to the fight for capitalist democracy.

By their capitulation to the petty bourgeois democrats, the Stalinists as leaders of the proletariat subordinated the working class to the rule of the native big bourgeoisie in combination with imperialism. The middle class program of a democratic republic for Greece where trade unions would function freely, where the state machinery and its armed forces and police would be purged of Nazi collaborationists and the creatures of Metaxas, the nationalization of public utilities, railroads, etc., proved a utopian dream. The very threat of effecting such a program by EAM led to civil war and British intervention. Frightened by the inexorable logic of the struggle—which could only triumph with the dictatorship of the proletariat—the Stalinists and petty bourgeois leaders sought an agreement with the reactionary bourgeois government in exile and through them with British imperialism.

The fall of Mussolini in July 1943, under the impact of great strikes and demonstrations, struck all of Europe like a series of electric shocks. Revolutionary ferment raced wildly

through Italy and broke over its boundaries, especially into neighboring Greece where large detachments of the Italian Army were quartered for occupation purposes. The Italian troops, infected with the anti-war fever that gripped the population at home, began to fraternize with the Greek workers, exchanging arms for civilian clothes. The Nazis were forced to dispatch picked troops into Larissa to disarm the largest exclusively Italian garrison in Greece. A general strike broke out among the Greek workers. 300,000 Athenians, defying German machine guns, grenades and tanks, marched in demonstration. It lasted for hours, and when it was over 300 demonstrators had been murdered by Nazi guns and more than 100 wounded.

The flare-up of class warfare accompanied by demonstrations of international solidarity brought into sharp relief the treacherous character of the Stalinist-dominated leadership of the EAM. The EAM leaders, frightened by the revolutionary upsurge, soon dispatched a delegation to Cairo to persuade Tsouderos, the reactionary Premier of the King's Government-in-Exile, left over from the Metaxas regime, to set up a government of "National unity." They asked for only one concession: that King George issue a statement that he would not return to Greece until a plebiscite had been held. Tsouderos gave them a traitor's welcome. The delegation was placed under house arrest by the British authorities, held incommunicado, and then sent back to Greece under the most humiliating circumstances.

The Greek armed forces, stationed in Egypt, were bitterly anti-monarchist. Eight months before, the King called upon the British to disarm the Greek Brigade in the Middle East. The British imperialists, alarmed by the developments in the Greek mainland, now launched their counter-revolutionary terror. A mutiny was quelled on the destroyer *Ierax*, and five sailors were sentenced to death. The army was drastically purged. A *Nation* correspondent described the events that followed:

"Hundreds of other persons, not only army men but civilians, were arrested. . . People disappeared without a warrant having been issued, without any specific charge having been issued, and without notification to their families. The Greek military headquarters in Cairo were occupied by force. The offices of the Greek government were placed under British supervision. The editor of the newspaper *Hellin* and the director of the Hellenic League of Liberation and the Seamen's Association of Alexandria were arrested."

Britain's Brutal Intervention

The Greek soldiers and sailors fought back. Resisting "the efforts of the Cairo government to impose the most notorious fascist officers" upon them, (statement of Greek Maritime Union) the Greek Brigade stationed near Alexandria mutinied. The mutiny soon spread to the Greek warships lying in the naval base; the sailors formed ship committees and took charge of the vessels. On the invitation of the King's Government, with which the Stalinists had sought collaboration the month previous, the British High Command moved against the rebellious forces.

Churchill reported to the House of Commons the brutal intervention of British imperialism: "The Greek brigade was encircled by British forces some 30 miles from Alexandria and Greek ships which mutinied in Alexandria harbor were lying under the guns of both shore batteries and our superior naval forces which had gathered. The tension lasted nearly three

weeks. . . The disorderly ships were boarded by Greeks under the Greek government, and, with about fifty killed and wounded, the mutineers were collected and sent ashore. The mutinous brigade in the desert was assaulted by superior British forces which captured the eminences surrounding the camp, and 4,000 men there surrendered."

The Greek Maritime Union appealed to the British workers to cease granting any help or recognition to the self-appointed Greek government in Cairo, under whose repressive fist "thousands of Greek civilians, officers, soldiers, and sailors are today confined in concentration camps for the sole crime of being anti-fascists."

First to flout the appeal of the Greek seamen were the Stalinist-EAM leaders themselves. Over the still fresh graves of the martyred sailors, not more than three weeks after the mutiny had been subdued, they again addressed themselves to the Cairo butchers for a coalition. Venizelos, (son of the famous Greek leader) who succeeded Tsouderos, had been toppled by the mutiny and George Papandreou, a Social Democrat, became the King's first minister. (Papandreou had been brought out of Athens on the recommendation of the notorious Rex Leeper, British ambassador, after he had delivered a memorandum to British agents on how to destroy the EAM.) In line with the new "Teheran" revelation, the Stalinists reversed their previous position on the monarchy and agreed to serve in a "Pan-Hellenic" coalition under the King. This agreement was embodied in the Lebanon Charter signed in May.

Just as in Italy the Stalinists had rescued Badoglio when he and the House of Savoy were about to crash into limbo, so in Greece they propped up Papandreou and the House of Glucksburg. No wonder the Beirut (Lebanon) conference sent a message to Churchill thanking him for "his interest in Greece and its future." In the heat of the class struggle all fictions are burned away. The Stalinists could not bolster up the Greek puppet without publicly approving the British master behind him. Churchill, his hands still red with the blood of Greek soldiers and sailors, smirked in the House of Commons that he had received a "very agreeable letter" from the Stalinists.

It was precisely at this point that the masses intervened to block fulfillment of the sell-out agreement and keep it a dead letter for more than three months. Papandreou accused the Stalinists of violating the Lebanon Charter and threatened to outlaw EAM-ELAS. But popular indignation at the murder and imprisonment of the soldier and sailor rebels was running too high for the Stalinists to act rapidly. The Cairo court martial was still grinding out death sentences and long prison terms for the mutineers. The masses wanted amnesty for the convicted, not coalition with the jailers and executioners. In July 1944 the London *Sunday Observer* reported that EAM leaders "are quite ready to enter the government. But they have hesitated to take this step without the full approval from those they represent lest this should further split the resistance movement and bring about civil strife in Greece. . . . The main obstacle to complete unity is the intransigent attitude adopted by certain EAM leaders of secondary rank."

Here is the key to an understanding of events in Greece. A great gulf separates the insurgent masses from their treacherous Stalinist leaders. Yet so long as the Stalinists remain at the helm they cannot escape the revolutionary pressure of the workers and peasants who hate the king and will never

peacefully countenance his return, who are determined to purge Greece not only of the German collaborationists but of all the satraps of the Metaxas dictatorship, and who instinctively are striving towards a socialist solution. This indomitable pressure delayed for months the consummation of the Stalinist betrayals and forced the Stalinist leaders to withdraw agreements previously made.

Stalinist Treachery

The EAM was finally able, after three months of internal struggle, to send five representatives out of the mountains to sit in the Papandreou cabinet. To palliate the distrustful masses, EAM announced a program which included nationalization of the railroads and public utilities that constituted surety for the \$400,000,000 national debt held by British bankers.

The entry of EAM representatives into the Papandreou Cabinet gave Churchill a tremendous advantage. It was a victory for reaction. The heretofore thoroughly discredited Cairo government was for the first time provided with a semblance of popular support. Behind the facade of "unity," the Greek capitalists and British imperialists could intrigue with greater confidence for the disarming of the masses. This became the decisive question and only its decision could resolve the issue of power. The People's Front, whose aim is to sidetrack the masses from the highroad of socialist revolution onto the detour of capitalism must inevitably capitulate to the disarming of the masses. Under Stalinist leadership this capitulation occurs rather sooner than later. The problem was particularly acute in Greece because the regular army, shot through and through with revolutionary moods, was unreliable and had to be violently disbanded. Only the forces under Zervas, commander of EDES, plus two remaining Royalist detachments in Egypt and the despised Security Battalions (the "Cossacks" who had maintained "order" under Metaxas and the Nazis) could be counted on.

As far back as December 1943 Eden proclaimed in Parliament that the British government would send arms only to General Zervas. By the end of September 1944 the question of power could no longer be postponed. The Germans were withdrawing from Greece with Partisan bullets hastening their retreat. The Greek people began taking over. ELAS levied taxes on the rich and distributed food stocks to the famine-stricken people. Politophilaki, the ELAS police force, took charge of law enforcement arresting collaborationists, Metaxas agents and Black Market racketeers.

Churchill had anticipated this situation and subsequently he revealed in a speech to the House of Commons that he had previously obtained the agreement of Stalin and Roosevelt to install the Greek Monarchist Government on the peninsula with British troops.

The Greek Government towards the end of September, now residing at Caserta, Italy, called upon the Allies to occupy Greece. The EAM representatives dissented but remained in the government. Thus the Stalinists, by remaining in the government, permitted their prestige to be used as a cover for the conspiracy that was being prepared against the Greek people.

The betrayal of the Stalinists takes on huge proportions when we consider that the situation was revolutionary and power was within the grasp of the Greek workers. But the Stalinist leaders dreaded workers' power just as much as

Churchill. Poulos, *Nation* correspondent, wrote from Greece: "The EAM could have seized the power. They had plenty of time to do it between the German withdrawal and the British arrival." Why didn't they? Poulos answers: "The . . . major reason was Teheran."

The counter-revolutionary conspiracy was no secret—except to the masses. On August 21, Papandreou met with Churchill. He refused to produce the minutes of this conversation when he reported to the cabinet. An official statement declared ominously that they had "reviewed every aspect of the Greek situation and found themselves in complete agreement." A month later, the Stalinist leaders became full-fledged participants in the organization of the British imperialist-monarchist conspiracy. On September 27 General Seraphis, Commander of the ELAS had a conference in Caserta with Zervas and the Supreme Commander of the Allied forces and signed a secret agreement. Here are the terms, finally made public by Anthony Eden on December 20 in the House of Commons:

The Caserta Agreement

"1. All guerrilla forces operating in Greece place themselves under the orders of the Greek Government of National Unity. The Greek Government places these forces under the orders of General Scobie, who had been nominated by the Supreme Allied Command as the general officer commanding in Greece. 2. In accordance with a proclamation issued by the Greek Government, the guerrilla leaders declare they will forbid any attempt by any units under their command to take the law into their own hands. Such action will be treated as a crime and punished accordingly. 3. In Athens no action is to be taken except under orders of General Scobie. Security battalions are considered instruments of the enemy unless they surrender. 4. All Greek guerrilla forces, in order to put an end to past rivalries, declare they will form a national union to coordinate their activities in the interests of the common struggle."

Thus the stage was set for the occupation of Greece by British troops and the imposition of the Monarchy. Not only did the EAM leaders fail to warn the people and to organize them against this sinister invasion—they facilitated the invasion. When the British troops came ashore in the first days of October, the deceived and hungry populace gave them a lavish welcome. And for a time the British fostered the deception by bringing in food on relief ships at the rate of 2500 tons a day. But this miserly gesture only sharpened the edge of discontent. The supplies fell into the hands of Black Market profiteers who sold them at astronomical inflationary prices. Longshoremen at Piraeus, the Athens harbor, struck for greater allotments of food. Women and children marched in the streets with placards: "Bread for the People!"

While the workers were spontaneously taking the road of action, EAM leaders were busy negotiating for the disarming of ELAS. An agreement was signed with Papandreou that both ELAS and EDES would disarm and be superceded by a National Guard. Scobie, feeling very much in the saddle, set December 10 as the deadline for turning in all arms to the police.

It appeared as if the counter-revolution would triumph without a struggle. Poulos, *Nation* correspondent, vividly describes the situation in Athens at this time:

"Thousands of traitors and quislings were permitted to roam freely around Athens. No collaborators were called to trial or punished by the government. Royalist organizations were secretly armed. Members of the Nazi-organized Security Battalions were spirited out of prison and armed. Wild stories of red terrorism were fed to the local and foreign press. High officials of the various ministries who had faithfully served the Nazi and quisling government were kept at their posts. No attempt was made to purge the police and national guard, both of which had worked for the Gestapo. When the Under-Secretary of War, on November 24, appointed fourteen officers' to organize a new national guard, eight of them were former officers of the Security Battalions. The Mountain Brigade was withdrawn from Italy and brought to Athens. More British troops kept landing in Greece. And long after the last German had left the Greek mainland British tanks rumbled along the streets of Athens."

By now the masses were thoroughly alarmed. Under their angry pressure the EAM leaders were forced to tear up the October 18 agreement. Again negotiations began. Another agreement was reached. This time ELAS' disarming would be contingent on the disarming of the Metaxas-Nazi police force, the Mountain Brigade and the Sacred Battalion in addition to EDES.

"Thereupon, Rex Leeper, British Ambassador," the December 8 British *Tribune* reports, "informed Papandreou that His Majesty's Government would not allow the demobilization of . . . the Sacred Battalion and the Mountain Brigade. These two, Leeper said, were incorporated in the British forces and consequently outside the authority of the Greek Government. Also, His Majesty's Government were of the opinion that these were the only reliable troops available to protect the Greek Government against a possible coup d'etat."

British Provoke Civil War

The British methodically and cold-bloodedly gathered together their military forces. By November 28 they were ready to act. ELAS General Seraphis was ordered on that day to carry out the Caserta agreement and sign an order disbanding ELAS. He dared not agree, he said, because "his people would think he had signed under Allied pressure. He said he would rather go back to the mountains and discuss it with his people."

On November 29 Scobie's headquarters absorbed the Military Liaison, in charge of distribution of food supplies, and UNRRA came under British control.

On November 30 RAF planes dropped leaflets all over Greece announcing that EDES and ELAS must demobilize between December 10 and December 20. No mention was made of the gendarmerie, the Mountain Brigade or the Sacred Battalion.

On December 1 Scobie threatened the people with starvation unless they submitted. His proclamation read: "I stand firm behind the present constitutional government until the Greek State can be established with a legal armed force behind it and free elections can be held. Unless we all succeed together in this, currency will *not* remain stable and the people will *not* be fed." (Scobie underscored the "nots".)

Only now, faced with this declaration of war, did the EAM leaders resign from the government. They could no longer participate with impunity. Thus had they betrayed the revolutionary masses step by step. And when the inevitable civil war finally burst forth, despite Stalinist treachery and

cowardice, it took place under the most advantageous circumstances for the counter-revolution.

Churchill had given Scobie precise, cold-blooded instructions: "When shooting begins, said Churchill, he expects ELAS will put women and children in the first line. Scobie was instructed to be clever and avoid any error. Scobie was instructed not to hesitate to open fire on any armed male who assails authority of British or of Greeks collaborating with them. Scobie's forces should be augmented by forces of the Greek Government. British Ambassador is advising Papandreou not to hesitate.

"Scobie should act as if confronted by local rebellion and should teach ELAS a lesson, making it impossible that others will behave along these lines, and that British must keep and dominate Athens. It would be splendid if Scobie could accomplish this without bloodshed, but said he should do whatever he has to. (Signed) Kirk."

This report was transmitted on December 5 to the U. S. Ambassador in Italy and made public by Drew Pearson on December 11. It has never been denied.

The provocation was organized and the Stalinists stepped right into the trap, or rather they led the unarmed workers, and their wives and children, into the trap. Permission for a demonstration had been granted by the Government for December 3. On the night of December 2, the permit was cancelled. It was too late to warn the workers, who poured into the streets. Without warning, government police from ambush opened a murderous fire on the demonstrators with machine guns, tommy guns, mortars and light anti-tank guns. British armored cars stood by for action during the massacre. When the "wild and savage" firing ceased 23 dead lay in the streets. More than 150 were wounded. Most of the victims were boys and girls under 18.

Now the counter-revolution went to work in deadly earnest. Martial law was declared. General Katsotas, acting Military Governor of Athens issued an ultimatum giving armed formations 72 hours to quit the city or be treated as enemies. Court martials were set up. Workers were being forcibly disarmed.

But the masses, now thoroughly aroused, began fighting back. They could no longer be confined to the role of helpless spectators and victims. Defying martial law, thousands of demonstrators marched through the streets of Athens waving the blood-stained banners of yesterday and shouted: "Down with the Government!" For a quarter of a mile outside Athens cathedral people knelt in homage to the martyrs. When they arose they shouted: "Revenge! Revenge! Down with Papandreou!" On December 5 when word spread that police had killed four more civilians, the cry changed to "Death to Papandreou!" Strikes broke out in the harbor the day after the massacre and spread throughout the city. EAM was forced to recognize the accomplished fact and declare a general strike. A demonstration was held before the British Embassy with signs: "British Soldiers! Let us choose our own government!"

Feeling their strength, the workers were now determined to finish once and for all with their oppressors. Dockworkers in Piraeus paraded armed with clubs, knives and a few guns. Machine gun nests were set up at some points. ELAS seized two police barracks in the harbor town. Meanwhile partisans poured into Athens seizing 21 out of 28 police stations. Hun-

dreds of other armed workers battled British and government troops for possession of key government buildings.

When the first round of fighting was over, although the British had brought tanks and Spitfires into action, the workers' detachments were in control of all of the city (and the country too) with the exception of three square miles in the center of Athens. Papandreou and his cabinet fled from the government offices and took refuge in the Gran Bretagne Hotel guarded by British tanks. He proclaimed a government "crisis" and resigned. The power was in the streets with the workers of Athens.

But no revolutionary workers' government was established in its place? Why? The workers had displayed magnificent courage, superb heroism and a genius for organization. But tragically, their leaders were not revolutionary fighters but cynical counter-revolutionary Stalinist adventurers. They headed the revolutionary masses only to behead the struggle. These unspeakable wretches were preparing to betray the struggle on the very day the fighting broke out. On December 4 the C.P. paper, *Rizospastis*, proposed that a Regency be instituted. The Stalinists offered to enter a new government which included "all parties" (including the murderer Papandreou). At this point Churchill stepped in and ordered Papandreou to stop thinking he needed to represent anyone but the British Empire, and get back in the Premiership.

After another week of fighting EAM agreed to give full powers to a Regent and to disarm under the direction of a new "national unity" government. But Scobie was in no hurry. He was only beginning to make headway against ELAS in Athens. So he stalled for time. First he demanded ELAS disarm before a new government was set up. Then he had Papandreou cable the King to ascertain his opinion on the Regency. Papandreou himself changed his mind three times on the question. Finally King George of Glucksberg insisted that EAM be left out of the cabinet. Churchill supported his stand. Meanwhile, British warships were shelling the workers' district in Athens.

After almost a month of fighting, ELAS remained in control of all Greece, with the exception of sections of Athens. 20,000 ELAS troops attacked the White Guard forces of General Zervas in Epirus and wiped them off the map. The vast majority of EDES deserted to ELAS and the remaining few Royalist troops were evacuated by the British. Indian colonial troops sent against ELAS went over to their side. Faced with the prospect of a long drawn-out civil war whose outcome could not be predicted, and the rising indignation of the British working class, Churchill decided to sheath his claws and make peace with EAM.

The "Peace" Offer

The Stalinists on their side were only too anxious for "peace"—at the expense of the workers. Each week the struggle continued could only further expose them and prepare the way for their elimination in favor of a genuine revolutionary leadership. Their new "peace" offer was again an offer of capitulation: ELAS would withdraw from Athens provided Papandreou's troops would likewise be withdrawn, the gendarmerie to be placed on reserve and Nazi collaborators purged; British troops would be employed as specified by the infamous Caserta agreement cited above.

On December 25, Churchill and Eden arrived in Greece and concluded an agreement to have the King appoint a re-

gent as requested by the EAM heads and settle other questions under his supervision. Emboldened by Stalinist treachery and cravenness, reaction resumed its political offensive. Even while the conference was meeting, regent-to-be Archbishop Damaskinos called on the working class fighters to lay down their arms. Scobie reaffirmed his ultimatum that ELAS withdraw from Attica, hand in its arms and disband. On January 2 General Plastiras took office as Premier, appointed by the new regent. Since his arrival he continually denounced the ELAS and called on them to disarm.

Who is Plastiras? The British *Tribune* describes him as the commander of the Greek contingents that invaded Soviet Ukraine in 1919. More recently: "He lived unmolested in France during the German occupation. At the height of the German success in the summer of 1941 Plastiras was negotiating with the Germans to reach an agreement with them similar to that which he has now with the British. He took up contact with two of Abetz's agents: the S.S. General Thomas, and the S.S. Leader Roland Nosek, but the negotiations broke down when Plastiras' faith in the Germans was shattered by their reverses in the winter of 1941." This congenital Quisling is now being groomed for the role of a Greek Franco.

And despite British crimes against the Greek people, the Stalinist secretary of EAM Dimitri Partsalides kissed Churchill's feet declaring that he "wished to express the Greek people's feelings on behalf of the EAM for the efforts of Mr. Churchill, the Prime Minister of our great ally, England, in coming to Athens."

Thus was Churchill enabled to return to parliament and take the offensive against his critics. He hypocritically disavowed any intention of Great Britain to intervene in the internal affairs of Greece. Then he denounced ELAS as "Trotskyist. . . a name that is equally hated in Russia." With this one winged phrase he showed he had far more understanding of the Greek situation than all the stupid scribblers of the *New Leader*. At one stroke he revealed what had already become abundantly obvious. First, that Stalin had no independent territorial aims in Greece. This was confirmed even more directly by Bevin when he told the Labor Party Conference that Stalin had agreed at Teheran to Greece becoming a British sphere of influence in return for Rumania, Bulgaria and other Balkan territory as Russian spheres. Second: That Stalin was no less the enemy of the revolutionary Greek masses than was Churchill; that Stalin had not only abandoned the Greek workers to the onslaughts of the counter-revolution organized by British imperialism, (during the entire course of the struggle Stalin did not pronounce even one syllable that might be construed as support of the Greek masses) but he gave Churchill his full support. "These matters," Churchill said, "were first discussed at Teheran." Third: That the Stalinist leadership could not always control the mass struggles which often took on a revolutionary character.

Trotskyism in Greece

ELAS is "Trotskyist" in one sense only—in the revolutionary instincts of its indomitable fighters, in their great capacity for struggle and sacrifice. But its program and leadership has no resemblance to "Trotskyism." Churchill forgets that during the real "Trotskyist" revolution, he never in his wildest dreams conceived of going to Moscow to secure the agreement of the Bolsheviks to set up the white guard Baron Wrangel as regent for the Czar while the Red Army quietly

surrendered its arms. How could he? The Bolsheviks had shot the Czar, declared war to the death on Wrangel, demobilized the British troops sent in to aid Wrangel. By fraternization and direct appeal to international solidarity, the Bolsheviks had spurred the British workers to threaten a general strike against the government if the British imperialists did not keep hands off the Russian Revolution.

Under the terms of a truce arrangement signed by the Stalinist leaders on January 11, ELAS was to withdraw from the Athens area on January 15 but not lay down their arms. But days before the truce was to go into effect Plastiras was appealing to ELAS to lay down their arms. Scobie's forces were mopping up in Athens and pursuing ELAS troops for 90 miles outside the capital. Warrants were being sworn out for the arrest of the "leaders of the rebellion." On January 14 the Plastiras cabinet announced that 25 three-judge committees would soon begin receiving cases of persons arrested in order to try all who had borne arms against the state. The Greek military governor of Athens proclaimed Draconian measures virtually equivalent to martial law. Damaskinos became "profoundly shocked" that ELAS retained hostages (a defensive measure against hostages seized by the counter-revolution). Plastiras announced he was not bound by the truce agreement since he was not a signatory to it. Meanwhile the Royalist scum, despite the Military orders, was permitted to demonstrate in Athens shouting slogans against Communism, for Scobie, Churchill, and Roosevelt. The climate looked good to the Greek King and he cabled his friends in Athens that the Regency was only temporary and he would soon return. For the workers it looked like the beginning of a terrible white terror.

Then for an entire month an unprecedented campaign of

vilification, led and inspired by Churchill himself, was conducted from the rostrum of the House of Commons and into the world press, against ELAS. The most harrowing atrocity stories of fiendish ELAS acts were invented, tales that parallel and sometimes leave in the pale the lies invented about the Paris Communards by Churchill's ancestors and by Churchill himself against the Russian Revolution. And the "labor" scoundrel, Sir Walter Citrine, lent the authority of the British trade union movement to Churchill's calumnies by returning from Greece with "evidence" manufactured undoubtedly by the unspeakable Rex Leeper. All these slanders have a familiar ring: they are the "moral" screen behind which the counter-revolution perpetrates its hellish deeds.

The Stalinist EAM leaders are now concluding their "Peace agreement" with Plastiras and British imperialism: ELAS is to disarm by March 15, but the Mountain Brigade, the Sacred Battalions and Metaxas' gendarmerie remain. A *Christian Science Monitor* reporter correctly observes: "There is no doubt the agreement leaves EAM in a generally weakened position when compared with that it held prior to the revolt."

The Greek masses suffered a definite setback in this first armed encounter with the forces of the counter-revolution. As this analysis makes clear, not primarily because of Britain's superior armed might, but because of the duplicity and criminal treachery of the Stalinist leadership. The Greek workers will now absorb the political lessons of this betrayal and prepare for the next stage of the struggle.

The glorious chapter that the Greek masses have already written in the annals of working class struggle will forever remain a shining inspiration to revolutionary fighters everywhere.

3. The Lesson of Greece

The Greek civil war has served to lay bare the moving forces and the underlying dynamics of the European crisis. All the major political factors, all the basic conflicts, which in their general political features exhibit a striking similarity throughout Europe, are mirrored with complete faithfulness in the momentous class struggle now in progress in Greece. Greece thus serves as an important starting point for an analysis of the revolutionary crisis in Europe and as an object lesson for the proletariat.

The most important aspect of the present political situation in Europe is the deep-going revolutionary ferment among the masses. This revolutionary mood has seized not only the working classes but to a considerable extent, the lower middle classes as well. In 1936 the revolutionary crisis engulfed Spain, France, Greece. It remained for all that largely localized. The capitalists, aided by their Stalinist and Social Democratic labor lieutenants, were able to isolate each revolutionary situation and thus throttle more easily the rising mass movement. Today the revolutionary crisis is sweeping across Europe from one end to the other. There is not one single country that will escape its hot breath. And regardless of the ebbs and flows of the revolutionary process, regardless of all initial setbacks, retreats and defeats, the revolution will continue to dominate Europe *for years* to come.

For the masses there is no way out of the present catastrophe except through socialist revolution. Capitalism, after building up Europe as the center of affluence, culture, political democracy and progress, is today engaged in literally destroying the continent, tearing down brick by brick its great metropolitan cities and reducing its people to beggary and starvation. Europe, ridden with famine, pestilence and death, is in a blind alley. The working class has been driven down to inhuman levels. The middle classes are ruined by the war inflation. Under capitalism these masses have nothing to look forward to except further ruination and enslavement.

The western imperialists, aided by Stalin and his greedy bureaucracy, aim to reduce the continent to the status of a colony, to exploit its peoples in truly Asiatic style, and to inflict upon them the rule of the bayonet and the whip. That is why the revolutionary crisis will not be mitigated but aggravated with the passing months. The revolutionary ardor of the masses will not cool. It will become more militant, more determined, more grim, more compelling. We must prepare ourselves for a protracted period of revolutionary eruptions.

The first world war was an expression of the absolute decline of the capitalist system. Capitalism in Europe — as on a world scale — was no longer expanding but contracting.

In Greece, as throughout Eastern Europe, bourgeois democracy became a luxury which the capitalists could no longer afford. Bourgeois democracy, or more correctly, what little there was of it, gave way to military dictatorship. But diseased and decaying capitalism could not, for long, continue its rule under democratic forms even in Western Europe. Mussolini came to power in 1922-23. Ten years later the Weimar Republic was smashed and the Nazi dictatorship proclaimed. A year later, a clerical brand of Fascism took power in Austria. Franco triumphed in Spain in 1937. At the same time, a semi-bonapartist dictatorship arose even in "ultra-democratic" France. Everywhere the masses saw how their own capitalists set up dictatorships and began ruling over the people with unconcealed violence and terror.

The imposition of the Nazi dictatorship over the whole of Europe was merely the last act in this drawn-out reactionary drama. It was under Nazi rule that the exposure of the European capitalists was completed. While the masses were undergoing untold agonies, they saw their ruling class hobnobbing and collaborating with the foreign overlords, joining the Quisling governments, coining profits out of the mass misery and suffering, and uniting with the Nazis to hound all working class militants and anti-fascists. Is it any wonder that the big capitalist circles throughout Europe have irretrievably disgraced themselves and exposed their true visage to the broad masses? The campaign to "purge the collaborators" is not, as the newspaper correspondents hypocritically pretend, directed against individual capitalist malefactors. It represents the elemental desire of the masses to destroy the power of the capitalist class *as a whole*. It is mass action directed, in truth, against capitalism *as a system*.

The European capitalists worked cheek by jowl with the Nazi butchers because that was the only way they could continue to rule over and exploit "their own" sullen and rebellious peoples. Collaboration with the foreign conqueror became for them a life and death necessity. That is why they were so anxious that the Allied armies occupy Europe when Hitler's "New Order" began to crumble and his armies to retreat. European capitalism is so shaken, weak and desperate, its leading circles are so thoroughly discredited, the armed forces at its disposal so pitiable, the masses so revolutionary, that foreign armies are indispensable for the preservation of its rule. That is why the Vatican, the powerhouse of reaction, is so concerned that the Allied occupation armies remain "for twenty years", lest Europe go communist.

The Anglo-American imperialists in alliance with Stalin are coming into Europe to strangle the rising revolution. But they have other aims as well. They intend to keep Europe prostrate and to carve it up into "spheres of influence." With the superprofits wrung from the enslaved masses, the imperialists hope to circumvent a new crisis of their system and avoid new violent class struggles at home. British brutality and counter-revolution in Greece are helping to open the eyes of the whole world to these actual Allied aims.

Greece, of course, is an extreme case, as the country has been a semi-colony of Britain for over a hundred years. But the peculiar feature of Europe's present crises is that the basic social *similarities* between all European countries are becoming greater than their specific *differences*. In pre-war Europe, the gap between Greece and France was *immense*, in standard of living, political freedom, etc. There still exists considerable disparity between the two countries, but it is

an undeniable fact that they are drawing closer together; not, unfortunately, by Greece rising to France's pre-war level but by France moving downward towards the level of Greece. Predatory imperialism is hurling all of Europe into the abyss, and while some countries are more favored and richer than others, all are being plunged downward at a dizzying speed.

Right after Hitler's attack upon the Soviet Union, the Stalinists throughout Europe took the lead in organizing resistance to the Nazi invaders. The Resistance Movement, which up to that time, consisted of small isolated groups led chiefly by ex-officers, petty-bourgeois patriots and the like, for the first time took on a real mass character. The prestige of the Stalinists, who clothed themselves with the authority of the Russian revolution, was further enhanced at this time by the heroic struggle of the Red Army and the Soviet masses and later by the sensational Red Army victories. The Stalinists, even during Nazi occupation, emerged as the most influential leadership among the working class.

The European workers did not simply aspire to regain their national freedom and rid themselves of the hated foreign tyrant. Their national aims were fused with their social aspirations. They determined not only to drive out the Nazi oppressors but also to destroy the rapacious rule of the native capitalist exploiters. These two aims—the national and the social—fused all the more easily and indissolubly because of the open bloc of the Nazis and the European capitalists and their joint collaboration in oppressing the masses. The European masses organized their forces in the underground and no sooner did Nazi rule begin tottering than they rose in revolutionary struggle. The downfall of Mussolini signaled the beginning of the European revolution.

Stalinist and Social-Democratic Traitors

Unfortunately the mass movement was headed by scoundrels who took advantage of the illusions of the masses in order to betray them. The Stalinist leaders are simply the cynical agents of the counter-revolutionary Kremlin bureaucracy, which views these popular movements as chattel to be deployed and sold out in concordance with the requirements of its arch-reactionary diplomacy. The Social Democrats, cowardly and servile to the bone, continued their nefarious game of housebreaking the working class movement and converting it into a submissive menial in the service of the capitalists. Between these two utterly corrupt and conscienceless bureaucracies, the growing mass movement was derailed off its course. The Stalinist and Social Democrats concluded permanent political blocs with the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois leaders—new People's Fronts.

The program of these People's Fronts is everywhere the same—chauvinistic, class collaborationist, pro-Allied, pro-imperialist war. It is these *political blocs*, parading under the high-sounding titles of "Liberation" or "Resistance" movements, that occupy the center of the political stage in Europe in this initial stage of the revolution. This explains why the class struggle, which has flared up so violently in Greece, Belgium, France, Italy, is carried forward under such "tame", "naive", and often such reactionary slogans and demands. There is a crying contradiction between the aims of the embattled masses and their present "working class" leaders.

Trotsky, in discussing Spain, remarked that the Stalinists and Social Democrats formed the People's Front bloc not

with the real bourgeoisie—they had all gone over to the Franco camp—but with the shadows of the bourgeoisie: a variegated assortment of lawyers, doctors, journalists representing nobody but themselves. This was precisely the character of the underground People's Fronts organized in Europe in 1942. The Stalinists and to a lesser degree the Social Democrats, led substantial masses, working class and lower middle class. The big capitalists had gone over in the main to the Nazi camp. The petty bourgeois lawyers, doctors, politicians representing the old defunct middle class parties were simply political ghosts. They led nobody and represented nobody.

But this does not prevent them from playing a decisive role in the People's Fronts. On the contrary. It is precisely these avowed spokesmen of capitalism, now being pushed to the fore by the Allied imperialists, who determine the aims and delimit the goals of the movement. In fact, one of the very purposes of the People's Front bloc is to rehabilitate these political cadavers, rescue them from their fearful isolation, provide them with the appearance of popular backing, and through them steer the masses back to support of, or at least acquiescence in capitalist rule.

At first the treacherous nature of these class-collaborationist blocs was concealed from the masses because of the prevailing underground conditions. The hostile class forces within the bloc could not unfold their programs fully and reveal in practice the full implications of their positions. But no sooner did the Nazi "New Order" begin to crumble accompanied by the rise of class struggles than the true nature of these political blocs became unmistakably clear. These new People's Fronts, like their pre-war predecessors, have the sole purpose of stifling and sidetracking the revolutionary struggle for socialist emancipation and confining the mass movement to the utopian fight for bourgeois democracy.

Role of "Liberation" Leaders

The betrayal of the Stalinists and Social Democrats takes on gargantuan proportions when one considers that it is precisely these collaborationist blocs, these "Liberation" movements, that have provided the "mass base" for the counter-revolutionary handpicked People's Front Cabinets: the Bonomi cabinet in Italy, De Gaulle in France, Pierlot in Belgium, Papandreu in Greece and the similar cabinets set up by Stalin in Eastern Europe. It is precisely the leaders of these "Liberation" movements who have entered as Quislings into the various governments, which are providing the "democratic" facade for the military dictatorships of Stalin and Anglo-American imperialism.

The mechanics of the betrayal are clear. The working masses, seething with dissatisfaction, throw their weight behind the "Communist" and "Socialist" parties, in the illusory belief that the leaders of these parties will advance the revolutionary struggle for socialism. These wretched bureaucrats, in turn, proceed to enmesh the masses within their perfidious People's Fronts in order to sidetrack the struggle, dampen the revolutionary ardor and steer things back along capitalist channels. The working class thus finds itself in this anomalous position: It is supporting what it considers the extreme revolutionary leaders in order to crush capitalist rule. But through some political hocus-pocus, which it still does not fully comprehend, the working class finds itself collaborating with the self-same capitalist class under the capitalists' program and reinforcing the capitalists' counter-revolutionary government.

Herein is the explanation for the present bewilderment of the European masses and the main cause of their initial setbacks.

The Greek events unmask more thoroughly the criminal character of the People's Front, the tragic futility of this unnatural alliance between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. The working class wants peace, a purge of the capitalist traitors, arming of the masses, a government of their own, socialization of industry, the reorganization of society on new socialist foundations. The Bonomis, de Gaulles, Pierlots, Papandreous want to rehabilitate capitalism, disarm the armed formations and thrust the people again into the bloody maelstrom of the war—this time on the side of the Allied bandits. This unnatural alliance between the two hostile social classes is already bursting at all seams. Throughout Europe we see the masses waging furious battle against the very People's Fronts' puppet governments which "their own" "Liberation" movements have initiated and are pledged to support.

What is the burning task for the revolutionists in Europe? To demolish the policy of People's Frontism and to overthrow its chief architects—the execrable Stalinist and Social Democratic bureaucrats. Otherwise as sure as night follows day, the present People's Fronts will pave the way for a new bloody counter-revolution and the imposition of new savage capitalist dictatorships, just as the People's Front of 1936 in Spain paved the way for Franco. The only possible consequence of the continued leadership of these two venal "labor" bureaucracies is a repetition of the tragedy of Spain, this time on a Europe-wide scale.

Trotskyist Tasks

The revolutionary vanguard must plunge into the struggle, work unceasingly to show up these "leaders" for the counter-revolutionary rascals that they are and burn out their influence in the labor movement. A large-scale and vigorous agitation must be started to expose the fatal role and purpose of the perfidious People's Fronts. The Trotskyists will call upon the working masses to break the bloc with the bourgeoisie both *inside and outside* the present governments. They will counterpose to these People's Front blocs the necessity of setting up, on the broadest possible basis, workers', farm laborers', poor peasants' and soldiers' Soviets. The Soviets will constitute the genuine alliance of workers, peasants and soldiers, in place of the fake alliance concocted by the People's Frontists. Only the Soviets can rally all the oppressed masses and topple the bloody regimes of Europe's desperate and ruthless capitalist rulers. Only the mass Soviets, which will surely be forged in the fires of the civil war, will prove capable of organizing fraternization with the troops of the invading armies and win their support, or at least their neutrality, in the coming gigantic battles to crush the age-old power of the exploiters and establish the authentic rule of the people.

The Trotskyists will learn to connect themselves with the masses and their struggles; in action gain their confidence and earn the right to revolutionary leadership. It is in the coming volcanic upheavals and turbulent class battles that the masses will gain political experience, will shed their illusions, and in ever growing numbers place themselves under the revolutionary banner of the Fourth International. The Soviets, under this revolutionary leadership, will spurn the program of chauvinism, war *revanche*, national hatreds and

imperialist war. They will unfurl the proud banner of the October 1917 revolution, the program of socialist revolution, working class internationalism and the fraternal collaboration of the European peoples under the aegis of the Socialist

United States of Europe. Thus and only thus will the European peoples find their way out of the wreckage and degradation of the imperialist war and achieve peace, well-being and freedom.

The Campaign to Conscript Labor

By C. THOMAS

The demand for a National Service Act, conscripting labor for work in private industry, has been raised periodically since the United States entered the war. From the beginning the question has been enveloped in a fog of duplicity. The arguments advanced by the proponents of labor conscription have varied from time to time, have often been contradictory, and have tended to conceal rather than reveal the true aims of such legislation. Those supporters of Wall Street's war who "oppose" labor conscription have contributed their share toward obscuring the issue. One group of contenders extols the advantages of "voluntary" labor as a means of "furthering the war effort," the other insists that "compulsory" labor is necessary. "Voluntary versus compulsory labor." Thus is the question put. An examination of the status of labor since the outbreak of war will reveal that "voluntary" labor under wartime capitalism is a myth.

Immediately following Pearl Harbor, the labor bureaucrats "voluntarily" surrendered the right to strike in exchange for compulsory arbitration of labor disputes by the tripartite War Labor Board. Composed of an equal number of representatives of the unions, employers and the "public," i.e. the government, the WLB functions as an administration agency to police the unions. Compulsory arbitration deprived the unions of their independence of action. The no-strike pledge deprived the unions of their most effective weapon of defense.

With the union thus shackled, Roosevelt proceeded to freeze wages by executive decree, establishing the Little Steel formula ceiling on wage increases. The union bureaucrats now "voluntarily" accepted the wage freeze in exchange for Roosevelt's fraudulent promise to take the profits out of war and "stabilize" the cost of living. The WLB was converted into an instrument to enforce the wage freeze. While profits soared to the highest levels in history, the wage freeze effectively reduced labor's share of the national income. Rising prices, constantly forcing the cost of living upward, resulted in a gradual reduction of real wages and a lowered standard of living for the workers.

In "normal" times, the employers depend upon a large reservoir of unemployed workers to keep wages down. During periods of war, the army of unemployed is absorbed in the military forces and expanded war production. The employing class then utilizes political means—its control over government—to prevent competition between individual employers which would increase wages and thus reduce profits. The capitalist government, functioning as the executive arm of the employing class, begins to regulate hours, wages and conditions of employment. The government aims to eliminate competition between individual employers in the interests of the employing class as a whole.

Although the Little Steel formula established an arbitrary limit on wage increases, it did not eliminate geographical wage differentials, nor existing differentials between industries. The natural movement of labor is to industries paying higher wages and providing better working conditions. This movement, if permitted to follow its natural course, would inevitably undermine the government's wage-freezing policy. That is why Roosevelt was soon forced to issue a number of decrees aimed at controlling the movement of labor, in order to bolster the wage freeze.

Manpower Priorities

A category of manpower priorities was devised to channel labor into the most strategic war industries. Industry was classified as: (1) essential; (2) necessary; (3) non-essential. The system of occupational deferments for men employed in "essential" industry was an effective goad for those subject to the provisions of the Selective Service Act. The "work-in-essential-industry-or-be-drafted" principle assured an adequate supply of labor to "essential" industry as a whole. It provided no solution, however, to the problem of wage differentials between different industries and different localities. Within the confines of the "work-or-fight" rule, labor could continue to seek the best employment. To plug this gap, the War Manpower Commission was established to tighten the government's control over the movement of labor. Under the broad powers granted the WMC by Roosevelt and with the aid of subsequent executive decrees, workers were frozen to their jobs at frozen wages.

The first steps in this direction were taken for certain "critical" industries. In September 1942, Paul V. McNutt, WMC chairman, issued a decree freezing the workers in the lumber and non-ferrous metals industries in 12 western states. Later the order was extended to cover a number of geographical areas. In December 1942, it was applied to over 700,000 workers in the heavily industrialized Detroit area. In January 1943 a similar order covered 175,000 workers in the St. Paul-Minneapolis area. Finally, the job freeze was made national in scope in April 1943, applicable to all workers in "essential" industries covering approximately 27,000,000 farm, industrial and government workers. Selective Service officials ordered those who quit without "permission" to be reclassified and inducted into the army.

For those not subject to the "work-or-fight" penalty—women, men disqualified for military service, over-age, etc.—the compulsion is economic. The power to grant or withhold employment is the power over life and death. In a sweeping decree issued by Roosevelt on December 5, 1943, the War Manpower Commission was given control over the U. S. Employment Service. The executive order declared that the

USES was to become the clearing house for "all hiring, re-hiring, solicitation and recruitment of workers." This decree also provided that: "No employer shall retain in his employ any worker whose services are more urgently needed in any plant, facility, occupation or area designated by the WMC Chairman." To reinforce the December 5 decree, an executive order was issued which went into effect July 1, 1944, placing all male workers over the age of 17 under the control of the U.S. Employment Service. Entitled the Roosevelt-McNutt "controlled-referral" plan, the executive order compels workers to take jobs in industries and areas designated by the USES. Those who balked, declared McNutt, would be refused a certificate of availability without which they would be denied a job and in addition, would be "deprived of unemployment compensation." This "work-where-you're-told-or-starve" decree together with Roosevelt's December 5 decree empowering the War Manpower Commission to shift workers from one "plant, facility, occupation or area," to another, provided the basis for the "Allentown Plan" recently inaugurated by the WMC.

In Allentown, Pa., the WMC recently compelled employers engaged in "non-essential" production to discharge hundreds of workers, some of them holding years of seniority. These workers were forced to apply to the U.S. Employment Service and were directed to jobs in war plants at lower wages. The penalty for refusal to take such jobs was denial of employment "for the duration of the war." Officials of the WMC announce that the "Allentown Plan" is to be extended to other "critical" areas.

Thus we see that the legend about this being a war between "free labor" and "slave labor" is a piece of monstrous deception. Roosevelt has abolished "voluntary" labor, at least for an important section of the working population, by executive decree. The process of regimenting labor in the interest of the exploiting class began with the outbreak of war. It was accelerated under the pretext of wartime necessity. The demand for a National Service Act is part of this process.

The Austin-Wadsworth Bill

The campaign to conscript labor has been under way for a number of years. The first National Service Act was drawn up by Grenville Clark, Wall Street lawyer and behind-the-scenes lobbyist for the Big Business interests. It was submitted to Congress in 1943 under the sponsorship of Senator Austin and Representative Wadsworth. The Austin-Wadsworth bill provided for the conscription of all males between the ages of 18 to 65, and women between 18 to 50 for work in private industry. The penalty for violators was imprisonment. The bill died in the 1943 Congress but was revived after Roosevelt incorporated the demand for a national service law in his January 1944 message to Congress. "I have received a joint recommendation for this law," declared Roosevelt, "from the heads of the War Department, the Navy department and the Maritime Commission." From then on, the brass hats, under the direct inspiration of Wall Street bankers, spearheaded the drive for a national service law.

The ballyhoo to conscript labor continued throughout 1944. With the approach of the national presidential election campaign however, the Roosevelt administration began to soft-pedal its labor conscription agitation. The issue was kept simmering in the pages of the *N. Y. Times* which continued to devote space to periodical statements by War and Navy

Department spokesmen. The "Citizens Committee for a National War Service Act," organized by Grenville Clark, with himself as chairman, maintained a legislative lobby.

Neither of the two capitalist parties included the demand for a national service law in their political platforms. Nowhere in all of their campaign oratory, did the Democratic and Republican candidates even dare raise the issue.

The votes had hardly been counted, however, when "labor's friend" in the White House, elected by labor's votes, let loose a blast that: "Workers who quit critical war jobs were costing American lives on the battlefronts because it was necessary to ration shells hurled at the enemy." This was the cue the forced labor advocates were waiting for. A full-fledged munitions "shortage" developed overnight. It seemed that the munitions "shortage" was due to a suddenly discovered manpower "shortage." The manpower "shortage" was due, of course, to "workers who quit critical war jobs." The rabid labor-hating head of the Army Service Forces, General Somervell, opined: "They have taken a furlough..." It wasn't long before the whole pack was in full cry for a compulsory labor draft to eliminate the deplorable state of affairs which made it necessary "to ration shells hurled at the enemy."

In commenting on the alleged "munitions shortage" the weekly magazine, *Business Week*, circulated primarily among corporation executives who demand factual reporting and not inspired propaganda, revealed: "There have been no munitions shortages at the front, for all the talk, other than those caused by bogged roads and enemy action. Supreme headquarters would not have started this all-out drive if it had not been altogether confident on supply." The much-ballyhooed munitions and manpower shortage was simply part of the psychological warfare designed to facilitate the enactment of additional repressive labor legislation.

A Major Offensive

A week later the German counter-offensive caught the American command napping and smashed through for sizable gains. This was a heaven-sent opportunity for the chair-borne command at home to launch a major offensive against the American working class. In his fourth term message to Congress, Roosevelt called again for passage of a National Service Act. Included in the message was a joint letter from Secretary of War Stimson and Secretary of the Navy Forrestal, stating that Roosevelt's Chiefs of Staff, General Marshall and Admiral King, joined them in urging "the passage of a national war-service law."

In response to administration pressure, Chairman May of the House Military Affairs Committee, introduced a "work-or-fight" bill providing for the creation of army labor battalions. Spokesmen for the Army and Navy objected in the preliminary hearings to a conscripted "works corps" stating they preferred "the penalties against those who refused to obtain or remain in essential war jobs to be civil ones (fines and imprisonment) rather than inductions into special Army or Navy service units." In an unprecedented move to speed enactment of the law, Roosevelt dispatched a message to the House Military Affairs Committee urging immediate, favorable action on the May-Bailey bill.

"While there may be some differences on the details of the bill," wrote Roosevelt, "prompt action now is much more important in the war effort than the perfecting of details." Upon receipt of the message, Chairman May abruptly termi-

nated the hearings saying: "We've discussed this matter long enough. It's now time to act." The bill was altered to meet the objections of the brass hats and submitted to the House with a recommendation for its adoption. The Bill provided that men between the ages of 18-45 who left their jobs "without permission" of their draft boards would be subject to a fine of \$10,000 or 5 years imprisonment, or both. The same penalties would apply to workers who refused to accept jobs when ordered by their draft boards. The administration of the act was placed in the hands of Selective Service. Thus it was proposed to give the brass hats direct control over a substantial section of the working population. In essence, the bill "legalizes" and extends the compulsory controls established by the previous executive decrees.

The May-Bailey Bill

The provisions of the May-Bailey bill are so purposefully vague and ambiguous that a wide latitude of "interpretation" can be applied by the agency administering the measure. In the House debate, members of the committee who approved the bill were unable to explain its provisions. Representative Brown of Ohio, declared: "The bill is filled with inconsistencies. Very frankly, I am not certain what it contains. I do not know what many of its provisions mean, and I am not alone in this position, because the members of the Committee on Military Affairs who reported this bill seemingly could not agree among themselves as to what many of the sections of the measure really mean." One of the questions on which the members "seemingly" disagreed was whether or not it was an anti-strike bill.

Representative Brown pointed out that: "Section 2 prohibits any voluntary stoppage of work by any individual. That could be taken to apply to strikes. But, when the question was asked whether or not this would prevent a man from striking, some on the committee said 'Yes,' some said 'No.' Before our committee some said, 'We will let the local draft board pass upon the question as to whether or not it is a legal strike.'" (*Congressional Record*, January 29, 1945). The "local draft board," that is, the brass hats who control Selective Service will decide whether or not a strike is "legal." But to a brass hat there is no such thing as a "legal" strike.

Unable to justify or explain its provisions the supporters of the May-Bailey bill resorted to the following "clinching" argument: "Our military leaders want it, and if they want it who are we to object." The pages of the *Congressional Record* are sprinkled with that type of "logic." Representative Howard Smith of Virginia, author of the Smith "Gag" Act and co-author of the Smith-Connally "anti-strike" law orated that the only question involved was whether, "notwithstanding our objections, you can give a vote of no confidence to the Chiefs of Staff of the American armed forces. That is the question involved here and no other question."

Representative Kilday of Texas: "I say to you I take my stand with General Marshall and Admiral King. Those who prefer to accept the vague insinuations of Philip Murray and the AFL may take their stand where they please." Representative Sikes of Florida: "Regardless of all the objections which can be raised, there remains one fact which outweighs them all. The Commander in Chief and the Chiefs of Staff have stated that the United States must have a manpower draft—now." Representative Arends of Illinois: "Who

am I to loudly voice my opinions from a military angle against those of General Marshall." And so on, and so forth.

The political deputies of Wall Street cloak their reactionary program with the military prestige of the general staff. "One of the consequences of the war is the emergence of the Military Staff as the spearhead of reaction. The ruling capitalist circles demand unquestioning subservience to the military caste. The intervention of the brass hats in various spheres of civilian life is an integral part of the growing regimentation of the American people. It is part of the enormous strengthening of reactionary tendencies in American life and politics and the unmistakable trend toward totalitarianism." (Resolution of the Socialist Workers Party on "The U.S. and the Second World War.")

Under constant prodding by the administration, which utilized all the pressure tactics at its disposal, the May-Bailey "limited" service bill was railroaded through the House of Representatives by a vote of 256 to 165. Administration spokesmen demanded immediate action to speed the bill through the Senate. Meanwhile, the military situation in Europe had undergone a radical change. The Russian offensive broke through on the eastern front and was rolling toward Berlin. Allied counter-attacks on the western front pushed the Nazis back into Germany. The pretext of military necessity advanced by the supporters of the May-Bailey bill lost its plausibility. It became obvious that the much-touted "win-the-war" measure could have no effect on the outcome of the war in Europe.

Turn in the Military Situation

The sharp turn in the military situation undoubtedly strengthened the opposition to granting the brass hats direct military control over labor. Administration stalwarts on the Senate Military Affairs Committee attempted to work out a compromise which would turn the administration of the act over to the War Manpower Commission. But the brass hats refused to compromise. They insisted on retaining the provision empowering Selective Service to administer the act. Whereupon the Senate committee announced it would hold "closed hearings" on the bill. Appearing as witnesses before the Senate committee the brass hats again altered their tactics. They dropped the pretense of a "munitions" and "manpower" shortage, which had been thoroughly exposed as a fiction, and insisted that the May-Bailey bill was needed to "boost the morale of the men in the armed forces." To prove that the soldiers were demanding the adoption of the bill, an inspired editorial appeared in the Paris edition of the army newspaper, *The Stars and Stripes*, endorsing the measure. However, this too-clever scheme was quickly exposed. The board of the paper kicked up a fuss against the editorial during the course of which it was disclosed that the editorial was prompted by high officials of the War Department. The incident shows to what lengths the brass hats are ready to go to forward their plans for dictatorial control.

Dropped also was the pretense that the May-Bailey bill was needed as a "win-the-war" measure. It suddenly developed that a national service law was required primarily for the period AFTER the defeat of Germany. The January 27, 1945 issue of *Business Week* reported to its clients that: "The main purpose for which the Army wants a national service law is to give it a firm hold on workers after Germany goes under." The same magazine had reported in a previous

issue that: "Another virtue of manpower legislation from the point of view of planners in the Army, Navy, and Office of War Mobilization and Reconversion is that it would serve to check worker migration during the period after the end of the war in Europe and before the end of the war in Japan." Coming at a time when the war in Europe is entering its final stages, the insistent demand for additional instruments of labor repression has ominous significance for the American working class.

When the war in Europe ends there will be little justification for maintaining the present high rate of inductions into the armed forces. The "work-or-fight" penalty which uses the threat of induction as its compulsion will be weakened. In addition, the cutback in war production will close many plants and will result in a lower income for wage earners by reducing hours, shortening the work week and eliminating overtime pay. The pressure for wage increases will grow. As the "moral" pressure of "full-production-for-the-war-effort" is dulled, class conflicts will sharpen. The "voluntary" no-strike pledge will prove inadequate to keep wages frozen. Nor can Roosevelt and his brass hats count too much on their labor lieutenants to "hold the line" against the workers. That is why they want a national service law as an additional weapon to prevent the labor movement from regaining its independence of action.

Division Among the Capitalists

The division among the capitalists over the May-Bailey bill reflects a conflict of interest between different sections of the employing class. Conflicts of interest exist between agriculture and industry, commercial and industrial capital, between "essential" and "non-essential" industry, etc. This clash was revealed some time ago in the dispute over reconversion policies which was resolved by the removal of Donald Nelson as head of the War Production Board and the consolidation of military control over production. Many employers, zealous of their prerogatives, fear the too great concentration of power in the hands of a military caste. *Business Week* (January 20, 1945) reports: "Civilian officials admit privately that the generals are having things all their own way. Byrnes, (Director of War Mobilization and Reconversion) taking on operating responsibilities for the first time has thrown his weight on the side of the military. His deputy for war production is not a civilian but an army officer—Maj. Gen. Lucius Clay, formerly director of procurement for the Army Service Forces, one of the strongest and most impassioned advocates of the military viewpoint."

The military bureaucracy, on the other hand, are determined to retain control over "reconversion" policies. "With materials destined to be more plentiful after V-E Day, WPB priority control would lose its potency. At that point, it would be an easier job to control the economy through manpower." (*Business Week*, January 13, 1945). It is significant that the greatest employer opposition was directed against the provision giving the brass hats direct control over manpower. These capitalists insisted that the existing instruments of compulsion were adequate to control labor and asked "only" that these instruments be sharpened and made more effective.

The attitude of the capitalist opposition to the May-Bailey bill was summed up in a letter to the *N. Y. Times*, written by Ira Mosher, President of the National Association

of Manufacturers. "The NAM program requires more effective functioning of the existing WMC machinery and regulations. It requires adequate statutory authority for the MWC respecting the establishment of employment ceilings in all industries, the use of controlled referrals and compulsory releases. It calls for immediate application of the work-or-fight principle, within the present framework of the Selective Service authority and machinery."

The NAM program thus calls for tightening the drastic job freeze decrees issued by Roosevelt and their rigid enforcement. It asks that the War Manpower Commission be granted statutory authority by Congress to strengthen its power to apply "legal" compulsion. Under the hypocritical guise of defending "voluntary" labor, this employers' association presents a plan for perpetuating and extending the system of forced-labor-by-executive-decree which Roosevelt has put into effect over the past three years.

The labor bureaucrats of the AFL and CIO have endorsed the NAM program. These treacherous skates have step by step paved the way for reaction by voluntarily agreeing to the surrender of labor's rights. Functioning as labor lieutenants of the capitalist class, they have joined the conspiracy against their own rank and file. "From the outset the labor bureaucrats proceeded to prove by word and deed, how indispensable they are in harnessing the workers to the chariot of war. They declared a moratorium on labor's right to strike. They espoused the policy of compulsory arbitration. They installed labor representatives on the employer-dominated War Labor Board—thereby lending their prestige to the anti-labor actions of the WLB. They accepted and circulated Roosevelt's counterfeit 'stabilization' promises as good coin; they acquiesced in the freezing of wages; and as part of the War Manpower Commission's 'labor-management' committee they shared the responsibility for the job freeze." (Resolution of Socialist Workers Party on "The U. S. and the Second World War.")

The Labor Bureaucrats

After rendering yeoman's service in helping to strait-jacket the unions, the labor fakers now join with the employers in urging a "compromise" manpower bill which would extend the job freeze after "V-E Day." If this "compromise" measure is adopted, the labor skates can be counted on to make the welkin ring with shouts of "victory." Every time the bureaucrats win one of their "victories" the labor movement loses part of its shirt. While these trade union officials seek to cover their treachery by effecting a rotten compromise on the question of forced labor, the Stalinists openly avow their support of every union-smashing, strike-breaking, slave labor measure advanced by the political and military agents of Wall Street. The Stalinist traitors function as the very spearhead of reaction inside labor's ranks.

The drive for additional measures of labor repression to be applied after Germany is defeated completely exposes the fraud of Roosevelt's "peace, security and jobs-for-all" program in the "post-war" period. If capitalism could guarantee a decent standard of living for the masses on the basis of "peacetime" production it would have no need of strengthening its machinery of repression. But decaying capitalism, it is clear, cannot mitigate the class antagonisms; it can only sharpen them. It cannot raise, or even maintain, the present

standard of living but must drive the living standards of the workers to ever lower levels.

The resolution of the SWP on "The U.S. and the Second World War" points out this precise tendency: "The colossal war expenditures will raise the national debt of the United States above the astronomical figure of \$300-billion. This unprecedented debt is accelerating the process of inflation. The cost of living continues to rise, additional and more burdensome taxes are imposed on the masses, the workers' standard

of living is depressed to ever lower levels. Despite the favored position of the United States the war will have a ruinous effect on American economic life. Unemployment, that capitalist-bred social plague, will scourge the land. The arch-reactionary measures of repression against the labor movement adopted under the pretext of war necessity will be extended to the 'post-war' period. The drive toward totalitarian rule will continue under the demand for a 'strong' government in Washington."

The Outlook For A Labor Party

By WILLIAM SIMMONS

Amongst the belligerent powers the United States alone could afford the luxury of a wartime national election. American capitalism alone could grant such a democratic concession to the people. Compared to present day Europe this stands out naturally as an enormous concession. Viewing the question, however, in the light of the realities of American political development, the concession is small indeed. After all, American capitalism was in a position to face this election, as it has faced so many before, without a serious political challenge to its rule.

Had there been in this election even the mere parliamentary opposition from a virile and popularly supported workers party, there might have been a different story to tell. As it was, the traditional two party system again saved the day. It offered the electorate the choice of Roosevelt or Dewey; either the Republicans or the Democrats. This made the people's ballot a *yes* ballot regardless of which name headed the slate.

Only the undeveloped political expression of class relations can account for such a situation. In Europe—except during periods of fascist or semi-fascist dictatorships—bitterly contending parties mirrored existing class antagonisms. Here the unequalled concentration of economic power has brought a similar concentration of political power. This political power is lodged securely in the grasp of organized wealth. And so, the country which is most advanced economically and technologically, still retains within its social system a backward political development. While class conflicts have found violent outbursts in economic action, they were rarely in the past reflected in politics. The proletariat produced by super-modern American industrial conditions has thus far remained, to all intents and purposes, politically inarticulate.

The traditional two parties have for many decades served equally as instruments of the dominant class. And they have long since become elevated into a system of politics. This is not to say, however, that there never were any differences between them, or that neither ever served a progressive purpose. Each of the two parties is a product of two different historical stages of development. At one time they came to contest issues of life and death, a conflict which culminated in the Civil War. While neither party expressed fully the conflicting interests of classes, both parties did mirror currents in the conflict over fundamental issues involving the advancement or retardation of the productive forces.

The division into two national parties arose originally

out of the clash between the industrial system in the North, based upon wage labor, and the plantation economy of the South, based upon slavery. As northern capitalism grew stronger, more united, became more conscious of its interests and developed definite objectives, it created a political party to advance these interests and aims. That was the Republican Party. In this historical setting it became a progressive instrument for the advancement of the productive forces. On behalf of industrial capitalism it challenged, at its inception, the Democratic Party for governmental control. And it became the party of the golden age of capitalist expansion.

The Democratic Party entered the stage much earlier. It emerged as an expression of the need for centralized government at a time of clashing sectional interests, as, for example, the conflict between the commercial Northeast and the agricultural plantation-owned South in regard to the frontier, as well as the conflict between the settled areas and the frontier.

Capitalists Maintained Both Parties

But while the increasingly powerful capitalist masters challenged the Democratic Party for control of the government, they took good care never to attempt to destroy it. On the contrary, they soon found it useful to maintain and support both parties in order to maintain the fiction that the totality of public interests was being served by a two party system.

During the golden age of capitalist expansion, political patronage, public plunder and robbery on a colossal scale were the distinguishing characteristics of American politics. Loathsome corruption, nefarious scheming and outright debauchery of municipal, state and federal government became its natural corollary. And this happened not only in the long forgotten past. Just recall the scandals under the Harding administration. Or take the testimony of a Chicago Commissioner of Public Works at the time of his resignation in 1906:

"Application to the State Attorney," said he, "evolved the fact that our present laws—passed in the interest of capital—make it no offense for capital, i.e. the privileged few, to steal from the community, i.e. the unprivileged many."

Corrupt legislative assemblies and law courts set their seal of approval upon the plunder of the public domain. In fact the entire machinery of government functioned at the bidding of organized wealth, regardless of which party occupied the seat of authority. Politics became business. Specialization extended from industry into politics where

specialists in corruption operated. Laws and judicial decisions were made to conform to this custom. It was class rule in its most outrageous guise. And, of course, class rule it remains to this day, even though the plunderers have adopted somewhat more refined methods. American capitalism has had the good fortune, owing to its enormous resources and its ability to pay above European levels, to exercise this class rule through bourgeois democratic forms. The two party system became an important element in this setup. It kept alive the illusion of freedom of choice and it was therefore religiously preserved.

American capitalism could well afford to extend this measure of democratic liberties without too great fear that its rule would be challenged. It had been generously favored through decades by what Marxists recognize as the law of uneven development. Its most striking expression is the distinction between advanced and backward countries. In their development they have passed through different stages, through different forms and at an uneven tempo. In the United States capitalism could draw on an unequalled abundance of natural resources; and it therefore experienced the most rapid expansion within the system of growing capitalism. It could constantly avail itself of the most efficient utilization of productive forces and was finally able to overtake all of its capitalist competitors and even advance further at their expense.

But within this uneven development there emerged also the stages or the features of what Trotsky called a combined development. Backward countries, for example, supplement their backwardness with some of the latest advances. Here it was a case of the latest advances existing alongside carry-overs of a deeply rooted backwardness. Within the same social system appeared at certain stages the extreme opposites. But these exist dynamically, that is they must undergo change or disappear.

So far as the United States is concerned such features were and still are apparent. In the first place, the United States enjoyed the most rapid growth of productive forces and yet emerged late as an imperialist power, owing to the fact that the greatest possibilities of capitalist expansion remained for decades within the borders of the 48 states. In the second place, industrialization, beginning in the East, advanced constantly into new regions. At the same time backward forms of split-up tenant holdings, amounting to virtual peonage, together with Jim Crowism, persisted in the South. But during the early decades of westward advance, class distinctions rose only slowly along the frontier. There, mutual cooperation prevailed; social and political organizations remained democratic. As long as free land was available, competition-crushed or blacklisted workers found a place to start life anew. Class and social antagonisms often found their outlet in pioneer rebellions. In this manner and for quite a long time a variety of social stages existed side by side.

Moreover, vast numbers of immigrants arrived in the United States every year, "and while they did not bring over any medieval institutions from Europe," as Engels said in a letter to Sorge, "they did bring over masses of medieval traditions, religion, English common (feudal) laws, superstition, spiritualism, in short every kind of imbecility which was not directly harmful to business, and which is now very serviceable for making the masses stupid."

Therefore, when we take into consideration these his-

torical conditions together with the ability of American capitalism to maintain a relatively high standard of living for the masses, it is only natural that this finds its expression today in a retarded political development. Herein are likewise to be found some of the important reasons for the paradoxical situation of opposite extremes existing within the United States. Despite this country's advanced industrialization and technology, the most backward political ideology of the masses has prevailed to this day as evidenced by the absence of a mass working class political party, whether reformist or revolutionary. At the same time this is also the most outstanding illustration of the combined development in the United States.

This does not mean, however, that where, as Marx said in a letter to Sorge, "capitalist economy and corresponding enslavement of the working class developed more *rapidly* and *shamelessly* than in any other country," there were no popular political movements or no influence of revolutionary or socialist ideology. History shows examples of both. But Socialist influence never penetrated in a sustained fashion deeply into the ranks of the American masses. And so far as Popular movements are concerned, they were mainly middle class in make-up and in ideology, hodge-podge affairs, mostly limited to certain sections of the country; and they were short-lived. They were in the nature of a by-product of the class struggle rather than its direct expression. The rapacious plunder of big capitalism often forced the middle class to the wall. It became rebellious at times. Some of these movements used to attract labor support during periods of strike upheavals and the ensuing vicious persecution of the workers.

Outstanding among such movements was the Greenback Party which started as a reaction against the depreciation of the Civil War greenbacks. During the late 'seventies amidst strikes and labor agitation, the party emphasized labor demands and in 1878 it received about a million votes and elected fourteen representatives to Congress. From then on, however, it declined rapidly and disappeared.

Later arose the Populist Party. It originated in Kansas and spread in the Middle West and West. The closing decades of the nineteenth century had witnessed the industrialization of agriculture, thus requiring more efficient and more expensive implements. As a result heavily mortgaged farms went into the hands of financial and industrial corporations. A census of 1890 reveals that mortgage indebtedness had already passed the one billion mark carrying an interest rate of 7 percent. Only 47 percent of the nation's farmers actually owned their farms unencumbered. On the remainder 34 percent were tenants or sharecroppers.

The populist Party grew out of this situation. The party also endeavored to gain support from the industrial workers in the East, and succeeded primarily as a result of the furious strikes then in progress in Homestead, Pa. and Pullman, Illinois. At the 1894 elections the Populists polled over one and a half million votes, only in order to disappear shortly thereafter.

The LaFollette Movement

This was the last of the lower middle class political challenges to the American ruling class. From then on such political opposition as did arise originated by and large with the working class. Yet nearly all these attempts suffered equally from feebleness of principle and poverty of numbers. Only the campaign for LaFollette Sr. in the 1924 presidential election netted

a vote of almost five million. But this movement was expressly stipulated not to be a third party movement and its program did not go beyond anti-monopoly, anti-injunction and anti-imperialist demagoguery in the Wilsonian sense of the term. Otherwise labor parties of a sort have come and disappeared, none of them passing beyond a sectarian, local or statewide basis.

The official trade union leadership reluctantly agreed to support the LaFollette campaign. But otherwise it has, throughout its history, always constituted a brake upon political development of the masses. At times it would be aroused from its political stupor by some especially outrageous anti-labor legislation; but it has always been beset by a greater fear of any radical or socialist influence, or anything tending toward independent labor political action. The worst scare it experienced, no doubt, was at the 1892 convention when a resolution, sponsored by the Socialists, to the effect, "that the AFL advise the working people of America to organize their economic and political power to secure for labor the full equivalent of its toil", was defeated by the narrow margin of 4,897 votes to 4,171. At that point however, the Socialist Party leadership became helpful. What if that resolution should be carried next year? They might really have to do something about it. The resolution was not reintroduced and the AFL leaders were free to continue their activities in either Republican or Democratic political machines or cliques, on a local, statewide or national basis. This activity would yield at times some small concessions to labor. Above all it yielded patronage to these officials.

But politics develops its own logic: and today, the tighter the union leaders, both AFL and CIO cling to Roosevelt, the wider grows the gap between them and the rank and file. The longer these leaders succeed in retarding labor's independent political development the more complete and thorough will be the breakthrough.

Meanwhile both of the old capitalist parties have long since outlived the conditions under which they came into being. And hence, the progressive features which they once possessed have disappeared. American society could in the past, at different stages of its development, find political expression through either of these two parties, because of the essential need to advance the productive forces. Both parties were able to survive practically as sole contenders beyond the period of their own progressive role because the class historically destined to challenge capitalist rule had failed to develop its own political party.

Today the productive forces have not only advanced but the owners of the means of production have exhausted the long term factors of expansion. With this capitalism itself has ceased to be progressive. Class contradictions and class antagonisms have assumed gigantic proportions. Interrelations of class forces have also changed. The working class, now more homogenous, more conscious of its position, and better organized, can no longer find any political expression whatever through the old parties.

The last election marked the zenith of the two party system. Opposition parties, i.e., those actually running their own candidates and not just merely furnishing a new buckler for old "friends," appear to have reached the lowest ebb. But this election also signalled the breakdown of the two party system.

Basic social cleavages are now reflected not between the

two major parties but inside both of them. Major political issues engender serious political conflicts within both parties. This is the case notably with issues of world affairs. But problems of domestic economy also often create deep fissures. The Democratic Party in fact was held together in this election only by its one indispensable candidate. What we witnessed in 1944 was the forerunner of the political division along class lines. For class lines are now much less in flux. They have congealed and settled down to permanent conditions of conflict. From now on class lines will form the basic alignments of the American body politic.

The Dominant Imperialist Power

While American politics are still confined to the 48 states its problems embrace the entire planet. The United States is now the dominant imperialist power. President Roosevelt's four terms in office are not merely an extraordinary wrinkle of present-day politics. They mark the beginning of a new turn of events. For his administration has introduced American capitalism to largescale world conquests and—to the world revolution.

Right now the United States is proceeding in rapid strides to Americanize the world; but, at an even more accelerated tempo, will American politics become Europeanized. And while the former is bound to fail ultimately, the latter, that is the political expression of class antagonisms, will start here on a far higher level. Hence we can confidently expect that its social impact will be so much more explosive.

This is the general framework within which the labor party will develop and by which it will be molded. It is therefore impossible to conceive of any absolutely fixed pattern for the role and function of such a party. There is no historical line of march laid down once and for all. A labor party will be conditioned by the framework within which it grows and develops. Its pattern can be envisaged at best only in outline form. At its inception it will denote only the fact that the workers have at long last engaged in political action independently of the capitalist parties. All-inclusive and broad in scope, as it must of necessity be, it will embrace conservative minded workers as well as radicals, trade union members as well as officials. And its limitations will be conditioned by the extent of its reformism. A distinct reformist stage after the emergence of a labor party is, of course, not excluded. But in the epoch of wars and revolutions this is bound to be shortlived because of the increasingly limited ability of capitalism to grant reforms and because of the acuteness of its contradictions. Historically, reformism, as such, has long ago exhausted its progressive role. It can now only prolong the agony of a decaying system. For capitalism will henceforth not even be able to maintain for the people the standard of living once attained.

Yet the organization of a labor party will be a progressive step, while at the same time also a drawback. Like everything in nature and society it will contain opposite elements. It will be progressive first of all in the sense that it means a declaration of political independence by the workers—an enormous step forward as compared to the present conditions. It will be progressive also in the sense of filling the gap, before the workers in their majority are ready to follow the revolutionary party. Thus it becomes both a stepping stone and a preliminary school.

At the same time it is also a drawback because it will

tend to enlarge and prolong the gap—naturally not by the conscious or willful desires or actions of the membership. Once, however, it attains strength, influence and prestige, its leadership will certainly tend to consider the labor party in terms of permanency, as an agency for reformist purposes as well as in terms of permanency of official positions.

The British Labor Party

Examples of this are seen in England today. The British Labor Party leadership is not only so deeply rooted in the idea of permanency of its own positions, but it is also so completely bound up with the British Tories in furtherance of imperialist aims, that its own pretended reformist objectives have been drastically watered down or completely forgotten. As a result, the British Laborites are in ever more deadly fear of separation from the Tories and of standing up independently. Applicable to them is what Trotsky once said about the Austrian Socialist leaders, namely: that, while they maintained a firm majority in Vienna, they always took good care never to poll more than 49 percent of the vote in Austria as a whole, lest they might have to make good on their professed Socialist aims. The British Labor Party has now decided to stand independently in the next election. But who knows? By that time we may witness a section of the leadership splitting away like Ramsay MacDonald did. This leadership's record during recent years has been one of increasing conspiracy with the Tories against the workers—a conspiracy against and a brake upon the revolutionary mission of the workers. Of

course, the British Labor Party arose as a product of the period of expanding capitalism, the period of greatness and super-profits of the empire, and it is not yet adjusted to new conditions. Nevertheless its example should serve as a lesson, and a warning.

A labor movement is strong and progressive when it is conscious of a goal and strives for its realization along class lines. When the class lines become obscured, its strength is dissipated. From a progressive instrument it is turned into dead weight.

The British Labor Party leadership has attempted to erase the class lines; not so the membership. The latter are moving leftward. In this country the emergence of the labor party itself will be a result of the leftward march of the workers. It will arise under the conditions of decaying capitalism. It must fight from the outset. It is most likely to be quite radical from its inception, influenced by world revolutionary developments. It may even arise over the prostrate bodies of some of the worst diehard labor lieutenants of capitalism, while others may go along in an attempt to behead it. In any event it will start here on a relatively high level.

Of course, a labor party is not an end in itself; it is only a means to an end. It is only a political class expression on the road toward the abolition of capitalism and class society. Nor does it come into being purely as an automatic process. Men must exert their conscious influence and action. The conscious revolutionists particularly must be the leaven in a field of such fruitful work.

The Imperialist War And Revolutionary Perspectives

*Excerpts from International Report Delivered in the Name of the National Committee of the S. W. P.
at the Eleventh Convention of the American Trotskyist Movement, November 16, 1944*

By E. R. FRANK

The outbreak of the second world war did not catch us by surprise. We knew that without successful socialist revolutions, it was inevitable. We knew it was coming. We predicted it. And by our whole rounded political struggle, for our principles and our organization, we had steeled a cadre. We had prepared for the imperialist war. We were ready.

But right in our own party, the strongest, the best organized Trotskyist party, with the most tempered and experienced leadership, right in our own party, the Shachtmanite petty-bourgeois section of our leadership and membership buckled and folded up under the pressure of bourgeois public opinion the minute war broke out; unceremoniously abandoned the program to which they had promised to remain loyal and true and for which they had promised to fight come what may; abandoned the program of the Fourth International and attempted to engineer a split throughout our movement. We survived the fight with the petty-bourgeois opposition and emerged out of that fight stronger, healthier, more homogeneous, a more disciplined, a more effective party. Comrade Trotsky and we fought that fight as the steward of the whole International movement. We were able to assume this re-

sponsibility because we still enjoyed a measure of democracy, and could conduct the struggle in thorough-going fashion right to the end. We went into the war period with no illusions, with our eyes wide open. We knew that we, like the other Trotskyist parties, would be temporarily isolated. And we attuned our tactical orientation, we adjusted our tactics for the uphill pull in our political propaganda, our literary and organization activities, our trade union work. We didn't change our program, we didn't alter, much less abandon our principles. We merely adjusted our tactics, as realistic revolutionists, as Leninists always do. We knew that the fumes of war, the hypnotic spell of "national unity" would not long prevail. While at first, the war may halt the radicalization of the masses, may adversely affect the revolutionary process, it would soon impart to it a powerful impulse. Trotsky pointed out to us again and again that this war was not merely a continuation of the last one; that many factors were now more favorable from the point of view of the revolutionary vanguard; that the economic position of all the imperialist states, including the U. S. was infinitely worse today; that the democratic and pacifist illusions of the last war were

to a considerable extent absent; that the experience of the first world war did not pass without deeply affecting the masses.

We were able to proceed in our revolutionary work with patience, with tenacity, with confidence, because we kept our perspective, we kept our heads. We did not lose our nerve. We knew that life was working in our favor.

In this, our movement was unique. I am not referring here to the sell-outs of the Social Democrats and the Stalinists. In contrast to the last war, nobody was surprised or caught off-guard by the betrayal. We had anticipated this treason and had taken it into account in formulating our plans. I am now referring to the petty-bourgeois hangers-on, to the fellow travelers of the revolution. The retreat of the left-wing intellectuals from Marxism was converted into a precipitous flight. They madly rushed onto the bandwagon of the imperialist war. Darkest pessimism reigned supreme in all the left-wing intellectual circles, as well as the emigre groups. Some thought that Hitler's victories were definitive; that Europe had slipped back to the dark ages; that the revolutionary movement had been irretrievably defeated; that Europe, that all suffering humanity would have to begin the long, painful climb over again. Others saw in Hitler's victories proof that a new class of managers, of bureaucrats, had emerged; that the new form of society superseding dying capitalism would not be socialism, but bureaucratic collectivism, the managerial society, that the Marxist program had proved a utopia.

A Feeling of Blackest Pessimism

In all these intellectualistic petty-bourgeois circles there reigned, as I said, a feeling of blackest pessimism. The picture was all dark and hopeless. And, of course, the petty-bourgeois quacks and fakes of the Shachtman group, veering like a weather vane in response to the pressure and mood of bourgeois intellectualdom, these fugitives from Bolshevism proclaimed in their turn that the clock of history had been set back so far that the political scene in Europe would be dominated by the fight for national liberation and bourgeois democracy. We were back in the nineteenth century! This pressure was so strong, this mood of defeatism was so pervading, that it found its way even inside the ranks of the Fourth International. A group of German refugee comrades published a document called the "Three Thesis," a thoroughly revisionist document, a thoroughly anti-Marxist thesis, which took for good coin Hitler's boasts that his "New Order" would last centuries. They too thought that Europe was thrust back a hundred years, that the working class had lost its preeminent role and must dissolve itself in the middle class in the fight for "a national democratic revolution." Stripped of its verbiage and theoretical "profundities," what was implied here was the necessity of new Peoples' Fronts to fight for "bourgeois democracy." We decisively rejected this defeatist, this revisionist, this liquidationist "theory" at our last convention in 1942. We set our course on the perspective of the rise of the proletarian revolution.

The disorientation, the defeatism, the abandonment of the Fourth International program on the part of the German emigre comrades came about because they had lost all revolutionary perspective. They proclaimed the battle that had not yet started, already lost. We base ourselves on the rising

working class revolution. They consider the European revolution already defeated.

We knew that out of the war would come a gigantic revolutionary explosion, above all in Europe, and we were confidently preparing for it. And less than a year after our 1942 convention, Italian fascism crashed to the ground. We saw in the downfall of Mussolini and the beginning of the Italian revolution the most striking confirmation of our analysis and program, and by the same token, an annihilating refutation of all the theories and speculations of our enemies. We immediately proceeded in our press to subject the Italian events to a thoroughgoing analysis and point to the road ahead.

We found no special difficulty in writing our plenum resolution on the European revolution, its perspectives and its tasks, any more than we found any special difficulty in analyzing the Italian events in our press. Do you know why? Because we were proceeding from a fundamental analysis. The Italian revolution represented for us merely the last link of a long chain that we had already wrought. We didn't have to hunt for some new formulas. We didn't have to devise new principles. We didn't have to improvise, or proceed empirically from one step to another. We knew the answers ahead of time. I don't mean the answer for every concrete problem that came up from day to day. There are no blueprints of that kind. But we had the general strategic answer and we understood the general trend and direction and meaning of the events.

Lenin, Trotsky and others established 30 years ago that capitalism on a world scale, and that European capitalism in particular, was no longer expanding but contracting. Its absolute decline had begun. In addition to the internal decline, the capitalist states of Europe were suffocating, because every one of them was hemmed in behind tariff walls and artificial state boundaries. The huge standing armies were eating up the substance of Europe's wealth. The national state had become a reactionary fetter upon the economy of Europe. The first world war was itself testimony that European capitalism was in a blind alley. The war destroyed Europe's hegemony, it impoverished the continent, and left it weak and debt-ridden, accelerating its decay. Economic hegemony had definitely passed into the hands of the richer and more powerful American imperialism. The war further disunited and dismembered Europe, further exacerbated its trade rivalries. The Versailles treaty created 17 new national states, raised up new gigantic tariff walls and further increased the standing armies.

The blind alley into which European capitalism was thrusting the peoples was answered by the October revolution of 1917, which wrenched one sixth of the earth's surface out of the grip of capitalism and opened up the revolutionary era in Europe. The fierce, sanguinary, class struggles that swept Europe from one end to the other further weakened capitalism, further hastened its decline.

In contrast, American imperialism was still rising. Wall Street which had entered the war as a debtor emerged as a creditor. In addition to its tremendous material preponderance over Europe, American imperialism still enjoyed "national unity" at home. As against a Europe torn by revolutionary struggles, the U. S. was the home of class collaboration par excellence.

Now all this is not some new revelation which our National Committee thought up just the other day. This analysis was made by Trotsky 20 years ago and was adopted at that time as the official position of the Communist International. Trotsky wrote: "the staggering material preponderance of the U. S. automatically excludes the possibility of economic upswing and regeneration of Capitalist Europe. If in the past it was European Capitalism that revolutionized the backward sections of the world, then today it is American Capitalism that revolutionizes over-mature Europe. She has no avenue of escape from the economic blind alley other than the proletarian revolution, the destruction of the tariff and state barriers, the creation of the Socialist United States of Europe." And further: "American Capitalism in driving Europe more and more into a blind alley, will automatically drive her onto the road of revolution. In this is the most important key to the world situation." It is this fundamental twin concept: Lenin's concept that we live in the epoch of wars and revolutions and Trotsky's analysis of the relationship between America and Europe that has guided our struggle all these past years.

By 1923, the revolutionary wave, evoked by the October revolution of 1917, receded. The defeat of the revolution in Germany in 1923 marked the turning point, and made possible the stabilization of Capitalism in Europe. The U. S. came in with its Dawes plan, its loans and credits, and buttressed the shaken Capitalist system. But this very stabilization and the upturn in European economy that followed was on a far lower foundation than before 1914. This so-called stabilization proved of a not very enduring nature. This very stability was extremely unstable. Only six years later, a catastrophic economic crisis struck U. S. imperialism, the largest, the strongest, the "healthiest" imperialist power of the whole world.

And it was not very long before all of Europe — all of the world — was again writhing in the grip of crisis. For ten years Europe was gasping and choking. The consuming economic crisis was only interrupted now and then by pitiful cyclical rises followed by new depressions. But the crisis itself was never overcome. The crisis again sharpened the class struggles, first of all in Germany, which was thrust into a new revolutionary situation. The question was sharply posed: either Fascism or Socialism. There was no third alternative. Through the base treachery of the Stalinist and Social Democratic leaders, the revolutionary situations were all dissipated and the potential revolutions aborted, one after another, first in Germany, then Austria, then France, then Spain. The Capitalists were permitted to regain the upper hand; the path was cleared for their plunging the masses of Europe and soon all humanity into the bloody maelstrom of the Second World slaughter.

And even super-powerful, super-rich, super-stable American Imperialism — the U. S. — where they thought they had exorcized the class struggle, where they thought Marx had been refuted by Henry Ford, even this colossus writhed and twisted and shook for ten years in the toils of terrible economic chaos. For ten years Wall Street tried every device to overcome the crisis, but found that it could not extricate itself from the contradictions of decaying world capitalism. Finally it too plunged into the war with the aim of crushing its rivals and establishing its own world domination. It sought to solve the crisis by its exploitation of the peoples

of Asia, of Africa and even of Europe; by making Wall Street the center of world tribute. American imperialism had reached its heyday and was already moving into its period of decline at a far faster tempo than any previous imperialism.

The crisis at home gave birth to the modern trade union movement, the largest, the best organized, the most volcanic trade union movement in the world. The class struggle, far from having been exorcized, emerged in America in full fury. Its young militant working class had not tasted defeat; it was vigorous, full of confidence and moving leftward.

In the last war, Europe lost its hegemony to America. But Europe is losing its very independence to America in this war. Europe's decay was accelerated as a result of the first world war. But Europe is prostrate and ruined as a result of this one. America could stabilize Capitalism in Europe after the last war on a lower foundation and could permit its revival within sharply defined limits. American imperialism can enter and is entering Europe today with no other program but its dismemberment, its despoilation, to prevent Europe from reviving to a competitive level, to reduce Europe to a semi-colony, a vassal of the Wall Street banks. . . (Here follows a discussion of Wall Street's political program, bourgeois democracy, and the position of Morrow and Logan. See Frank's Speech in December 1944 *Fourth International*.)

Once we understand the trend of events correctly; once we have a correct analysis of the European situation, a correct understanding of the nature and role of American Imperialism, a correct appraisal of the European revolution, then our answers, our programmatic tasks, fall into their proper place. They are properly guided.

Our program for the European proletariat is the program of the October revolution, the program of Lenin and Trotsky in 1917, the program of the Socialist revolution, of the dictatorship of the proletariat, of the Soviet power.

Our central unifying slogan is the Socialist United States of Europe. This is the revolutionary answer, the only alternative to the imperialist scheme of Balkanizing Europe and enslaving its peoples. It corresponds to the experiences and needs of the European masses, who are learning that it is necessary to destroy the reactionary and outlived state boundaries, and that only through the economic unification and socialist collaboration of the free peoples of Europe can the menace of recurrent devastating wars be abolished and freedom and economic well-being assured.

Our instrumentality to lead the revolution is the Bolshevik party. Lenin taught us the kind of party the working class must have to make the revolution.

Our basic tactics to mobilize the masses and lead them forward to the revolution we have likewise learned from Lenin and the October Revolution. These tactics have been carefully studied by our movement over a great number of years. They have been enriched and refined through the study of their application, or more often, their lack of application, in the revolutions in Germany, Austria, Italy, France, Spain, China and elsewhere.

This work of careful preparation and training, of mobilizing the Trotskyist cadres for the revolutionary tasks ahead was crowned in 1938 with the holding of the Founding Conference of the Fourth International, right on the eve of the second world war. This conference adopted a world program for the present epoch. It is not merely a restatement of socialist doctrine and fundamentals, but the *tactical* program show-

ing how the Fourth International must proceed to mobilize the masses for revolutionary purposes and win them to the banner of the Fourth International.

Trotsky, the author of this document, approached the whole question from *this* point of view: economically, he said, the world is ripe and over-ripe for the proletarian revolution, for Socialism. Capitalism in every sphere is disintegrating and sees no way out. The proletariat, in millions of masses, again and again moves onto the revolutionary road. But each time it finds itself blocked by its own conservative leadership. *The crisis therefore is one of leadership.* A new leadership, adequate to the revolutionary tasks at hand, must be created. This means the Fourth International, this small cadre, must find its way to the worker mass.

But how? *By a program of transitional demands.* The present epoch, said Trotsky, is distinguished not for the fact that it frees the revolutionary party from day-to-day work, but because it permits this work to be carried on indissolubly with the actual tasks of the revolution. We do not discard, said Trotsky, the old "minimum" demands; we defend the democratic rights and social conquests of the workers, but we carry on this work within the framework of our revolutionary perspective, and that is why the old minimum program is now *superseded* for us by the transitional program, the tasks of which lies in *systematic mobilization of the masses for the proletarian revolution.*

Now the job today in Europe is to take *this* program and *apply* it. In our opinion it is not necessary to hunt around for some new program, or new tactical schemes. *We need only apply the Transition Program of the Fourth International.* Of course, a program is not a blue-print, it is not a cure-all. You cannot become a master strategist of the revolution merely by memorizing a lot of slogans and rules, any more than you can become a master surgeon by memorizing the best text book on surgery. Other things are necessary. You must have experience. You must have talent. You must have the ability to correctly gauge and appraise a situation, to know what it is necessary to do at the particular moment. You must have the courage and heart of a revolutionary fighter to withstand all pressure and attacks from the camp of the enemy. You must have all of these things. But many of these things are beyond the scope of resolutions and cannot be supplied or imparted by resolutions. A resolution has got to provide a *line*. If it does that, if it provides a *correct line*, it is a good resolution, it does the job.

The Transition Program

The revolutionary party will win the confidence of the masses by its struggle for the program of transitional demands. Our transitional program does not have a propagandistic character but is invested with burning importance in Europe today. That means that the bridge to the fundamental slogans can be more or less rapidly crossed and that all immediate, minimum, democratic demands are of necessity intertwined with the transitional ones, the essence of which is contained in the fact, explained Trotsky, that they are directed ever more openly and decisively against the very bases of the capitalist regime...

The revolutionary party that today has the firmness and strength to fight for its principles; to resist the pressure of bourgeois public opinion, which inevitably bears down in merciless fashion on the revolutionary vanguard; the party

which resists the "temptation" to win the masses "the easy way" by watering down its program, will on the morrow have the opportunity of becoming the revolutionary leader of the masses. Because the masses want a decisive change, because they thirst for a genuine revolutionary leadership, because the catastrophic crisis is driving the masses ever more fiercely onto the revolutionary road. And as they grow disillusioned with their present misleaders, they will turn to the parties of the Fourth International.

* * *

We don't have to say anything new about our *programmatic* position on the Soviet Union. That question was so thoroughly discussed and so magnificently illumined by Comrade Trotsky during our debate with the Shachtmanite petty-bourgeois opposition, that it retains all of its validity to this day in its *basic*, in its *fundamental* features. The Trotskyist position on the Soviet Union, an integral part of our world program for the world revolution, is the only position that has been vindicated by the events, that has proved its correctness in the struggle that provided correct guidance to the revolutionary vanguard through all the mazes, twists and turns of capitalist diplomacy, of war, of changing alliances and the like. All the other programs on the Soviet Union have already been consigned by events themselves to the dust heap.

Take as an example the most pretentious of the theories on the Soviet Union—Burnham's theory of the managerial society. Burnham's book, "The Managerial Revolution", you may recall, enjoyed a passing vogue among capitalist executives, government bureaucrats and renegades from Marxism, both in the United States and England. Burnham told us that the proletariat did not possess sufficient inner strength to reorganize society on socialist foundations and that a new class of "managers" was emerging which would supersede dying capitalism and take over the helm to form a new exploitative class. On the basis of this theory, Burnham had no difficulty in foretelling that Stalin and Hitler, the two main representatives of this new class of "managers" which was destined to emerge all over the world, were united by an "affinity of ideologies" and had joined together "to drive death wounds into capitalism". Hardly had the Professor spoken his prophecy, than Hitler threw his armed might against the Soviet Union and staked everything on crushing it. Burnham's "theory" proved no more enduring than the Stalin-Hitler Pact.

Two years later, Mussolini, the very pioneer of Burnham's "New society", was deposed, more correctly dismissed, just as an employer dismisses his plant superintendent, when his services are no longer required. The precursor of the "new society" proved to be no more than a common adventurer and cutthroat in the service of the Italian bankers, monopolists and landlords. The Fascist regime simply fell apart like a rotten apple.

Today, Hitler's "new order" in Europe has already collapsed under the double blows of his military opponents and the struggles of the insurgent masses. And the downfall and total destruction of the Nazi regime is not far off.

That is how events themselves have dealt with this bit of pretentious humbug which for a few years "cut a big swathe" in capitalist "cultural circles" and in the editorial offices of petty bourgeois intellectualdom. And this "theory", let it be remembered, was the only half-serious attempt to counterpose some sort of unified logical conception to Trotsky's

Marxist analysis of Fascism as well as his analysis of the Soviet Union and the Stalinist bureaucracy.

So much for Burnham's theory and its inglorious fate. Little need be said at this date of his shamefaced pupils and imitators of the Shachtmanite variety with their pathetic attempts to discover a new "managerial class" but limited solely to the Soviet Union. In a new form and in a different connection, this is a recreation of the anti-Marxist idea of national exceptionalism, with a vengeance.

It is an elementary tenet of Marxism that a class is not an accidental phenomenon, but emerges as an inevitable and necessary vehicle of a given stage of production. Every ruling class has in its own way represented a historically *necessary* and *unavoidable* stage of social development and could be overthrown only when it had exhausted its historical possibilities. Marxism knows of no historically unnecessary classes and certainly knows of no classes that are limited to "one country". History has annihilated Burnham's "theory" of the new bureaucratic class. It has disposed of his anemic Shachtmanian imitators in passing.

Now I said that our question on the Soviet Union is an integral part of our whole program of world revolution. It does not stand apart from it. From our political characterization of the Soviet Union as a degenerated workers state, we drew the conclusion that we must defend the Soviet Union unconditionally against any and all imperialist attacks. Now *that program* retains its validity. We don't have to change it. But we *always* defended the Soviet Union in our own way, by our own methods, which had nothing in common with the methods of Stalinism. Only those methods, we said, were permissible that were not in conflict with the world revolution. Stalinist defense was carried on under the slogans: For the Fatherland! For Stalin! Our defense was carried on under the slogans: For Socialism! For the World Revolution! Against Stalin!

While our basic position retains all of its validity, naturally, we do not give *equal* emphasis to all sections of our program at all times. We invariably push to the fore that section of our program, that tactic, that slogan, which has the greatest application, which is required by the general political situation. That is the art of politics: to apply to the conditions of the day that part of your policy which has the most immediate, the most burning urgency. When Hitler attacked the Soviet Union, we began hollering at the top of our voices for the unconditional defense of the Soviet Union. That was the most important problem of world politics: save the Soviet Union from imperialist attack. That was a key position in protecting and advancing the revolution, which we knew would inevitably emerge out of the war.

A Different Situation

Today, however, we face a far different situation. The Soviet Union is no longer in immediate military danger. The Nazi attack has been successfully repulsed. Hitler's "New Order" has already been destroyed. The Nazi regime faces imminent collapse. The continent is now in the process of military occupation by the armies of England, the United States and the Soviet Union. The European masses are in revolutionary ferment. The European revolution is rising and the Anglo-American imperialists have entered into a conspiracy with the Kremlin bureaucracy to strangle the revolution and

to prop up decaying capitalism. That is the true picture of Europe today.

Under these conditions, it would be the height of unrealism, it would betray a complete lack of revolutionary generalship to keep on shouting the slogan of yesterday: Defend the Soviet Union. We do not alter our program; we do not discard this slogan which at a later date may possibly again acquire importance. But in the present situation this slogan recedes to the background and we push to the fore that section of our program which today has greatest importance; that section compressed in the slogan: "Defend the European Revolution against All Its Enemies," against the imperialists, against the Kremlin bureaucracy, against all its agents and agencies. As I said, we do not change our program, but we very definitely are shifting our emphasis today, in conformity with the needs of the situation, in conformity with the changed relationship of forces, in conformity with the new requirements.

As a matter of fact, we haven't made this shift in our emphasis, this tactical adjustment, just today. Some nine months ago our committee discussed this very problem and came to the conclusion that it was necessary to change the emphasis of our propaganda because of the new conditions in Europe. The discerning reader will have noticed that we conducted our propaganda in this spirit for a good many months. We propose now to incorporate this tactical prescription in our resolution, in order to make unambiguously clear to all, the nature of our tactical adjustment and the reasons for it.

The Stalinist bureaucracy, which emerged about 20 years ago, lost faith in the European revolution and proclaimed it realizable to build socialism in the Soviet Union alone. Today the process of degeneration has proceeded so far, this bureaucracy is so hated by the Soviet masses, it is in such conflict with the nationalized economy and its requirements, that it dreads, it mortally fears and opposes the European revolution which is now rising. That is why Stalin has rushed headlong into the arms of Roosevelt and Churchill, that is why he conspired with them at Teheran to crush the revolution and to uphold capitalism throughout Europe. That is why the Red Army, an instrument of the counter-revolutionary bureaucracy, is used to prop up capitalism in Rumania, Bulgaria, etc. Stalin is preparing to repeat his hangman's work in Spain on a Europe-wide scale.

Internally, we know that the bureaucracy has practically effaced all the basic political conquests of the revolution; it has destroyed the Bolshevik Party, the Soviets, the trade unions; it has murdered the generation of leaders who led the Russian revolution; it has reintroduced a savage despotism; it uses the Red Army as a gendarme of capitalist property in Europe. Politically, the bureaucracy has virtually gone the limit in its headlong drive toward reaction. Economically, nationalized property and planned economy, these basic conquests of the October revolution, still remain.

We know that the Kremlin bureaucracy does not represent a new class, which has a historic function to perform, but is a parasitic caste, thrown up because of a purely exceptional conjuncture of events, a caste that is transitory in nature.

Now if we assume that the Kremlin bureaucracy allied with the imperialists, succeeds in definitively crushing the European revolution, then the fate of Europe is sealed. It can only become the helpless vassal, a semi-colony of the

Anglo-American brigands, a doomed continent. *And sealed also is the fate of the Soviet Union.* Because the path will be *immediately cleared* for the reintroduction of capitalism in the Soviet Union, either by internal counter-revolution or by external military intervention or by a combination of both.

If, on the other hand, the workers' revolution emerges triumphant in any country, we can assume that it will more or less rapidly penetrate and make its influence felt among the Soviet masses and the Red Army troops. Once the Soviet masses are lifted to their feet, the very first thing they will proceed to do is overthrow the dictatorship of Stalin and his bloody henchmen and restore the Soviet Union on the principles and teachings of its founders — Lenin and Trotsky. *In either case the Kremlin bureaucracy is doomed.* The Soviet Union is in a transition period and that transition cannot too long endure. It is either: forward to Socialism or backward to Capitalism. It cannot indefinitely remain in its present form. *And it is clear that its whole life is bound up with the fate of the European revolution.* That is why we came back again to the same proposition: the fight to protect, to defend, to extend, to deepen the European revolution is in essence, and coincides with, the true defense of the Soviet Union itself...

* * *

American imperialism, by its unbridled expansionism, by its attempt to displace all rival imperialisms—not only Japan and Germany, but also the defeated allies, such as France, and even its partner-in-arms, British imperialism — is destroying every semblance of stability in the Orient as well as in Europe, is exacerbating all the inter-imperial conflicts and is becoming the irritant provoking new revolutionary explosions. American imperialism, the greatest counter-revolutionary force of the whole world, with its program of *Pax Americana*, before which the ambitions of all previous imperialisms pale, with its mad schemes of dominating all the

continents and all the seas, will become the very instrument of destroying the old equilibrium and provoking new rebellions of the exploited masses...

We are going to have to pay a lot of attention to our international obligations in the period ahead. The revolution is rising and we must be prepared to aid our co-fighters in every possible way. We have already done quite a bit. But that is only a good beginning. The next period will see the extension and growth of the Trotskyist movement, especially in Europe, and our assistance will have to keep pace with the opportunities and the needs of the struggle. We must stand ready to give all possible help to our comrades who are on the firing line.

But the greatest aid that we can give our co-thinkers, the greatest of all contributions that we can make is to perfect our movement, strengthen our forces and redouble our fight against this predatory beast of American Imperialism, this international marauder, who would rob and subjugate the whole world.

We know the power of this Wall Street crew. We know that this gang of Wall Street freebooters is prepared to wade through rivers of blood to save its infamous rule. We know its armed prowess and its counter-revolutionary designs. But we are also aware of its insoluble contradictions. We know that our enemy will grow weaker and that, we will grow stronger and will conquer in the end.

The power of a revolution is a *mighty* power. Before its hot breath armies have been known to melt away and thrones come crashing to the ground. The flames of the European revolution which, once started, will surely spread throughout the continent like a prairie fire, will make their effects felt even here across the Atlantic. They will give a strong impetus to the process of radicalization of the workers that is already beginning, and they will inspire the coming class struggles here at home...

On The European Situation and Our Tasks

By DANIEL LOGAN

(Continued from Last Issue)

The party that during present weeks would untiringly diffuse these slogans among the large masses would infallibly draw their attention and thus prepare their ears to receive more advanced slogans. At a further stage it would enjoy the authority of having foreseen the march of the development and of having been with the masses in their most elementary struggles. The benefit would be tremendous.

The slogan of the republic is imposed all the more by the present situation, since the official workers parties have rallied to the monarchy. The slogan is not only directed against the present regime and the Allies, but is also a sharp weapon against the coalitionists, the Stalinist and Socialist parties.

To throw some light on this problem we have to try to determine at which stage of the Italian revolution we are now. For this purpose historical parallels and examples are useful, even indispensable. Provided we are cautious enough not to forget the differences, they may furnish us with convenient landmarks.

During twenty years Fascism had gradually lost its petty-bourgeois "mass" following, and had become a dried

up Bonapartist regime, resting mainly on the police apparatus. Thus Mussolini's removal was to be almost as painless as the dismissal of another Bonapartist ruler, Primo de Rivera of Spain, in January 1930. Rivera was succeeded by General Berenguer. The first result of the shift was the breaking up of the censorship, political discussions sprang up, and the problem around which they centered was the existence of the monarchy. A year passed, during which the students demonstrated and the workers fought against the police. In February 1931 Berenguer resigned, two months later Alfonso had to flee and the republic was proclaimed. The Spanish revolution was going toward new heights.

If we are to follow the Spanish revolutionary calendar, we must say that the present regime of the Lieutenant General corresponds to the Berenguer interlude.

The differences between the two situations are important and obvious. There is now a world war, in which Italy is participating, being occupied by both camps. Foreign troops will be on Italian soil for quite some time. On the other hand, a general European revolution is coming, to which the fate of the Italian revolution will be most closely connected. How-

ever, at the present stage, the historical parallel clearly shows the correctness of the slogan of the republic.

For months the problem of democratic demands for Italy was as good as forgotten by our press. There were journalistic comments on political moves taking place there, such as the formation of the Bonomi government, etc. There was a constant reaffirmation of our Socialist program. But there was no indication of how to call the masses to action. A semi-turn occurred on July 22nd, when *The Militant* came to write about a series of democratic slogans, although in the most unclear and confusing way. The slogan of the "overthrow of the monarchy" was raised. Why in that negative form and not as the immediate proclamation of the republic?

Since then, our press has come to speak a few times of a "workers' and peasants' republic." It must be clear that this is *not* a democratic, not even a transition, demand. It is merely a more popular expression for the dictatorship of the proletariat, and, as such, has at the present time a purely propagandistic character. There is no objection to its use, of course, but it must be clear that it does not eliminate the present need for the democratic demand of the immediate proclamation of the republic.

This discussion should not, of course, tend to give to the slogan of the republic in Italy a disproportionate importance. It is at the present time a very useful agitational slogan, the specific weight of which in our daily activities should be left, however, to be determined by comrades who are directly on the stage. If we have insisted upon it particularly, it is because the slogan is extremely important as a *test case*. It is always very easy to write or adopt *general* formulations about democratic demands. They have been in our documents for years. But all that has little value if concrete applications are indefinitely postponed. On the other hand, many signs point out that we may soon enter a new stage in Italy. It may happen that the question of the republic will be quickly solved. A slogan which may soon gain great importance is: *For a Togliatti-Nenni government!*

Some comrades may raise against the present use of democratic slogans the following argument: such use would be all right if the Fourth International now had in Italy a big party capable of setting in motion large masses, but unfortunately this is not yet the case. Therefore the problem is quite different; it is at the present time the building of a strong revolutionary party, and for that purpose any program of democratic demands is useless. The premises of this reasoning are correct, but the conclusion — false. It is true indeed that the building of a revolutionary party in Italy is still ahead of us, and that victory is inconceivable without forging such a party. But this task cannot be fulfilled outside of the daily struggle of the masses — in a hothouse, as it were.

This problem has been discussed in Europe quite often, especially in France and Belgium in 1934-36, at the time when the political situation there was already in a state of pre-revolutionary fluency and the organizations of the Fourth International still very weak. Trotsky and the executive body of the Fourth International always resolutely opposed the tendencies that wanted to restrict our groups to strictly propagandistic programs and slogans until the day when we would have assembled a large party and come like Minerva out of the head of Jupiter. We cannot thwart a possible opportunist danger in a young party by a "little dose" of ultra-leftism, but only by outlining the correct Bolshevik policy.

I think the resolution should contain a short but sharp warning against ultra-leftism. The war has stirred up a tremendous wave of reaction. The official workers parties have not been the last to follow or even to propel this wave. The Stalinists have been, in words and in deeds, at the point of reaction. The remnants of the Second International, slightly shocked by such brazenness, follow them as best they can.

In such conditions one may well say: "The main danger is opportunism. Why bother now about ultra-leftism?" Such a way of putting the question would be utterly wrong. The danger of opportunism is tremendous, indeed, but it is precisely why the danger of sectarianism should not be ignored; on the contrary, it should be carefully watched. Opportunism does not eliminate ultra-leftism, but engenders it. Ultra-leftism is only the other face of opportunism, its shadow, an infantile reaction to it and, in a sense, the punishment the working class has to pay for it.

The putrefaction of the Second International during the last war brought about many an ultra-left tendency. The German organization of Luxemburg and Liebknecht was impregnated with ultra-leftism and broke its head precisely because of that ailment; in France opportunism blended with ultra-leftism in grandiloquent phrases, etc., etc. Lenin had to write a special pamphlet against the infantile sickness of ultra-leftism.

At the end of the present war and in the coming revolutionary upheaval we may expect the same occurrence, probably with much greater intensity. At the last plenum I spoke about this coming danger of ultra-leftism. Since then events in one country at least have arrived, on schedule, as it were, to show the reality of the danger. In England the "break-aways" are becoming a serious problem. Disgusted with the treacherous policy of the union leaders and the Stalinist party, workers quit the unions and ask: why a union? Anarchists are taking advantage of this mood. This is only the first sign of things to come.

A new generation of young revolutionaries is now appearing, which has not accumulated much experience. In many countries they have grown up under illegality, without much opportunity to study the lessons of the past. The crimes of the bourgeois order have been so atrocious, the servility of the official workers parties is so repulsive that many impatient reactions may be expected. Moreover, Europe has known for four years sabotage and terrorism, and these cannot fail to leave traces of adventurism in the policy of many a good revolutionary workers party.

Under the blows of experience ultra-leftism had been forced during the twenty years between the two wars to abandon many of its original positions. But the point to which it clung most obstinately was its opposition to the use of democratic and transition slogans. Our movement had to conduct a long fight precisely on that problem.

We are now entering an historical epoch in which general propaganda is not enough. Liberals, reformists and all the admirers of bourgeois progress always hoped that Czarist Russia would gradually rise to the level of cultured and democratic Western Europe. Quite the contrary occurred. With the disintegration of capitalist civilization, Western Europe has catastrophically sunk to the level of despotic Russia and even far below. Reformists and centrists used to view Bolshevism as a product of backward Russia, not good enough for enlightened Western Socialism. But now all Europe has

been made "good enough" for Bolshevism. History puts *all* the teachings of Bolshevism on the order of the day more imperatively than ever. And one of these lessons is Bolshevism's contempt for mere enlightening propaganda about the virtues of Socialism, its ability to feel the aspirations of the masses, to seize upon the progressive side of these aspirations and on that point to drive a wedge that would detach the masses from their conservative parties and leaders.

The draft resolution states in point 32 on the slogan of the Socialist United States of Europe:

It corresponds to the needs and experiences of the European masses who are learning that only by the destruction of the outlived and reactionary national state and through the economic unification and socialist collaboration of the free peoples of Europe can the menace of recurrent devastating wars be abolished and freedom and economic well-being assured.

A few lines before, the draft resolution had indicated that the proletariat of a European country will give military help to the workers of another

by boldly disregarding the outlived and reactionary national boundaries.

These formulae are not lacking in ambiguity and they can cover a correct as well as a false position. Without knowing the exact interpretation given to them by the writers of the draft resolution, I deem it necessary to state here my own position, as a contribution toward a more precise formulation of the subject in the final resolution.

No doubt, in the military struggle against imperialism and its agents, the proletariat will not hesitate to "boldly disregard" national boundaries. But does that mean that state borders will disappear from one day to the next? I do not think so. The European national problems cannot be erased by the signing of a decree abolishing state borders. It will take a whole historical epoch to solve them.

"United States" implies the existence of different *states*, that is to say, borders. It means that each nation of the federation has the right to say or no, the right of self-determination, up to and including the right of secession. *Socialist United States* can only rest upon the conviction of each people that only by a federative organization Europe can live. Violence cannot speed up the acquiring of this conviction, but on the contrary can only delay it.

After the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, we do not wish to march to Socialism by violence, but by patiently convincing the peoples of the superiority of centralization. Just as, in the agrarian problem, we are not partisans of "forced collectivization," but we want to demonstrate to the peasant, by his own experience, the advantages of large collective enterprise over small property, so in the national question we are against any "forced unification" and the only real, not fictitious, guarantee is the right of secession.

The slogan of the Socialist United States of Europe is an attempt to solve the conflict between the centripetal necessities of a planned economy and the centrifugal tendencies inherited from past centuries. It is a dynamic formula, the content of which will continuously change. It will probably start with military collaboration, then a coordination of economic plans will come, and so far, up to a complete economic, political, social and cultural unification of the continent. This will not be reached in a day, not even in a few years, and will largely depend, moreover, on what happens in the rest of the world.

At a certain stage, the process of political centralization will be accompanied by the process of the withering away of the state. Will the various European states blend into one state, which will subsequently wither away, or will they begin to wither away before reaching complete amalgamation? We cannot tell now, but we may never have a single state.

The best examples we have until now of federative unification are those of two bourgeois nations: Switzerland and the United States of America. In both cases the driving force toward unification came from an external threat. In Switzerland the urban and rural cantons had widely diverging interests, but upon both the danger of Austrian domination was threatening. In America the thirteen colonies were far from seeing eye to eye with one another on all questions, but they had to unite their forces in order to resist England. Similarly, in Europe the driving power toward unification will be the necessity to fight the domination of the Yankee overlord and it will lead to military, economic and political cooperation.

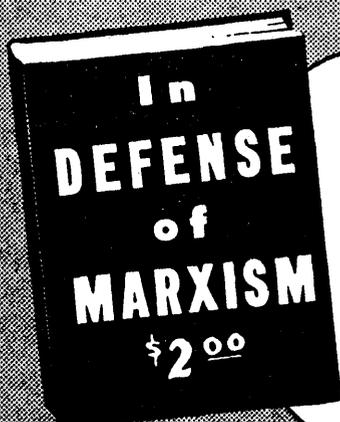
At what tempo? We cannot tell. The example of America shows also how the building of the federal power was a long process, extending over more than a century and necessitating a civil war of four years. The European nations today are certainly more separated than the thirteen colonies were. Socialism will have, undoubtedly, other methods than capitalism for reaching unification. It would be childish and dangerous, however, to expect the erasing of national boundaries and the sudden disappearance of all national problems some fine morning by the signing of a decree.

Putrifying capitalism will bequeath to the victorious proletariat a continent torn by wars and national hatreds. Suspicions will have to be quieted. Any precipitated step can only revive them again and delay real, Socialist unification. Anyway, whatever may be the tempo, the first big step will not be the establishment of a single European state, but the formation of a federation of states, which implies *borders*, borders of a new type indeed, borders between workers' states, but borders nevertheless for some time.

The theoretical errors of the draft resolution about the "naked military dictatorship" or the two kinds of bourgeois democracy have to be unequivocally corrected. That would straighten up the axis of the resolution. The attention has to be focused on the specific problems of the period we are now entering. The question of the democratic demands should not be dealt with in five lines, but all its aspects have to be carefully examined. The slogan of the immediate proclamation of the republic in Italy has to be incorporated. Although many parts of the draft resolution can be used, a great deal of rewriting should be done.

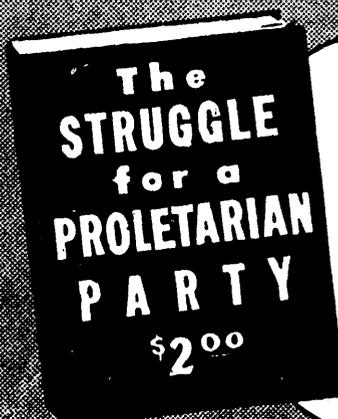
We are now entering a period of transition which will go from the collapse of German domination over Europe to the dictatorship of the proletariat. *The question of the character and length of this period is directly tied to the problem of the formation of the revolutionary party.* Whoever does not pay enough attention to that period, assumes that we will go through it automatically, tries to jump over it theoretically, ignores its peculiar problems, etc. — whoever does that (and I believe the writers of the draft resolution do it to a great extent) *obscures the problems, and therefore increases the difficulties, of the building of the party.* The greatest help that the members of the SWP can now give to their European comrades is to carefully correct the draft resolution and present an impeccable document.

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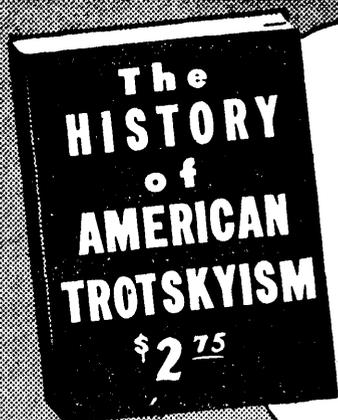
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