

# Fourth International

## **The Stalinist Left Turn and the Internal Crisis in the USSR**

---

**Lackawanna: Steel Town 1946**

*By V. Grey*

---

***Leon Lesoil***  
***Belgian Trotskyist Martyr***

*April 1946*

*25 Cents*

## Manager's Column

April 1 is the opening date of *Fourth International's* subscription campaign for 500 new subscribers. For some time, many of our agents have felt that *Fourth International* should be introduced to a wider circle of readers. Recent events have heightened the interest and increased the need for theoretical political understanding. Thousands of leading trade unionists are realizing the importance for the labor movement to have a rounded social viewpoint and program of action. The experiences of the war and the strike struggles have further strengthened this tendency. Thousands of veterans are now looking for an explanation of world events and a solution. They can only receive this through the Marxist analysis and program.

During the two-month period of the campaign, we are featuring the rate of \$1.00 for a 6-month subscription. The following quotas have been assigned for each of the large cities in which we have an active agent:

### Quotas for "Fourth International" Subscription Campaign

CITY	QUOTA
Akron	10
Allentown-Bethlehem	5
Bayonne	10
Boston	10
Buffalo	20
Chicago	40
Cleveland	10
Connecticut	5
Detroit	40
Flint	10
Los Angeles	60
Milwaukee	5
Minneapolis	25
Newark	20
New York	100
Philadelphia	20
Pittsburgh	5
Reading	5
St. Louis	5
St. Paul	10
San Diego	5
San Francisco	25
Seattle	20
Tacoma	5
Toledo	10
Youngstown	20
Total	500

New York has the largest quota of 100 subscriptions. This does not mean that Los Angeles, with a quota of 60, may not challenge New York's position, especially on a percentage basis. It will be interesting to see what results are obtained in Detroit

## FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

VOLUME 7 April 1946 No. 4 (Whole No. 65)

Published monthly by the  
Fourth International Publishing Association

116 University Place, New York 3, N. Y. Telephone: ALgonquin 4-8547. Subscription rates: \$2.00 per year; bundles, 20c for 5 copies and up. Canada and Foreign: \$2.50 per year; bundles, 21c for 5 copies and up.

Entered as second-class matter May 20, 1940, at the post office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879.

Managing Editor: E. R. FRANK

### CONTENTS

Review of the Month	
Recent Soviet Developments	99
Atom Bomb and "World Mood"	101
Stalinist "Left Turn" and the Internal Crisis of the Kremlin Regime	103
Lackawanna: Steel Town 1946	By V. Grey 106
Political Situation in Brazil	110
Leon Lesoil	115
How the Constitution Was Written	By Harry Frankel 118
The National Question in Europe	121
From the Arsenal of Marxism	
The Intellectuals and the Workers	By Karl Kautsky 125
Press Clippings	
The German Desert	126

Printed by Criterion Linotyping & Printing Co., Inc.

and Chicago, both great industrial cities, who in this campaign each have a quota of 40.

Likewise, Minneapolis and San Francisco will possibly toss down the gauntlet to each other to see which goes over the top first. Four other cities—Buffalo, Newark, Seattle and Youngstown—are set for Trotskyist competition on quotas of 20 each. Which of these four cities will first attain its goal, and which will chalk up the highest number of subs?

There are a number of cities in which we have active agents who have not been assigned quotas. Portland, Kansas City, Rochester, San Pedro, Cincinnati and Baltimore should be stung into competition by this challenge. The scoreboard will, of course, be extended to include any or all of these cities. In fact, nothing would give us more pleasure than to devote a large part of the Manager's Column in the May issue to an accounting of their achievements in this campaign.

The May issue of *Fourth International* will contain a report on the number of subscriptions received and the percentage of the total this number constitutes.

It is our belief that the initiative of the agents is one of the most important factors in signing up subscribers. Agents should call the attention of readers to the fact that a subscription is the best way of assuring the prompt arrival of their copy of the magazine. Subscribers will not have to rely on newsstands. We receive many orders for current copies from readers who find the newsstand sold out in their vicinity. Of course, newsstands will continue to carry the F. I. for those readers who are first getting acquainted with our magazine.

Agents should also point out that with the many discussion groups, lectures and forums which use the articles in the F. I. for material, it is very helpful for students to have a chance to study the magazine beforehand. Attention should be called to articles in past issues of the magazine which have discussed and analyzed the most burning and pressing issues of our times. T. Cliff's articles on the Jewish problem, the editors' analysis of the lessons of the strike wave in the March F. I., and *Scientists and the Atom Bomb* in the same issue, are but a few examples of the kind of articles that

class conscious workers are looking for.

Onward to a successful campaign!

\* \* \*

Letters from our subscribers: To a request for information on how he happened to subscribe to *Fourth International*, T. C., San Francisco replies: "What led me to subscribe was Birchman's informative article on Nigeria. (October 1945 F. I.) I enjoy the F. I.

"I do find an error on the first page, however, as follows: February 1946, you say 'The labor movement in America is 14 million strong . . . over one fourth of the whole working class, as large a trade union movement as any working class has ever built in relation to the labor population.'

"Australia seems to have us by a good margin. In 1928 its unions had 911,541 (15% of the total population) or over half the wage-earners—60% of the men and 41% of the women. Even in 1936 the unorganized figure stood at 814,809."

From E. M. G., Madison, Ohio: "You asked me in your first letter to let you know how I liked the article. (The Middle East at the Crossroads, by T. Cliff, December 1945.) It was excellent and all that Dr. Nearing implied. Please have my subscription start with the January issue, as there was a continuation of the article by T. Cliff."

\* \* \*

On the foreign scenes we have received a letter from Ceylon, telling us of a new book company which is launching a special advertising campaign to popularize *Fourth International* and other Trotskyist literature. This company is now receiving a bundle order of 100 copies per month. We wish them success in this undertaking.

H. J., Cape Town, requests a regular bundle order and says: "Once more we are receiving copies of the F. I. and the comrades await each issue keenly, particularly after the literature starvation in South Africa which flowed from war censorship."

Great Britain: "I received my receipt for *Fourth International* and was delighted.

"You ask for my impressions of the magazine. As you may know I was a member of the National Administrative Council of the ILP until Easter 1945 when I was expelled for 'Trotskyism.' I can tell you that the theoretical articles in the F. I. were largely responsible for my development away from Centrism to Marxism, together of course with the fundamental Marxist works."

## REVIEW OF THE MONTH

*Significant Recent Developments in the Soviet Union—A New “World Mood” in the Age of Nuclear Warfare—The Stalinist Left Turn in the Light of the Unfolding Domestic and International Crisis of the Kremlin Regime*

### **The 1945 Inheritance Laws And the Recent Political Developments Inside the Soviet Union**

For the first time in many years first-hand material concerning internal life of the USSR is becoming available in this country. Two highly significant developments have taken place: one in the field of economy, the other in the domain of politics. The latter is quite recent, the former is one year old.

Last year, on March 14, 1945 the Supreme Council promulgated an important decree which introduced sweeping revisions into those sections of the Soviet Civil Code that govern the inheritance of private property by law and by will. So far as we know, the full text of this decree was made publicly available in this country for the first time in the recent February issue of the *American Review on the Soviet Union*. A study of this decree discloses a further deep incursion under the Kremlin regime into the economic foundations of the USSR.

From the Marxist standpoint, inheritance is a juridical expression of “the economic organization of society based on the private ownership of the means of production” (Marx). A little reflection will show that it is impossible to strike at the roots of capitalism without at the same time overturning the chief buttresses of the legal superstructure whereby private property is perpetuated. That is why one of the first actions of the young workers’ republic under Lenin and Trotsky was to abolish inheritance. “Inheritance by law as well as by will is hereby annulled,” states a decree of May 1, 1918.

But this original decree, like others in the same period, was intended to set a goal rather than to be put immediately into effect. It is possible to completely abolish inheritance, only when a country’s economic life has been definitely switched to the track of socialist production. At the outset it is possible only to place rigid restrictions on inheritance. This is precisely what the Bolsheviks did in Russia. A limit was fixed on the amount of property that could be bequeathed and the number of individuals who could inherit. Capitalist law, naturally, sets no such limits.

#### **SOVIET LAW UNDER LENIN**

The initial Soviet regulations of inheritance were stop-gap measures. In the absence of adequate social security provisions, the Soviets permitted, in order to take care of incapacitated individuals and minors, inheritances of property up to 10,000 gold rubles in value, with the heirs being limited

to the direct decendants of the deceased—children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, the surviving spouse, and the incapacitated members of the household. All property over and above the set sum reverted to the state, the sole legal owner of all property.

With the inception of the New Economic Policy (NEP)—that is with the partial retreat toward capitalist forms made necessary after the termination of the Civil War—these stop-gap measures became the legal norm (decrees of May 22, 1922). In certain cases the 10,000 gold ruble restriction was waived, and a heavy progressive inheritance tax—up to 50 percent—was levied on permitted inheritances over and above the fixed sum.

Under the regime of the bureaucracy we observe a step by step relaxation of restrictions on the amount that could be legally bequeathed, and on March 1, 1926 the 10,000 gold ruble limit was erased. In addition, exempted from the heavy inheritance tax were such items as: household articles (except luxuries), insurance policies, author’s and patent rights, bank savings, etc. The next step toward removing all restrictions on the amount of inheritance came nine years later, when, the decree of April 1, 1935, sanctioned the transfer of bank accounts, state-loan bonds and negotiable paper to individuals other than the legal heirs.

But the restriction on the number of legal heirs remained in force throughout all these years, and through the first years of the war. Moreover, if a property owner died intestate, his estate could be by law divided exclusively and equally among his direct relatives (surviving spouse, children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and incapacitated members of the household). In the absence of these, the property reverted to the state. The original provisions in this connection, thus remained the law of the land.

Such is no longer the case, because the March 1945 decree extends the number of heirs by law to include “able-bodied parents, and in their non-existence the brothers and sisters of the decedent.”

#### **SWEEPING CHANGES**

In addition, an order of precedence is set by law, as is the case in capitalist countries. No such precedence, however, operates in inheritance *by will*. Article II of the new decree flatly states that “every citizen can bequeath his entire property, or part thereof to *one* or *several* persons mentioned in Arti-

cle I of this decree," and then it goes on to add that in the absence of these "the property may be bequeathed to *any* person." In other words, not only distant relatives but completely unrelated individuals may legally inherit "by will." This is virtually identical with the capitalist guarantees for the perpetration of private property.

It is noteworthy that the decree also permits property owners to bequeath either part or the whole of their estates to "government organizations and to social institutions," the sole restriction being that "minor children and other incapacitated heirs" cannot be deprived of their legal share. Among the "social institutions" recognized by the Kremlin are the "millionaire" collective farms, co-operatives, restricted officers' clubs, and other formations which represent budding bourgeois property forms within the existing economic structure of the Soviet Union. It ought to be added that the Greek Orthodox Church, too, is now a legal heir.

One cannot estimate at a distance the full extent to which capitalist tendencies have been strengthened in Soviet economy during the war years. It is clear, however, that the March 1945 decree greatly reenforces these tendencies. Not only is the perpetuation of private property now sanctioned, but the road to its concentration is widened.

#### EFFECTS IN AGRICULTURE

This must be especially true in agriculture where a hot-house growth of millionaire collective farmers occurred during the war. These are rural bourgeois who dispose of huge sums of currency, state-bonds, etc. and who are likewise permitted by law to possess dwellings, livestock, private plots of land, agricultural implements, etc. Those among them with high decorations, and there are many, are exempt from war taxes and other levies. Under the law these accumulations can now be perpetuated virtually intact. Furthermore, the same inheritance law provides new loopholes for rapid accumulation: individuals or groups of individuals are now enabled, by the relatively simple device of arranging "legacies," to gain possession of property (or dispose of it), which they might otherwise be prevented from doing by the still extant restrictions on outright purchases and sales.

The urban bureaucracy is now in a position not only to perpetuate its incomes, savings, town homes, summer villas, automobiles, household furniture, utensils, etc., but also to acquire as "heirs" property in the collective farms. This process, of course, works both ways, and may work to knit more closely the capitalist elements in the village with those in industry.

When this is added to the pressure of the full-blown capitalist elements in the Soviet "buffer-zone" (Eastern Europe and the Balkans), and of world imperialism, it becomes clear that enormous centrifugal tendencies are being generated inside the USSR.

How strong is the capitalist wing in the country and in the administrative and military apparatus? There are as yet only indirect indications, for the struggle remains muted.

#### THE KULAK IS ABROAD AGAIN

For example, on the same day the inheritance decree was issued, i.e., March 15, 1945, *Pravda* called editorially for a decisive attack on the *kulak* (rich farmer) elements. To be sure, Stalin's editors cautiously limited the *kulak* danger to the liberated Latvian area where the Nazis

and anti-Soviet Latvians allegedly "poisoned the consciousness of the workers with false propoganda." After all, the Kremlin could not very well admit publicly the resurgence of this "danger" on a national scale—and in the midst of war!—after the years of boasting that the *kulak* had been completely liquidated. (This "liquidation" was proclaimed in the early 'Thirties, along with the "irrevocable victory of socialism in one country.")

At the time, one year ago, *Pravda* called only for an intensified campaign of "political education" in the areas liberated from the Germans. Since then this "educational" campaign has been extended far and wide. The whole press has been switched over from the wartime ultra-nationalist propoganda to a post-war emphasis on the Stalinist brand of "Marxism-Leninism." Supplementing the press in this new tactical "left" re-orientation is a huge staff of tens of thousands of agitators. They have been mobilized to "re-educate" the population and have been warned not to suspend their activities after the February elections to the Supreme Council.

It may appear paradoxical that the Kremlin should launch a full scale attack on the capitalist tendencies at the same time that Soviet laws reenforce these same tendencies. This paradox is inherent in the parasitic and contradictory character of Stalin's rule. On the one hand, he batters down systematically all the conquests of the October Revolution, and strengthens the capitalist tendencies and paves the way for the restoration of capitalism; on the other hand, up to now the ruling stratum, personified by Stalin, has been compelled to smash the capitalist tendencies, when they grew too strong, in order to preserve the power of the Stalinist bonapartist clique.

Stalinism has emerged from the war as a regime of crisis. In the political field this is expressed at present by a supplementary press and agitation campaign to still "further reenforce" the power of the state. Every possible variation is being played on this theme. Thus, in connection with the twenty-second anniversary of Lenin's death, *Pravda* announced on January 22:

*The greatest theoretical and political conquest of Leninism is the doctrine elaborated and theoretically grounded by Stalin—is the doctrine of the development and strengthening of the state under socialism and communism in the conditions of the victory of socialism in one country. (Our emphasis).*

#### "STRENGTHENING" OF THE REGIME

In plain language this means that the regime of terror will be still further intensified. Up to now the Soviet people have been promised that the state would begin to "wither away" the moment that the "communist" stage of Soviet development was reached. Today they are warned that there will be no relaxation of Stalin's rule, not even under "communism." By virtue of Stalin's "greatest theoretical and political conquest" it is henceforth "counter-revolutionary" to cite in the USSR not alone Marx and Engels but also Lenin on the withering away of the state.

The "strengthening" of the state inevitably implies a still further concentration of power, especially in Stalin's own hands. Among the recent reforms has been the abolition of the wartime "Defense Council" as well as of the People's Commissariat of War. All military departments have been merged into a single body, with all the authority vested in the hands of a single person, Generalissimo Stalin. This surpasses anything done by Hitler, not to mention the wartime measures of Stalin himself. In passing let us note that this "reorganization"

at the same time scraps one of the constitutional reforms introduced by the Supreme Soviet Council in 1944, namely: the granting to the 16 autonomous Soviet republics of the right to dispose of their own "independent military formations" and to establish their own commissariats of defense. Needless to say, Stalin thereby violated his own "Constitution" which prohibits amendments of the "supreme law of the land" without the approval of the Supreme Council.

According to the January issues of *Pravda* a large-scale reorganization of the commissariats in industry is now likewise in progress. These measures "relative to the creation of new People's Commissariats and the strengthening of others" are emphatically referred to as being "of colossal state importance." (*Pravda*, January 23.)

Up to now such measures and such formulations in the press invariably implied a purge. It is possible that a secret purge is actually taking place.

## The Atom Bomb And a "World Mood"

Among the recent contributors to the discussion on the atomic bomb is Professor Sidney Hook (*New Leader*, February 23). This individual has long posed as a profound and enlightened thinker, although he never said anything new or original in his life, nor has ever cast a new light on familiar but important issues. Why then do we propose to acquaint our readers with his views? Because the topic itself is a rather serious one, and, furthermore, because Hook represents a type in the academic world. He epitomizes the older generation of intellectuals who began moving toward Marxism in the 'Twenties and early 'Thirties, halted midway and then scurried into the camp of "democratic" imperialism on the eve of World War II.

The atomic bomb has posed point blank the question of the survival of civilization and even of the physical survival of mankind. This proposition has been affirmed by the outstanding scientists directly connected with nuclear research. Without a single noteworthy exception, all those who are in position to really speak with authority have asserted that this danger is no myth. They are seeking to awaken public opinion before it is too late, that is, before the outbreak of World War III. This is the virtually unanimous opinion of the scientists, most of whom had no previous experience in dealing with social problems and many of whom are quite conservative—even reactionary—in their social outlook.

### PETTY BOURGEOIS FAKERY

The reactionary character of Hook, in common with the rest of the Social-Democratic renegades from Marxism, can be gauged by the fact that he skirts around this issue, or more correctly, dismisses the actual danger. According to this oracle from New York University, there is far greater danger in the spread of a "new world mood"—*fin du mondisme*—which is "slowly seeping through the membranes of our culture." Everything is thus reduced to psychology, or rather, psycho-pathology; mankind is threatened not with physical annihilation but with a pandemic of a new mental disease.

Thereupon with a serious air this gentleman pretends to trace the alleged new malady to its alleged sources, examining its alleged effects ("unhealthy psychological consequences")

upon the various sections of the population, and proposing an alleged solution ("social therapy"). This elaborate construction is labelled by the *New Leader* editors as "provocative analysis." Let us follow it through its contortions.

The origin of the "new world mood," its discoverer reveals, is twofold: its "immediate cause" lies in "the spread of scientific knowledge"; the second, and major source is war, especially "war in the age of nuclear energy."

Ordinary mortals have commonly accepted the spread of knowledge, including scientific knowledge, as a blessing and not an evil. Those who attribute social ills to science or its progress have up to now been generally classified among the obscurantists, Hook himself is as a rule fond of noisily parading as a champion of "science," let alone a disseminator of scientific knowledge. However, as we see, when need arises, it is as easy for him to do just the opposite. And in the true tradition of all free spirits, he disdains to so much as offer an explanation for his 100 percent switch.

### MOODS AND THEIR ROOTS

Let us pass on to the second source. Wars give rise to mass moods, even world moods. No one will dispute this. But no matter how learned one may be, given moods cannot be discussed separate and apart from the *character* of the given war. Supporters of the Second World War painted it up and exalted it as a "democratic" war, a "people's" war, a war of "liberation," a war "against fascism," etc., etc. They swore it would lead of a "people's" peace, unprecedented international harmony and prosperity, in short, the bravest of brave new worlds. How could such a "progressive" war suddenly produce so reactionary a "world mood?" Among the ardent supporters of the war was Hook who is now obviously displeased, if not upset, by its consequences. In these conditions the least one might expect is an explanation. None is forthcoming. How could there be? The professor would have to confess to betrayal of his trust as educator of the youth, confess to having helped send off the youth to the slaughter pens and contributing in his own small way to the present world "mood."

Let us continue. We would be the last to deny the impact or importance of mass moods. Nonetheless, mass moods, progressive and reactionary alike, do not arise by chance. Nor have they an independent existence of their own. They have deep social roots; above all, they are rooted in classes and the material conditions of their existence, stemming from the latter and changing in correspondence with shifts in these conditions as well as in the reciprocal relations between the classes.

But Hook has long ago dispensed with social classes and the class struggle. Instead he divides mankind into three vast categories: 1) those who are "coarse-grained"; 2) those of "nobler stuff"; and finally 3) certain nameless elements presumably those made of the subtlest "stuff" of all. Approximately the same procedure is followed in grading meat in the packinghouses.

The "world mood" affects each category in a different way, but adversely. Thus the first category becomes the culture medium for immoralism. The professor unhesitatingly predicts saturnalias "which will eclipse anything known in the past."

The second category, we are assured, becomes the medium for quietism, mysticism, fatalism. Isn't it perhaps necessary to find a cure especially for these moods, infallible camp-followers

of blackest reaction? But they, like those of the first category, are brushed aside as "superficial."

### PRETENTIOUS RIGMAROLE

It thus turns out that the discoverer of a new world mental affliction is least concerned with its most malignant manifestations. If moral and spiritual decomposition and prostration do not interest him, what then does? It is only toward the end of the article that we come to the solution of the whole mystery and mystification. There are, it appears certain nameless elements—the third category—who threaten to become the medium for the surrender of "our belief in the validity of democratic life."

All this pretentious and insolent rigmarole about "*fin du mondisme*" turns out to be merely a cover for a political defense of American imperialism, its domestic and foreign policy.

Hook was and remains a tub-thumper for Wall Street and its "democracy." But there is a process of disillusionment, ferment and reorientation taking place today among the intellectuals. Many are beginning to lose confidence in bourgeois democracy. This is indeed the "end of the world" so far as thinkers like Hook are concerned.

Along the intellectual front at the present time the "democratic" supporters of Washington are lining up on one side, while, on the other, are those who gravitate toward Moscow and Stalinism. The professor wants to keep the intellectuals tied to the chariot of imperialism. For this purpose was created the "world mood" with all its attending horrors.

Besides, in the absence of this "philosophic" facade, it would be impossible to tell the professorial mind apart from the mental baggage of any reactionary Senator or Representative. For example, Hook indignantly points to Moscow's role in Poland, Czechoslovakia, the Balkans, the Baltic countries, but carefully refrains from mentioning Washington's role in Italy, Germany, Japan, China, etc.; or, for that matter, England's role in Egypt, India, Indonesia, etc.

He dangles the threat of a world, including the USA, dominated by Stalin, which is doubtless an evil. But no less evil and immediate is Wall Street's march toward world domination, concerning which all the champions of "democracy"—whether in Congress or universities—keep mum, of course.

PROGRAM FOR WORLD WAR III  
It is hardly surprising that under the guise of "social therapy" the professor then prefers a rounded domestic and foreign policy. At home he is in favor of preserving bourgeois democracy—"more and more force to democratic principles in all our institutions."

The sum and substance of his foreign policy may be reduced to three propositions:

- 1) Keep the atom bomb a secret ("iron-clad control of all work on nuclear physics");
- 2) adopt a "tough" policy toward the USSR;
- 3) forge an anti-Soviet bloc ("alignment with other democratic powers").

The "social therapy" of the "democratic" professor turns out almost identical with the proposals of—war-monger Winston Churchill, the faithful watchdog of the British empire.

This essay of Hook, so replete with the bombastic banalities of the academic world, is typical in one respect: it raises the *common* idea of petty bourgeois intellectualdom that there are only two choices in the world of today: Stalinism or American imperialism. And that one must choose one or the other. In this is expressed of course the worship of power on the part of the petty bourgeoisie and their prostration before it. If this was actually the only alternative, the fate of mankind would be sealed. For neither Stalinism nor "democratic" imperialism offer any way out.

Stalinism is reactionary through and through, and can only produce further tyranny, reaction and horrors.

### THE CLASS HOOK SERVES

The imperialist bourgeoisie—it should now be clear—has become consistently reactionary. The virulent nature of its rule has been fully laid bare by two world holocausts in the lifetime of a single generation; by the economic stagnation, depression and crises in the interval between the two world wars; by the decay of bourgeois democracy and the rise of totalitarian forms of bourgeois rule; by the spread of all forms of ideological reaction: anti-Semitism, race-hatreds, obscurantism, etc., etc. The unregenerate nature of imperialist reaction is being laid bare by the cynical preparation for a new slaughter.

The choice is not Stalinism or "democratic" imperialism, but socialism through the proletarian revolution. The decayed bourgeoisie and the no less decadent Stalinist clique in the Kremlin is capable only of draining civilization of all its vitality and dragging mankind down with it into the abyss. Those scientists and intellectuals who are looking for a progressive solution to the atom bomb threat, must turn to the scientific program of the working class, the only dynamic living progressive force in modern society.

They must turn to Marxism and ally themselves with the party of the socialist revolution.

The atom bomb is history's blazing signal, illuminating the precipice on the brink of which civilization today totters. To save Europe and the whole world, the proletarian revolution is unconditionally necessary. For there is no class other than the proletariat viable enough to lead society away from the abyss and back to the highway of progress.

## FASCISM and BIG BUSINESS

By DANIEL GUERIN

Is Fascism a new social order? Is "National Socialism" (Nazism) a form of Socialism? Who sponsors fascism? Who benefits from it? How does it seize power? What program and method can defeat fascism? Guerin gives Marxist answers to these questions in his comprehensive study of the German and Italian fascist movements.

376 pages, paper \$1.00

ORDER FROM:

PIONEER PUBLISHERS

116 University Place

New York 3, N. Y.

# *The Stalinist "Left Turn"*

## *and the*

# *Internal Crisis of the Kremlin Regime*

A large section of worker militants in the unions whose political awakening came during the war years, and others who are just beginning to awaken to political life are acquainted with Stalinism only in the guise it has assumed since June 1941. They know Stalinists as servile agents of imperialism, recruiting sergeants for the imperialist war, flag-wavers, bond salesmen, strikebreakers and red-baiters. It is an entirely new experience for most of them to encounter Stalinists disguised as "militants," employing class-struggle phrases, posing as fighters against capitalism and for socialism. To all these elements we must know how to explain patiently and persistently that Stalinism in its "leftist" guise is just as treacherous, just as inimical to the real interests of the working class as when it is outspokenly reactionary. It is more dangerous because it is more deceptive.

### **Underlying Causes of the Stalinist Turn**

Generally speaking, like the traditional reformists, the Stalinists are hand-to-mouth politicians. But whereas the reformists serve the capitalist rulers at home, the Stalinists are the unquestioning agents of the despotic oligarchy in the Kremlin and adapt themselves invariably to the orders and needs of the latter. On the other hand, the policy of the Stalinist bureaucracy is guided by one primary consideration, namely: to retain its power and privileges in the USSR. Whatever else may change, these factors remain immutable.

The key to the policy of the Stalinists in any given country therefore lies in the existing international and domestic position of the Soviet bureaucracy. It is this, that must be analyzed first in order to understand the true character and scope of the so-called "left turn" now in progress.

Without any fear of exaggeration, one can say that the Kremlin has never confronted a more critical situation at home and abroad than it does today.

The acuteness of the international crisis is self-evident. The conflict can no longer be kept behind the scenes of the "United Nations" organization and in the diplomatic chancelleries of Washington, London and Moscow. It has erupted to the surface with a violence unprecedented in history. Victorious "allies" are at each others throats before a single "peace treaty" has even been drafted. When and where has this ever happened before? If there was nothing else to go by than Winston Churchill's speech, the position of the decisive section of the world bourgeoisie would nevertheless be amply clear: they are convinced that no prolonged period is possible of a relatively "peaceful" coexistence of capitalism and the Soviet Union, with its planned economy and nationalized property forms. They are now preparing for war, or more correctly, they are preparing world public opinion for war. Supplementing the speeches of Senator Vandenberg, Secretary of State Byrnes, Winston Churchill and lesser lights are the carefully calculated diplomatic moves (the interchange of notes on Iran, on Manchuria, on Bulgaria, on the movements of Soviet troops in Iran, etc.).

All this adds up to a "war of nerves" on a scale comparable to that preceding the outbreak of World War II. All this does add up to a highly unstable international situation, with abrupt and even explosive shifts and turns.

Washington and London could reconcile themselves to the establishment and even extension of Moscow's spheres of influence, provided these territories are not withdrawn from the orbit of capitalism. Political domination is not indispensable to imperialism so long as it is able to dominate economically. In the secret deals at Yalta and Potsdam, Stalin agreed to preserve capitalist relations in the "buffer zone." We repeat what we said before, there is no reason whatever to charge Stalin with duplicity on this score. He believed that this was feasible and is probably more astonished than his capitalist "allies" that it turned out impossible for him either to combine capitalist property relations with nationalized property forms or to share political power with capitalist groups. In every case, those territories which came under the Kremlin's political domination were almost simultaneously barred to the penetration of finance capital. It was this that Churchill objected to when he referred in his speech to the "iron curtain (which) has descended across the continent," and not, as he pretended, to the political regime "from Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic."

Under these conditions, from the standpoint of imperialism it is not decisive that the Kremlin has refrained from formally incorporating into the USSR a single country in its "buffer zone," or that capitalist property forms are still nominally retained in these areas.

Why can't the Kremlin bide its time? Why has it so stubbornly refused to relax its monopolistic control of Eastern Europe and the Balkans? Why does it, on the contrary try to reach out for additional concessions (in the Mediterranean, Iran, Turkey, Manchuria) ?

First, there are military and strategic considerations. By virtue of the new relationship of forces on the international area, the world is in effect divided into two decisive spheres of influence: one, under the domination of American imperialism, the other—under Moscow. At best only a precarious equilibrium can be maintained between any two rival world states. The situation is aggravated in the extreme by the fact that today's rivals represent two mutually exclusive social systems. This impells the Kremlin to seek "adequate" military strongholds and territorial guarantees.

Secondly, there is the internal situation in which the regime finds itself. The economic crisis in the USSR, resulting from the war, is so grave that it threatens to pass into a political and social crisis of the regime. The regime sees no way out in the economic field save through the realization of the Fourth Five Year Plan, which cannot be achieved by the devastated country without the resources of the "buffer zones." Unmistakable signs of a maturing social crisis are likewise apparent.

In many respects there is a striking parallel between the existing situation in the USSR and that of 1928-29, and the

"left" turn that followed at that time. In drawing a historical analogy it is, of course, necessary to guard against making an identity. But if this is kept in mind, the historical experience can greatly aid in understanding the present situation.

In 1928-29 the country was threatened with economic collapse and famine. To save itself the bureaucracy executed an abrupt shift in economic policy, launching the First Five Year Plan, with high annual co-efficients of growth. In a general way this situation has been reproduced. The Fourth Five Year Plan is being launched amid devastation and the threat of famine. The inception of this plan represents a break with previous economic policy in the sense that there was no over-all planning in war-time; centralized direction was greatly loosened; great disproportions between various branches of industry not only went uncorrected but were even encouraged if they served the needs of war; and, finally, little attention was paid to costs in terms of labor and money alike which undermined still further the financial structure.

The 1928-29 turn to planning ran up against capitalist tendencies in agriculture—the *Kulak*, or well-to-do farmer—whose welfare had been previously promoted. Does the 1946 resumption of planning confront similar obstacles? Throughout the war years, the entire Stalinist propaganda machine was employed for the purpose of fostering nationalism and capitalist tendencies, especially in the collective farms. In place of the 1929 kulak, there now stands the "millionaire" collective farmer. Elsewhere in this issue we establish the fact that in March 1945 the Kremlin made important concessions (inheritance law) to capitalist elements and virtually in the same breath called for a political struggle against these elements. It ought to be added that at about the same time Duclos, a French Stalinist leader, was summoned to Moscow and instructed to launch the attack against Browder, who, was in common with other party leaders of Stalinism abroad, working might and main to promote chauvinism and capitalist ideology at his particular scene of operations.

## The Danger of the Restorationist Wing

With the arrival of official Russian publications in this country, there is no lack of data testifying to the fear on the part of the Bonapartist clique of the restorationist wing, on the one hand, and the resentment of the masses against the privileged bureaucracy as a whole, on the other. Thus, the leading editorial in the September 1945 *Bolshevik*, "theoretical" organ of the Russian Stalinist party, states that "vestiges of capitalism in the consciousness of a certain part of the people, moods and prejudices connected with private property and nationalism, could not help but be revived under the conditions of German-fascist occupation."

Just what part of the people became infected with "moods and prejudices connected with private property and nationalism." Were they workers? Were they peasants? Were they the privileged bureaucrats and the army officers? These questions are not answered by the editorial. This is done deliberately. Under one and the same formula, Stalin combines in his traditional manner the struggle on two fronts—against the immediate threat of the restorationist tendency and against the gravest danger of all—the possible resurgence of the masses.

The November 1945 *Bolshevik* speaks even more emphatically in an editorial which gives political directives for the then pending elections to the Supreme Council.

The election campaign [states this editorial] demands of party organizations an intensified political activity and *vigilance*. The paramount task of the party organizations in the election campaign is to

carry on large-scale political work. *The hostile elements may attempt during the elections to revive their activity in order to undermine the confidence of the electorate in the elections, and dissuade them from taking part in the elections.* (Our emphasis.)

Let us note in passing that after the election the Moscow press admitted some 2-million blank votes were cast, or almost seven times the number of oppositional votes reported officially in the 1937 elections.

The same editorial then goes on to single out among the "peculiarities of the situation" three special groups who had been exposed to "anti-people's ideology."

1) "millions of Soviet citizens who lived in the regions of the USSR, subjected to German occupation";

2) "millions of Soviet people, freed by the Red Army from fascist captivity and who have now returned to the fatherland";

3) "the citizens of Western provinces and republics which were incorporated in the Soviet Union shortly before the war," (i.e., Karelo-Finnish, Moldavian, Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian, Republics).

How many of these millions are "hostile elements" imbued with "anti-people's ideology?" Why should any large part of the Soviet people be infected with "moods and prejudices connected with private property and nationalism?" The answer of course is that these formulas have been devised by Stalin in order to combat the capitalist tendency within his own party and the state and administrative apparatus, and at the same time, to order to defend the regime against the masses.

For adding to the crisis of the regime is the discontent among the masses. Here, too, there is an analogy with 1928-29.

## Mass Discontent

However, the 1928-29 inequalities in living standards pale in comparison with the gulf which today separates worker and manager, soldier and officer, collective-farm laborer and the collective-farm administrator. The pre-war inequalities received a tremendous impetus during the war years. They were deliberately fostered by the Stalinist regime. This cleavage between the popular masses and the bureaucracy has sharpened the conflict between them.

In the course of the war millions of Soviet civilians and soldiers who had seen the outside world only in the false mirror of the official press obtained their first glimpse of the outside capitalist world. They discovered that even under the conditions of war and devastation, even under the conditions of harsh capitalist exploitation, the living standards were higher, food and clothing more plentiful. Revolutionists readily recognize and admit this fact, just as Lenin did. And like Lenin they draw from this the conclusion that backward Russia cannot build socialism by itself, but must obtain the aid of the more advanced countries. A revolutionary leadership in the USSR would therefore work to extend the October Revolution to other countries. But the Stalinist regime has blocked and continues to block the road to the world revolution in the name of "building socialism in one country." What answer has the Stalinist bureaucracy to give these millions who found higher living standards outside the USSR?

There are other millions who underwent great sacrifices and privations at home and who may, not unnaturally, get the idea that since the war is over and the USSR emerged victorious, their lot should be improved, that they, too, should enjoy some of the fruits of their victory. What answer has the Stalinist bureaucracy to give them?

The very same press that only yesterday spewed nationalism, encouraged capitalist tendencies and never breathed a word

about socialism is now piping a new tune, to wit: ". . . the perspectives for the development of our society from socialism to communism have become still more reenforced" (*Pravda*, January 22, 1946). And this new tune is intended to exhort the masses to new sacrifices:

In some comrades the circumstances of transition to peacetime development generate moods of complacency and placidity; they think that now that the war is ended one can let up on the intensity of the work. The party organizations must fight resolutely against such moods. We are confronted with the enormous task of further strengthening the military-economic might of the Soviet country and of raising the living standards of the toilers. The solution of these tasks is impossible without the exertion of all our forces, without a further growth of the productivity of labor in the degree of organization and consciousness of the masses. (*Bolshevik*, September 1945.)

These words are plain enough: There will be no relaxation for the Soviet masses; they can expect little in the way of improved living standards. The emphasis in the new Five Year Plan remains, as was the case in the past, on heavy industry whose further growth can occur only at the expense of consumer goods production. The huge military burdens remain. The bureaucracy, which has grown monstrously in numbers and privileges, continues to devour an increasing portion of the national income.

The Soviet people can look for no assistance from outside in the economic field. In league with Allied imperialism, the Stalinist bureaucracy helped drag down the living standards of the whole European continent and Asia. It helped destroy the mighty industrial power that once was Germany and to reduce the German working class to the status of paupers.

Stalinism proved incapable of leading the German revolution, which was on the order of the day in 1929-33, and in unity with a Soviet Germany raising the economic level of all Europe. Instead by his policies he then helped strangle the German working class and finally today helps reduce Europe to ruins. And this whole program of barbarism and reaction is carried through in the name of "socialism in one country!"

Concurrently, we repeat, the bureaucracy has grown more arrogant, arbitrary and privileged. The reaction of the masses to this is among the news most stringently suppressed by the Kremlin censors. But two highly symptomatic items did recently creep into the press.

First, there is the incident at a mass meeting addressed by Kalinin where a woman rose up to demand why he was wearing such fine polished boots while the masses had to walk barefoot or in bast shoes. This was indeed audacious! It indicates the degree to which the resentment among the masses against bureaucratic privileges has grown.

The second incident occurred last year in the Yaroslav automobile plant where, at a general factory conference, the old chairman of the factory committee was voted out of office despite the backing of a top trade union bureaucrat. The new chairman was presently removed by the union Central Committee. But the general factory conference reelected him once again, although he was sharply criticized by the Central Committee, who, at the same time, backed the candidacy of the previous chairman.

The "left" turn in the USSR thus serves a number of purposes: 1) to lull the resentment of the masses and cover up the reactionary character of Stalinism; and most immediate of all 2) to conduct a struggle against the capitalist wing at home, and reinforce the ruling Bonapartist clique, the section of the bureaucracy around Stalin.

The news of the tactical "left" turn reached the world last

May with the *Daily Worker's* publication of the Duclos document, attacking Browder. The downfall of Browder has no independent significance of its own but must be viewed as part of internal and international situation of the Stalinist regime. The same thing applies to the developments in the Stalinist parties in the rest of the world.

It was Browder's personal misfortune to be at the head of a party which Stalin used once before to signal a "left" turn. The Kremlin attaches great importance to such details. In 1929 it was Lovestone's fate to serve as scapegoat. The expulsion of Lovestone, the then leader of American Communist (Stalinist) Party, came as a public proclamation to the world that much bigger and more important heads would soon roll inside the USSR. Lovestone's political death at Stalin's hands was followed by the physical annihilation of the left wing—the Trotskyists—and the liquidation of the right wing in the Soviet Union, headed by Bukharin, Rykov and Tomsky—that is, the liquidation of the very people with whom Stalin had been in alliance and upon whom he had relied in his struggle against Trotsky. It remains to be seen whether the current "left" turn will likewise be accompanied by a large-scale purge. There would be nothing surprising in it, for Stalin, the Kremlin Nero, is the greatest devourer of his own agents.

Ironically enough, the same Browder who waged, in Stalin's behalf, the struggle against Lovestone, and who expelled Lovestone in 1929 for rightist deviations, finds himself expelled 17 years later—for right, opportunist revisionism. Almost the same language used by Browder at that time to denounce Lovestone, is now being used against Browder.

## How Far Left Will the "Left" Turn Go?

The amplitude of the Stalinist swing to the "left" does not depend on Stalin's will but on the further development of the international and domestic situation. Circumstances may compel the Stalinists to move much further than they themselves contemplated.

Trotsky once characterized Stalin as an opportunist with a bomb. This characterization applies to the whole movement headed by the Stalinist bureaucracy and to its parties in the capitalist countries. It manifested itself most graphically in 1929 when in recoiling from a disastrous opportunist course leaped all the way to ultra-leftism. The current swing to the left has not gone, of course, nearly so far. When one leaps from right to left, the point of landing on the left depends largely on how far to the right the starting point is. The current leap of the Stalinists started from such an extreme right that the landing point is still pretty much to the right. To arrive at the same point as in 1929 they would have to negotiate the distance in several leaps.

Moreover, several factors operate to retard the "leftward" movement of the Stalinists and to render it highly spasmodic in character.

In the first place, the very gravity of the situation, and the greatly restricted arena for maneuver renders Moscow all the more avid for allies, no matter how unreliable, no matter how temporary and weak.

For example, in Brazil, long after the "left" turn in the United States, the Stalinists flung themselves into the embraces of dictator Vargas. In Argentina, right now, they are coquetting with Peron. The services of the Stalinists will probably be offered gratis for some time to any colonial and semi-colonial bourgeoisie that makes even a gesture of ranging itself against American imperialism.

Conversely, to gain a respite, or some trifling concession, no

matter how ephemeral, Stalin will not hesitate to order an about-face or to sell out his puppet parties to Washington. The most recent case in point, is the Moscow deal, where the Yanan regime was bartered over the counter.

Moreover, in countries where the Stalin parties are powerful, their very strength operates as an obstacle to their turning too sharply to the left. For this immediately poses the question of the proletarian conquest of power. And this is precisely what the Kremlin fears the most. Not alone because it will precipitate war with the "democratic" imperialists, but also because the European revolution may be unleashed thereby, and sweep away the Kremlin oligarchy itself in its raging flood. That is why the Stalinists remain in the cabinets in France and Italy. And that is why they will do everything in their power to remain in an alliance with the respective bourgeoisies to the last possible moment. An open break between the USSR and Washington-London would, of course, alter their role drastically. Driven into opposition, the strong Stalinist parties in western Europe could readily engage in such ventures as the one with the EAM in Greece.

Is it possible for the Stalinists in given countries, and espe-

cially the United States, to move as far in the next period as they did in 1929? This is by no means excluded. They are now executing a forced turn. In the critical and highly explosive situation that exists, all sorts of dizzy last minute twists and turns of policy are possible. In exceptional circumstances, if they find all avenues of escape blocked to them, these opportunists with bombs are quite capable of ultra-leftist adventurism, as they demonstrated several times previously.

In 1938 when England moved toward an anti-Soviet four-power alliance (Britain, France, Germany and Italy), Stalin—in a letter purportedly answering a young Russian—threatened the bourgeoisie with "world revolution." Significantly references to this notorious "Ivanov letter" have been reappearing recently in the official Russian press. Stalin's reply to Churchill repeats in different terms the 1938 bluff as a counter-threat to the threat of a two-power bloc against the USSR. It is a bluff because Stalinism cannot alter its counter-revolutionary character. But this does not at all mean that it is no longer capable of conducting adventurist policies. Ultra-leftism has as little in common with revolutionary Marxism as opportunism. This has been confirmed both in theory and practice.

## Lackawanna: Steel Town 1946

By V. GREY

A big strike is like a rehearsal for revolution. Like a revolution, it has a long preparatory stage or series of stages; and yet it comes with a suddenness and ferocity that surprises everyone; not least of all, the participants. It can carry a huge mass of people to a higher level of development. And when it is over, when it recedes, it does not permit this heavy mass to ebb all the way back to the starting point. This too is like a revolution.

As long as capitalism continues, with its constant pressure on the workers, we must look at these advances as mileposts on the road of socialist revolution—and not as real lasting improvements in the material conditions of the workers. They are mainly advances in understanding. The workers then stand on a higher vantage point, and are better able to see the tasks ahead. How they gain the height, how the human mind leaps, should be seen and understood by those who want to prepare for the greatest leap of all.

A big strike tests ideas as well as people. It shoulders prejudice aside. It rejects all cowardice. Its own needs demand sacrifices the majority had never consciously contemplated. The more crucial the strike, the more bitter the struggle, all the more surely does the latent genius of the masses come into the open.

Such was the case in Lackawanna during the 1946 Steel Strike. These things were demonstrated more clearly there than in most steel towns where they were only half-disclosed. This was because large picket lines were necessary here. The steel corporations used Lackawanna as one of their guinea pigs and refused to allow union men to maintain the plant. They provided food and bedding for the scabs, asked foremen and others to work, and defied the union. So the workers struck January 11 instead of on the 20th, and began mass picketing which they continued 24 hours a day until February 18.

The great steel strike shook the capitalist earth. The mighty Morgans trembled at it. It stopped the usual show in Washington (where pitiful creatures like Truman tried to wield a ring-

master's whip.) It left its mark on the country's economy. And it did a great deal more.

It reached down into the little town of Lackawanna of some 28,000 souls, and shook these 28,000 out of their accustomed way of life. Lackawanna will never be the same. It was a town of saloons and churches. More a huddle of houses than a town, cultureless and hard bitten. It was prejudice-ridden. Adjacent to the industrial and commercial city of Buffalo, it conducted no real business but the dreary business of making a living seven to three, three to eleven, eleven to seven, in the steel plant.

The town was Jim Crow—divided into sections by race and nationality. The pathetically small margin of difference between the two sides of the tracks was an insurmountable social barrier. People were frozen into little molds. The crumpled, dirt stiffened overalls of the plant or the shinier stiff clothing of Main Street—both seemed to contain unthinking, unfeeling ingots of humanity. The only constructive activity the people seemed to know was the body-destroying, mind-murdering work of the mills.

But a tremendous change has now taken place. The strike unleashed a torrent of enthusiasm—from a reservoir nobody had ever seen. The dam and dikes of conservatism and prejudice were battered down. The narrow rut's of people's lives were widened. Negroes, foreign workers, native whites—were jostled, pressed together in a crowding flood of their own making.

True, the houses still stand in Lackawanna—Fifth Street, the Turnpike, Gates and Wasson Avenues—unpainted, miserable. And the railway tracks still divide the town, True, each brother returned to his side of the ghetto when the storm was over. But every picket among the thousands had felt in his prejudiced heart the disturbing wind of class solidarity, and he would never be the same again.

It wasn't just a case of colored and white workers rubbing shoulders in a common activity. They had done that in the plant for years. But here was a common FIGHT—against a common enemy. Here was the camaraderie of struggle. Negro pickets, al-

most as if they consciously wanted to show off to their white brothers, would take long chances. They would run behind the mills to lonely places, to find a bunch of sneak foremen who were attempting to scab. They would go out on the ice of Lake Erie to prevent the foremen-scabs from entering from the rear. They would be the first to volunteer for less pleasant tasks when the first exciting days were over. The best white pickets wanted to be assigned with the best Negroes. White men learned to be proud to clap their brother fighters on the back and kid around with them.

These were the same Negroes whose fathers had been imported from the south by Bethlehem Steel to break the 1919 strike. These were the same whites whose fathers persecuted and despised the Negroes. They were the same whites who themselves only yesterday reviled the Negro—and had little faith that these poverty stricken people would hold out in a strike of any duration.

But the very doubts and suspicions of the past, the dead wood of conservatism, added fuel to the conflagration when it came. People living under capitalism are not dew-sprinkled little plants, like lillies-of-the-valley. They are big with faults. The men of Lackawanna brought their faults and prejudices to the picket line with them. These faults did not automatically die away as a precondition of unity—but entered into the melting pot in their own way during the struggle.

For instance, you can spot the more anti-Negro elements by their use of the word “boogie.” But before the strike was very old you began to hear warm expressions something like this—“Say, those boogies are ALL RIGHT!”

If there had been no mistrust in the past, there would have been no rivalry in action in the present—no urge among the best elements to cement and emphasize their unity. An excellent example of this new-born urge was the picketing of Gerald K. Smith in near-by Buffalo during the strike. A dozen carloads of colored and white workers came eight miles from the steel town to show their solidarity against this race-baiter. They had no former knowledge of working-class politics whatever. They understood only one thing: that Smith was trying to break up their picket lines by turning the white against the colored. That was enough for them.

## Turning the Tables

It is a commonplace in history that a brake upon progress can under certain conditions become its accelerator. The understandable desire for food, clothing and shelter in Lackawanna kept the workers chained yesterday. But with changing times this same desire caused them to break the chains.

Less commonplace, but illustrating the same law of transformation, are other phases of Lackawanna's struggle. During the war, most of the men worked 16 hours a day at one time or another. And on the very eve of the strike, many men were still fighting over “sixteens.” But the men whom poverty and Bethlehem Steel forced to work these long hours in the plant were well prepared for eight, twelve and sixteen hours a day on the picket line.

Not only on the first day but on the tenth and the twentieth, there were sleepless, red-rimmed eyes. Many insisted on these long hours even though there might be an adequate complement of fresh men at their post.

The familiar badge of capitalist servitude, is the check number and the eternal time-card. In Lackawanna these same time-cards were given out for picket duty. On them were written the picket's name, and his check number in the plant. His picket

captain signed him in and out for picket duty just as his foreman had done in the plant. After five weeks of picketing—long after the excitement was over, after financial troubles, sickness, dullness, and false rumours of victory had done their work, there were still 1,276 men showing up steadily on the picket line out of 10,000 people in the plant. Capitalism had given Lackawanna a good training.

## A Defeat Contributes to Victory

Other obstacles turned into stepping stones, too. The memory of the 1919 defeat was often considered, and no doubt was in fact, an obstacle in the way of strike, a stumbling block of the mind, just as it was in the organization campaigns.

Steel is not an industry of changing personnel. The 1919 defeat was as familiar as is yesterday to a great many steel workers. It stuck in their minds. A great many younger men were the sons of 1919 strikers. They remembered their fathers blacklisted—or locked out an extra year for daring to strike. Many were the tales of mounted cops charging horse and all into saloons, clubbing and dragging their helpless victims into the street. This memory hung over the mind, like the smoke-pall over the town.

Before the strike no matter how hard you tried you could seldom get up much interest over 1919—not even much bitterness against the company. Surely, you would say, anyone would be class-conscious for fair after he went through THAT experience. But it didn't seem to be so. They remembered the hunger and the suffering but couldn't definitely and clearly state the basic cause for it. A “radical” would say the most obvious thing that ought to stick in your mind after an experience like that is that the workers have to fight the bosses. But the worker who has done the fighting—and lost, thinks otherwise. . . . Sure, these workers knew the company boded them no good. Sure, they did not believe in the Horatio Alger fairy tales of poor boy makes good. But they did not seem to have the fire and the will to action that great fights require. And the memory of 1919 was one thing that caused this partial paralysis.

But this same memory, once the step was taken, turned into a mood of vengeance, and hurled new soldiers into battle. Hundreds and hundreds of men in their fifties and sixties, some in their seventies, walked the picket line in Lackawanna—veterans of 1919. By and large it was a picket line of middle-aged and old men.

Some had been in other areas during that struggle. One old timer said, “I was down in Pennsylvania then. I walked away from our fellows on line because I think I could take care of myself.—I was young fellow,” he said apologetically, “and the scabs jump me.—See this leg?—I stay together with the line now. But I stay here and help—don't worry—I stay here.”

Towards the end of the strike, far more than at the beginning, you would hear the remarks about 1919—the determination not to let the companies do what they did then. With the passage of time the similarity of struggle became more apparent, just as its points of difference did. The basic, and crucial character of the struggle became so clear that men began to say, “It's not the 18½ cents I'm worried about. It's us or the company; that's what I'm thinking of.” This may have been in their minds much earlier. But finally it began to be on their tongues.

Some might say this fight was easier than 1919. But that would be putting the question wrongly. If the present strike was not so costly it is because the down payment of 1919 and

the instalments of '37 and '41 had already paid the blood and gained the organization necessary to win the fight.

The same workers were involved. And they were fighting the same companies. Dearly bought experience could be applied directly by the buyers.

Because of the compactness of Lackawanna, the large number of people with a similar body of experience, there was actually a *collective consciousness*, a mass determination, a hatred of the company and a will to vengeance and victory that no single individual was aware of. If you could have opened their minds before the strike you would have found the usual family worries, and a thousand and one different interests. You would have found things perhaps, that made them all different from one another. But you would have also found—in every single one, at least a drop of memory of 1919. Small as this was, it was the great common denominator that made it possible to add all these human fractions to a mighty number.

The past struggles, though hardly spoken of in ordinary times, in reality pull like an undertow beneath the surface mind. It is all too easy to lose sight of this during times of inactivity, during reaction. It is all too easy to take the glum memory of the individual's empty stomach for the social memory of heaving rebellion. The day-to-day home life, the movies, the church, the latest song on everybody's lips, the interminable repetition of days in the plant—all beat their waves in one direction along the ordinary channels of the brain. But the undercurrent of social memory, giving the lie to all the claptrap that the conscious mind believes, comes rushing to the surface in January 1946.

## Answering the "Sheep" Theory

Because of the uneven rhythm of this inner development, there are those who say it does not exist. They say the steelworkers merely follow the leader. The union moved because Murray told it to move. The steelworkers are a bunch of sheep, etc. But this is not so. And only a sheep mentality can think that it is.

Murray was supported but never idolized by the rank and file Lackawanna worker. Murray supported the war and the no-strike pledge. So did the Lackawanna workers. But under Murray's leadership during the war, the only general flat hourly increase was the 4½ cents awarded by the WLB in the well known 1942 "Little Steel" decision. And Murray could justify all defeats by waving the flag.

This was all very well. But the fact remained that the steelworkers wanted more money. And during the great miners' strikes of 1943 the furnace and mill workers began to talk about John L. Lewis. They identified Lewis with the fighting miners, and they wanted a fighting leader. But this tendency never reached an organized level in Lackawanna. Not especially articulate or meeting-conscious at *any* time, the men were particularly loth to attend at that time, when talk—do-nothing talk—was all they heard.

Attendance at union meetings hit an all-time low in Lackawanna—during the drive for the \$2 raise—just a few weeks previous to the strike. Why was this? On one side there was a tendency to disregard the promises of the leadership, or at least not to take them very seriously; and on the other, there was the feeling which the Murray leadership was itself responsible for—namely that "they" will take care of things, and "we" are only rank-and-filers, etc.—A sheep psychology to be sure, but unlike the sheep's capable of turning suddenly into its most drastic opposite.

Of course the Lackawanna workers had the illusion that great questions are settled by "leaders." Of course they had the illusion that the government was impartial. It would all be settled without a strike. "They" would get together and give us our demands. Didn't President Truman say that a 24½-cent increase was justified? etc. This illusion was very widespread. Without a doubt a great majority in Lackawanna were its victims. They didn't seem to believe there would be a strike at all.

In reality, this illusion of peaceful development, though widespread, was exceedingly weak. It was like a small manure pile spread over a wide field. The sight and smell were everywhere. But the rising tide of class struggle cleansed it away very quickly.

The Lackawanna workers did not project the strike. They did not consciously prepare for it. The only mass meeting previous to the strike drew a scattered four or five hundred people. The company's open preparations for the comforts of scabs—carloads of food, bedding, cigarettes, etc.—drew no indignant response—at the time. Yet the workers struck with firmness and ferocity when their hour came.

When Bethlehem Steel's Lackawanna management refused to agree to the union's maintenance plan and continued to



make open preparations for scab maintenance, the District United Steelworkers Director, Joseph Molony, called the strike at 9 P.M. January 11. He announced it in a surprise move, to a small roomful of cheering stewards. The vast majority learned of the strike at the 11 o'clock exodus in the midst of shouting loudspeakers, signs, pickets, traffic jams and all the rest.

Foremen and superintendents, frantically summoned by the company to come and maintain the plant, must have expected the lines to let them through. They approached with a kind of half-confidence at first. Supervision was a holy of holies. They had generally had no trouble in the past entering the plant during work stoppages. Besides, the men weren't hot for strike yesterday, were they? The strike was called over the men's heads, wasn't it? How quickly the 5 to 1 strike vote (10 to 1 in Lackawanna) was forgotten, and people's minds lulled by appearances!

Oh yes, men took off their hats when they shuffled into the superintendent's office only the day before. But in the very first hour of the strike the same men would tip over the same superintendent's car with the greatest boldness, and resolutely opposed the startled foremen who tried to walk in the gate.

Three Gate, the scene of so many weary dawns, was an electrically charged human dynamo. Round and round the pickets

walked, with the rhythm and watchfulness of tigers. And then a superintendent's car would turn hesitantly toward the gate. Sizzle went the dynamo! Bang went the line! "Get him" yelled the gang! And thirty pickets rushed the car. Some pulled the door open, some pulled the driver half out. Others tried to close the door on his neck. Still others began to turn the car over—until with eye-bulging fright the "big shot" drove away. This was not smooth, stream-lined action, with direction and discipline. But these very deficiencies prove the singleness of main purpose, the unity of intent—and most important in this case, they reveal that not a flying squadron of picked men, not an organized bunch of stewards and committeemen, but a nameless cross section of the mass, were the participants.—Sheep run about when the dog barks. But they never bite the dog.

It was a long strike, in a way—long enough, at any rate, for some to go hungry. But the five weeks of picketing at sixteen posts, keeping twenty-seven shanties manned for twenty-four hours a day, brought out the iron qualities of the workers, and inexorably pushed up a rank-and-file leadership.

The men who organized the picketing, kept it tightened up, dispatched the relief pickets, kept them fed and kept them warm, saw to the thousand and one details of keeping this army in the field and on its toes—these men were not the international organizers nor, on the whole, the local union officials, although a few of these played a very good role. Whatever the man's title—secretary of this or that, committeeman, steward—or just plain "man," if he could lead, then the eruption of the strike pushed him through even the conservative crust of the steel union to a position of leadership.

There were 135 picket captains, all of them volunteers. Some of the very best had never been stewards in the union, or come to a union meeting. During the strike they held their own meetings in the union hall. They created their own dispatching system and recognized only the most active picket leader as chairman. They had no "legal" power, no connection with the "top committee" but they settled the great majority of practical problems among themselves.

The strike was long enough to bring new strata of the workers into action. Living as they did, pressed together in the same little area, the less active were pressured and shamed by the more active. The wives played an important part here. Mrs. Jones would tell Mrs. Smith over the back fence, or at the grocery store, that her husband had picketed every day—and ask what Mr. Smith was doing.

This was such a powerful force that the dispatcher even tried the experiment of assigning a group of pickets to a regular post on the basis of their being neighbors instead of shop mates. Lincoln Avenue, a residential section, is adjacent to the side fence of the strip mill. Four shanties were put up on this avenue and the usual vigil kept. The place was very lonely, however, a long way from any of the front gates, and men would drop away after a few shifts of duty—especially the night men. So names were looked up, addresses were checked, and men who lived in the Lincoln Avenue area, regardless of what shop they worked in, were assigned to these posts. And those who pleaded sickness at home to get out of night duty like as not had their next door neighbors, as picket captains, answering their plea.

The strike was long enough to bring back men, who had got temporary jobs, to the picket line for a day or two a week. Four rheumatic old men shared the work of cleaning up the union headquarters. But this happened during the third week of the strike. They had stayed home until then.

A high school girl wrote an essay—an old timer wrote a

scathing denunciation of "Americans" who didn't show up on the picket line—a striker's son offered the services of his school band—all these came in the last week of the strike, and never found their audience at all. An open-hearth worker brought his stripling 16-year-old into the hall to help the dispatcher; a college boy, a part time steel worker, came out to picket Saturdays and Sundays. Amateur sign painters began to decorate the hall with cartoons and slogans.

It wasn't just the more backward who came forward as the strike rolled into its later weeks. Those who it seems had been stunned into backwardness, were just coming out of their daze. They were among the best contributors when their time came.

At the same time, many good men slipped away, too. After the first day or two, the excitement died down. The more volatile and adventurous, if they lacked the patience and doggedness of the majority, would not wait half the night in order to catch a lone fence-climber and give him his deserts. They drifted off and did not come back until the company began using airplanes to drop food and supplies into the besieged plant. But even this did not bring many of them. A wave of violence and strike-breaking would certainly have brought them back.

The Blast Furnace workers, the lowest paid and hardest worked, were everywhere at the beginning of the strike. But at the end the Open Hearth men were more in evidence. The latter had more Union experience and more "savvy." They also had more savings.

In the course of the strike, the saloon keepers and small merchants of Lackawanna gave thousands of dollars. (Other unions gave next to nothing, because the fat-headed top leadership in Lackawanna opposed any real appeal to them.) Two of the saloon keepers personally aided the food committee with food preparations, coffee delivery, etc. One in particular, the owner of a small saloon—"Joe's Place"—made almost daily tours with hot chocolate, soup, sandwiches, etc. He spent hundreds of dollars and hours of his time "helping those who helped him." He was a Jew. His action was a real blow against anti-Semitism. But the main point is that *every* small business place gave something or other. Most of them really wanted to. Those who didn't felt they *had* to.

The length of the strike gave the workers time to think. It gave them time to grind over the lessons of their own actions. It gave them time to realize it was really a nation-wide strike, and they were among hundreds of thousands of other steel workers. Again and again they remarked that the big companies were using Lackawanna for a guinea pig—that the companies hoped to destroy union maintainance in this particular plant—and thus destroy it everywhere.

These men said they were *glad* they could be the ones to win this thing for the rest of labor. This in the face of going out ten days before the rest of the country—and leaving so much equipment ruined that half the men were out of work another five weeks! What an advance for Lackawanna!

The strike gave the workers time to wonder about Washington and ask plenty of questions. "What are they doing in Washington? What are they taking away from us down there? This fellow here says we should have a Labor Party. Of course we should! I was always for a labor party—wasn't I, Jim?"—You can't find serious opposition to the Labor Party anywhere, up and down the picket line. Why is this? What is happening?

Why the same thing is happening on the picket line in a few weeks as happened in the plant in a generation. The accumulation of grievances and incidents that were never grievances but just part of the sluggish flow of life under capitalism

—this reached the boiling point and erupted into the strike. Now in faster tempo the accumulated lessons of the past are reviewed. They are marshalled before the unaccustomed mind—and wondered at. It still hasn't reached the stage of a "natural," "normal" process. Even though the tempo has quickened—perhaps just because it has—the struggle for a labor party will have its repercussions too, even in Lackawanna.

Lackawanna may not be the perfect example of a steel town. It may not present a perfect picture of the American industrial

worker. Certainly there have been different experiences—and special circumstances. Added to this, there is a somewhat different background from the average town.

But the workers in Lackawanna eat, drink, clothe themselves and love their children. They work in the mills of the capitalist exploiter. In this, as in many other respects, they resemble their brothers in the rest of the United States. In a certain sense, Lackawanna is a cross-section of the worker's world in the USA.

# The Political Situation in Brazil

(Published in the August 12, 1945 issue of *Diario Carioca* at Rio de Janeiro, Brazil)

The absolute dictatorship wielded by Vargas for 11 years in Brazil came to the end of its tether in the first part of 1945. In this situation the Brazilian Trotskyists—the Revolutionary Socialist Party—advanced as the central slogan the convocation of the National Constituent Assembly. The reasons for this, along with the analysis of the Brazilian political scene, are contained in the document which appears below.

We have in addition received a Manifesto of the RSP Central Committee, adopted November 4, 1945 and published in November 12, 1945 issue of *Folha da Noite*, Sao Paulo, Brazil. This Manifesto briefly reviews the conditions under which the PSR first launched the slogan for the Constituent Assembly. "This demand," states the Manifesto, "was needed under the circumstances then in force in Brazil. Formulated with precision, it influenced all the popular programs published at the time."

There was one noteworthy exception—the Brazilian Stalinists, who under the leadership of Luiz Carlos Prestes strove might and main to prop up the Vargas dictatorship. Incarcerated for years by Vargas, and while still in prison, Prestes sent a telegram to his jailor, hailing the "democratic tendencies" in the latter's regime. As the Manifesto correctly points out: "Liberated immediately after this disorienting declaration, he (Prestes) confirmed his previous position in successive interviews with the press. The New State in his surprising interpretation 'was marching toward democracy.' A 'suitable solution' of the crisis confronting the fascist regime in Brazil must be 'unity and peace,' that is, there should be a 'national coalition government,' embracing in first place the totalitarian rabble, headed by Getulio (Vargas)."

The support of the Stalinists provided Vargas with a breathing spell. "Without their support Getulio Vargas would not have long survived the post-war crisis." On the very eve of the deposition of Vargas, the general secretary of Stalinist party in Brazil, issued a statement declaring, "We are ready to defend the government against any aggressors, from whatever quarter they may come."

While the Stalinists did not succeed in saving Vargas, they did nevertheless succeed in disorienting the struggle for the democratization of the regime. As the Manifesto states: "Now it is not only the revolution which the so-called Communist Party betrays. It betrays the democratic liberties which the mass of the people are striving to implant in the country upon the fumigated ruins of the New State."

In conclusion the Manifesto declares:

"The Revolutionary Socialist Party demands that all the remnants of the New State be eliminated immediately. Among these are: the fascist law that destroyed free unions and the right to strike; the National Security Tribunal; the DIP, now disguised with the pseudonym DNI; Article 177, the special and political police; the mediators and prefects named by the dictator as the passive effluvium of his choice; the legal statute in force against the press. And above all, we demand freedom for the circulation of the workers' papers with no restriction other than the civil law.

"The Revolutionary Socialist Party calls upon the proletariat and the popular masses in general to defend tenaciously the democratic conquests of the recent months, at which blows are already being directed

by the new gentlemen of the Government, and to fight for the enlargement of these conquests. It also warns all the workers that while the fall of the tyrant represents a beginning of liberty, it is far from being, however, all the liberty that is implied in the suppression of the bourgeoisie as a dominant class.

"Without idealizing bourgeois parliamentarianism, because in its opinion a Soviet State, a state of the historic type of the Paris Commune, is superior as a democratic expression, the Revolutionary Socialist Party publicly reaffirms its conviction that a *National Constituent Assembly* in Brazil should be able to prepare the city and rural proletariat and the related layers of the population for much greater historic tasks. *Long live, therefore, the National Constituent Assembly!*"

The Brazilian people are just beginning to emerge from the long night of the New State.

Compelled by internal factors and above all by international developments, the dictatorship has *apparently* capitulated. Presidential and Congressional elections are scheduled for December 2 of this year.

In a slow but progressive reawakening, the popular masses are beginning to mobilize for the electoral battle, although there remains a certain disinterestedness and skepticism. The totalitarian virus implanted by the pre-fascist camarilla of Getulio Vargas still did not succeed, however, in destroying the political consciousness of the popular masses of Brazil. From day to day new sections begin active participation in political life.

The Brazilian proletariat, which has such a glorious tradition of struggle, was the target for the heaviest blows of the totalitarian fury of Getulioism. The workers were bled by the increasing misery and paralyzed by terrorist means and social demagoguery. Though still confused about the exact road it should take, the Brazilian proletariat is demonstrating its decision to resume its historic course interrupted by the coup d'etat of November 10.

## The Political Forces in the Field

Political groupings of various ideological colorations, representing the most diverse economic interests, are growing throughout the country. Among these groupings are three principal currents which, by their quantitative value, occupy the Brazilian scene; two of the three contend for the presidency of the Republic and for parliamentary representation; the third current stands, above all, for the convocation of a National Constituent Assembly.

The *apparent* and the sincere followers of General Gaspar Dutra, Minister of War, who is considered the favored candidate for the presidency of the Republic, are grouping around

the title of Social Democratic Party (PSD). Despite their heterogeneity, given the character of our economy and the historic immaturity of the Brazilian bourgeois class, the Dutra forces represent the most clearly reactionary among the possessors of the means of production in Brazil. Gathered under the banner of the PSD are the industrialists and the big national commercial interests in their most complete expression (Roberto Simonsen, Matarazzo, Euvaldo Lodi, Gastao Vidigal, Brasilio Machado Neto, etc.)—the industrialist group who represent the most openly protectionist tendencies and who are likewise most firmly linked with British imperialism.

Apparently the entire state apparatus is on the side of General Gaspar Dutra.

Even more heterogeneous in its social-economic content than the first faction, the "National Democratic Union" constitutes a mixture of the agrarian bourgeoisie (PRPPRM, with Joao Sampaio, Julio Prestes, Alberto Whately, Artur Bernardes, etc.) the middle class remnants of "tenantism" (like Juraci Megalhaes, Jose Americo, Manuel Rabelo Virgilio de Melo Franco, Miguel Costa, Eliezer Megalhaes, etc.) the middle commercial interests and sections of the urban petty bourgeoisie of radical tendencies in the social-reformist camp (Social Democratic Union, Liberation Movement, intellectual sharpshooters, etc.)—the so-called "democratic left" inclined toward socialism. In spite of the "circumstantial" presence of a strong nucleus of big land owners, the social-economic content of the grouping is determined and revealed by a dominant liberal tendency in its programmatic expression—in the economic field, state non-interventionism and free trade; on the political plane, the concession of civil liberties and workers' democracy (free unions and the right to strike.) In the international sphere they maintain closer ties with North American imperialism, the principal consumer of our agricultural and livestock products and raw materials, which furnish Brazil in return dollar exchange and manufactured products.

Extremely more complex than the two preceding currents are the elements which may be called the "prestista-queremista." Although they are far from possessing "absolute organic unity," these elements are composed of tendencies which, with "their own objectives," have the central aim of circumventing the presidential elections. The principal leaders are Luiz Carlos Prestes, Stalinist chief in Brazil, and the dictator Getulio Vargas. If the position of Prestes is motivated more by international than by national factors (Stalin's diplomatic maneuvers to secure "friendly" governments, trade relations, etc.) the "appeasers" position of the leaders of the Brazilian Communist Party (PCB), their striving for "order" and a "peaceful and united" solution of the Brazilian crisis, with their hand extended to an imaginary "progressive bourgeoisie"—has stronger roots than appear on the surface. It is the same bonapartist basis on which Getulio Vargas based his pre-fascist dictatorship. Just as the dictatorship until recently placed itself "above" the belligerent political groups, pretending to play the role of arbiter in maintaining "order" and protecting property, so now Prestes and his ex-communist followers have completely abandoned the class-struggle camp in search of a "peaceful development" which they idealize. And they have likewise abandoned internationalism as useless in view of the "increasing cooperation of the great powers." With his position of equal distance from the candidates and of semi-alienation from the presidential struggle, demanding in first place the convocation of the National Constituent Assembly "with Vargas and his following still in power," Prestes reveals the bonapartist character of his politics and

effects "in practice" a bloc of the PCB with the remnants of the New State.

It is not by mere chance that the position of Prestes today fuses almost completely with the pre-fascist bonapartism of Getulio Vargas. The thermidorian ideology of Stalin, which promoted the degeneration of the Russian workers' state, is projected in all the former sections of the defunct Third International. Therein lies the source of Prestes' action in leading the ex-communists of Brazil, with some exceptions, to that position of bonapartist national reformism contained in the program read at Sao Januario and repeated at Pacaembu with an accentuated demagogic note, for "all the people" of Sao Paulo. The bonapartism of Prestes, with its "anti-coup d'etat" and "appeasement" obsession, resorts to the same arsenal of social demogogy which Getulio seized upon to justify the coup d'etat of 1937, aiming to defend the class domination of the bourgeoisie against the electoral agitations of its own political parties. If with that position of bringing grist to the dictator's mill, Prestes is helping the state apparatus to survive, it is also true that he has his own nationalist-reformist objectives, which he seeks to attain with the participation of his tendency "in a government of national confidence." In the foreign field such a government would serve the aspirations for survival of the bureaucratic caste dominating Russia, which today suffers from the accentuated nationalist regression promoted by the gentlemen in the Kremlin.

The reasons why the PCB, notwithstanding its political crime of class collaboration is winning a certain prestige among the masses are twofold: on the one hand, the profound political backwardness of certain sections of the Brazilian proletariat, impeded in its ideological development during the past 15 years by the fatal line of the defunct Third International and by the totalitarian demagogy of the New State; and on the other hand, because the petty-bourgeois layers and broad "plebian" sections see in Prestes the democratic radicalism of the Prestesism of Coluna, which they confuse with his limited aspirations of today.

The mass base of "queremism" is little different from that of Prestes. Except for a section which follows Prestes because they believe he symbolizes communism, the workers and intellectuals who followed Getulio Vargas before Prestes was freed from jail together with the Stalinists who today give disguised support to "queremism," integrate practically into a single "Prestista-queremista" current which could move toward a "white coup d'etat," taking the form of a "government of national confidence."

## The Speeches of Prestes

Even to the most inexperienced Marxists, those whose knowledge of the doctrines of Marx and Engels does not go beyond the "ABC of Communism," the theses defended by Prestes in his speeches should have sounded like the theories of the alchemist Paracelsus to a disciple of Saddy or Ashton.

It would be insulting to the "humanitarian socialist" characteristics of the eighteenth century to draw an analogy between its ideas and those of the "national leader."

The false petty-bourgeois radicalism of the leader of the PCB does not succeed in masking the total abandonment of Marxism by the former captain of the "Prestes Column." The origins of his general line are clear. The "strategic-tactical" orientation of the PCB issues from Stalin's declaration that "the period of war has ended and the period of peaceful development(!) has begun." This pronouncement by the Kremlin magi-

cian was enough for all his satellites throughout the world to hastily cast aside even the pseudo-revolutionary phraseology.

For Prestes, the Brazilian crisis can really be solved only through a National Union with the "sincere (!) and loyal (!) collaboration of all the true (!) patriots, regardless of social category, political ideology or religious creed." As "theoretical" justification Prestes bases himself on the nature of the Brazilian problems which "are problems of the bourgeois-democratic revolution": the solution of these problems "indubitably interests the proletariat which in countries like ours suffers much less

from capitalist exploitation than from the insufficiency of capitalist development." The extension of these class-collaborationist ideas into the international domain leads the orator of Pacaembu to divide finance capital, that is, imperialism, into colonizer and benefactor. It becomes evident then, that with such ideas, which did not find favor even in the most servile reformists of the Second International, Luis Carlos Prestes sinks into the swamp of collaboration with the dictatorship to which he gives

"frank, open and resolute support" in its "march to democracy and while thus proceeding" because the "true (!) and sincere (!) practice of democracy is the thing most necessary in our land."

From the rapturous lyrics of Prestes over *National Union*, *true democracy*, *beneficent foreign capital*, an *all-inclusive communist party* (agnostics, atheists, Catholics, etc.) the conscious proletariat, grounded in the Marxist school, can reach only one conclusion: the leader of the PCB is more than a revisionist of the revolutionary theories of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky, he is a renegade from socialism. It is not necessary to justify here with the texts of the masters the scientific socialism which we affirm. It is enough simply to read the *Communist Manifesto* of 1848, or *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* and *State and Revolution* by Lenin.

The idolator of "order" and of an "effective solution, without greater shocks and friction, of the grave social and economic problems of the hour" feigns ignorance of the fact that in a capitalist society "order" always signifies the submission of the proletariat to the ruling class and that a solution "without greater shocks and friction" can be nothing but a solution *imposed* by the owners of the factories and the land upon their wage slaves. His mystical declarations about democracy have nothing in common with the Marxist characterization of a regime in which "wage slavery is the lot of the people."

Prestes is ignorant, or feigns ignorance of the fact that Leninists always fight for the democratic republic as the preferable form of government *under the capitalist system* without losing sight of the fact that such a regime affords better means for the proletariat to attain socialism, and that the fight for the democratic republic never constituted *an end in itself*.

The *National Union* "of all true (!) patriots, regardless of social category, political ideology or religious creed," praised by the "leader," is the collaborationist hypertrophy of the *Popular Front* tactic which had such tragic consequences for the Spanish and French proletariat. Even more so than the

Popular Front, the National Union blots out class lines in the bourgeois state, completely subordinating the proletariat to the bureaucratic-police rule of the capitalists. *National Union* implies abandonment of the class struggle, the surrender of the workers' weapons of struggle and binds them to the masters of the factories and the land.

The appeal to the "true patriots" made by the Stalinists' "guide" cannot be addressed to the urban and rural worker masses. Only when the workers seize state power will they have a country to defend. Then they have sentiments of revolutionary patriotism which should not be confused with the chauvinistic nationalism of the Soviet bureaucracy. For the present, the "true patriots" of Brazil are the ruling classes.

The Communist Party appears today as the party of "everybody." In this also, Prestes' thinking does not rise one millimeter above a vulgar "populism," aggravated by the character of the epoch in which it reappears. Equally valueless to the leader of the PCB in this respect are Lenin's teachings on the nature of the "proletarian party"—rigorous organization of the working class, founded on a materialist and atheist ideology. The petty-bourgeois and collaborationist mentality of the leader is reflected on the organizational plane, modeling a counterfeit of a communist party which will crumble to dust in the decisive conflict to come with the bourgeoisie.

Prestes' economic ideas in "practical politics" are of no different tenor. He does not discuss the questions most pressing to the workers, such as the high cost of living, pauperism, and working conditions; instead he indicates generic "solutions" which cannot be understood by the worker masses, or he resorts to unbridled demagoguery, harmful to the working class, or he reverts to formulas already singled out as harmless by the bourgeois economists.

Forgetting or feigning to forget the law of the uneven development of capitalism in the national and international sphere, in order to caress his idealized "progressive" industrial bourgeoisie, Prestes spares this greedy devourer of "super profits," venting the fury of his criticism upon the big landowners. Without doubt, the question of land distribution is among the first of the radical transformations through which Brazil must pass. But not in the form indicated by the "national leader." If revolutionary experience shows that in given conditions the agrarian problem can and should be viewed on the level of "bourgeois legality," this does not signify that the final objectives of the "agrarian revolution" should be disfigured by contingencies of adaptation to the capitalist state. If Prestes does not seek to sow confusion in the minds of the rural worker masses, he ought to raise, within the framework of the bourgeois regime, a demand for the confiscation of landed property, which may to a certain extent be put through, varying according to the regions.

Moreover, expropriation without indemnification of the large estates cannot be demanded separate and apart from the measures of pre-revolutionary character, such as workers control of production.

Demands of that order are not, however, raised arbitrarily. They are imposed and conditioned according to the political-economic conjuncture, when the relation of social forces begins to appear favorable to the proletariat.

Nevertheless, the obsessive national-reformist Menshevism of Prestes reduces the Brazilian agrarian question to the problem of creating "internal markets" for the development of his idealized "progressive" bourgeoisie. Disregarding the rich experiences of the historic peasant struggles, and impelled by his deeply



VARGAS

rooted opportunism, the legendary captain presents for one of the most vital Brazilian problems, a reactionary and utopian solution.

## Prestes' Cries Against "Trotskyists"

Prestes' doctrine has nothing in common with Marxism-Leninism. His renunciation of Marxism-Leninism would do very little harm if the famous captain would confess it publicly. But he does not do that. And thus he becomes a mystifier of the proletariat.

To mask his capitulation to the bourgeoisie and his ties with the dictatorship, the Stalinist leader heaps insults on all who denounce his opportunism. Thus he attacks the revolutionary Marxists, who correctly describe the political collaboration of the PCB as treachery, and he attacks the left intellectuals and "liberal" opposition, who censure the PCB for supporting the dictator Getulio Vargas and the New State.

The orator of the "festival" of Pacaembu, with the impudence of a conscious liar, lumps together under the label *Trotskyist*, the revolutionary socialists—disciples of Lenin and Trotsky—and the petty-bourgeois left, who have nothing in common with Marxism. And the "leader" brands as "provocations in the service of fascism" the criticisms of his slogan "for order and security," which gave new vigor to the dictatorship. The "Trotskyist rabble," to this semi-colonial "fuehrer," include not only the Marxists of the school of Lenin and Trotsky, who, true to the theory of the Bolshevik leaders, do not seek to cheat the proletariat with class collaboration and blatant petty-bourgeois patriotism; who point out to the popular masses the road of struggle without quarter against the Vargas dictatorship and all forms of despotism; who do not see in the Brazilian bourgeoisie a "democratic-progressive" fraction; who do not conceal that their final objective is *communism*, through the dictatorship of the proletariat, supported by the rural semi-proletariat and the poor peasants; and who declare openly that only in the road of *class struggle* and *internationalism* will the proletariat be able to diminish its present misery and, when social-political-economic conditions permit it, free themselves definitively from the fetters of capitalist slavery. To Prestes, the "Trotskyist rabble" likewise includes the radical petty-bourgeois intellectuals who, although anti-Trotskyist, struggle honestly against the dictator Vargas and his lackeys, and for *formal democracy*.

Lumping together the revolutionary Marxists—who are proud to have had in their ranks a proletarian militant of the ability of Leon Trotsky, whose historic role and Marxist teachings the slanderous vociferations can never destroy—and petty-bourgeois radicals or liberal oppositionists, who are determined to dismantle the dictatorship of the usurper in the Catete, the leader of the PCB aims at alarming the former, forcing them to cease their criticism of his disastrous opportunism. In that also, Prestes utilizes the methods of his "ally" of today, who, until yesterday, branded as *communists* all who dared to oppose the totalitarianization of Brazil.

Let Luiz Carlos Prestes bellow, then, against the "Trotskyists," whom the dictatorship and the bourgeoisie *in unison* are assailing.

The revolutionary Marxists reject as false, and as deliberately treacherous, the perspective of the "peaceful development" of society initiated by Prestes and his master following the military defeat of fascism.

It fell to the lot of the ex-communists of the defunct Third International, with their Stalin, Togliatti, Browder, Gallagher and consorts, to discover, this time at the end of the second im-

perialist slaughter the process for the "adaptation of capitalism" which Bernstein, Briand, Millerand and Company announced before the blood-bath of 1914-18.

The reformists of our day are rushing headlong into their voluptuous "pacifism." The destruction of the Nazi-fascist bandits does not even remotely affect the antagonisms between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, nor does it reduce in any way the conflicting interests among the various imperialist groups.

They seek to trick the working class with the victory of the British workers, or with the participation of the Communist "fronts" in the bourgeois coalition governments. The bourgeoisie knows how to defend itself. It makes concessions with the left hand, only to take away twice as much with the right. The participation of the counterfeit leftists in power is the "consolation" capitalism gives to the proletariat and the popular masses, who emerge more miserable than ever from this war. It is also the recourse of the ruling class for the purpose of avoiding revolutionary "explosions."

The reformists of the defunct Third International, in their conservative anxiety for "peaceful and united solutions," anticipate with their thesis of "peaceful development" the highly improbable relative stabilization of the capitalist system. Even more, with their shameless and cynical opportunism, they cooperate to make it a fact." They preach "social peace." They smother strike movements and insurrections. They promote or endorse new imperialist agreements.

These valets of capitalism, represented in Brazil by Prestes, are able to fulfil temporarily, as they already succeeded in doing in other historical situations, the role of witch-doctor for the dying. However, the results of their therapy are precarious. Because the patient in his death-agony cannot be saved.

The world bourgeoisie did not solve a single one of its problems through this war; on the contrary its problems have been extremely aggravated. The impoverished, starved European popular masses face the coming winter under conditions of a mortally disorganized Old World economy. The anti-capitalist reactions of the working class, at present unstable and confused, can assume such proportions under the direction of the new vanguard now crystallizing—the Fourth International—that a new cycle of proletarian revolutions for the establishment of socialism will be initiated.

However, if there are firm perspectives in this direction, the working people and their legitimate vanguard—the revolutionary Marxists—still have considerable distance to travel.

In Brazil, it is still the hour of rear-guard defensive battles "against increasing misery and for workers' democracy."

In the course of the class skirmishes for the "recovery and strengthening of the unions," now under the control of a corrupt bureaucracy in the service of the Minister of Labor and the police; in the struggles for an increase in minimum wages and for a sliding scale of wages; for improved working conditions; for the establishment and legalization of "factory, farm and barracks committees"; for the organization and maintenance of



PRESTES

"workers' parties" and "workers' newspapers"—in these skirmishes the working class will regain strength and confidence in its own forces, will develop its class consciousness, and will separate with severity and precision its own camp from the camp of its enemies.

That level of partial struggles, as carried out, will reconstitute the worker forces, will unify their ranks, and will forge the workers' army for the "decisive battles of the vanguard" against capitalism and for socialism.

The proletariat should not succumb to electoral intoxication. The ballot, which for the reformists and opportunists of all colorations constitutes a panacea for all social evils, serves the working class only as a secondary instrument of political struggle. It can and "should" be used as an auxiliary recourse, particularly in the political-economic conjuncture in which Brazil finds itself. But it should be exercised as another "affirmation" of class consciousness.

The electioneering siren-songs of all the groupings turn now, with redoubled hypocrisy and new and seductive promises to the popular masses, requesting their votes.

We have described the political, economic and social content of the three most powerful currents which "legally" appear on the ballot:

The *Social Democratic Party*, ultrareactionary, effective continuator of the New State and the unifier of the most consciously counter-revolutionary Brazilian fascists and semi-fascists, including the oligarchies of the past;

The *National Democratic Union* popularizing the "conservatively" united liberal opposition, with democratic colorations lent to it by the "left wing" composed of the petty-bourgeois radicals;

And the *prestista-queremista*, more popular in composition through the predominance in its ranks of the Communist Party of Brazil, which exploits the socialist aspirations of the masses, but which "in practice" is farther "to the right" than the bourgeois opposition, lending itself to the game of the dictatorship, which seeks to survive either through a possible "white coup d'etat," or through the equally possible device of nominating the dictator in the presidential elections.

This political scene is still subject to change. However, it represents in its general lines the dominant tendencies in the Brazilian situation.

None of the candidates for the presidency of the Republic should, because of their class origin or because of the social forces they represent, merit the support of the urban and rural proletariat, or the agricultural semi-proletariat, or the poor. Moreover, even though the presidential election "can" constitute a stage, what is of interest to the Brazilian people, "in their unity," is a National Constituent Assembly, elected through direct and secret universal suffrage.

We nourish no superstitious faith in the "virtues" of bourgeois elections, for the proletariat can expect almost nothing from constitutional parliamentarism within the framework of the capitalist state.

However, so long as the relation of social forces is unfavorable to the worker masses, preventing them from taking the power from the historically bankrupt bourgeoisie, the workers should seize all possible democratic liberties in order to organize themselves and advance their revolutionary education. It is only in this sense that we fight for free elections and for a National Constituent Assembly in which the proletarian vanguard could make itself heard.

In its struggle for "workers democracy" (freedom of association in trade unions and political parties, freedom of the press for the workers, etc.) the Revolutionary Socialist Party (PSR) declares itself ready to march in a united front with all the socialist and democratic forces of the petty-bourgeois camp, as well as "through concrete actions" with the liberal opposition "at present" opposed to the New State, which in the present stage stands as the principal enemy of workers' democracy for which the revolutionary Marxists struggle under the bourgeois regime.

This united front "dynamic of action" does not imply that the revolutionary socialists would compromise their organizational autonomy or renounce ideological criticism of their "circumstantial" allies and the united front should be formed immediately in concrete actions to realize the aspirations most strongly felt by the popular masses. It can be attained on the electoral level in the form of a technical agreement for the union of the socialist and radical forces under a common slogan.

The revolutionary socialists declare themselves ready to fight shoulder to shoulder with all who will fight "effectively" against the dictatorial maneuvers to impede the elections, which "in fact" would contribute greatly to the restoration of the terrorist form of government with which the New State ruled us up to the beginning of 1945.

## Immediate Demands

We consider the following tasks foremost among the "immediate objectives" of the proletariat and the popular masses:

1. Overthrow of the New State and the consequent abolition of the 1937 "Constitution" with all its appendages. Convocation of a National Constituent Assembly, elected by direct and secret universal suffrage, extending to 18 year olds, soldiers and the illiterate.
2. Freedom of association in political parties, trade unions and cultural organizations. Freedom of the press. Legal recognition of the workers' local organizations (committees, trade union groups, party sections, etc.).
3. The unrestricted right to strike.
4. An increase of 50 percent in minimum wages. A sliding scale of wages to provide relief from increased prices of consumer goods. Wages, with a strictly guaranteed minimum, to follow thus the movement of prices.
5. Suppression of the Security Tribunal and the dissolution of the political and special police.
6. A sliding scale of hours, "with no reduction in the eight-hour wage" to meet impending unemployment. Unemployment insurance.
7. Improved labor legislation and the consequent revocation of all the fascist labor laws. Extension of labor legislation to cover the agricultural workers.
8. Improved pensions and lodgments, adjusted according to the sliding scale in order to guarantee full benefits to the pensioners.
9. Abolition of indirect taxes and the confiscation of super profits as one form of "effective" struggle against the high cost of living.

The strategic task of the revolutionary socialists is not to reform capitalism but to overthrow it. It is evident then that the demands set forth above do not constitute our "transitional program," which we have already published, and even less our

maximum program. These demands represent a body of immediate and "minimum" aspirations of the proletariat and the popular masses. The PSR calls upon the working class to fight for all or part of these demands, and it calls upon the socialist and popular organizations to form a "united front of action" for this fight.

Every action in support of these demands will constitute a blow against the dictatorship.

The more solidly the proletariat and the popular masses mobilize in concrete actions against the New State, the more assured will be the elections and the fulfillment of their most pressing needs.

*The Central Committee of the Revolutionary Socialist Party (Brazilian section of the Fourth International)*

Rio de Janeiro, July 1945

## Leon Lesoil

This biographical sketch of Leon Lesoil is translated from the memorial pamphlet issued in 1945 by the Belgian Trotskyists—*Parti Communiste Revolutionnaire* (Revolutionary Communist Party).

\* \* \*

Son of a worker, a worker himself from the age of 13, Leon Lesoil awakened to a political life during the First World War.

Caught up by the wave of patriotism and chauvinism that swept over Belgium after the German invasion, he enlisted in August 1914 in the sincere belief that the war was in defense of Justice, a "war to end all wars."

Carried away by his faith, he devoted himself completely to this "crusade." His military courage earned for him the admiration of his superior officers. So great was this esteem that years later when Lesoil was implicated in the notorious "Great Communist Conspiracy," fabricated by the bourgeoisie in 1923, his former chief officer Commandant Oudenne, appeared before the Court of Assizes to give the following stirring testimony in his behalf: "My acquaintance with Lesoil dates from the war. Our ways have since parted. Now that he is in the defendant's dock in the Court of Assizes I am prepared to state that he has all my esteem and affection. And I hope that Lesoil on his part has the same feelings for me."

For a man in military walk of life to agree to make such a statement in favor of a Communist accused of "conspiring against the safety of the state," Lesoil had to be gifted with an exceptional character. And all those who met him know that Lesoil was indeed capable of winning such rare testimonials. His natural generosity, his good-nature, his honesty and his candor impelled him irresistibly toward the noblest and most self-less causes, with a complete disregard for danger.

Lesoil experienced what may be called the turning point of his life toward the end of the First World War. In 1916 he was sent to Russia with the Belgian military mission in order to reinforce the Russian front. A few months later, in February 1917, the Russian revolution broke out. Lesoil lived through all the developments. With his infallible instinct for justice he was quick to grasp the real significance of the events. He understood that the Bolsheviks—calumniated at that time as grossly as the Trotskyists are today—expressed the deepest aspirations of the Russian people. In the light of Bolshevik propaganda and his own experience, he understood the true meaning of the war to which he had dedicated himself in 1914. He understood that the "just war" was only a mask for the predatory appetites of imperialist reaction. The attitude of the Allies toward the Russian revolution, their brutal and cynical intervention against the Soviet power and against the Bolsheviks who were swept into power by the overwhelming majority of Russian soldiers, workers and peasants, served to open his eyes completely. From that moment he went over to Bolshevism and was to devote himself entirely to the cause of the world

revolution. He was to devote himself to it with the same ardor, same courage and same fearlessness which he had so often evinced on the battlefields.

Even before the 1918 Armistice, he gave a striking expression to his opposition to the imperialist war. Upon his regiment's departure from Russia, he made his way to Vladivostok and America. There, he attended a meeting of Allied officers, called to launch the recruitment of men for the crusade against Bolshevism. Lesoil took the floor to oppose this proposal, and proudly defended the Bolsheviks and the Soviet regime. This magnificent act of courage and sincerity earned for him immediate deportation from the country. Twenty-four hours later he was requested to embark and recross the ocean.

Upon his return to Belgium Lesoil threw himself into the political struggle. He took an active part in the founding of the Belgian Communist Party. He quickly came to the forefront as a first-rate agitator. At countless meetings, he spoke in defense of the Russian revolution, appealed for international proletarian solidarity and pitilessly unmasked the reformist renegades.

### Capitalist Persecution

In this period he worked as a surveyor in the Gouffre coal mine at Chatelineau. The management was obviously reluctant to tolerate for long his presence among the other workers, and awaited only an opportunity to get rid of him. This opportunity presented itself when an international conference of Communist organizations convened in Berlin immediately after the war, in order to organize aid for Russia where famine was raging because of the Entente blockade. Chosen by the Belgian Communist Party to represent it at this conference, Lesoil asked the management of the coal mine for a fifteen-day leave. They gave him the alternative of renouncing his participation in the conference or facing dismissal. Lesoil did not hesitate. He chose to attend the conference and lost his job.

In order to earn a living, he had to take a job in another coal mine working underground. Fired again, this time black-listed for carrying on Communist propaganda, Lesoil experienced considerable hardships. Those who knew him when he was on the crews dredging the Sambre know what sacrifices he had to make in order to support himself and his family.

Beginning with 1924, Lesoil was put to a new test. Inside the Communist Party there broke out the struggle between those who claimed that the victory of socialism was possible in a single country and those who maintained that socialism could triumph only through the world revolution.

In this struggle which terminated in 1927 in the expulsion of the entire Trotskyist Opposition, Lesoil showed the same firmness and the same moral and intellectual courage as in his struggle against the employers, against the capitalist govern-

ment and its reformist allies. No pressure, no attempts at corruption could make him deviate from the political line which he considered as the only correct one, the only one capable of leading the world proletariat to victory.

To the end of his life, Lesoil was to remain for the Belgian proletariat the banner-bearer of authentic Communism. Following his teacher Leon Trotsky, whose personal friend he was, he defended without the slightest vacillation the heritage of Lenin against all the falsifiers and renegades. In 1938, he participated in the Founding Conference of the Fourth International, the World Party of the Socialist Revolution, whose growth throughout the world he unfortunately did not live to see.

Arrested by the Gestapo on June 22, 1941, on the day Germany attacked Russia, he was first imprisoned in the fortress de Huy, and later in the Hamburg-Neuengamme concentration camp where he died on May 3, 1942, exhausted by the forced labor, malnutrition and harsh treatment.

Such was, in its main outline, the life of Leon Lesoil.

This courageous and gifted worker's son had many opportunities to make a career for himself during his lifetime.

During the First World War, his exemplary conduct opened wide for him the doors for a military career. Lesoil made no response to all the advances of his superior officers. He preferred the road of Bolshevism, the struggle side by side with the oppressed.

Lesoil could have made a career in his profession as surveyor and have led the peaceable existence of a petty bourgeois.

Finally, Lesoil could have made a career in the Communist Party, provided his spine and spirit were flexible enough to conform with all the turns and treacheries of Stalinism. Lesoil preferred the road of intransigent opposition, choosing loyalty to the Bolshevism of Lenin and Trotsky.

Lesoil personalized the purest revolutionary idealism.

Militant workers, toilers in mines and factories, let his memory live in your hearts! In our daily struggles, in the approaching pitiless struggle against capitalism which breeds wars, fascist barbarism and universal misery, let his sublime example serve us as the model of courage and heroism!

\* \* \*

## Leon Lesoil Before His Judges

In March 1923, on the occasion of the notorious conspiracy hatched by the bourgeoisie, Lesoil was arrested together with all the leaders of the Belgian Communist Party. Together with Jacquemotte, Van Overstraeten and a dozen other militant Communists, Lesoil was brought before the Court of Assizes. They were all acquitted and the only result of the trial was to win great sympathy among the workers for the Communist cause.

We publish herewith a summary of Lesoil's testimony before the Court of Assizes. This summary appeared in an editorial of *Drapeau Rouge* (Red Flag), official organ of the Belgian Communist Party. The theme of Lesoil's testimony is the revolt of a soldier who had heroically performed his duties in the belief that he was fighting for a just cause and who suddenly realized that he had been duped, that the war was only a settling of accounts between two gangs of bandits. Isn't this theme equally valid today? Haven't the workers of the whole world been duped again for the sake of capitalist profits? Doesn't the war "against Hitler" reveal itself more and more as a war against the working class? And who is there

so naive as to boldly maintain that after Hitler and the Mikado have been crushed the "Big Three" will be able to assure peace to the world?

Capitalism means war. Peace is impossible unless the workers of the world unite in an implacable struggle against capitalism. This truth—which was brought home to millions during the first world war and which will, despite the mountains of lies, find its way tomorrow to all the workers of the world—was presented simply by Lesoil, before his judges and the large audience which followed the trial proceedings.

So far as *Drapeau Rouge* is concerned, the road that it has travelled since 1923 can be gauged by comparing this editorial with those it now publishes:

"*The President of the Court*: 'According to the documents in your dossier you performed your duties valiantly, very valiantly, during the war and the court must respect you for this. You enlisted in August 1914. You were wounded several times and when your wounds rendered you incapable of serving in the infantry, you asked to be transferred to the Belgian mobile artillery division operating on the Russian front. The services you rendered in this post earned for you a high decoration from the Russian government. You have proved yourself an ardent patriot. Under these conditions how do you explain the change of heart that led you to join the Communist Party and participate in propaganda against the fatherland?'

"And Lesoil replied.

"Before the assembled magistrates, before a jury consisting of middle and big bourgeois, before the attorneys most of whom were attached to the ruling class by birth, by their mode of life and by their social outlook, Lesoil simply told the story of his life as a working-class child. Forced into a factory at the age of 13, he worked in the daytime and studied at night. He related, without embellishments, his feelings and thoughts during this period of his life. Wholly preoccupied in pursuing his studies which would prepare him to make his mark in life and help him win his place in the sun, his time was divided between work in the factory, his studies and the usual relaxations of the youth in our coal mining areas.

"At the age of 17 he received his diploma as surveyor and at the age of 21 as foreman of mine works. Called up twice, in 1912 and 1913, to serve in the militia, he was finally discharged in 1914 because of poor health. As he himself stated he was at this time indifferent to the labor movement, to the history of his people and the struggles of his class.

"The war broke out. He enlisted. For four years he was just a unit in these immense armies of millions that hurled themselves against each other on all the fronts. He had an exalted faith in the nobility of the cause for which he was fighting and which he firmly believed, as he was told, to be the cause of righteousness, justice and humanity. He believed with every fibre of his being that military victory would bring peace to the world. He fought and suffered in order that this war be the last!

"Of course, he endured moments of dejection. During the darkest hours he would probe his inner self, and doubts assailed him. He had to fight to prevent facts he saw with his own eyes from undermining the faith which sustained him.

"But all this was engulfed in the elation of victory! Thanks to the sacrifices of millions the 'democratic' governments will bring peace to the world. There will be an end to human massacres! An end to the vile hatreds among peoples and races! And his is the legitimate pride of having participated in this grandiose work, of having helped to wipe out war!

"Then slowly but with inexorable logic came the foundering of all his hopes. . . . The conquerors, yesterday's Allies, began the ghoulish haggling over the division of the spoils of conquest. He saw trampled underfoot, ridiculed, reviled and discarded as so many theatrical props all the noble ideas of Right, Justice and Humanity under the aegis of which he had fought and suffered, for which so many of his comrades-in-arms had died in combat. . . . He witnessed the squabbles of diplomats, representing the Allied governments, as they grabbed up the deposits of coal, iron, potash and oil. He saw veterans, widows and orphans of men gone beyond recall sacrificed in the interests of the rich. He saw the bourgeoisie of every country preparing new armaments, rushing into new wars. He saw capitalism, in every country, continuing the terrible system of exploiting the people. And then he understood! All the anger against the abominable deception of which he was a willing victim, all the indignation against the needless sacrifices welled up in him, rose to his lips and expressed itself in a cry of anguish: *'It was a war of the money-bags! It was a war to fill the coffers of the rich!'*

"His whole being revolted at this thought. No, it was impossible that all this blood had been spilled for nothing! It was not possible that this entire terrible tragedy had been in vain! He then looked about him, his thought tempered in the fire of suffering. And he understood that only the struggle of the age-long victims against the capitalist system which breeds wars would put an end to human slaughter and bring about peace. He joined the working class party, entered the socialist veteran's organization, enrolled in his union and threw himself into the class struggle. But it was not long before he realized that nationalism had conquered the key positions within the framework of the working class party and that the reformist leaders were, under the cover of 'national defense' and 'national restoration,' working to prop up the bourgeois regime and to prepare new holocausts. Lesoil then broke with the lethal illusions of social reformism and devoted himself entirely to Communism.

"There was a solemn silence as Lesoil related the story of his life.

"And all those present in the courtroom, proletarians and bourgeois alike, felt, consciously or unconsciously, that this story was the story of the working class itself, forcefully presented by the statement of our friend.

"Yes! It was the story of the proletariat as a whole which thus was made available in a concrete form. It was the story of the proletariat which, misled and lured by capitalist lies, truly believed that this war had been a war for human rights and human justice; the story of the proletariat which, deceived by its masters in every country, surrendered itself to them body and soul; the story of the proletariat which, educated by living reality, turned its back on the bourgeois lies and which, upon taking cognizance of the impotence of the social democracy torn apart by national antagonisms, finally enters—virile and ardent, with clear vision and fervent heart—the road opened up for it by emancipating Communism."

\* \* \*

## Lesoil in the Concentration Camp

We met a militant anti-fascist who shared the fate of Lesoil and of our other comrades who were arrested and interned with him at Hamburg-Neuengamme Concentration camp. We put to him several questions concerning the life in the camp, state of mind of Lesoil and his comrades. His answers are of

great interest to all of Lesoil's friends and, moreover, they contribute to disclosing the martyrdom of all political prisoners in concentration camps. This comrade is not a member of our movement. His testimony is thereby rendered all the more valid. At the same time it constitutes the best answer to the infamous calumniators who depict the Trotskyists as "Hitlerite agents."

Q—When did Lesoil arrive at the Hamburg Concentration camp?

A—In September 1941. Together with him there arrived about 250 Belgians belonging to different Leftist tendencies, political suspects most of whom were arrested on June 22, 1941, the day on which Germany declared war on the USSR and on July 22, 1941, the day after the Belgian national holiday. Some of them came from the sinister Breendonck camp, others from the fortress de Huy. The two contingents were assembled beneath Liege and were brought in the same convoy by railway to Germany. Among those from de Huy was Leon Lesoil. I met him some years before through an accident of political struggle and I had not seen him since.

Q—What other Trotskyist militants arrived at the same time as Lesoil?

A—I remember seeing with Lesoil, Ferdinand Michaux from Charleroi, Joseph Franquet from Jemappes, Beugnies from Jemappes, Marius Nopère from Cuesmes, Louis Marcourt from La Bouverie, Leon De Lee from Anvers, Lucien Renery and Francis Van Belle from Liege, and Gaston Maes from Mouscron, the only one who was still alive when I left the camp.

Q—In what condition were they upon their arrival?

A—Despite three months of captivity, Lesoil and his comrades were still fairly vigorous men if one compares them to the pitiful wrecks of Breendonck. Leon, beneath whose hard exterior of an old fighter beat a sensitive soul, never ceased deploring the pitiful condition of some among them whom he had known well years before, when they were glowing with health and vitality. He was particularly affected by the feebleness of a comrade we called Pierrot. He looked in vain for the splendid athletic body of this brave soldier who fought with the International Brigade in Spain; he saw only a man prematurely aged, sagging from the superhuman exertions which he had to undergo for three months in the inferno of Breendonck; but the spark of hope still burned in his brave clear eyes. Leon said to us: "You have escaped the chain-gang, my comrades." Alas! He had little doubt that he, too, would soon be subjected to galley-slave labor which would rapidly undermine his health and hasten his death, followed soon by the death of his old comrade Pierrot.

Q—How were you treated? What kind of work were you forced to do?

A—Like all prisoners, Germans, Austrians, Czechs, Poles, who constituted the bulk of able-bodied men, the Belgians were compelled to wear the convict costume: beret, pants and jacket, no pockets, made of gray ersatz cloth with blue stripes. They were then assigned to different barracks which served as lodging. Leon had the consolation of remaining near some of his friends. And then life was organized, or rather the forced labor began. Most of our time was devoted to the famous "*arbeit*," "*Arbeiten, immer arbeiten*" ("work, and more work"). The fearful obsession of inhuman exertions, in rain or icy wind, with one's belly empty. Modern slaves, we pushed "trucks"—Decauville wagons—our backs bent, our muscles taut, our minds sometimes haunted by recollections of former discussions. And our Nazi hangmen seemed to say to us ironically: "You demanded the right to work. . . . You ought to be satisfied. . . ."

With some of his friends, Leon was assigned to the "klinker," a huge brickyard, a veritable inferno which reverberated with the shouts of the "kapo" and "vorarbeiters"—those who were in charge of the work and foremen, who had the advantage of not having to work . . . provided they made others work.

Leon was subjected to this gruelling regime of labor. Day in and day out, in snowstorms, in rain which sometimes fell in torrents and sometimes in persistent drizzles, drenching the clothes to one's skin, or in icy winds which lashed one's face and numbed one's joints, Leon Lesoil and his friends—without uttering a single word—would perform their inhuman labors from dawn to sunset. Then they would return, covered with mud, drenched, chilled, shivering with fever, to fall down exhausted on their straw mattresses, only to jump up with a leap to the shout of "Aufstehen!" (Get up!) which resounded in the barracks at the first glimmer of daylight. One must experience personally this galley-slave labor in order to fully understand this torture which accomplishes gradually its work of physical and mental destruction.

Leon Lesoil came to know the redoubled strain of "Schwer Arbeit" (hard labor), aggravated by the malnutrition and vile living conditions. A man, in such a situation, responds only to one reflex: to struggle. He struggles against everything that overwhelms him: separation from his family, grief, despair. He often triumphs over all this, but hunger never relaxes its grip, his strength diminishes, his mind seems to give way. He keeps on struggling just the same, and always the relentless order "Arbeit" rings in his ears. Then his strength betrays him, and it is the fearsome prospect of slow and anonymous death, far from your dear ones, which one day takes you by surprise amid this struggle. Through this martyrdom Leon lived simply, courageously, almost without a sign of revolt, in order better to conserve his energy, and perhaps with the hope of triumphing, in spite of everything, and seeing the dawn of liberation.

Q—How did he die?

A—Like many others, Leon succumbed to the typhus epidemic spread by lice during the frightful winter of 1941-1942. Within three months one-third of the able-bodied men in the camp were mowed down. Leon, however, survived the illness, but it left him exhausted. His legs swelled up, huge distensions appeared under his eyes making them seem very tiny. Edema, the terrible malady which never spared anyone there, seized his whole body.

His morale, nevertheless, remained admirable. One day when the bread rations had been cut, it occurred to me to ask him: "What do you think, Leon? Do you believe that we shall be able to stand up under this blow?"—"We will stand up under it," he replied to me. "Just as my friends back home, just as my miner comrades will stand up. And yet they go down into the mines with a 'lunch' which is not much bigger than ours. And is there any hard work that they are not subjected to?" Thus, in his distress, he still kept thinking of his miner comrades, whom he loved so deeply!

Another time, he said to me jokingly: "What do you think of the Old Guard? We can take it, eh! We shall come out of here alive!"

Illusion! He overestimated his own strength. Without medical care, without proper nourishment, he succumbed in his turn to the blows of this terrible disease. Leon came to know the final phase of this ruthless malady and this was the end. A day came which he believed would not come. . . . In that period they still provided decent transportation for human remains to the Hamburg crematorium. For the last time Leon passed through the gates of the camp in a cheap wooden coffin, painted black. He was in the company of other victims of Hitlerite barbarism, all of them resting on a cart which was pushed by eight comrades, come from all corners of the world at war. . . .

## How the Constitution Was Written

By HARRY FRANKEL

In our previous essay (see *Fourth International*, March 1946) we outlined the role of the Northern merchants and the Southern planters in the struggle of the American colonies for independence. If we follow the coalition to the next great stage of its work, we find it in the unification of the nation under the Constitution. At this stage, however, the lead in the coalition changes hands and the merchants become the more aggressive and dominant element.

The cause of this shift is easily traced. The merchant class stood in need of a strong national government far more urgently than its ally in the coalition. Its need was lodged in the classic motivations that have everywhere caused the bourgeoisie to accomplish the task of national unification. The planters on the other hand, had a lesser interest in the foundation of a strong central government. In the course of the struggle over the Constitution the erstwhile allies of the planters, the farmers of the interior, turned against them. The planters themselves were lukewarm on the subject. In the light of these conditions, it is not at all strange that the merchant class, taking advantage of its concentration in urban centers, its capacity for swift action and its superior organization was able to leap to the front and take the helm in the coalition.

It would be wrong to imagine, however, that the Northern merchants alone and against the opposition of the planters formulated the Constitution and established the Union—in a word that the coalition was broken. This is the error made by Charles A. Beard in his *Economic Origins of Jeffersonian Democracy*.

Beard, in tracing the origin of the first two great political parties in the U.S., the Federalists and the Anti-Federalists or Republicans, set out to prove that they had their roots in an economic antagonism between mercantile and planter-farmer interests. In this he is naturally correct as against his opponents in the dispute. However, in his anxiety to trace the dispute along a single straight line, he commits an error which historians of his school would have us believe is made only by Marxists who are allegedly prisoners of their dogmatic schematism. In the fight over the Constitution, he places the planting interests who later led the Anti-Federalists, in the camp of the opponents of the Constitution. He is guilty of schematism because he does this to prove a continuous line of opposition between the two classes. In reality, the antagonism was not so simple.

The planters and merchants were in their relations like inter-

meshing gear wheels. Their interests revolved in opposite directions, but nevertheless, possessed many points of contact and mutual dependence. Chief among these was a vigilance against the restive population in the cities and on the land. This important political congeniality served to unite them at many crucial times, particularly during the writing and ratification of the Constitution.

Sharp rebellion in Massachusetts and the capture of the Rhode Island State government by the indebted farmers had just served notice on the ruling classes of the precariousness of their position in the face of the rising popular clamor. This notice was served in the South as well as the North, and we have Madison's authority to authenticate the stories of rebellion in Virginia. That the planters shared the alarm of the merchants at these storm signals, and that they moved to form a strong central government capable of helping the states to maintain property rule is indubitable. Washington, the largest planter of Virginia, shows in his letters the profound effect these events had upon him.

Add to this the additional reason, that the planters would benefit from a union that would enable them by commercial treaties to establish their markets outside the British sphere, and the full motivation for the cooperation of the planters in the imposition of the federal Constitution emerges. Beard himself recognized this in his earlier work, *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution*, where he wrote that despite their interest in a loose union, the planters favored the Constitution because "there were over-balancing compensations to be secured in a strong federal government."

The two chief leaders of the Anti-Federalist party, the planter leaders Madison and Jefferson, stood behind the Constitution. Madison, indeed, was the central figure of the Constitutional Convention, the "Father of the Constitution." Jefferson, writing from Paris, approved the substance of the work of the Convention:

I am not of the party of federalists, but I am much further from that of the anti-Federalists. I approved from the first of the great mass of what is in the new Constitution. . . .

Jefferson goes on to speak for a bill of rights (later adopted), and a provision denying re-eligibility to the President. Beard comments on this letter that Jefferson could have been called "with equal justification" an opponent or a friend of the Constitution! So far from the truth had his mechanical approach to the dynamic relations of two classes led him.

Even the figures which Beard presents on the composition of the Constitutional Convention, figures which speak so eloquently in his behalf at other times, speak against him here. Of the delegates whose later political opinions are known, 25 were to become Federalists and 18 were to become Anti-Federalists. All of the 25 merchant representatives, primarily from the North, voted for the Constitution. Of the 18 later to become Jeffersonians or Anti-Federalists, 12 favored the Constitution and 6 opposed it—thus the bulk of the planting representatives worked for the adoption of the new instrument.

The true story stands in this light: the planters lost their allies, the small farmers, when they maintained their coalition with the merchants in the organization of the Federal Union; the farmers opened a struggle against the Constitution and established the elements of the new party, and the planters later left the coalition to join the farmers in the struggle against the mercantile class when the latter disclosed its plans in the Hamiltonian system.

We now enter upon one of the most amazing chapters in American history. For the first time in close to three decades the planter-merchant coalition that ruled the country was broken. In a brilliant and vigorous stroke the Northern bourgeoisie took independent possession of the state power and for a turbulent decade, used it like a pile driver to sink the foundations of American capitalism.

How was it possible for the mercantile elements to accomplish this? We have already seen how the planters, having a lesser interest in the adoption of the Constitution, left the lead in the work for the merchants. In the struggle over ratification, a struggle which necessitated much intrigue and a political struggle on the part of the bourgeoisie, they organized a strong political force in the name of Federalism. This force they used to catapult themselves to leadership in the early government. Their activity and their energy everywhere, their strongly organized class conscious forces in the urban centers, gave them the hegemony over the planters.

### Hamilton's Program

Alexander Hamilton was a brilliant young lawyer of West Indian birth who had served as a Colonel on Washington's staff during the revolution. From his early childhood he had manifested a mental precocity that revolved around two main axes: a splendid capacity for financial analysis and a strong belief in the rule of the rich, aristocratic and "well-born." Entering Washington's cabinet as the first Secretary of the Treasury, he demonstrated his abilities and developed his conceptions in the famous "Hamiltonian system" to such good effect that he was soon the idolized leader of the mercantile elements.

Two letters recently (1931) discovered by Professor James O. Wettrean testify to the immediate origin of Hamilton's program. In November 1789, William Bingham, Philadelphia "merchant, capitalist and banker" . . . wrote a long letter to Hamilton in which he recommended virtually all of the essential measures subsequently proposed by the Secretary of the Treasury. Stephen Higgenson, "mariner, merchant and broker" of Boston also wrote Hamilton in the same vein, advocating similar measures to those finally proposed by Hamilton. Does this discovery detract from Hamilton's genius? Not at all. For Marxists understand that political leaders do not "invent" the programs they advocate, but draw them from the interests of one or another economic class. Hamilton has won his place in American history by the energy and resoluteness of his appreciation of the bourgeois program, and by the brilliance of his defense of his measures.

Hamilton's system was unified by a single conception: The establishment of the rule of the bourgeoisie. In the first place he proposed a funding of the debt of the central government through the issuance of bonds which would repay in full the claims on the government. In the second place, he proposed a similar funding of the debts incurred by the states during the war and their assumption by the Federal government. In order to understand the audacity of these measures, it must be remembered that the paper with which the soldiers had been paid was largely in the hands of speculators, brokers and merchants, who had bought up the "worthless" stuff at as low as 1/6, 1/10 and 1/20 of its face value. Since the total of state and federal paper outstanding was about \$60,000,000, and since those who held it paid, it has been calculated, no more than \$20,000,000 for it, Hamilton's proposals amounted to an outright gift of \$40,000,000. The stupendous size of this grant can be appreciated when it is understood that the total land values

in all of the thirteen states at that time were only ten times that amount.

What a speculator's orgy! They thronged the galleries of Congress like harpies. Would the measures pass? Of the 64 members of the House, 29, almost half, are known to have been owners of paper. Many were speculators. While the measures were under consideration, two fast sailing vessels chartered by a member of Congress flew southward freighted for speculation. Coaches drawn by steaming teams rocked over the bumpy roads of the interior, on the mission of securing, at ridiculous prices the remainder of the paper in the hands of the uninformed veterans. Is it any wonder that they passed?

But speculation was not Hamilton's primary motive. A key to this is seen in the fact that he himself held no paper, and dissuaded his wife's rich family from securing any for fear that it might compromise him. His interest lay in the furtherance of his central conception: The strengthening of the role of the bourgeoisie through the new federal government. In those who held the paper he saw a stout prop for the government. In their enrichment, he saw the expanding power of the bourgeoisie.

### Aiding the Bourgeoisie

Among Hamilton's other measures were the establishment of a National Bank as the centralized engine of the moneyed power, and measures for the development of industry outlined in his famous *Report on Manufactures* of December 5, 1791. If we were to summarize his program, we would say that it aimed at the sharp stimulation of capitalism. It was carefully calculated to provide a fluid working capital for the bourgeois class, in the form of the certificates of the funded debt backed by the Federal Government. The whole structure was to support and repay itself out of taxation of the population. Internal excise taxes such as the Whiskey Tax were to provide the revenue.

Hamilton realized the truth of Jefferson's assertion that the capital thus created was barren, producing, like money on the gaming table, "no accession to itself." Thus he sought the alternate redemption of the capital structure out of the proceeds of manufactures, and worked vigorously for their encouragement. The stimulus was to be manifold. Fluid, well backed capital was to be provided by the funding and assumption of the debt. A tariff wall would protect the infant industries from British competition. Restrictions on the sale of western lands in the form of large parcels and high prices would hold the labor supply in the East and eventually lower its cost. So well did Hamilton realize the urgency of this phase of his program that he could even be seen, in those early days, tramping over the Jersey marshes with his merchant associates contemplating sites for factories.

Hamilton's program met with violent opposition from the farmers, and their representatives, many of whom had opposed the adoption of the Constitution. Gradually, as they realized that the coalition was entirely ruptured by the audacious Hamilton, the large planters under the lead of Jefferson, Madison, Monroe and similar figures went into opposition. A great battle opened that was to shake the nation to its roots during the next decade.

The agricultural interests were quick to realize that the work of the first administration was conducted entirely in behalf of the mercantile interests, and further, that it would pay for itself out of taxes and higher prices borne by the agricultural population, who constituted 9/10 of the country. Stung to fury, they launched a tenacious offensive under the able

guidance of Jefferson. In this they had every advantage. The revolutionary ferment not yet subsided, was aroused to a wave of levelling radicalism by the stirring news from France. This the Anti-Federalists turned skillfully to their advantage and against the authoritative centralist ideology of the Hamiltonians. Jay's Treaty with England in 1794, failing to provide for western farm interests by protecting navigation on the Mississippi, increased the indignation of those elements. The agricultural classes, numbering 9/10 of the population and led by the planters and their trained, able spokesmen, produced by the Revolution, formed an irresistible force in the America of that day.

The bourgeoisie stood on a too narrow base, a fact which Hamilton sensed and which he sought to correct by his feverish efforts in behalf of manufacturers. It was not until the middle of the 1840's that manufactures surpassed commerce in the relative composition of the bourgeoisie. In the meantime the opening of the western lands and the admission of new agricultural states to the union increased the weight of the planters. Already during the decade of the great struggle, two new states were admitted who cast their votes in the Jefferson column in the election of 1800.

The bourgeoisie could do nothing to save itself from the planter-led popular storm. Desperately, they worked at the artificial concoction of a war with France which they could use to crush the opposition. This plot failed. Equally vain was the attempt to bind the breaking barrel with the iron hoops of the Alien and Sedition laws. All failed. They felt the pillars crumble beneath them and the edifice from which they had hoped to gain so much collapsed.

### Foundations Remain

But if the edifice collapsed, the foundations stood and stand to this day, so well had Hamilton built. His accomplishments in that remarkable decade are truly great. For an anticipatory decade the American bourgeoisie held independent, unassisted power, and the taste of the brilliant fruits of their rule still lay in their mouths when they stormed and destroyed the Southern ramparts in the second American Revolution sixty-five years later.

The chief significance of Hamilton's work lies in the fact that he guaranteed the shaky possibilities for union and placed them on a solid rock foundation. Had he failed, American capitalism would not have had to wait three quarters of a century for its Bismarck as Germany did, for the general trend of conditions favored union. Nevertheless, the issue was by no means decided in 1790, and Hamilton's drastic measures tipped the scales.

Nor did the Jeffersonians molest the basic foundations laid down from 1789-1800. In Beard's words, "They decided that the country could not be ruled without the active support, or at least the acquiescence of the capitalist interests." Jefferson made a conciliatory inaugural address, and Hamilton, speaking of it, said: "In referring to this speech we think it proper to make a public declaration of our approbation of its contents. We view it as virtually a candid retraction of past misapprehensions, and a pledge to the community that the new President will not lend himself to dangerous innovations." Although Jefferson ruled primarily in the interests of the agricultural elements, he guaranteed the public credit, left untouched the National Bank, preserved the Navy for the protection of commerce and strengthened the central government. The years that followed saw a trickle of supporters continually flowing from Federalism to Republicanism, including in their number prom-

inent politicians and some of the richest of merchants. Despite the efforts of the die-hard elements of the merchant class organized in the Essex Junto, the coalition was partially restored.

From 1800-1865 the bourgeois heir waited and fought to come into his own. The heritage it carved and struggled for was exclusive political and economic predominance. If the delay seems long, one should remember the enormous agricultural expansion, with the acquisition of vast western lands and the development of the greatest southern staple of all: cotton. Not out of whimsy did the New England merchants fight, in the early period of expansion, the acquisition of new western lands. Not for nothing were they known as the "little America" party. Had the Pacific instead of only the temporary barrier of the Alleghenies bounded the colonies on their westward side, the bourgeoisie would have come to power much sooner. The plantation system would have died from lack of nourishment in the

form of the new lands it needed constantly, labor and capital would have been held in the East and the manufacturing Empire that Hamilton dreamed of would have advanced by forced marches. But things were otherwise, and the bourgeoisie had to wait.

We have now come to the end of the first revolution in American history. We have traced the coalition that ruled from its establishment through its chief modifications, ruptures and restorations. We have seen how the planters are primarily responsible for independence and the merchants for union. It was a period in which the class battles were fought entirely in the open. The majority of the population was disenfranchised, and the deceptive parliamentary facades of today were only in their infancy. The movements of the classes remain plainly imprinted on the pages of history like footprints in deep snow.

# The National Question in Europe

Statement of the European Executive Committee in *Quatrieme Internationale*, December-January 1946.

The second imperialist world war and its consequences have revived discussions on the national question in Europe. In this issue of *Quatrieme Internationale* we publish some of the principal documents representing the views both of sections of the International and of individual comrades.

Today our movement is the only one which fulfills the duties of a genuine revolutionary vanguard; the only one which poses and discusses the fundamental problems of the proletarian movement.

The discussions which took place during the war on the national question were especially heated, leading to deep divergences which are far from eliminated today. In fact, the objective causes at the bottom of this controversy, namely, the occupation of Europe by the German imperialist armies, actually persist today in a different form—the joint occupation of Europe by American, English and French imperialists and by the USSR.

In the following lines, in order to arrive at a correct understanding of the whole problem, we have tried to throw light on three aspects: 1) the national question in Europe during the imperialist epoch; 2) the national question during the last imperialist war; 3) the national question today.

## 1. The National Question in Europe During the Imperialist Epoch

The position of revolutionary Marxism on the national question in the imperialist epoch has been best formulated by Lenin.

Lenin returned to the two great principles already established by Marx and Engels on the national question, namely: 1) the proletariat of an oppressor state must recognize the right of self-determination of all peoples; and 2) the proletariat of an oppressed nation should approach this demand in its relative and not its absolute sense, i.e., the interests of the socialist movement as a whole must be taken into account. Lenin also indicated the principal modifications in applying these principles to the imperialist epoch.

In the time of Marx and Engels, socialists were for the liberation of big nationalities, the great revolutionary peoples of the west (Germans, Poles, Magyars) and against Czarism

which in that epoch constituted the principal reactionary force, and also against certain small nationalist movements (such as the Czech) "which Czarism utilized for anti-democratic ends" (Lenin). In the imperialist epoch, on the contrary, socialists proclaim themselves "against the united, straightened-out front of the imperialist powers, of the imperialist bourgeoisie, of the social-imperialists, and for utilizing *all* nationalist movements against imperialism for the purposes of the socialist revolution" (Lenin).

The colonial and semi-colonial countries are not the only countries in which nationalist movements are possible and inevitable. Lenin admitted the possibility of nationalist movements and nationalist wars even in Europe, on the part of annexed or oppressed "small states" against the great imperialist powers, and cited in this connection the examples of Belgium, Serbia, Galicia and Albania.

The tactic advocated by him toward these movements was to come to their aid, to the extent that they aggravated and deepened the crisis of imperialism, without compromising the general interests of the socialist movement. The "indisputably extremely complex position," to use Lenin's own words, was formulated by him in the following way:

It is our duty to educate the workers to be "indifferent" to national distinctions. Nobody will dispute that. But not to be indifferent in the spirit of *annexationists*. A member of an oppressing nation must be "indifferent" to whether small nations belong to *his* state or to a *neighboring* state or to themselves, according to where their sympathies lie: if he is not "indifferent" in this way he is *not* a social-democrat. To be an internationalist social-democrat, one must *not* think only of one's own nation, but must place the interests of all nations, their general liberty and equality, *above one's own nation*. In "theory" everyone agrees with this, but in practice an annexationist indifference is displayed. Herein lies the root of the evil.

On the contrary, a social-democrat belonging to a small nation must place the weight of his agitation on the *second* word in our general formula: "voluntary *amalgamation*" of nations. He may, without violating his duties as an internationalist, be in favor *either* of the political independence of his nation *or* of its inclusion in neighboring state X, Y, Z, etc. But in all cases he must fight *against* small-nation narrow-mindedness, insularity and aloofness, he must fight for the recognition of the whole and the general, and for the subordination of the particular to the interests of the general.

People who have not gone thoroughly into the question think that

there is a "contradiction" in social-democrats of oppressing nations insisting on "freedom of secession" while social-democrats of oppressed nations insist on "freedom of amalgamation." However, a little reflection will show that there is not, nor can there be, any other road leading from the given situation to internationalism and the amalgamation of nations, that there is not, nor can there be, any other road leading to this goal.

But Lenin never called into question the imperialist character of the war of 1914-18 nor the duty of socialists in England, in France, in Germany, Russia and Austria-Hungary to carry out a consistent internationalist policy in the sense outlined above. He never called into question the policy of revolutionary defeatism despite the prospect that the war would bring the invasion and temporary occupation of one of these countries by another.

He was particularly opposed to Rosa Luxembourg's project to put in the forefront in Germany a "nationalist program" in defense of the "fatherland" against "the invasion" by "class struggle methods."

To this Lenin replied:

In France, in Germany, and in the whole of Europe it was a bourgeois-democratic revolution that objectively was on the order of the day in 1793 and 1848. Corresponding to this objective historical situation was the "truly objective," i.e., the national bourgeois program of the then existing democracy; in 1793 this program was carried out by the most revolutionary elements of the bourgeoisie and the plebeians, and in 1848 it was proclaimed by Marx in the name of the whole progressive democracy. Objectively, the feudal and dynastic wars were then opposed with revolutionary democratic wars, with wars for national liberation. This was the content of the historical tasks of that epoch.

At the present time the objective situation in the biggest advanced states of Europe is different. Progress, if we leave out the possibility of temporary steps backward, is possible only towards socialist society, only towards the socialist revolution. Objectively, the imperialist bourgeois war, the war of highly developed capitalism, can, from the standpoint of progress, from the standpoint of the progressive class, be opposed only with a war against the bourgeoisie, i.e., primarily civil war between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie for power; for unless such a war is waged serious progress is impossible; and after that—only under certain conditions—a war to defend the socialist state against bourgeois states is possible. That is why those Bolsheviks (fortunately, very few . . .) who were ready to adopt the point of view of conditional defense, i.e., of defending the fatherland on the condition that there was a victorious revolution and the victory of a republic in Russia, were true to the letter of Bolshevism, but betrayed its spirit; for being drawn into the imperialist war of the advanced European powers, Russia, even under a republican form of government, would also be waging an imperialist war!

## 2. The National Question During the Second Imperialist War

On the eve of the Second World War, Trotsky took a position on the national question, analagous to Lenin's position during the First World War. This should serve us a general guide in our attitude towards the problems raised by the German occupation of Europe.

In 1916, Lenin wrote:

It is highly improbable that this imperialist war of 1914-16 will be transformed into a national war, because the class that represents progress is the proletariat, which, objectively, is striving to transform this war into civil war against the bourgeoisie; and also because the strength of both coalitions is almost equally balanced, while international finance capital has everywhere created a reactionary bourgeoisie. Nevertheless, it cannot be said that such a transformation is

impossible: if the present war were to end in victories similar to those achieved by Napoleon, in the subjugation of a number of viable national states; if imperialism outside of Europe (primarily American and Japanese) were to remain in power for another twenty years without a transition to socialism, say, as a result of a Japanese-American war, then a great national war in Europe would be possible. This means that Europe would be thrown back for several decades. This is improbable. But it is not impossible, for to picture history as advancing smoothly and steadily without sometimes taking gigantic strides backward, is undialectical, unscientific and theoretically wrong.

The position adopted by Trotsky in 1938 has the same general line:

An imperialist war, no matter from what corner it begins, will be carried on not for "national independence" but for the division of the world in the interests of separate cliques of finance capital. This does not exclude that in passing the imperialist war could improve or worsen the condition of this or that "nation," or, more exactly, of one nation at the expense of another. Thus, the Versailles peace treaty dismembered Germany. A new peace treaty may dismember France. Social-patriots utilize precisely this possible "national" danger of the future in order to support "their" imperialist bandits of the present. Czechoslovakia does not represent any exception from this rule.

In reality all speculative arguments of this kind and the frightening of people over future national calamities for the sake of the support of this or that imperialist bourgeoisie flow from tacit rejection of revolutionary perspective and revolutionary policy. Naturally if a new war ends in the military victory of this or that imperialist camp; if a war calls forth neither a revolutionary uprising nor a victory of the proletariat; if a new imperialist peace more terrible than the Versailles treaty places new chains for decades upon the people; if unfortunate humanity bears all this in silence and submission—not only Czechoslovakia or Belgium but also France can be hurled back into the position of an oppressed nation (the same supposition may be made in regard to Germany). In this eventuality the further frightful decomposition of capitalism will cast all humanity back for many decades. Of course in the realization of this perspective, that is, a perspective of passivity, capitulation, defeat, and decline, oppressed classes and entire peoples must then climb on all fours in sweat and in blood over the historic road already once traversed. Is such an outlook excluded? If the proletariat suffers without end the leadership of social-imperialists and communist-chauvinists; if the Fourth International is unable to find a road to the masses; if the terrors of war do not push the workers and soldiers on the road to rebellion; if the colonial peoples bleed patiently in the interests of the slaveholders, under these conditions the level of civilization will inevitably be lowered and the general retrogression and decomposition may again place national wars on the order of the day for Europe. Even then we, or rather our sons, will have to determine the policy in regard to future wars on the basis of the new situation. But today we proceed not from the perspective of decline but from the perspective of revolution; we are defeatists at the expense of imperialists and not at the expense of the proletariat. We do not link the question of the fate of the Czechs, Belgians, French, and Germans as nations with conjunctural shifts of military fronts during a new brawl of the imperialists but with the uprising of the proletariat and its victory over all the imperialists. The program of the Fourth International states that the freedom of all European nations, both large and small, can be secured only within the frame of the Socialist United States of Europe. We look ahead and not backward!

Thus, according to Trotsky, there can be no question of the second imperialist war becoming transformed into a national war; there can be no question of considering the great capitalist and imperialist nations of Europe, after their defeat and occupation by their adversaries, as having been reduced to the level of oppressed nations and, in this way justifying the struggle of their respective bourgeoisies as a "nationalist" struggle; there can be no question of a "national and democratic revolution" as distinct from the socialist revolution.

Despite this clear and precise warning, two diametrically opposed and equally erroneous positions arose on the national question in our ranks, after the German occupation. One of them is represented by the IKD, the leadership of our German section and is formulated in the "Three Theses" which constitute an opportunist and revisionist deviation; the other position is represented by minority tendencies in certain sections and constitutes an ultra-left, sectarian tendency. In between these two, there are a number of other opinions which to a greater or lesser extent tend toward one of the extremes.

What then is the correct position?

In the first place, it is necessary to recognize that the war was imperialist in character on both sides—on the side of Germany as well as on the side of the Allied nations; and that the only "progressive war" was the struggle waged by the USSR during the non-annexationist phase.

Next, it is necessary to draw a primary distinction between the large imperialist countries which suffered defeat and occupation (in particular, France) and the "little states," annexed or oppressed, taking into account the evolution undergone by these small nations in the interval between the two wars. Many of them not only possess the theoretical possibility of themselves oppressing other nationalities, as was the case in Lenin's time, but have actually developed into capitalist and imperialist countries oppressing other peoples (Czechoslovakia, Poland, Yugoslavia).

In all occupied countries, both large and small, the bourgeoisie must be considered as reactionary and incapable of carrying through a struggle for national independence, being divided into two factions attached to one of the belligerent imperialist camps.

In line with these considerations it is possible to adopt a revolutionary Marxist tactic towards the so-called "new national question in Europe."

## Revolutionary Tactic

The revolutionary proletariat takes cognizance of the fact that the German occupation led to a certain national oppression and inscribes into its program the demand of the right of self-determination of all nations.

Without placing the slightest confidence in its own bourgeoisie, and recognizing that, in the imperialist epoch, the struggle for national independence is inseparable from the struggle against imperialism and for socialism, the revolutionary proletariat wages this struggle with its own class methods, namely: Inside Germany it fights for the revolutionary overthrow of Nazism and demands the withdrawal of German troops from occupied areas of Europe; in the occupied countries, it conducts the struggle against German occupation in the spirit of internationalism and class struggle, placing the emphasis on fraternization with the German workers in uniform and on the necessity of a free federation of peoples in the Socialist United States of Europe.

It therefore rejects the idea of "a national democratic revolution," through which its struggle must necessarily pass before unfolding on the basis of its own socialist program and terminating in the proletarian revolution.

The demand for the right of self-determination nowise constitutes, even for a limited period, an end in itself, rendering null and void the rest of the revolutionary internationalist and socialist program; but is simply an integral part of the latter, and subordinated to the whole.

Among the touchiest problems raised by the occupation was

that of adopting an attitude toward the "national movements" and the "national resistance organizations." These movements were not the artificial products of the chauvinist propaganda of the "Allied" bourgeoisie and the Stalinist parties.

Above all, they represented, especially in those cases where they acquired a mass character, the form assumed by the spontaneous reaction of workers and urban and rural petty bourgeoisie to the oppressive rule of occupying imperialism and the national bourgeoisie. Channeled into the "resistance" organizations, these masses fell automatically under the leadership of the "resisting" bourgeoisie and of the Stalinist parties which fought on the basis of extremely chauvinistic programs.

In its relations with these "national unity" formations which distorted the imperialist character of the war and dealt mortal wounds to proletarian internationalism, the party of the revolutionary proletariat could be guided only by safeguarding its organizational and political independence from them, and by waging an intransigent struggle against the social-patriotic and chauvinist programs and practices. But, on the other hand, it was necessary to carry on patient, systematic work in these organizations in order to free the revolutionary elements within them from the ideological vise of chauvinism and to regroup them on a class basis.

It was in this sense that the European Conference of February 1944 tried to pose and solve the problem of our attitude toward the "national" movements and "resistance organizations." The precise policy followed by each of our European sections still remained unknown at the time. It is quite possible and even probable that blunders were committed and that there were fairly marked deviations to the right and to the left.

It is necessary to consider as ultra-left all those tendencies which denied the existence of national oppression; which did not come out clearly for the right of self-determination; which neglected to organize under our own banner (the banner of the revolutionary party) the struggle against the German occupation (conducted of course in the internationalist and class spirit); and which minimized the importance of working inside the popular organizations (French FTP, Yugoslav and Greek Partisans, etc.).

It is necessary to consider as rightist and opportunist all those tendencies which made the demand for self-determination an end in itself, severing it from the rest of the socialist, revolutionary internationalist program; which favored in one form or another our participating or collaborating—as a political movement—with the organizations of the "resistance"; and which placed on the same plane "national resistance" in a large defeated imperialist country like France, and in oppressed "small states" like Yugoslavia and Greece.

## 3. The National Question in Europe Today

The termination of the war has not removed the problems raised by the German occupation. Europe is no freer today than she was yesterday, notwithstanding the difference in methods of occupation.

The struggle of the oppressed peoples of Europe did not lead to their "national liberation" but to the replacement of German occupation by separate or joint occupation of American, English, French and Soviet forces.

This proves once again that the equality of nations and the right of self-determination cannot be realized under the rule of imperialism, and that the real struggle for "national independence" is inseparable from the struggle against imperialism and for socialism.

Moreover, the new occupation of Europe poses far more important problems than did the German occupation. In the latter case it was a question of occupying certain European territories, owing to the vicissitudes of war and in the course of the war. Today it is a question of a much more durable occupation which in the long run threatens to transform the structure of viable nations, in particular, Germany. In case of prolonged apathy and impotence on the part of the revolutionary proletariat, the 1916 perspective of Lenin and of Trotsky in 1938 might be realized, that is to say, Europe may be thrown back for many decades and hence may arise the possibility of new national wars.

But at the present time there is no reason for taking as our point of departure this perspective, which is one of the decisive defeat of the revolution. Today, as during the war, we base our policy on the revolutionary perspective which still remains open. Today, as yesterday, we inscribe in our socialist, revolutionary internationalist program the demand for the self-determination of all peoples; and we declare that the struggle for genuine national independence is inseparable from the struggle against capitalism and for the Socialist United States of Europe and of the World.

With respect to European countries now occupied by American, English and French imperialist armies, our attitude is as follows: Our co-thinkers in America, in England, in France must place the emphasis on the right of the oppressed masses in the occupied countries to self-determination and they must conduct an active struggle for the withdrawal from these countries of American, English and French troops.

Within the occupied countries, our parties, while organizing the struggle of the popular masses under their own banner and while waging this struggle in the internationalist and class spirit, must place emphasis above all on the necessity for a federation of free nations in the Socialist United States of Europe.

In particular, with respect to Germany, the June 1945 resolution of the European Executive Committee concretized our attitude as follows:

- 1) Self-determination of all peoples; immediate withdrawal of all occupation troops.
- 2) Against military rule! Against occupation! Against the dismemberment and pillage of Germany! Against deportations of German workers! Against forced labor!

For the fraternization of troops of occupation with the German toiling masses!

For the fraternization of workers of other countries with the deported German workers! Let them be enrolled into the trade unions of these countries! For the same working and living conditions and equal rights with the workers of these countries!

Let the Nazis in Germany be purged and punished by the German workers themselves! For the complete freedom of the labor movement in Germany!

This position is restated as follows in the latest Manifesto of European Executive Committee addressed to the German proletariat:

We protest against the dismemberment of Germany, against the indemnities and requisitions and billions in reparations. We salute all acts of fraternization between the soldiers of occupying armies and the German proletariat. We demand of these soldiers that they do not permit themselves to be used for imperialist and reactionary ends against the German proletariat. We stand for the right of self-determination. We, international Communists, will struggle for this right

wherever we are; we will do our utmost to regroup the proletariat of the entire world. . . .

On the other hand, a large part of Europe is occupied or effectively controlled by the USSR.

Forgetting the words of Robespierre that "no people loves armed missionaries," forgetting the words of Engels, repeated by Lenin that "the victorious proletariat cannot impose well-being upon any other people without thereby compromising its own victory," the Soviet bureaucracy has proceeded to violate brutally and bureaucratically the national and democratic rights of the peoples of Central and Southern Europe.

The Fourth International declares that there is nothing in common between Marxist-Leninist politics on the national question and the acts of annexation, the extortion of reparations, the transfer of populations, the enslavement of peoples to which the Soviet bureaucracy has resorted in order to expand its economic base and its strategic zone in Europe and Asia, instead of furthering the revolutionary movement of the masses and promoting the socialist federation of free nations. These methods are some of the manifestations of barbarism into which mankind is being plunged as a consequence of the retardation of the European and world socialist revolution, the prolongation of capitalist decay, and the degeneration of the workers state in the USSR.

The Fourth International upholds the right of self-determination in countries occupied or controlled by the USSR.

It recognizes the same right for the Soviet republics such as the Ukraine, White Russia, Karelia, Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia, who, if their peoples so desire, have the right to secede from the other federated republics of the USSR. This demand is necessary in view of the policy of oppression and forced assimilation practised by the Soviet bureaucracy.

In adopting this policy, the Fourth International remains faithful to the revolutionary teachings of Marx and Lenin and to the general interests of the international socialist movement.

The domination of the world by the "Big Three," as a result of World War II, continues, despite their differences and internal friction, to rest on authoritarian anti-democratic and despotic methods and the enslavement of a whole number of nations.

Reactionary capitalism, imperialism and the Soviet bureaucracy are more and more extensively violating the democratically-determined frontiers of nations—that is to say, those frontiers which are determined by "the language and sympathies of the population" which Engels considered to be the "natural" frontiers.

Only the proletarian and socialist revolution will, by bringing about a new democratic determination of the state frontiers, restore liberty to these nations.

The old "Economists" [wrote Lenin] distorting Marxism into a caricature taught the workers that "only" "economics" is important for Marxists. The new "Economists" either assume that the democratic state of victorious socialism will exist without boundaries (like a "complex of sensations" without matter), or that the boundaries will be drawn "only" in accordance with the requirements of production. As a matter of fact, those boundaries will be drawn democratically, i.e., in accordance with the wishes and "sympathies" of the population. Capitalism violates these sympathies and thus creates fresh obstacles to the establishment of intimacy between nations. Socialism, by organizing production *without* class oppression and by ensuring the well-being of *all* members of the state, gives *full scope* to the "sympathies" of the population, and precisely by virtue of this facilitates and enormously accelerates the establishment of intimacy among and amalgamation of nations.

# From the Arsenal of Marxism

## *The Intellectuals and the Workers*

By KARL KAUTSKY

*The question of interrelations between intellectuals and workers has a long history in Marxist literature. It was discussed at some length and with considerable fervor in the heyday of the Second International. We reprint herewith some comments made by Karl Kautsky written prior to the 1905 Russian revolution that is, more than a decade before Kautsky betrayed the ideas of revolutionary Marxism. Kautsky's remarks on this topic were made by him in an article on Franz Mehring, Neue Zeit, vol. XXII, 1903, No. 4, pp. 101-3.*

Part of the very problem which once again so keenly preoccupies our attention is the antagonism between the intellectuals and the proletariat.

My colleagues will for the most part wax indignant at my admission of this antagonism. But it actually exists, and as in other cases, it would be a most inexpedient tactic to try to cope with this fact by ignoring it.

This antagonism is a social one, it relates to classes and not individuals. An individual intellectual, like an individual capitalist, may join the proletariat in its class struggle. When he does, he changes his character too. It is not of this type of intellectual, who is still an exception among his fellows, that we shall deal with in the following lines. Unless otherwise indicated I shall use the word intellectual to mean only the common run of intellectuals who take the standpoint of bourgeois society and who are characteristic of intellectuals as a whole, who stand in a certain antagonism to the proletariat.

This antagonism differs, however, from the antagonism between labor and capital. An intellectual is not a capitalist. True, his standard of life is bourgeois and he must maintain it if he is not to become a pauper; but at the same time he has to sell the product of his labor, and frequently his labor power; and he himself is often enough exploited and humiliated by the capitalists. Hence the intellectual does not stand in any economic antagonism to the proletariat. But his status of life and his conditions of labor are not proletarian, and this gives rise to a certain antagonism in sentiments and ideas.

As an isolated individual, the proletarian is a nonentity. His strength, his progress, his hopes and expectations are entirely derived from organization, from systematic action in conjunction with his fellows. He feels himself big and strong when he is part of a big and strong organism. The organism is the main thing for him; the individual by comparison means very little. The proletarian fights with the utmost devotion as part of the anonymous mass, without prospect of personal advantage or personal glory, performing his duty in any post assigned him, with a voluntary discipline which pervades all his feelings and thoughts.

Quite different is the case of the intellectual. He fights not by means of power, but by argument. His weapons are his personal knowledge, his personal ability and his personal convictions. He can attain a position only through his personal abilities. Hence the freest play for these seems to him the prime

condition for success. It is only with difficulty that he submits to serving as a part which is subordinate to the whole, and then only from necessity, not from inclination. He recognizes the need of discipline only for the masses, not for the select few. And he naturally counts himself among the latter.

In addition to this antagonism between the intellectual and the proletarian in sentiment, there is yet another antagonism. The intellectual, armed with the general education of our time, conceives himself as very superior to the proletarian. Even Engels writes of scholarly mystification with which he approached workers in his youth. The intellectual finds it very easy to overlook in the proletarian his equal as a fellow fighter, at whose side in the combat he must take his place. Instead he sees in the proletarian the latter's low level of intellectual development, which it is the intellectual's task to raise. He sees in the worker not a comrade, but a pupil. The intellectual clings to Lassalle's aphorism on the bond between science and the proletariat, a bond which will raise society to a higher plane. As advocates of science, the intellectuals come to the workers not in order to cooperate with them as comrades, but as an especially friendly external force in society offering them aid.

For Lassalle who coined the aphorism on science and the proletariat, science, like the state, stands above the class struggle. Today we know this to be false. For the state is the instrument of the ruling class. Moreover, science itself rises above the classes only insofar as it does not deal with classes. That is, only insofar as it is a natural and not a social science. A scientific examination of society produces an entirely different conclusion when society is observed from a class standpoint, especially from the standpoint of a class which is antagonistic to that society. When brought to the proletariat from the capitalist class, science is invariably adapted to suit capitalist interests. What the proletariat needs is a scientific understanding of its own position in society. That kind of science a worker cannot obtain in the officially and socially approved manner. The proletarian himself must develop his own theory. For this reason he must be completely self-taught, no matter whether his origin is academic or proletarian. The object of study is the activity of the proletariat itself, its role in the process of production, its role in the class struggle. Only from this activity can the theory, the self-consciousness of the proletariat, arise.

The alliance of science with labor and its goal of saving humanity, must therefore be understood not in the sense which the academicians transmit to the people, the knowledge which they gain in the bourgeois classroom, but rather in this sense that everyone of our co-fighters, academicians and proletarians alike, who are capable of participating in proletarian activity, utilize the common struggle or at least investigate it, in order to draw new scientific knowledge which can in turn be fruitful for further proletarian activity. Since that is how the matter stands, it is impossible to conceive of science being handed down to the proletariat or of an alliance between them as two

independent powers. That science, which can contribute to the emancipation of the proletariat, can be developed only by the proletariat and through it. What the liberals bring over from the bourgeois scientific circles can not serve to expedite the struggle for emancipation, but often only to retard it.

The remarks which follows are by way of digression from our main theme. But today when the question of the intellectuals is of such extreme importance, the digression is perhaps not without value.

Nietzsche's philosophy with its cult of superman for whom the fulfillment of his own individuality is everything and the subordination of the individual to a great social aim is as vulgar as it is despicable—this philosophy is the real philosophy of the intellectual; and it renders him totally unfit to participate in the class struggle of the proletariat.

Next to Nietzsche, the most outstanding spokesman of a philosophy based on the sentiments of the intellectual is Ibsen. His Doctor Stockmann, (*An Enemy of the People*) is not a socialist, as so many believe, but rather the type of intellectual who is bound to come in conflict with the proletarian movement, and with any popular movement generally, as soon as he attempts to work within it. For the basis of the proletarian movement, as of every democratic movement, is respect for the majority of one's fellows. A typical intellectual à la Stockmann regards a "compact majority" as a monster which must be overthrown.

From the difference in sentiment between the proletarian and the intellectual, which we have noted above, a conflict can easily arise between the intellectual and the party when the in-

tellectual joins it. That holds equally even if his joining the party does not give rise to any economic difficulties for the intellectual, and even though his theoretical understanding of the movement may be adequate. Not only the very worst elements, but often men of splendid character and devoted to their convictions have on this account suffered shipwreck in the party.

That is why every intellectual must examine himself conscientiously, before joining the party. And that is why the party must examine him to see whether he can integrate himself in the class struggle of the proletariat, and become immersed in it as a simple soldier, without feeling coerced or oppressed. Whoever is capable of this can contribute valuable services to the proletariat according to his talents, and gain great satisfaction from his party activity. Whoever is incapable can expect friction, disappointment, conflicts, which are of advantage neither to him nor to the party.

An ideal example of an intellectual who thoroughly assimilated the sentiments of a proletarian, and who, although a brilliant writer, quite lost the specific mentality of an intellectual, who marched cheerfully with the rank and file, who worked in any post assigned him, who devoted himself wholeheartedly to our great cause, and despised the feeble whinings about the suppression of one's individuality, as individuals trained in the philosophy of Nietzsche and Ibsen are prone to do whenever they happen to be in a minority—that ideal example of the intellectual whom the socialist movement needs, was *Liebknecht*. We might also mention Marx, who never forced himself to the forefront and whose hearty discipline in the international, where he often found himself in the minority, was exemplary.

## The German Desert

"Faced with a disaster overwhelming a whole nation," Norman Clark, the Berlin correspondent of the *News Chronicle* reported "the Allied public health authorities are ordering burgomasters to take measures ensuring the easy burial of the dead in the winter. Graves are to be dug now which men debilitated by weeks of under-nourishment will not have the strength to dig in a few months' time."

Imagine for a moment that this report had appeared, not in a British paper in September 1945, but in a Nazi paper some time before the battle of Stalingrad; imagine that the town from which it was written was, not Berlin, but Warsaw or Kharkov or Amsterdam. A wave of horror would have swept the free world; no words would have been strong enough to denounce the barbarity unveiled by this report. We shuddered, almost incredulously, when we read the full story of Belsen. Yet, what is happening now, after the defeat of Nazi Germany and the collapse of Fascism everywhere, is nothing less than the transformation of a large part of Germany, as well as of Austria, into one huge Belsen. We are as efficient, it appears, as the Nazis were—ordering men to dig their own graves before their energy is sapped by hunger, cold and disease.

In Berlin, and in other places, almost every piece of machinery, of office furniture and equipment of any description has been removed and sent East. The same goes, to a large extent, for the private belongings of the inhabitants from bicycles and bedding to telephones, watches and cameras. Most livestock that could be found has

been requisitioned; practically every vehicle, from horse carts to locomotives and wagons (including trains running in the British zone of Berlin), that can be got hold of is going East. This means that the local population is left practically without food and without tools or other means of repairing their houses, roads and sewers, etc., and without the means of producing the most primitive necessities of life. Similar conditions prevail in Vienna.

But this is only part of the picture. In violation of the Potsdam agreement, the wholesale expulsion of all Germans from the Polish-occupied area east of the rivers Oder and Neisse and from the Sudetenland in Czechoslovakia is bringing a stream of utterly destitute refugees into the Berlin area. There is no food, shelter, clothing or medical attention for them there, so they are driven out to die on the roads or to starve in camps, just as the Nazis' victims were left to starve in Belsen. And this is not a handful of people: some eight to nine million human beings are affected, among them staunch anti-Nazis.

The effects of all this can be summed up in a few figures. It has been officially stated from Berlin that for the first month of joint Allied occupation, the death rate there has reached 61 per thousand, and the infant mortality rate well over 50 per cent. At least 10 per cent of all women between 15 and 45 suffer from syphilis, while in some areas the figure is as high as 50 per cent.

No one with a spark of imagination can seriously believe that this can last, or that

the armies of occupation can, for an unspecified number of years, be debased to the role of complacent administrators of ruin and decay. Sixty million people who have been deprived of a large part of their country in the East and are now pressed into a greatly diminished area cannot live without industries. Nor is there the faintest hope for the eventual democratization of Germany in such conditions, while words like "re-education" have become cynical mockery.

Moreover, the policy of non-rehabilitation is lunacy from the point of view of Europe as a whole as much as from the point of view of Germany. Europe is desperately short, not only of coal, but of all the industrial products that Germany could provide. Yet the Ruhr coal production is today about 15 per cent of what it was in the pre-war years, and the iron production in the Ruhr is perhaps 1 per cent of the 1944 figure. "The trouble is," the *Economist* pointed out last week, "that the prosperity of Western Europe has depended to a great extent on the existence of a great wealth-producing industrial concentration in the Ruhr. That wealth-producing machinery is now almost completely idle, and all Germany's Western neighbors are bearing the consequences. . . . Throughout Europe, economic life is a series of bottlenecks. In most countries, even in bombed Germany, the industrial capacity exists. What has broken down is the organization and direction which kept the wheels turning and the machines supplied."

From the *London Tribune*, September 14, 1945.

**By LEON TROTSKY**

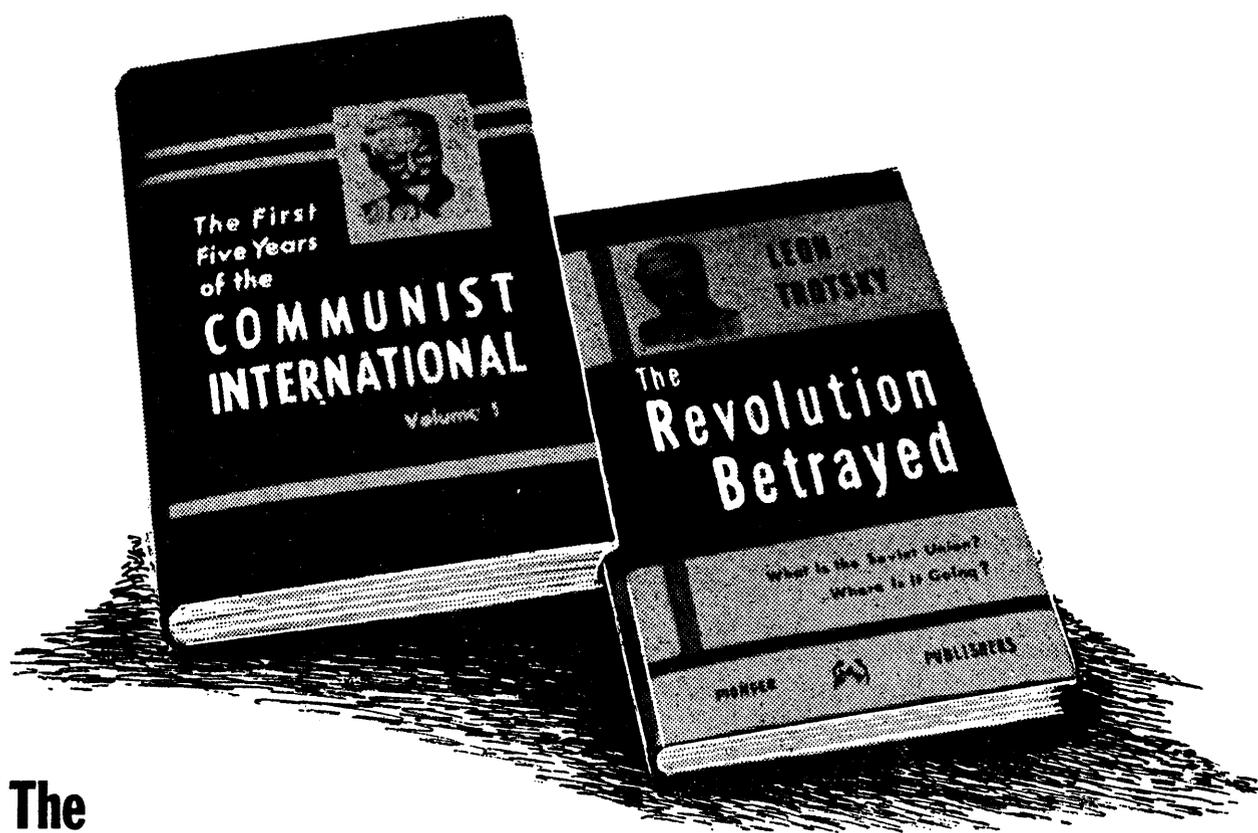
# The First Five Years of the **COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL**

**VOLUME I**

This volume contains the manifestoes, articles and other documents written by Leon Trotsky in the period of the first three World Congresses of the Communist International, 1919-1921.

384 pages

Paper \$1.50, cloth \$2.50



## The **REVOLUTION BETRAYED**

A re-printing of this Marxist classic, long out of print, for which Pioneer has acquired all publication rights.

320 pages

Paper \$1.00, cloth \$2.00

**PIONEER**

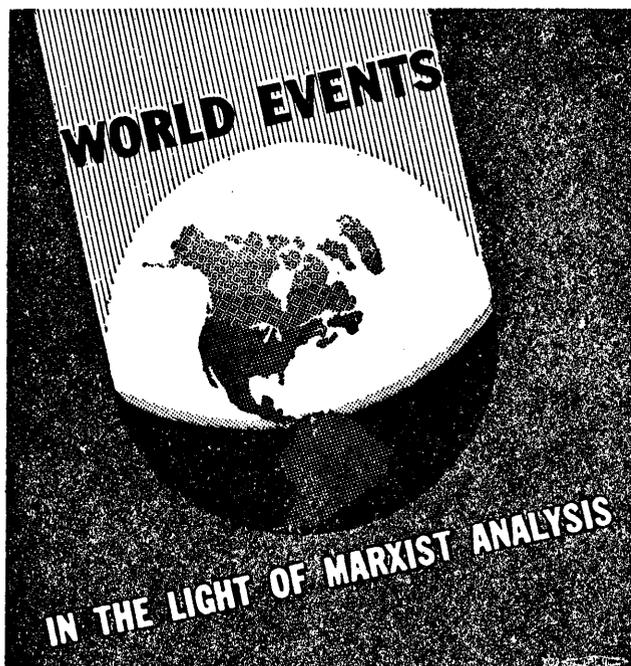


**PUBLISHERS**

116 University Place

New York 3, N. Y.

# What a Subscription to Fourth International Means to You



1. You will obtain information concerning the labor movement and the course of the class struggle both at home and abroad.

Fourth International *supplies exclusive information available in no other periodical.*

2. You will get clear solutions to the burning problems of the raging social, political and economic crisis.

Fourth International *presents the Trotskyist viewpoint, the only one that has withstood the test of events.*

3. You will not be caught by surprise by each abrupt turn and sudden crisis of our stormy epoch.

Fourth International *will aid you to follow events in the light of the revolutionary Marxist method and analysis.*

A subscription is the **BEST WAY** of assuring your copy.

For \$1.00 you will receive **FOURTH INTERNATIONAL** promptly for the next six months.

## FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

*Theoretical Magazine of the American Trotskyists*

116 UNIVERSITY PLACE, NEW YORK 3, N. Y.

I am enclosing \$ ..... Send me **FOURTH INTERNATIONAL** for ( ) 6 months, \$1.00.

NAME .....

ADDRESS ..... ZONE ..... CITY ..... STATE .....

NEW

RENEWAL