

Fourth International

Present Mood of the American Workers

—An Editorial—

Has the Depression Already Begun?

By John G. Wright

A. Leon (Oct. 22, 1918 — Sept., 1944)

By Ernest Germain

The Road to Socialism in India

By Indra Sen

A Wall Street Drummer Boy

(On Burnham's Latest Book)

By Joseph Hansen

June 1947

25 Cents

Manager's Column

Our *Reading* agent, H. S., increased his *Fourth International* bundle by three copies. "This is part of the fulfilment of our promise," he writes, "to again get a bundle of 10 copies and more, I hope. The bundle order had been decreased because some of the people to whom we had been selling single copies took subscriptions during the campaign."

* * *

Zeke Abel, new literature agent for *New Haven, Conn.*, ordered an additional 15 copies of the May issue. He says, "These *F.I.*'s will be used by the Connecticut State branch in covering a Wallace meeting scheduled for June 8 in New Haven."

Comrade Abel also informs us that "in the past week three *F.I.* subs have been obtained."

* * *

Newsstand sales of *Fourth International* in *Detroit* are averaging about 12 to 15 a month. The sales for April are broken down by *E. Brent* as follows: Family Newsstand 2 copies, stand at Michigan and Lafayette 4 copies, Carl's Bookshop 4, Cass & Warren's Drugs 3 copies—a total of 13. Comrade Brent states: "We are now on a paying basis with Cass & Warren's Drugs. This drugstore is across the street from the Wayne University and the magazine sells regularly there."

* * *

W. L., a subscriber in *Lorain, Ohio*, asks that we send him another copy of the May issue and explains why he didn't receive the first one mailed to him. "The fault is in the mails—all I received was the wrapper which was quite tattered and wet and was carelessly wound around some other person's mail which I got instead of the *F.I.* I enclose 25c and a 3c postage stamp so you can send me another copy."

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I really do not want to miss an issue as I like the magazine very much. It helps me watch the economical and political trends."

* * *

The following comments were made by *G. B.*, New York City: "The opening article in the May issue—May Day, 1947, A Day of World Struggle For Bread, Peace and Socialism!—was most inspiring. Now, when we are being attacked from all sides by anti-labor bills which, if passed, will take away the only assurance we have of getting

our rights as workers, who is on our side? Certainly not the bosses' stooges who have the nerve to debate these bills on the floor of the Senate; certainly not these 'defenders of democracy' who want to outlaw Communism and let the Ku Klux Klan remain legal. No! It is people like the author of the May Day article in the *F.I.* who give us courage and hope and tell us how we can rid ourselves of these slave-drivers forever. Not only in America but all over the world.

"The workers are expected to

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tremble in their boots now because the master has cracked his whip. But as long as facts like those expressed in the May Day article are printed, it will give the workers courage to defy the whip."

* * *

A friend in *England* writes: "We are now in touch with a young German P.O.W. whose political ideas are very close to the principles and policy of the Fourth International. We pass on to him copies of your literature which he receives eagerly. He hands it on to his comrades who are sympathetic to his ideas. There is a possibility that he may be able to get a copy of *The Militant* and *F.I.* placed in the reading room of the camp; he has already approached the camp librarian with the *Socialist Appeal*. . . I would like to express appreciation of the article in the November *F.I.* by E. R. Frank on the role of Stalinism in Europe. This was a most balanced account of the situation confronting Europe."

* * *

The following back issues of *NEW INTERNATIONAL* are urgently needed for binding:

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FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

VOLUME 8

JUNE 1947

NUMBER 6

REVIEW OF THE MONTH

The Present Mood of the American Workers—What It Denotes and Whence It Stems—The Red Baiting Campaign and the Anti-Labor Drive—Symptoms of the Radicalization and Politicalization of the American Working Class

A Brief Review of Recent Developments— Their Meaning and Trends

A DIALECTIC DEVELOPMENT

Neither the class struggle in the United States nor the political maturing of the American working class takes place smoothly, evenly and along a straight line. On the contrary, these processes unfold in a spasmodic, irregular manner, now leaping forward, now lapsing backward, now halting as if suspended in mid-air. Having attained trade-union consciousness and organization in the Thirties, the workers are only now really beginning to move toward political consciousness. In preparation for this giant leap, they must first pass through certain experiences. Among the chief lessons to be learned is their recognition of the limitations of pure trade union action.

For ten years the mass of industrial workers have relied almost exclusively upon the economic power of their newly created trade union organizations to safeguard their rights and promote their welfare. This was most graphically expressed in the grandiose tidal wave of strike struggles after V-J Day.

Starting with the fall of 1945 the strike curve shot sharply upward, reaching by January 1946 the unprecedented total of nearly 19 million man-days lost through strikes. Before expending its momentum, the record strike wave swept over virtually every key industry from auto and steel to coal and railroads.

The limitations which this mode of struggle encountered has been no less graphically expressed by the extraordinary fluctuations in the number of strikes since then. The massive wave which mounted so spectacularly has seemed to evaporate and die down to a minimum.

In the wake of the explosive outburst, throughout the latter part of 1946, the strike curve kept dropping. By April 1947 it had dropped to the low point of 1,200,000 man-days lost through strikes. In the course of the current year, except for the telephone workers and the miners, the basic sectors of American industry witnessed no strikes when contract renewals came up. And in the case of the telephone workers it was an isolated development, which took place outside of both the AFL and the CIO, and only served to accentuate the general absence of strike action.

Thus by the Spring of 1947 the class struggle on the industrial front dwindled to its lowest peacetime ebb since the formation of the CIO. What a tremendous swing in a year and a half!

REASONS FOR THE LULL

The major industrial unions which headed the great strike movement of 1945-1946, auto and steel, concluded in 1947 agreements without resort to the strike weapon. In view of the steep rise in living costs and the bonanza profits of Big Business the workers had urgent need of far higher wage boosts than they were offered—and accepted. How explain this seeming passivity?

Were they intimidated by the anti-labor barrage from the federal and state legislative bodies? Or were they weakened by their spineless leaders who, bowing before the pressure of the corporations and their political agents in Washington and in the localities, refused to weld the workers in a united front of struggle before and during the contract negotiations? Both these factors, and especially the week-kneed policy of their leaders, indubitably contributed to the situation. Lewis' capitulation to Truman's strikebreaking use of federal courts likewise undoubtedly had a dampening effect. But it would nevertheless be wrong to conclude that the official union leadership simply imposed these settlements upon their memberships in defiance of mass demands for head-on conflicts with the corporations.

PREVAILING SENTIMENTS

The workers were instinctively sensing the inadequacy of strike struggles to solve even their economic problems if they were conducted under the old policies of the incumbent leadership. They followed these leaders not because they had retained their former confidence in them or their policies, but because they did not as yet have a new leadership and new policies to rely upon. Groping towards a solution, they hesitated to enter into major battles with Big Business and its government.

By and large it appears that among the workers in the plants there was no strong sentiment for strike action to bring the employers to better terms. The auto workers in Detroit and Flint were not pressing hard for strike action. Even in Akron, the center of the rubber industry, where the workers won wage increases last year without striking, the union arrived at a peaceful settlement. To strengthen their hand in negotiations the rubber union leadership correctly mobilized the ranks in preparation for a general strike against the Big Four. This was not a bluff; and the membership responded in full force to this call to action. But the workers were ready to hit the picket lines not so much because they believed that a strike would solve their economic

problems. They were ready to fight, if the tight-fisted rubber barons forced a showdown. Besides, they understood the need of demonstrating their power in order to wrest a few more concessions from the profiteers.

Generally speaking, the signing of contracts with the companies was in most cases greeted with relief, if not satisfaction. This is confirmed by the absence of widespread protests against the wage settlements. The workers in auto, steel, rubber and elsewhere seemed to feel that under the given circumstances it was advisable to get what they could without a strike. This attitude stands in sharp contrast with their mood a year or so ago. But this shift in mood does not signify any decline in militancy or vitality. They had good reasons for their reluctance to quit work.

The strikes of 1945-46 were long drawn-out and very costly. The General Motors strike lasted 111 days. These exhausting struggles placed a heavy strain upon the workers. Many working class families did not recover from their effects for almost a year.

MATERIAL ROOTS OF THE MOOD

In the interim the workers—unarmed politically—have seen their wage gains washed out by soaring prices, which they were helpless to combat without a sliding scale of wages. Even at the peak of the boom they were haunted by fears of the unavoidable depression, with its cutbacks, layoffs and shutdowns. They have little confidence in the security of capitalist production; but they have not as yet grasped either the Socialist alternative to it or the necessity for independent political action.

Their wartime savings are largely spent and the huge volume of installment sales shows that they are already sinking into debt. In steel mills many men nowadays are working doubles, and workers elsewhere are taking on extra jobs to eke out inadequate wages. As unemployment looms, apprehension grows among the younger men with lack of seniority, while older men are afraid they will soon be relegated to the industrial junkpile.

The mass of workers could see no advantage in repeating such disheartening experiences as seeing dearly won gains snatched literally overnight by high prices. They could not afford to lose weeks of pay, without good cause or without some assurance that their struggles would bring them and their unions positive results. And above all, they were beginning to either question or lose confidence in the official leaders and their tactics.

The strike of the telephone workers ran counter to this general trend; but in reality it supplemented it. Here was a new layer of workers passing for the first time through a stage already traversed by others. The telephone operators, installers and repair men represented an entirely fresh layer of workers who were taking their place for the first time among the battalions of organized labor. Their magnificent fight in face of overwhelming odds, against the AT&T monopoly and against government strikebreaking activities, testifies to the growing radicalization of the American working class as a whole in the face of the worst anti-labor offensive in decades.

In the space of a few years these women and men, long dominated by an intricate system of paternalism, favoritism and terrorism, had cast off their submissiveness to the great monopoly. They transformed weak, company-controlled unions into instruments of struggle and managed to bring hundreds of scattered organizations, divided along craft and regional lines, into nation-wide joint action. Although the union leaders

were young, inexperienced, naive, they were genuinely representative of the ranks. On the picket lines these new recruits displayed a heroism, determination and maturity worthy of the most tested unionists. The telephone girls of New Jersey braved without flinching strikebreaking state legislation, heavy fines and possible jail sentences—and forced the state administration to retreat.

A VALIANT STRUGGLE

The phone workers had to face single-handed and fight it out alone with the wealthiest corporation in the world. Aided by government mediators, the AT&T succeeded in splitting the national strike front, cutting down wage demands, and forcing separate settlements. The telephone workers have passed through an unforgettable experience. They are now veterans of the class war. They have acquired a sense of their independent power and will never revert to their former status. Instead, they will go forward to forge a stronger union in closer association with the rest of organized labor.

Similarly, we repeat, the present passivity of the other organized workers does not flow from any lack of confidence in their own powers. It is primarily an outgrowth of their lack of confidence in the program and perspective offered by the union leadership. The workers have become cautious and more calculating. They are absorbing their first lessons to the effect that economic action alone cannot solve their problems and that other and higher forms of action are required.

Despite their present disposition to avoid strikes, the industrial workers have invariably manifested a will to struggle wherever the objective was clear and important issues were at stake. The enormous reserves of militancy in the ranks of labor were dramatically exhibited in the one-week stoppage of the soft coal miners in April as a protest against the criminal neglect of safety precautions which caused the murder of 111 Centralia miners. Undaunted by the injunction and the monstrous fine which crushed their strike last December, 350,000 miners walked out of the pits in direct challenge to these same government agencies and successfully insisted upon their enforcement of the Federal Mine Safety Code.

No less significant have been the widespread demonstrations against anti-labor legislation. The most important took place in Detroit on April 24 when 500,000 workers quit the plants in massive protest against the Big Business-Congressional attacks on labor's rights. This was the greatest outpouring of labor's power ever seen in this industrial stronghold.

In Iowa one hundred thousand AFL and CIO members engaged in a 24-hour strike against union-wrecking bills which were being rushed through the state legislature. From Boston to San Francisco the union ranks have come out in large-scale parades and demonstrations against Wall Street's anti-labor drive.

PROTESTS AGAINST ANTI-LABOR DRIVE

The demand for a nation-wide 24-hour strike to force a veto of the Taft-Hartley bill has spread rapidly among the unions. While Green and Murray remained on their knees praying that Truman would not approve the slave-labor legislation, one International after another, as well as dozens of city central bodies and scores of locals, were calling for a one-day work stoppage to put maximum pressure on the White House. Among them were the CIO Packinghouse Workers, the five CIO maritime unions, and the AFL Seafarers International.

This protest movement directed against the capitalist gov-

ernment at Washington expresses the deep desire of the workers for bold measures in defense of their interests. But the union bureaucrats are doing their utmost to suppress this combativeness and restrain the ranks from action.

The CIO no less than the AFL leaders are afraid of confronting either the corporations or their government. Immediately after signing the steel contract, CIO President Murray warned the steel workers that for the next two years they must observe a "no-strike pledge," regardless of employer provocations. When General Motors fired and disciplined a number of union presidents and militants for participating in the Cadillac Square demonstration, the UAW officials behaved like scared rabbits before this arrogant assault upon their organization.

RED-BAITERS AT WORK

At the same time, hand in hand with Wall Street and its government, sections of the union bureaucracy have been vigorously pursuing their own red-baiting campaign. By this means they hope to curry favor with Washington and Wall Street, protect their soft jobs against the genuine militants, and oust the Stalinists from the unions they mechanically control. In the CIO the reactionary red-baiting cliques have already picked up strength in the UE and have gone so far as to engineer a split among the Connecticut brass workers in the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers International. The spearhead of this drive is the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists. The Roman Church's Foreign Legion in the American labor movement has become so bold that in Buffalo priests openly organized a May Day parade as a counter-demonstration against the "Reds." The Vatican understands where the workers are heading and it seeks to divert them in advance.

The incessant barrage of red-baiting has undoubtedly made inroads among the workers and caused some injurious effects. But it is far from enjoying irresistible popularity and guaranteeing success to its practitioners. The rebuke administered by Ford Local 600 of the UAW to those who expected to ride into office on an orgy of anti-red propaganda indicates that the workers are not permitting themselves to be hooked by the red-baiting line without regard to consequences in their unions. They do not swallow red-baiting as a substitute for an answer to their pressing economic problems. They have learned from past struggles how red-baiting plays into the hands of their mortal enemies.

Although the anti-red drive has deprived the Stalinists of some union posts, it has at the same time refurbished to a certain extent their damaged reputations in the eyes of the workers. Thanks to its persecution by the agents of Wall Street, the Communist Party is able to rally its forces and gain a new lease on life. The advanced workers are confronted by the difficult problem of learning how to fight Stalinism without falling into the camp of the capitalist reaction. The struggle against Stalinist influence within the NMU and the victories over the Stalinist slates in a number of important local elections prove that with a correct policy the militants can organize their independent forces and defeat both the Stalinists and the reactionaries.

A MOLECULAR PROCESS

All these facts show that, beneath their surface passivity, a great deal of critical thinking and assimilation of ideas is going on in the depths of the working masses. They are submitting to judgment, not only the policies of the union bureaucracy, but above all the conduct of the government at Washington.

Since the Republican victory in the November 1946 elections fortified the swing toward reaction, the workers have seen price-controls scuttled and price-gouging and profiteering gone wild. They have seen every branch of the Federal government, the White House, the Supreme Court and Congress, gang up against the unions. They have watched the Democrats work hand in glove with the Republicans in passing the Taft-Hartley bill, sponsored by the National Association of Manufacturers and designed to wipe out labor's gains of the past fifty years. This anti-labor drive in Washington is being supplemented by a no less vicious offensive in the states. Already 13 states have enacted legislation forbidding the closed shop.

Under the impact of these blows which threaten the very existence of their organizations, the workers are being impelled to intensify their political thinking and look for new forms of political organization and action. In answer to the Big Business offensive, virile new tendencies toward independent labor political activity are springing into life.

A clear example of this as yet molecular transformation of working class consciousness through the elevation of economic to political struggle has occurred in Oakland, California. Here the struggle began over the Kahns and Hastings department store strike. This strike was directed by the Central Labor Council and opposed by the powerful Retail Merchants Association, which dominated the municipal administration. When this administration provided police protection for professional strike-breakers last December, the unions called a general strike. The administration backed down under this show of labor's strength.

ACTION ON POLITICAL ARENA

The solidarity welded by this general strike spurred the formation of the Joint Labor Committee to Combat Anti-Labor Legislation composed of AFL, CIO and railroad unions. This Committee was the motive force in the Oakland Voters League which was set up to dislodge the incumbent political machine and gain control of the city council. The class lines were sharply drawn in this electoral contest. The labor movement threw its full weight into the campaign which aroused great enthusiasm in the ranks. The Hearst and Knowland paid press shrieked that "Communists" were getting set to take over the city.

Nearly a hundred thousand voters turned out and the labor ticket scored a brilliant victory. Four out of five of the Oakland Voters League candidates were elected. The repercussions of this joint political action by organized labor which have been felt throughout the state will help pave the way for the formation of a Labor Party.

In South St. Paul, Minnesota, the CIO packinghouse workers put forward their own candidates in the city elections and succeeded in replacing company foremen with union members on the city council. Independent labor candidates have also participated in elections in Flint, Chicago, and Los Angeles. The delegates to the national convention of the CIO Packinghouse Workers and the CIO Marine Cooks and Stewards both held in May called for a break with the Democratic and Republican Parties and the formation of a new political party.

There is much unclarity in these first uncertain steps taken by the unions along the road to independent political action. But the trend is unmistakable—and it will find reinforcement and gain in tempo in the period ahead. As yet, these developments are limited to scattered localities. The further unfolding of the Labor Party movement on a broader scale depends in large degree upon the rate of growth of the left-wing in the unions.

Has the Depression Already Begun?

By JOHN G. WRIGHT

The attention of the whole world is today focussed upon the health of American economy. There is ample reason for this interest, for the future of world capitalism hinges upon the course of production in this country. The following questions are insistently raised. What is the present condition of U. S. economy? In what direction is it heading? What are its prospects in the next immediate period? We propose to offer some answers to these questions.

The first signs that all was not well appeared toward the end of September 1946 in the sphere of distribution. Inventories of manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers began accumulating at the rate of a billion dollars a month; symptoms of the saturation of the internal market began to appear in retail sales. (For an analysis of this first stage of the downward economic cycle, the stage of the critical turning point in the boom, we refer the reader to the December 1946 issue of the *Fourth International*, and the article by Art Preis, "Economic Trends in the United States," in the January 1947 issue.)

A New Stage Begins

Today these ominous signs are no longer confined to the sphere of distribution but have spread to the decisive sphere of production. The first thing to be noted is a decline in industrial output and factory employment, the first since the postwar boom got under way in September 1945. This decline set in toward the end of April. During the first quarter of this year—January-March—according to the adjusted index of the Federal Reserve Board, industrial output continued at its postwar peak level of 189; non-agricultural employment remained at 42½ million persons, while the army of unemployment hovered around the "prosperity normal" of 2½ million.

The change that occurred in April was by no means spectacular. By the beginning of May industrial output fell off two percentage points to 187; by the end of May it slid another two points to 185. The number of factories that cut back or suspended operations was likewise relatively small.

Hardest hit were the luxury trades (furs, jewelry) and the apparel and textile industries. Some 35-40 woolen mills out of several hundred in New England shut down, while others curtailed production. The slump in textiles spread to the South, with the most drastic curtailments coming in plush, upholstery, cotton hosiery, nylons and handkerchiefs. Similar conditions were noted in the leather and shoe industry.

In contrast to this drop in the non-durable or "soft goods" sector, production of durable consumer goods continued at a record breaking pace, although cutbacks in production also manifested themselves in such lines as lighting equipment, aluminum manufactures, radio and furniture. But this barely made a dent in durable manufactures which kept rolling along at a record pace of 225 per cent of the 1935-39 levels.

Heavy industry, steel, coal oil, likewise maintained their output, as did metallurgy as a whole. The lone cloud on the horizon was aluminum, the first major metal to be affected. The Reynolds Metal Co. shut down its Longview, Wash., plant (capacity 60 million pounds a year) and gave up the rod and bar mill which it had leased from the government. Alcoa reduced production in its Tennessee rolling mills.

At first glance, it would seem that with industrial production

pouring out at this rate, American business has little to worry about. Yet, in the face of these figures, there is great concern throughout the business world about an imminent break in the economic situation. This apprehension is well-founded, for these very figures indicate that the peak of production has already been passed, that most of the factors imparting momentum to the postwar boom have spent themselves; and signs of the downward trend are multiplying.

Here we are seeing repeated the customary pattern of downward cycles in capitalist production, during which the soft goods sector is the first to buckle under. Meanwhile durable goods continue to maintain their former pace or even forge ahead temporarily—but only to decline far more sharply at the next phase.

But one unusual factor has intruded itself into the present phase. There has been a sudden and absolutely unexpected curtailment of the construction industry, the major sphere of capital investment. Construction is normally among the last to register declines from boom levels. This is a departure from the customary pattern of capitalist downward cycles.

This spring, during the peak season of the building industry, cutbacks have created a rather high rate of unemployment among construction workers, especially in the New York area, and shut down many small plants servicing this industry, among them 250 sawmills in Georgia and Alabama. We shall deal later with the significance of this phenomenon.

The relatively slight drop of four percentage points in industrial output from the middle of April to the end of May has, however, brought about a significant change in the amount of employment. While Washington has as yet released only scanty figures about the growth of unemployment in this period, the number of jobless is probably approaching the 5 million mark, i.e., it has doubled. Nationally the proportion of unemployed to employed is one to ten. In New York, according to a recently conducted poll, it is one to six; in some parts of the country it is probably higher.

Thus the first unmistakable signs of debility have already begun to appear in U. S. economy. The question is: how serious is this condition and how rapidly will it develop?

The consensus of capitalist opinion continues highly optimistic. Thus the June 2 *Journal of Commerce*, an authoritative mouthpiece of Wall Street, consoles its readers with the forecast that these symptoms signify merely a trifling ailment, a "leveling off" rather than a "major depression."

It would be instructive to analyze the arguments of capitalist commentators like the *Journal of Commerce* in favor of this rosy perspective, in order to see how solid a basis their optimism has.

They rest their case on three main considerations: (1) the sound condition of the domestic market; (2) the booming foreign trade; (3) the expansion of building. If these three conditions are present, then there is indeed ground for optimism. Let us see.

The *Journal of Commerce* backs up its contention that the domestic market is thriving by the argument that "consumer buying is maintained." Is this actually so?

Exactly the reverse is true. Retail sales have been steadily falling off in dollars, just as, in the previous period, they had

fallen off in physical volume. The dollar volume in retail sales has been kept up in the last period by increasing sales of durable goods which temporarily compensated for the declining sales of "soft goods." Nevertheless an over-all drop has already begun. This can be seen from the comparative total sales of 296 largest department stores in the country, a key figure carefully compiled by the Federal Reserve Board. According to the May issue of the *Federal Reserve Bulletin*, these 296 stores sold in the first quarter of the current year a total of 838 million dollars, as against 859 million dollars in the same quarter of 1946, or a drop of 21 million dollars. This means that during the period of peak production and peak employment, the mass of the people were able to buy not more but less than they did the previous year.

This declining purchasing power of the masses produced even a sharper decline in the purchases of the stores themselves. We find that the outstanding orders of these 296 stores dropped almost by *half* in this same period as compared with 1946! While in March 1946 they ordered 971 million dollars worth of new goods, in March 1947 they placed orders for only 486 million dollars. At the same time retail inventories as a whole soared from 6.2 billion dollars in the first quarter of 1946 to 9.4 billion in 1947; with the inventories of the 296 department stores, leaping proportionately from 583 million dollars in March 1946 to 865 million dollars in March 1947.

What these figures prove irrefutably is that the domestic market tends to contract sharply. Workers have been able to buy less and less, while inventories of high-priced goods kept piling up. At the same time the stores themselves have bought less and less. If such was the trend during peak employment, how can it be expected to reverse itself in the face of rising unemployment and continued high prices? Instead of the trend being reversed, it must necessarily become more accentuated.

What measures have been proposed to remedy this serious situation? Alarmed by the reports of his economic advisers, President Truman has publicly urged a voluntary 10% over-all reduction in prices. There was plenty of ballyhoo around the proposal, but it fizzled. There have been no voluntary price reductions.

Why Prices Stay Up

It is not entirely out of malice or cunning that businessmen all talk about the need for cheaper goods, but do nothing about cutting prices. The manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers have now on their hands mountains of goods that already total close to 40 billion dollars. A ten per cent cut in these enormous inventories would mean an immediate loss of 4 billion dollars; a larger cut would mean a proportionately bigger loss.

The question staring them in the face is: Who shall take this loss? The wholesalers and retailers say—the manufacturers. But the latter are equally convinced that not they but the wholesalers and retailers must pay. While this muffled tug of war between the conflicting sections of the capitalists goes on—with each trying to save himself and let the devil take the hindmost—prices stay up, sales sag, inventories continue to accumulate. The disproportions between peak output and dwindling consuming power become ever more threatening.

What has happened during the spectacular splurge is that the domestic market has been ravaged by steep prices and fantastic profits of the monopolists. Big Business has proudly chalked up an extra 3 billion dollars in profits in the first quarter of 1946 (the 1946 rate of 12 odd billion dollars could not satiate them).

With the removal of all price controls and excess profits

taxes, it has taken less than seven months—from October 1946 to April 1947—for the capitalists to drive the economy from a condition of acute scarcities in virtually every sphere to conditions of glut, except for a few items. This has resulted in the first manifestations of overproduction and unemployment previously described.

This unbridled plundering of the people has gravely impaired their purchasing power, further undermining the domestic market. The most conservative estimates are that from 9 to 10 billion dollars in mass purchasing power were wiped out during the frenzied rise of prices and profits. In the process the meager war-time savings of the workers were swallowed up.

Under these circumstances, retail sales, an increasing proportion of which has consisted of durable goods, could be maintained in only one way, through the extension of consumer credit. This expedient has served to temporarily mask the dangerously impaired condition of the internal market.

Here are a few tell-tale figures, which bear today the aura of prosperity but which will on the morrow spell more cutbacks and shutdowns and more millions of unemployed.

By the end of April consumer credit rocketed to \$10,256,000,000. Charge accounts rose to \$2,782,000,000. Installment buying passed the billion dollar mark. This does not include automobiles sold on credit (such sales have reached three-quarters of a billion). We also omit mortgages on jerry-built homes, purchased by veterans and other homeless multitudes.

The bulk of these purchases are non-repeatable precisely because they represent purchases of durable goods. At the same time the debts incurred in making these purchases remain as the first charge against future income, leaving the debtors with proportionately less dollars with which to buy more goods.

It is clear that "consumer buying," far from holding up, is bound to contract sharply in the next period in view of high prices, declining incomes, growing indebtedness and growing unemployment.

In the meantime the monopolists are not devising ways and means to restore or add purchasing power, but are doing everything in their power to maintain high prices and exorbitant profits.

From the standpoint of their immediate interests, they find it preferable to unload high-priced goods, hold down wages and cut-back production. At this stage of the downward economic cycle such a course will wreak greater havoc than was caused by the self-same policies at the peak of the boom.

The realistic perspective for the next immediate period therefore is this: with production, now that all the distribution channels have become clogged, heading downward, the domestic market must follow suit.

So much for Wall Street's first source of solace.

Foreign Trade

Unable to find adequate outlets at home, can American business perhaps sustain itself by reliance on foreign markets? Here we come to the second argument in Wall Street's arsenal. Pointing to the booming export trade, the highly optimistic editor of the *Journal of Commerce* says:

One of the strongest spots at the moment is export trade. Goods have been going out of the country at the annual rate of 16 billion dollars. This compares with earlier official estimates that we would sell abroad about 12 billion dollars of our goods, and actual exports last year of 9.7 billion dollars. For the time being these huge exports are quite a factor in sustaining business.

If the well-being of American economy depends primarily on what happens to its foreign trade, then the outlook is dark

indeed. Before foreign trade can achieve any enduring stability, it is first necessary to stabilize capitalism in bankrupt Europe. For the past two years Washington has poured billions of dollars into Great Britain, France and Italy without noticeable improvement. These countries, along with Europe as a whole, continue to stagger from one economic crisis to another.

The subjective factors are now playing the decisive role there. For before Europe can be stabilized economically on a capitalist basis, it must be stabilized politically. But there is no short-term prospect for the realization of this goal. The greatest political convulsions lie not behind but ahead for Europe.

The situation in the Far East, the colonial heart of the world market, is no less unstable both politically and economically. China is torn by civil war. Indonesia and Indo-China are in revolt. India is on the brink of civil war. Prospects of political stability here, too, are rather dim.

On the other hand, those sectors in the Far East which have succeeded in registering a speedy economic recovery, now find that their own rapid progress is beginning to choke them. The rubber plantations, for example, have been restored more quickly than was anticipated. With what results? There is a rubber glut, the price of natural rubber is skidding. Australia and New Zealand have huge stocks of one of their chief products, wool. Their chief customer, the United States, already has a more than adequate supply on hand.

The Philippines are glutted with copra, so scarce only a few months ago. Coffee is again piling up in warehouses in Brazil. The Cuban sugar planters are wondering what to do with their record crops. These dislocations can only become more aggravated as world agriculture painfully climbs upward.

The policy followed by American businessmen on the foreign markets has not differed essentially from their economic policy at home. They have grabbed as much as they could as fast as they could. Soaring prices have slashed the purchasing power of foreign customers by half, by three times and more. The already acute shortage of dollars on the world market is being converted into a famine. This tends to cut down the markets for American exports.

Countries thus depleted of their gold and dollar reserves are compelled to retrench or see their fiscal systems topple. Rather than become hopelessly mortgaged to Wall Street, one country after another is being compelled in desperation to seek salvation by cutting down on American imports.

Still another factor undermining American foreign trade is the inability of the United States to buy anywhere near as much as it sells. As American exports boom, the gap between them and the imports keeps widening. At current levels there is a gap of almost 10 billion dollars between exports and imports.

But couldn't this gap be bridged by huge government loans and gifts, as many sanguine businessmen believe? Even if this insurmountable problem were "solved" temporarily through such devices, export trade would at best play only a subsidiary part in sustaining American production. Today production is at a level of 210 billion dollars a year. Let us assume that foreign outlets are able to absorb as much as ten per cent of this total (a much higher figure than the current boom). The question still remains what to do with the remaining 90 per cent in view of the shrinking home market.

As a matter of fact, there is slim prospect of maintaining even the present rate of exports. The very same editorial writer who points so hopefully to the unparalleled export boom, is compelled immediately to add:

Now it is quite obvious that exports cannot continue at this rate,

unprecedented in war or peace, much longer. The dollar shortage, becoming increasingly acute abroad, will automatically check this boom.

The one hope left is—a prolonged boom in construction. This is precisely why the unanticipated growing paralysis of the building industry is so ominous both with respect to short-term and long-term perspectives.

Former periods of peak production and peak prices have been accompanied by construction booms. This provides the main outlet for capital investment at home. Capitalist "savings," that is, accumulated profits, are capitalized by conversion into new homes, office buildings, new plants, plant expansion and equipment. In 1946, capital investment in this field lagged badly behind, barely reaching the figure of nine billion dollars, approximately one-half the rate of the boom of the Twenties. At the same time, approximately two-thirds of capital investment in industry has gone not into construction but into equipment.

The Lone Hope

The bulk of capital investments, not less than 15 billion dollars, was diverted into inventories! Profits were lusher in speculation than in home building. That is why inventories, including plant equipment and building materials, continue to swell, while construction plans are shelved, home building is suspended and plants manufacturing lumber and building supplies are shut down.

This singular lag in capital investments in building during the peak of the boom is today being translated into a crisis in construction which coincides with the first cutbacks in industry.

Construction awards thus far in 1947, as reported by the *Engineering News Record*, the accepted authority in this field, have declined month by month both absolutely and relatively as compared with the 1946 rate. In New York, this agency estimated, there was a 65% drop as against 1946. In Chicago, a 32% dip. In Boston and Seattle construction was sliced almost in half. In Milwaukee and San Francisco by 40%; in Austin, Texas, again by half. This 22 city survey hardly leaves grounds for optimism in the building industry.

The housing authorities in Washington, who had promised that not less than one million new homes would go up in 1947, have scaled down their estimate by a quarter of a million.

Unless drastic measures are taken quickly, the bottom threatens to drop out of this key branch of economy. This may readily spell disaster, because construction as such is both an avenue for capital investment and a new source of purchasing power. Apart from the still prosperous agricultural sector, it constitutes the main potential source of new purchasing power in a shrinking domestic market. What happens in the sphere of construction will have considerable bearing on how rapidly and with what intensity the downward plunge of national economy will occur in the next period.

The prevalent opinion in capitalist circles is that the construction boom has simply been delayed by high prices and that once a price decline sets in, construction will quickly spurt forward. This happened after the crash of 1920-21, and they expect it to happen again.

Such a development in residential building is not excluded. But residential building is only part of a construction boom in general, and of the boom of the Twenties in particular. Without capital construction in industry, residential construction alone cannot maintain industry at high levels. This is admitted even among capitalist economists.

For example, The Twentieth Century Fund, in its just-published monumental volume of 875 pages, entitled "America's

Needs and Resources," estimates that to keep economy operating at a level of 177 billion dollar "gross product" a capital investment of not less than 27.7 billion dollars is required. Of this total only 7.2 billion dollars is allotted to "consumer construction" or residential buildings while the rest must go into manufacturing, transportation, utilities and commerce.

But already in the last quarter of 1946 and the first quarter of 1947, the "gross national product" had surpassed the 200 billion dollar mark. Yet, capital investments in this same period were only a fraction of the sum estimated by the Century Fund. In other words, the productive facilities for such output, and an even larger one, already exist.

The Construction Impasse

This blocks off avenues for construction. Thus the Steel Trust has already cut down the larger productive capacity available during the war, because the steel kings see no possible outlet for more steel in the next period. The Electrical Trust likewise refuses to budge. The AT&T is deliberately promoting a telephone shortage for the same reason. In brief, most of the corporations are firmly convinced that their existing plant is more than adequate for their profitable markets. It is primarily for this reason that many construction plans have been shelved.

There is little likelihood that this situation will be reversed in the next period. Corporations that shelved projects in a period of high prices and high profits will hardly resume construction in a period of falling prices and lowered profits.

All indications thus far point to the prospect that capital investments in domestic industrial construction will be kept—as they have been—not at the maximum but at the barest minimum. Just the contrary situation existed in 1921.

This means that the short-term economic perspective is a bleak one. Having started downward, production will continue, with minor fluctuations, to decline.

The exact rate of this decline in the immediate period ahead cannot be determined in advance. Subjective factors play a decisive role here. The actual course which a depression may take at any given time-interval depends to a large extent on the interrelation between and the intervention of the decisive social forces, the basic classes, the ruling class on the one hand and the proletariat on the other.

The capitalist class does not sit passively by and await economic or political developments with folded arms. On the contrary, its agents intervene vigorously and consciously to serve its interests, well or poorly as the case may be. The workers, together with the mass of the people, likewise react to the changing economic situation either instinctively or consciously, depending on the strength of their organizations and their degree of political development. The interaction of these colliding forces causes fluctuations and modifications in the course of all social processes, including those in economic life.

Wall Street has mighty levers at its disposal, the government mechanism and its fiscal system together with its economic "regulators"—the various commodity markets, stock exchanges, the banks, the credit system and the like. While powerless to halt or reverse the basic economic processes, the bourgeoisie is nonetheless in a position, by manipulating these levers, to either retard or accelerate the decline.

Those who control this nation's destinies have evidently not yet made up their minds about what lies ahead and what they should do. This is indicated by the uncertain behavior of their surest barometer, the Wall Street Stock market which for one

whole year has been hovering around last year's lows, unable to decide whether to sink through this "floor" or to shoot upward again. This expresses the genuine indecision of a class that dares not look economic reality fully in the face. The plutocrats have been proceeding from hand-to-mouth, meanwhile consoling themselves with wishful thinking.

The initial rate of decline averages up to now 2 per cent a month. If this is permitted to continue unchecked, it would mean a drop of about 25% in a year; it would be a catastrophe of major proportions.

A resumption of building on a large scale would cushion this decline for a more or less extended period of time but would not alter the basic downward trend. The next few months will tell the story here.

What form will the depression take? The best that the capitalist commentators themselves hope for is a repetition of the 1920-21 cycle, when the depression hit bottom and spent itself in the space of 18 months, and the economy then rebounded to new heights.

It is still too early to chart the exact form of what lies ahead. We already have a warning signal that customary patterns need not necessarily recur. This signal is the lag of capital investments during the boom and the current peculiar manifestations in the construction industry. These are symptoms of a system that has lost its vitality.

There are several possible variants. Barring a desperate plunge into war by the ruling class (as its sole way of "solving" the crisis) or the intervention of the proletarian revolution, among these variants is one that may combine many of the features of both the 1920-21 depression and the catastrophe that erupted in 1929. In the 1929 crisis economy declined steadily for four years before hitting bottom and was never able to recover to former levels. The current decline may ultimately drop to levels one-fifth to one-third below the postwar peaks, with a "normal" army of 8-10 million unemployed; production may then flatten out at these lower levels for a relatively extended period, only to slide downward again later on. Stabilization at levels within close proximity of those that prevail now is entirely out of the question. On the other hand, some phases of the downturn may prove to be more precipitate than either in 1920-21 or 1929-32. In addition, we repeat, there is a good reason for expecting a combination of developments that may assume entirely unexpected forms.

In any case, there is no ground whatever for confidence in the economic future of American capitalism.

Two Corrections

An error was committed in translation of Ernest Germain's article, "The Jewish Question Since World War II," in our April issue. Here the text on page 113 is made to read: "That *capitalism* will first pass through a period during which the Jews will go through a process of assimilation and of 'national-cultural renaissance'—this perspective no longer constitutes a subject for discussion . . . etc." The French original reads: "That *socialism* will first pass through . . . etc." The inadvertent substitution of "capitalism" for "socialism," completely distorts the author's meaning.

An error of a similar character crept into the same author's article, "Stalinism—How To Understand It and How To Fight It," which appeared in May. Here the text on page 141 is made to read: "Actually these workers, in accepting the criminal police measures of their leaders, did not by any means follow these leaders." This is both incomprehensible and false. It should read: "Actually these workers, in continuing to follow their leaders, did not by any means accept their criminal police measures."

We apologize both to the author and our readers.

Manifesto on Germany

Addressed by the Fourth International to the Workers of Europe and America

- Against the plunder plans of the Big Four!*
- Against annexations, reparations and the dismemberment of Germany!*
- For a free, united, German Republic of workers and peasants!*

The resounding failure of the Moscow Conference leaves the German problem temporarily "unsolved." But Germany is still covered with ruins, cut up into four occupation zones, under four different military dictatorships. The toiling masses are still the prey of ruin, famine, lack of clothing and of housing. Their most elementary needs are still unfulfilled after seven years of war and privation. And the most elementary democratic rights are still denied them after twelve years of Fascist dictatorship.

For all their sudden outbursts of "humanitarian" demagogy, the Marshalls and the Bevins did not go to Moscow in order to find a solution for *these* vital problems. While hypocritically opposing the plunder policy of the Kremlin in the form of reparations—a policy dictated by the latter's particular requirements—the Anglo-American imperialists have clearly shown their own brigand policy by sharing out the coal of the Ruhr among their French, Belgian and Dutch satellites and by assuming complete domination of all industry in the western zones of Germany.

Each of the Big Four tries as far as possible to include Germany in its own economic and strategic sphere of influence. Each plots, from the point of view of its own interests, the future and political structure of Germany. The Stalinist agitation for a speedy centralization, like all the various plans for a "German federation," conceals the occupation powers' *common* refusal to let the German people freely decide their own fate.

The Big Four explain their policy of oppression and plunder by the myth of the "collective guilt" of the German people in starting the war. But the capitalists of the whole world, who today throw this dastardly accusation at the German masses, themselves for years economically, politically and morally fortified Hitler, whom they regarded as their "anti-Communist bulwark." While Hitler's concentration camps and torture chambers went on smashing the resistance of hundreds of thousands of German anti-Fascist working class fighters, the British and American capitalists continued placidly to supply German imperialism with all it needed to build up its war machine. While thousands of militant German workers were being murdered by the Nazis, the representatives of international capitalism wooed Hitler to gain his good services and made a whole series of "Friendship Pacts" with him.

The Stalinist bureaucracy has particularly "distinguished" itself in this campaign over the "collective guilt" of the German people. But this miserable lie will not make the workers forget that in 1933, Stalin turned the German working class over to Hitler without a struggle. It will not make them forget that the Pact he concluded with Hitler in 1939 precipitated the invasion of Poland. Nor will it make them forget that the ultra chauvinist war-time propaganda of the Kremlin was one of the principal elements in paralyzing the revolutionary energy of the German workers and in reenforcing Nazi chauvinism.

The reformist and Stalinist leaders, the lackeys of imperialism and of the Kremlin, also join this chorus of mudslinging

against the German working class with this monstrous myth fabricated by their bosses.

But it was precisely the criminal policy of these same leaders that permitted Hitler to take power in Germany. How can we forget the constant capitulation of the Social-Democratic leaders to the advancing tide of Nazism? And their shameful vote of confidence in the Reichstag for the foreign policy of the first Hitler cabinet. How can we forget the obstinate refusal of the leaders of the KPD (German Communist Party) to make a United Front with the Social Democracy against the Hitler menace, despite the urgent appeals of Leon Trotsky? How can we forget the refusal of the two parties to issue a call for battle to the 13 million workers who were ready to fight in the decisive hours in 1933? And these charlatans, whose policy has proved to be so hopelessly bankrupt, today dare so shamelessly to throw the guilt for their own crimes onto the shoulders of the working masses worn down by decades of uninterrupted suffering!

Workers of the world!

Destroy the myth that the entire German people are collectively responsible for starting of the war! Understand that the policy of the Big Four, far from laying the foundations for a lasting peace, only prepares the starting point for the race towards the Third World War. Don't forget that a new robbers' treaty, just like the Versailles Treaty after the First World War, will only create very fertile ground for the rebirth of another violent wave of chauvinism in Germany.

Against the secret diplomacy of the Powers of this earth, who are carving up the living flesh of the peoples, the Fourth International reaffirms the inalienable right of the German people to self-determination.

Workers of Europe!

To destroy Germany's industry, to lower the standard of living and the productivity of labor of its masses to that of colonial slaves means condemning the entire European economy, in which German economy is the spinal column, to permanent depression. No industrial and agricultural revival of your continent is possible if Germany is transformed into a vast prison where 70 million galley-slaves toil for the production of reparations for Stalinist bureaucracy and of profits for the world capitalist class. The chains that the Big Four are forging for the German masses will only increase the weight of the chains that are crushing all of you.

Only a free, united Germany, under the leadership of its working class, can fully contribute to the swift economic reconstruction of your continent through the national exploitation of its natural wealth, the development of its industrial potentialities and the complete utilization of the technical qualifications of its workers. The Socialist unity of Germany is the indispensable condition for the establishment of the Socialist United States of Europe.

Workers of the United States!

The oppression of Germany by American imperialism, the final pauperization of the German workers, the definitive colonization of its riches by your own monopoly capitalists—the very ones against whom you have carried on such admirable strike struggles since the end of the war—all this must soon bear down heavily upon the further development of your own class struggle.

gle. The lowering of the standard of living of the German workers will give your capitalist exploiters a powerful means of pressure to use against your own standard of living. The military dictatorship that your generals want to perpetuate in Germany is a training school for future would-be dictators of the United States. The same hyenas who prepare the anti-labor laws in Washington also want to reduce the German working class to abject slavery. Your struggle against the greedy and reactionary policy of the American trusts is one and the same with the struggle for the recall of the American troops from Germany and against all the reparations plans.

Workers of Soviet Russia!

The bloody police dictatorship which weighs on your backs prevents you from openly voicing your hostility towards the bureaucratic Stalin regime. But at the same time you are more and more worried by the accelerated preparations of Yankee imperialism for the launching of a new world war. That war, far from freeing you from the yoke of the Stalinist dictatorship, would only transform you into slaves of Wall Street. The nationalist policies of the bureaucracy and its vile practice of plunder and deportation are greatly facilitating the task of the American bankers and threaten to provoke complete indifference on the part of the German workers as to the imperialist plans of transforming their country into a bulwark of the encircling chain around the USSR. To fight this menace you must show the German workers, whenever and wherever you can, that the internationalist tradition of the October Revolution still lives on among you.

Remember the appeals of Lenin and Trotsky for "Peace Without Annexations or Reparations" "For the Fraternalization of the Workers of All Countries." Show the German workers that you want to take this path once more! For, only fraternal collaboration between a Germany free of national oppression and capitalist exploitation and a Soviet Union free of its bureaucratic parasites will give a new impetus to your collectivized economy and will give you the bread, liberty and culture of which the Kremlin deprives you.

British Workers!

Your votes carried the Labor government to power because you hoped thus to find a peaceful road to Socialism. But your ministers have shown themselves, in Germany as in Great Britain, to be the faithful agents of British imperialism. Will you allow those who are supposed to be building Socialism in Britain to tie the German workers down to forced labor? Will you allow those who drew you into five years of war for "the Four Freedoms" to deny the most elementary democratic right, that of self-determination, to the German masses? The fusion of the Attlee government's German policy with Truman's will definitely lead you on the road towards the Third World War which, in one way or another, will certainly reduce your country to ruin. The road towards a stable peace, towards the elimination of the reactionary bureaucracy of the Labor ministers, towards the expropriation of the monopolists, towards all those goals for whose realization you so ardently hope, is the road of struggle against the continued occupation of Germany and against annexations and reparations!

French Workers!

Your capitalist employers and their reformist and Stalinist collaborators tell you that without the Ruhr coal; reconstruction of the economy of your country is impossible. In reality the obstacle to this reconstruction is the greediness of your Two Hundred Families, the sordid egoism of your capitalist masters, the rotten corruption of their government apparatus, the complete decadence of French capitalism. Those who hope to dis-

tract your attention towards the Ruhr coal only hope in that way to perpetuate their own bloody filthy rule, your own growing misery and the violent domination of the French and colonial masses. You who have, under the Nazi occupation, felt the weight of imperialist oppression cannot tolerate the extension of the same slavery over the German workers!

Communist Workers of All Countries!

During the occupation of the Ruhr by Poincare's troops in 1923 the Communist Parties of all lands gave a magnificent example of working class solidarity and thus furnished striking proof of the *realism* of international united action of the working class in the face of the bloody quarrels of its imperialist masters. Today the Stalinist parties in every country carry out an ultra-chauvinist policy and oppose each other by defending the particular interests of "their" country side by side with their rulers.

The Fourth International, which fights with all its strength against the Stalinist bureaucracy's vile prostitution of the ideas of Communism, proudly lays claim to the revolutionary tradition of Lenin's Communist International. It calls upon you, in the spirit of that tradition, in the spirit of the militant fraternity that was forged in the concentration camps between your German comrades and yourselves, to join your efforts to those of the German workers in combatting the occupation of Germany, the annexation of its provinces and all the reparations plans.

German Workers!

This appeal of the Fourth International to the workers of the entire world is at the same time a message of hope to the German workers. It reminds you that in 30 countries there are organizations that reject with disgust the mud-slinging campaign against you, that holds higher than ever the banner of world proletarian solidarity, the banner of the revolutionary, communist, workers international.

In the spirit of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg it calls upon you, the workers of Germany, to struggle against the occupation, plunder and dismemberment of your country. You have only one enemy: the German and world exploiters. Only one ally: the oppressed masses of the entire world!

The crimes committed by the occupying powers in Germany equal those committed by Hitler in Europe. They are unanswerable proof of the sordid barbarism into which the outlived capitalist regime is dragging us. Today the struggle for elementary human dignity, for the most simple democratic rights can only succeed by the victory of the proletarian revolution. Only a Socialist Germany in a Socialist Europe can liquidate the remains of Fascism, clear away the ruins, heal the wounds, preserve and elevate human culture and technique to unprecedented levels and transform your present Calvary into a life at last worthy of man. We, the Internationalist Communists of 30 countries, have the firm conviction that with the fraternal aid of the workers of the entire world you, the workers of the country where Scientific Socialism was born, will find the road towards the Socialist revolution. Hitler threw Europe and his own country into the abyss of destruction. The German working class will show humanity that it is capable of lifting its country and the whole continent to a new and wondrous level of peace and well-being!

LONG LIVE THE INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY OF THE WORKING CLASS!

LONG LIVE THE GERMAN REVOLUTION!

LONG LIVE THE UNITED SOCIALIST SOVIET STATES OF EUROPE AND THE WORLD!

The International Executive Committee
of the Fourth International.

April 1947.

A. Leon

October 22, 1918—September, 1944

By ERNEST GERMAIN

The period of relative peace and prosperity experienced by Western Europe between 1870 and 1914 was hardly propitious for the making of genuine revolutionists. In order for the mind to free itself completely from the influence of ruling class ideology and in order for the will to be concentrated on a single goal—the conquest of power by the proletariat—it is not enough just to assimilate correctly the Marxist method and heritage. Life itself must propel men outside the routine of “respectable” existence and drive them into direct contact with all the violence, the cruelty, the degradation and barbarism inherent in the capitalist system. It was in the crucible of illegality, imprisonment, emigration and merciless struggle against the autocracy that the great revolutionary generation of Bolsheviks was forged in Russia. In order for a new revolutionary generation to be created in the countries of the West, mankind had to enter into the very fire of the crises of wars and revolutions.

It was war and revolution which cradled A. Leon, and which later closed his eyes. On the day of his birth the footsteps of the revolution rang through the streets of his native city, Warsaw. Two rival Soviets were contending for power. On the horizon, the Soviet Republic was already taking shape. Defeated armies brought their tatters, their bitterness and their thirst for justice into the popular assemblies. Human beings from the obscurest depths of mankind flowed in wave upon wave across the political arena: men and women, young and old, all the poor and oppressed, all the disinherited who had lived with their mouths shut and their backs bent and who now suddenly discovered their voices.

But while their hands bore the red flag deeper and deeper into the tortured city, there already fluttered over the fortress the red and white flag with the Polish eagle, hoisted by legionnaires under the command of a “socialist,” Pilsudski. These two symbols, these two currents of ideas, international socialism and petty-bourgeois social patriotism, were struggling passionately for supremacy over the masses. The short but fruitful life of Leon was to pass entirely under the sign of this struggle.

Partitioned at every historical turning-point, Poland could not avoid saddling its labor movement with the heavy heritage of a miserable past: militant nationalism. The Jews of Poland, victims of every political and social crisis, who had witnessed pogroms under the Czars, under the revolution, under the Whites, under the Russians, under the Poles, under the Ukrainians and under the Lithuanians, sought a desperate solution through the formulation of a nationalist myth of their own: Zionism. An expression of the complete blind-alley in which Jewish petty-bourgeois thought had arrived, this reactionary utopia was, nevertheless, among the youth and above all the proletarian youth, an expression also of the will to realize the socialist ideal, to participate actively in the world proletarian struggle.

The contradiction between the petty-bourgeois character of Zionism and the rigorously internationalist conclusions of Marxism drove the Zionist working-class leaders to formulate

a new theory which, by combining their socialism—which they wanted to be scientific—with their Zionist aspirations, would invest the latter with some semblance of Marxist justification. This is how the strange theory called “Borochovism”—from the name of its author, Ber Borochof—was born, a theory which was destined to become the official theory of Jewish revolutionists throughout the world for several decades. The family in Leon’s household adhered to “official” petty bourgeois Zionism. On his first contact with reality, the child felt the attraction of the Zionist myth like a religious intoxication. The myth was to be realized in life: the family left for Palestine when the boy was old enough to enter grammar school. The wonderful procession of scenes on this trip became engraved in his memory like a fairy tale. He remembered how the sun blazed on the roofs of Constantinople, the sound of the sea among the enchanted islands of the archipelago, and how the rugged coast of the Promised Land looked to him the first time. But the fairy tale did not last long; a year later they started back for their native country.

Amid these changing conditions of his life, the boy observes, strives to understand, and assimilates the idea of the constant movement of men and things. His mind goes traveling and doesn’t as yet come to rest. We must wait until 1926, when the family decided to emigrate to Belgium, before Leon begins to get intensely interested in companions of his own age and makes contact with the Zionist socialist youth movement “Hashomer Hatzair,” “The Youth Guard.” Other forces begin to act upon him. At school he feels the barriers set up before the Jew, before the foreigner, separating him from his classmates. How can he fail to understand that he is “different” from the others or that he has special problems, when he constantly notes that he is being treated differently, that he is not allowed to participate in games like any other little boy, but remains the butt of some comment or ironical jest? Upon his way homeward along the swarming streets of populous old sections of Brussels, he is sharply reminded of all the contradictions in modern society. He is greatly moved by the picture of the world’s division into the rich and the poor. How could he help naturally taking sides with the downtrodden, feeling himself, as he does, the victim of a double injustice?

This is how young Leon becomes an ardent militant in the Jewish Zionist youth. His mind begins to explain the indignation and revolt that his heart feels. Gradually, through a systematic Marxist education, Leon grows to understand society and the solution toward which the struggle of the workers is directed. Within the framework of this youth movement—which is, despite its confused political ideas, a model organization, and one of the best schools of morals and proletarian thought—everything begins to dissolve away—family ties, traditions, heritage of age-long petty-bourgeois calculation, heritage of submissive fear of authorities. He grows as free in his character as in his mind; he learns to govern himself, he lets himself be governed by reason, he learns to subordinate himself to the pursuit of the goal. His will becomes tempered in the ideal. His personality is formed in concentrating upon the

struggle for socialism; he finds the highest satisfaction in thought and action that is placed in the service of the world proletariat.

It is not long before the young Leon outstrips his comrades in the movement. As the most intelligent, the most firm and the most comprehensive, he at the same time possesses a calmness and a reasoned confidence that completely and naturally draws the respect of all those around him. Born to lead, he has no need to raise his voice, or to charm with beautiful phrases or to attract by extraordinary deeds in order to have everybody accept his authority. He moves up rapidly along the various rungs of the elected apparatus of the "Hashomer" and soon finds himself in the leadership of the Brussels section and on the national leadership.

The living conditions of his family compel him to give up his studies for a time. Because he has to be constantly on the move all over Belgium in order to make a livelihood, he is able to renew his contact with the working masses who are once again going into the streets to demonstrate their strength and to demand their rights. During the sunlit days in the summer of 1936 the fever spreads from the coal pits of Charleroi to the somber villages of the Borinage miners. While the police patrol the crossroads, the workers gather to hear a new leader. It has been years since they heard a genuine revolutionary voice.

The workers come by the thousands to Fléau, to Jemappes, to Quaregnon, to Frameries and to the great stadium in Bouverie in order to listen to the fiery speeches of Walter Dauge, the young founder of the Revolutionary Socialist Party. Leon attends the meetings of Dauge. He learns to distinguish Trotskyism from Stalinism. He studies and it does not take him long to side with those ideas which appear to him to be the product of genuine Marxism, and which are inspired by the genuine interests of the world proletariat and not by the miserable falsifications concocted by the master of the Kremlin. Concurrently the series of the monstrous Moscow Trials lead him to take a definite position. From this year on, as against the entire world organization of "Hashomer" which leans somewhat toward Stalinism, he becomes a resolute "Trotskyist" and defends his ideas vigorously and not unsuccessfully at national and international congresses and gatherings.

But even while rapidly advancing in his knowledge of Marxism and while pursuing deeply his study of political economy, he remains profoundly attached to Zionism. While serving for one year as Chairman of the Belgian Zionist Federation, he devotes all his energy, all his revolutionary zeal in the service of this cause. When a group of young militants depart for Palestine, an enthusiastic call is launched for the establishment of a "communist" colony there. But Leon begins to doubt. Side by side with him are the representatives of petty bourgeois and bourgeois Zionist organizations. Isn't he united with them for the present, even though he expects to fight against them mercilessly after "nationality" and the "possibility of waging an effective struggle"* have been conquered in Palestine? Isn't this "social-patriotism," even if in a rather unusual form? Leon has his Lenin at his finger tips. The lengthy and lucid arguments in *Against the Stream* ring in his ears. How can he reconcile his consistent Leninism with Zionism? Where can one find a common ground for the Jewish national struggle and the struggle of internationalist socialism?

In this way, 20 years after Borochoy, Leon, in his turn,

*"Hashomer Hatzair" defends the position that Jewish workers and revolutionary socialists are able to struggle "effectively" for the proletarian revolution only in Palestine.

took up the trail of the Hashomer "theoretician" in order to discover a Marxist justification of Zionism. He questioned everything; he methodically re-explored the connections between the ideas, accepting none of the axioms of the Zionist ideology, cutting his way through the tangled prejudices of Jews and non-Jews on the subject of the history of the Jews, a history which seems so astonishing and extraordinary and which his rigorously scientific mind seeks to explain by the Marxist method. In the course of his researches, he forwarded several articles to the Belgian Trotskyist weekly *La Lutte Ouvrière (The Workers' Struggle)*. The editors of this periodical established contact with him. He was astonished to find treasures of historical, economic and political knowledge among these simple workers. He sensed that this is the vanguard. He turned for the last time to his past, resolving to break with it harmoniously, with complete consciousness, after clarifying to himself and to his comrades the profound reasons for his break, after demonstrating to his friends the truth which he had himself just discovered. His "Theories on the Jewish Question" took form; his book "The Materialist Conception of the Jewish Question" would constitute the amplified elaboration of these theses.

The Break with Zionism

Meanwhile, a wave of uneasiness had seized the Jewish masses all over the Old Continent. They sensed the approach of war; and the presentiments of the terrible catastrophe that would befall them threw them into a crisis of nervousness and fear. The world congress of "Hashomer" convened. The menacing shadow of Hitler was already hovering over Brussels. In heated debate the delegates came out either for a "conditional" support of British imperialism, or for "neutrality," or for an "independent defense" of Palestine should it be threatened by a fascist army. Despite angry shouts of the assembly against this "renegade from Israel," Leon, even before breaking definitely with Zionism, defended courageously the position of complete "revolutionary defeatism." "Woe to those who with their own social-patriotism feed chauvinism among the workers in enemy countries." This weapon will boomerang against those who wield it. Woe to those who sow false hopes that the miserable lot of Jews in Central Europe will improve as a result of the war of British imperialism against its German rival! They will themselves prove to be its most sorely stricken victims. It was in this sense that Leon must have spoken. And what stupefaction must his words have aroused among those wavering centrists who seeks at every turn for cheap solutions and for compromises, who are incapable of reacting to the rigors of history with an equally rigorous mind.

As the waves of imperialist war broke closer and closer to Belgium before engulfing it in May 1940, Leon completed his "Theses on the Jewish Question" and submitted them for discussion to his organization. In his attempt to grasp the meaning of Jewish history Leon found himself in collision with Borochoy's "metaphysical materialist" theory and his first attempt was to eliminate this obstacle. Borochoy maintained that the Jewish question was rooted in the fact that the Jews, and above all the Jewish workers, played no important role in the vital sectors of economy (heavy industry, metallurgy, coal and so on) but instead occupied important positions solely in the peripheral spheres of economic life. The social composition of other peoples resembled a pyramid having as its base hundreds of thousands of miners, metal workers, railroad workers, etc., and then passing through large layers of handicraftsmen, topped off by ever thinner strata of businessmen, indus-

trialists and bankers. But the social composition of Jewish people resembled an "inverted pyramid" in which large handicraft strata rested on narrow layers of workers—who were moreover engaged in non-vital sectors of industry—and had to bear the full weight of an enormous mass of business men.

Borochoy cut his analysis short at this point; he accepted this as a historical fact, without making any attempt at an explanation, and used it as the starting point for his "solution" of the question: It was first of all necessary to "reverse the inverted pyramid," i.e., to create a "normal" Jewish society like those of other peoples; until this was done the Jewish proletariat could not seriously undertake revolutionary struggle; and such a society could be created only in Palestine.

Leon quickly grasped everything that was "non-dialectical" in this theory: The existing social condition of the Jews could not be approached as a "fact," but as the product of historical development. How did this different historical evolution of the Jews come about? Linking up Borochoy's thread of reasoning with several casual statements of Marx, who with his habitual genius had laid bare the entire "mystery" of Jewish history, Leon commenced to reconstruct the entire past of the Jews.

The Marxist Approach

The explanation for the religion of the Jews and for their preservation must be sought in the social role they played. Gathering together the mass of existing documentation he elaborated the theory of the "people-class," astonishing in its simplicity, and providing the indispensable key for understanding the past and present role of the Jews and for finding a solution to their misery.

Borochoyism erred, however, not alone in its point of departure but even more so in its conclusions. It approached the "solution" of the Jewish problem not only outside the past historical process but also outside the existing social reality. In the epoch of imperialism and of capitalism in its death agony, the "will" of a few million Jewish workers to "create a society like the rest" appeared as a pathetically weak force amid the imperialist giants fighting over every unoccupied nock and cranny on the globe, amid the violent collisions of classes on the world arena. Borochoy had no comprehension whatever of the law of uneven and combined development in the imperialist era, whose operation prevents every nation without exception from solving any of its problems under the capitalist regime in its death throes. The tragic peculiarities of Jewish society could not be eliminated by seeking to isolate it from decaying society as whole. The "inverted pyramid" of the Jews could not possibly be "reversed" while the "normal" pyramid of other peoples was itself in the process of crumbling apart. The world proletarian revolution is alone capable of normalizing Jewish history. Within the framework of decaying capitalism no solution is possible.

This was the manner in which Leon completely settled all the accounts with his own past. He not only exposed the petty-bourgeois Utopian character of the Zionist ideal, but also showed how this ideal, like the rest of the petty bourgeoisie's "own" ideology is bound to become in the imperialist epoch an instrument in the hands of world capitalism. He denounced Zionism as a brake upon the revolutionary activity of the Jewish workers throughout the world, as a brake upon the liberation of Palestine from the yoke of English imperialism, as an obstacle to the complete unity of Jewish and Arab workers in Palestine. Candidly, without any reservations or evasions, he condemned his own entire past activity. He understood what had completely conditioned it and how it had served as

a necessary stage in his own development. His mind, steeped in the dialectic, delighted in presenting each clear piece of knowledge, each phase of consciousness as the product of the struggle to surmount the counter-truth and error. "In order to understand one must begin by failing to understand," he would frequently say. "No conviction is so deeply held as the one gained in the course of a prolonged and sincere internal ideological struggle." The few years left him to live, demonstrated to him how exact these observations were in his own case. Having surmounted the nationalist stage of his own development, Leon rooted out from his thought every vestige of Zionism and his internationalism was of a purity that is rarely met.

Under Trotsky's Banner

No longer constrained to pursue two contradictory paths and to consume itself in internal controversy, his energy was henceforward able to strike out with all its power on a single road, that of the Fourth International. Leaving the "Hashomer" with about a score of comrades, Leon organized a study circle with the aim of leading his followers to Trotskyism. Most significant of all was the date of this "conversion." When Leon came to international communism, the workers movement seemed dead in Belgium. Henri De Man—who began his evolution as an ardent anti-militarist only to become in rapid succession a social patriot, a theoretician of insipid "revision" of Marxism, His Majesty's Minister and a charlatan patcher-up of capitalism—had just completed the circle of his "socialist" life by dissolving his party, whose President he was, and by calling upon his comrades to collaborate with Hitler in building a new order in Europe. Isolated from the masses who had been stunned by the May-June 1940 events, the Communist Party, following instructions from Moscow, prudently retired and even went so far as to publish a Flemish weekly which meekly reprinted Goebbels' interminable anti-British tirades side by side with ritualistic paeans to the "land where life was so joyous and so happy." The former Trotskyist leader Walter Dauge, whose intellectual baggage proved too light for this long ordeal, became profoundly demoralized and abandoned his party to its fate. The few Trotskyist cadres, dispersed all over the country, had hardly reestablished contact. The situation seemed to justify only resignation and watchful waiting. Any other attitude appeared like a manifestation of desperate and impotent revolt.

What was lacking was not so much courage to act as courage to think, and to think correctly. Marxist analysis enabled one to penetrate through the totalitarian lid pressing on Europe and to discover there gestating forces which would in the end throw it off. Correctly establishing the reasons which we had for hope, Leon noted that the workers' movement in Europe had already reached the lowest point of its ebb. It was now necessary to count upon a new rise. It was necessary not to await it passively but to prepare for it, preparing for it the cadres and insofar as possible the masses. Even in darkest moments of history, a party that is later capable of leading the masses in struggle can be forged only in constant contact with the day-to-day life, difficulties and aspirations of the people. Behind every reason for despair, one must discover a reason for hope.

This motivating thought of Leon is not only a symbol but the beginning of action. When, on August 20, 1940 we were overwhelmed by the tragic news of the assassination of L. D. Trotsky, Leon immediately wrote the first illegal pamphlet of the Belgian Trotskyist movement. He established contact with

several former regional leaders of the party in Brussels. The first leadership began to take form. The illegal Trotskyist organization was born on the day following the death of its spiritual father. The vitality of the ideas of the Fourth International, which are nothing else but the conscious expression of historical reality, seeks only the occasion and the men in order to become reaffirmed at every turn. It had just discovered both.

Under Fascist Illegality

There ensued a period of incessant, stubborn and unyielding work in the face of difficulties which kept constantly arising and which seemed each time insurmountable. From this moment on, the story of Leon was linked with the history of the Trotskyist movement in Belgium. The principal inspirer of the party, he served as political secretary from the time the first executive committee was set up. As a journalist, with an incisive, lively and clear style, he made his readers feel that he understood thoroughly every problem with which he dealt. The editorial board of the illegal *La Voie de Lénine* (*Lenin's Road*) worked under his direction and its first issues contained a masterly study from his pen of the structure and future of the various imperialist powers. In this study he traced the main line of future events in the war exactly in the way in which they later unfolded. An exemplary organizer and educator, he guided the branches, tried to build the party under conditions of illegality, and concentrated with infinite patience on winning the confidence of workers' districts and on forming a recognized and responsible national leadership on the basis of this confidence.

I met him personally for the first time on the first central committee of the party which was reconstituted by his efforts in July 1941.

Although he was absorbed to the exclusion of everything else in the enormous daily tasks, organizational as well as political, Leon did not for a moment suspend his ideological work which constitutes the most precious heritage he left us. On the one hand he systematically completed his book on the Jewish question, constantly working over the details, reflecting for weeks on a particular aspect of this or that question, devouring all the existing documentation, but prepared, once his mind was made up, to defend his views to the end. That is how this book came to be written. It is not only a model of the application of the Marxist method to a specific historical problem; it not only "liquidates" the Jewish question as a problem from the historical materialist point of view, but it contains in addition a wealth of observations and formulations on many problems in political economy, history and contemporary politics.

On the other hand, he devoted himself to elaborating an exact Leninist conception of the problem which was at the time agitating all revolutionists in the occupied countries, namely: the national question and its relation to the strategy of the Fourth International. Let those who so readily incline to criticize the Trotskyist policy in Europe in relation to the national question read and study the documents which Leon elaborated during this period. Let them find out how pre-occupied he was, as was the entire leadership of our party, with safeguarding, on the one hand, the Leninist program from the virus of chauvinism while defending Leninist tactics, on the other hand, against the myopia of sectarians, and they will see how silly are their accusations to the effect that we "underestimated" the national question.

Whatever he had clarified in theory he sought to execute in practice. The smallness of our cadres did not permit us to start consistent work among the resisters. But each time a genuine movement became apparent, whether on the occasion when the university of Brussels was closed, or during the first great strikes at Liege; or during the deportations or actions against the Jews, our party invariably applied its political line of "supporting and promoting mass movements aimed against the occupying imperialism with a view to directing them towards the revolutionary proletarian movement." It was with justifiable pride that Leon pointed out at the illegal party congress in July 1943 that there was not a single event in Belgium since 1941 in which our party had remained on the sidelines.

As soon as the party was reconstituted, Leon began to worry about international relations. An internationalist to his marrow, he found it intolerable that the Belgian section should live in isolation from its brother movements in Europe and throughout the world. The need for contact with the other sections of the Fourth International did not arise solely from his desire to compare the political line of the Belgian party with that of its brother parties; it also corresponded to a very clear realization that the great military and revolutionary shocks would in the future inevitably assume a continental character and that no political leadership could any longer function effectively on a national scale. An attempt to establish contact with Holland failed. We had more success in France. Thanks to this connection the last documents of L. D. Trotsky reached us via Marseilles from where we received the Manifesto of the Emergency Conference which was issued as a pamphlet by our party. Later, in August 1942, in a small village in Ardennes, the first meeting of representatives of Belgian and French leaderships took place. Leon and Marcel Hic were the principal inspirers of this meeting. They laid the groundwork for the future Provisional European Secretariat which was in its turn to reconstitute an international leadership under conditions of complete illegality.

This period of illegal activity under the most dangerous conditions, when one's heart involuntarily jumped each time the doorbell rang or an automobile pulled up close to the house, was a time of nervous tension and of continuous waiting for an explosion that would finally make a breach in the walls and bring closer the day on which would explode the gates of the enormous prison into which Europe had been transformed. We awaited this explosion from the very depths of this prison. Our thoughts were centered on the reserves of revolutionary energy stored up during the long years of suffering by the proletariat on the Old Continent. When Leon personally assumed the direction of party work among the proletarian soldiers of the Wehrmacht or when he attended meetings of the underground factory committees set up in the Liege metallurgical plants, he invariably invested these various tasks with a meaning which transcended the present; he wished to sow so that the party would be able to reap when the decisive moment came. Many times he would pose the question of whether we would be capable of gathering the harvest in view of the numerical weakness of our cadres. He could not foresee that he himself would be lost to the party during the decisive days of the "liberation" and that the absence of an effective leadership would prevent the party from profiting as it might have from the extraordinary conditions of that hour.

Then came the downfall of Mussolini. We finally felt the rising wind of the revolution; our activities multiplied. Each

of us expended himself unsparingly; the culmination was approaching. There took place a number of secret trips to France where Leon participated actively in the work of the European Conference of the Fourth International, February 1944. We halted our work of self-preparation; it was now a question of intervening actively in the workers' struggles which were erupting everywhere. In the Charleroi region, the Trotskyist organization took the initiative in organizing an illegal movement of miners' delegates. This movement spread rapidly to about 15 pits; in complete illegality the party's ideas began to take root among the masses. Understanding the full importance of this movement, Leon wished to follow it step by step. He decided to locate himself in Charleroi in order to collaborate daily with the revolutionary workers of the region. News of Allied landing in Europe and fears lest connections between the various regions be broken, hastened the preparation for the shift. After living for two years in complete illegality, he went to settle at Charleroi with his wife. On the first evening of his arrival the house into which he had moved was searched by the police. He was arrested and sent to prison.

Then followed long days of moral and physical torture. The Gestapo used every means to make him talk. He was torn with worry about the party which had lost five of its first rank leaders within the period of two years. He succeeded in gaining the confidence of one of the soldiers of the guard. A contact was established with the party. The letters which he sent are the most convincing testimonial that in the most difficult hours of his life all his thoughts were centered on the organization, its immediate projects, its future. He wanted so much to continue his work shoulder to shoulder with his comrades. Destiny willed it otherwise. The rapidity with which he was deported frustrated the preparations to effect his escape undertaken by the party and he was flung into the hellish place where five million human beings were to perish—Auschwitz.

Leon was the type least able to withstand the regime of Nazi concentration camps. He possessed a sense of human dignity which found intolerable contact with the degradation and cruelty which became the common denominator of human conduct inside the concentration camps. The nobility of his character was shattered against the implacable bestiality of egos in despair, just as his body became broken by physical exertions to which it was not accustomed and by malignant disease. After several weeks of labor in a road building gang, he was sent to a quarantine camp. There one had to devise tricks, grovel before the masters, engage in petty trading and

steal in order to survive. He could not rise above his companions in misery along these lines. Chained to his miserable cot, he passed his last days in reading and meditation. He was certain that the end was near. There came the final "medical inspection." The sick destined for the gas chambers were selected. He was among them.

It is difficult if not impossible to give an estimation of a revolutionary leader who reached only his 26th year. Despite all his incessant labors he has left us few works. He did not write a great deal; before confiding his ideas to paper he preferred to think them out to the end. Nevertheless that which he did leave us, his book and a thin volume of articles, suffices to discern in him, alongside of Marcel Hic, an individual of very exceptional talent and of the most serious promise possessed by the Fourth International on the Continent. By his strength of character as much as by the maturity of his political judgment, by his natural authority as much as by his qualities as leader, Leon was destined to lead our movement and to guide it through incessant struggles to victory. The void he leaves behind will not be quickly filled by a figure of similar stature.

Those who knew him will retain the memory of A. Leon as an example to emulate and a constant source of inspiration. Those who read his book will admire the clarity and rigor of his reasoning and will be astounded by the maturity of a mind at the age of 24 years. Among those who learn the story of his life there may be some who will perhaps ask why a man of such remarkable qualities tied his destiny to a small revolutionary organization; they will praise his sincerity, his complete ideological honesty that caused him to live in complete harmony with his ideas. They will ask themselves: Why did the Marcel Hics, the Martin Widelines, the A. Leons, who were among the most gifted European intellectuals, choose a movement which could promise them neither success nor glory nor honors nor even a minimum of material comfort, but which on the contrary demanded of them every sacrifice, including their lives and which required long ungrateful work, frequently in isolation from the proletariat to whom they wanted to give everything? And if they are able to recognize in these young revolutionists, along with their intellectual gifts, exceptional moral qualities, they will then say to themselves that a movement capable of attracting such men solely by the power of its ideas and the purity of its ideal and capable of leading these rationalist dialecticians to such heights of self-denial and devotion—is a movement that cannot die because in it lives everything that is noble in man.

Translated from the French by Ed Wilde

Against the War in Indo-China!

Appeal of the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International to the Workers of France and the Entire World

Comrades,

The heroic resistance of the Indo-Chinese peoples to the French imperialist armies is inspiring the oppressed throughout the colonial empire. The reactionary war of French imperialism is becoming drawn out, the imperialist calculations are being upset, while new quakes are shak-

ing that empire in Madagascar, Morocco and Algeria.

The French imperialists see before them the terrifying prospect of the break-up of the empire they founded on the blood, exploitation and misery of the colonial masses. They know that their power, already seriously undermined by the

Second World War, won't have any chance of getting the least bit stronger, or even of maintaining itself, without exploiting the vast colonial domain that their war-like expeditions of plunder and brigandage assured them in the past.

It is with blood and iron that they want to break the back of the liberation movement of

the colonial masses which is spreading impetuously from Indo-China to Algeria. They want to do this by using, behind the false front of the recently adopted "democratic constitution of the French Union," the worst methods of violence and oppression; methods which once were the "glory" of the French Lyautey, Jules Ferry, Bugeaud and Gallieni.

In Indo-China, tortures, massacres and the destruction of entire villages follow one upon the other. In Madagascar the French planes bomb groups of unarmed peasants and the Madagascar native members of the French Parliament are arrested and thrown into prison despite their parliamentary immunity. In Algeria, where police oppression grows ever greater, the French army's tanks and troops patrol the roads.

This war in Indo-China and this policy of oppression in all the French colonies are possible only because of the downright treachery of the so-called "Socialist" and "Communist" parties who, since the "Liberation," have consistently participated in the governments of the Fourth Republic of France.

Under the cover of liberal demagogy the Socialist Party has wedded itself completely to the cause of the French colonialists. Its ministers are in charge of organizing and conducting the war in Indo-China and of the bloody repressions going on right now in Madagascar.

The Communist Party is shackled by its policy of class collaboration and its dependence upon the international dealings of the Russian Stalinist bureaucracy. It has thus engaged in a series of bargains and shameful maneuvers with its bourgeois partners in power, without ever actually breaking with them and without calling on the masses to carry out a direct struggle against the colonial war and oppression. In defending the idea of retaining the colonies within the framework of the "French Union" the CP is actually obliged to make deals with all those in the colonies who obstruct and betray the mass liberation movement, and in France itself with the capitalist class which can maintain its "French Union" only by force and violence.

The Stalinist and Socialist ministers by participating in the bourgeois government have made

themselves the direct accomplices in all the crimes which French imperialism is now committing against the colonial masses.

The Communist Party controls the overwhelming majority of the French working class. But the CP has systematically sabotaged any mobilization and any genuine solidarity of the French workers with the struggling colonial masses. *The simple truth is that thereby the CP has allowed the war against Indo-China and thus encouraged the French colonialists in their present policy of violence and oppression.* Nothing better illustrates the CP's treachery towards the colonial masses as well as towards the French workers than the recent parliamentary comedy when the vote occurred on the military credits for the war against Indo-China. The CP deputies abstained, but the CP Ministers in the government voted for; *wordy babble for the masses, deeds for the capitalists of the Bank of Indo-China.*

Only the PCI, the Internationalist Communist Party, French Section of the Fourth International, together with the other Trotskyist organizations throughout the world, has courageously and completely supported the emancipation struggle of the colonial people from the beginning. Only they have called upon the workers of France and the entire world to give effective aid to the masses of Indo-China, Morocco, Madagascar and Algeria.

The International Executive Committee of the Fourth International proclaims its complete solidarity with the colonial peoples struggling to shake off the century-old tyrannic yoke of French imperialism. It sends its fraternal greetings to the courageous fighters of Viet-Nam and to the Trotskyist militants of Indo-China who are in the forefront of the struggle for the national and social emancipation of the Indo-Chinese masses. The Indo-Chinese section of the Fourth International, on the morrow of the country's "Liberation" and at the very beginning of the Indo-Chinese revolution, was deprived by the criminal hands of Stalin's GPU of many of its leading elements, among them the heroic figure of comrade Ta-Thu-Thau. The IEC calls upon the Indo-Chinese section to relentlessly continue its struggle both against French imperialism and against

all betrayal of the revolution from within by the Stalinist agents, leading the Viet Minh, in their deals with the native bourgeois elements.

The International Executive Committee salutes the strikers of Singapore and the Calcutta workers and the demonstrations in support of the Indo-Chinese masses that have taken place throughout the world.

It calls upon the French section of the Fourth International to continue its struggle for the victory of the Viet Nam people and for the defeat of the French capitalists. It calls upon the French party to make known to the French workers and more particularly to the arsenal workers, the dockers, the sailors and the workers in uniform, the example set by the workers of Singapore and Calcutta who by their strikes and demonstrations showed in concrete fashion their solidarity with the people of Viet Nam. It calls upon the French section to develop the class action of the French workers to force upon the imperialists the stopping of the war, the immediate ending of hostilities and the signing of a peace which recognizes clearly and without reservation the complete independence of Viet Nam.

It calls upon all workers' organizations to demonstrate their solidarity with the struggle of the Indo-Chinese and colonial masses and to boycott the production and transportation of war material to the imperialist armies.

—WITHDRAW THE TROOPS FROM INDO-CHINA!

—BOYCOTT THE ARMS AND MUNITIONS DESTINED FOR THE IMPERIALIST TROOPS!

—DOWN WITH THE SLAVERS' WAR IN INDO-CHINA!

—LONG LIVE THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE COLONIES AND THEIR RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION!

—LONG LIVE THE WORLD SOCIALIST REVOLUTION!

—LONG LIVE THE SOCIALIST SOVIET UNITED STATES OF THE WORLD!

The International Executive Committee of the Fourth International.

April 1947.

A Wall Street Drummer Boy

By JOSEPH HANSEN

"Burnham," said Leon Trotsky in 1940, "is an intellectual snob." Today we must alter this characterization somewhat to bring it into consonance with the change that has occurred in seven years. From the intellectual cocoon that enclosed the snob has finally emerged—a full-blown worshipper of Wall Street.

A sample of Burnham's fulminations in his latest book, *The Struggle for the World*,* will indicate what has happened to this professor of bourgeois philosophy. The entire United States, he maintains, is suffering from "adolescent schizophrenia."

**The Struggle for the World*, by James Burnham. The John Day Company, New York. 248 pp. \$3.

He offers "as a symptom of this schizoid adolescence, the attitude of our soldiers at the end of the recent war . . . it was summed up in a single objective: to go home. . . ." This attitude, says Burnham, "is incompatible with the objective requirements of a world power." The GIs, he insists, should have been held overseas to stake down Wall Street's "Empire."

For clinical purposes, let us subject this opinion to a simple test. On one hand we have millions of American youth. They were conscripted into the armed forces without consultation; and, under the lie Wall Street was fighting for an "Atlantic Charter" and "Four Freedoms," sent overseas to face death on the battlefields of the Second World War. They decided that they had no business overseas after V-J Day.

Against them stands a well-paid professor who stayed comfortably and safely at home in New York University throughout the war. This gentleman maintains that these millions of veterans are infected with insanity because their desire to go home conflicts with his visions of world conquest. Who should be placed under observation?

The Atomic Age Dawns for Burnham

What are Burnham's premises, from which all of his conclusions follow "consistently," including his estimate of the difference between his own mental state and the sanity of the American people? Burnham takes as his point of departure the development of atomic weapons. These weapons must be monopolized, he holds. For if two or more powers stockpile atomic bombs, then sooner or later one of them—out of fear of the consequences of receiving rather than dealing the first blow—will attack without warning. Retaliation will follow. But war waged with atomic weapons will end in the annihilation of one of the powers, probably both; moreover, there is "a definite material possibility of the total annihilation of human life."

Who should exercise this monopoly which Burnham believes can avert atomic destruction? The only realistic alternative, says this logician, is either the United States or the Soviet Union. A "third" camp or third alternative is utopian; the United Nations cannot be made effective; the hope for a world government is illusory; the communist perspective of a new society is a myth.

Burnham rejects monopoly control of atomic weapons by the Soviet Union. This, he says, would mean a world Communist "Empire." While this alternative would prevent atomic destruction, "to some . . . it will appear better that mankind should altogether perish than communism should thus conquer. . . ." Burnham, of course, includes himself in this category.

To show what horrors "communism" would bring as a world-wide system, Burnham recites all the well-known crimes of *Stalinism*—totalitarian regime in Russia, concentration camps, slave labor, mass purges, assassination of political opponents, frame-up trials, universal terror, secret police, reign of the lie, and all the other abominations on the *Stalinist* scroll of crimes. How *Stalinism* furnishes grist for Wall Street's propaganda mills is well illustrated in this book.

This professor at New York University prefers the rule of his neighbors downtown on Wall Street. Under Wall Street's idyllic rule, civilization would be safe.

Unfortunately, an aggressor power is on the loose. Proof? "The ultimate goal of communist, and therefore of Soviet, policy is the conquest of the world." That's why communist agitators, spies and saboteurs continually "arouse and exploit every divisive possibility. Labor against capital, big business against little business, CIO against AFL, farmers against businessmen, Negroes against Whites, Christians against Jews, Protestants against Catholics, landlords against tenants, foreign born against native born, South against North, unemployed against employed." The communists are building a Fifth Column in preparation for an attack on the United States. Even a "right" turn by Stalin would not alter this danger. "The surface would alter: the slogans would seek to lull to sleep rather than to knock sharply on the head. But the knife would still be ready for the heart." Compromise with conspiratorial communism is thus impossible. America or Russia, one or the other must go down.

If Wall Street, holding the atomic bomb, would only act now, it could end the menace of communism once and for all, stopping up the fountainhead in the Eurasian "Heartland."

Unhappily, in Burnham's opinion, Wall Street is following a "policy of vacillation" because "after these years of so much death and suffering and exile and destruction, there is a great weariness in the world, and a hope for rest"; and because "socially, politically and culturally, the United States is not prepared for the world role which it is nevertheless compelled to play."

To snap America out of its dangerous "immaturity" and lift the vacillators in Wall Street overnight to the ruthless intellectual level proper to rulers of the world, our philosopher-statesman has worked out a program that will inevitably destroy "communism," crush the Soviet Union and crown American Big Business ruler of the planet with the atomic bomb for scepter.

How to Conquer the World— In One Easy Lesson

In the United States, Burnham's program calls for a witch-hunt among government employes and a purge of the trade unions—"it should be made clear to workers that a union led by communists will not be treated like a union led by non-communists." In addition the professor demands a muzzle on the radical press, including such "liberal" journals as *The Nation*, *The New Republic* and *PM*. He insists on "the suppression of communism, now"; the renewal of the Draft Law and mobilization to bring the Third World War, which "has already begun," to a triumphant conclusion for American imperialism.

Abroad, Burnham's program is equally reactionary. It calls for converting Japan into "an American outpost" and stamping out communism there; supporting Chiang Kai-shek, butcher of the Chinese people, as "a shield of the United States against the thrust of communist power out of the Heartland"; denying India her independence "a generation longer"; and blocking communist domination of "Malaysia, the East Indies, the Arab and other Moslem territories, and the primitive regions of Africa."

Latin America, Burnham considers already part and parcel of the American Empire.

In Europe, he calls for union now with Great Britain; that is, common citizenship but with the British capitalists "necessarily" relegated to the role of junior partnership in the world Empire. France, "freed from internal communists, could be a great friend and bulwark of the United States and Western Civilization in the struggle for the world." Germany should be drawn into the Wall Street orbit. The Greek monarchy and fascist dictatorship in Spain should be supported.

As for the dispute over the Dardanelles, let Turkey "purchase from the United States, on easy credit, five hundred or a thousand first-class airplanes, completely equipped. Several thousand young United States officers might well go with the planes, to give instruction in their use to Turkish soldiers. The Turkish government might be induced to invite lengthy maneuvers of United States warships in the vicinity of the Straits. Perhaps a volunteer squadron of American aviators might wish training experience in the Near East; and might arrive with planes and equipment; perhaps, even, with planes fitted for atomic bombs and with a range at least as far as the Caucasus oil fields."

Pressure should be exerted on Sweden, Denmark, Holland

and Belgium; and they should be reminded of "the danger, the very great danger" they run if they turn up "on the wrong side."

We have not yet got to the end of the professor's lesson on how to conquer the world. He also proposes an "offensive" policy of "pressures and concessions"—pressures on any nation that shows reluctance about getting down on all fours before the atomic bomb; concessions to powers that flop down quickly.

The supreme objective of this policy is war on the Soviet Union. "The United States cannot carry out a serious foreign policy . . . unless it is at every moment ready for war. . . . Policy must come first, and I again repeat: peace cannot be the supreme practical objective of policy."

To sugar-coat this program, Burnham assures his readers that the Russian people would rally to the side of Wall Street and overthrow the entire Soviet system. He does not outline what would take its place. Presumably the USSR would be carved up into colonies ruled by American gauleiters.

Wall Street's "military leadership" has already worked out a plan of attack, in Burnham's opinion. "The strategic plan must be, it would seem, to strike an immediate, paralyzing blow with atomic weapons at the Caucasian oil fields, Moscow, and a dozen or more of the chief Soviet and Soviet-controlled cities and industrial concentrations. There is reason to believe that some among the military leaders think that with this blow the war would be virtually over, and that the Soviet Union, deprived of war potential, would have to quit within a few weeks."

However, Wall Street, blundering along with a "policy of vacillation," may let the strategic moment slip by. If the USSR succeeds in getting atomic weapons too, then the war would be of "incomparable length and magnitude" with defeat for the United States "almost certain."

Burnham demands a "sharp break with the past" and the launching of a policy "adequate to the demands of the present world political crisis." "It has always seemed to me that smaller, shorter and easier wars are, as a rule, better than bigger, longer and more difficult wars." He visualizes a surprise attack before the Soviet Union has atomic weapons: "Then of course, there will be no immediate retaliation to the initial mass atomic attack by the United States. This means that the first stage of the war will be a gigantic victory for the United States. If this victory were part of an adequate positive policy, it would, in all probability, be the end of the war."

"This policy which I have sketched," says Burnham, sizing up what came out of his typewriter, "is certainly grandiose." On this there can be no disagreement; "grandiose" is the right word.

"Whew! What a Book!"

Hitler worked out a similar grandiose scheme; so did the fanatical advisors of the Mikado. Now Wall Street has embraced these grandiose dreams of world conquest. Small wonder that Burnham is the current idol of an influential circle of American capitalists. They have given his latest book a resounding build-up in their press. While admitting that "his arguments have been made before," *Time Magazine* declared they had never previously been advanced "with such a compelling combination of chilling logic and prophetic fire." *The Saturday Review of Literature* patted Burnham on the back for presenting his material "with devastating logic and telling effect." The *New York Times* struck a lyrical note: "Whew! What a book!" *Life Magazine* ran a condensed ver-

sion, a good indication of how well Wall Street is stuffing the cash register of this renegade from the Marxist movement.

Obviously they are grateful for the way he assailed the doubts of the liberals about the projected atomic war and compiled handy rationalizations for Wall Street's mad program of world conquest, making it even appear "logical" if you don't look at it too closely. Obviously they consider Burnham a valuable propagandist, able to take the ideas long ago discredited by the foul-mouthed Southern Bourbon Congressmen, the red-baiting Hearst press and the Chamber of Commerce and clothe them in a style presentable to intellectual circles. A renegade like that is worthy of his hire.

What is so ominous about Burnham's popularity among capitalist circles is precisely the fact that his power-drunk program of world conquest happens to be the same program advocated by the most out-spoken war-mongers—a program that has already begun to take form in the Truman decree for a loyalty purge of government employes, the present nationwide anti-labor and red-baiting drive, and the Truman "doctrine" of heading America toward war with the Soviet Union.

It's not that the reactionaries have adopted Burnham's program as their own. The matter is much simpler than that. Burnham adopted *their* program.

Burnham was not even the first to conceive the grandiose policy of springing a Pearl Harbor on the Soviet Union. On March 11, 1946, more than a year ago, Rankin the Bourbon Representative from Mississippi, then head of the House Committee on un-American Activities, declared in Congress that "Almighty God has placed this great weapon in our hands at a time when atheistic barbarism is threatening to wipe Christianity from the face of the earth." Voorhis asked: "Does the gentleman really believe that our Nation would strike an atomic bomb blow?" Rankin answered: "If our Nation found out that some other Nation was getting ready to bomb us we would beat them to it. . . . When we find some outfit getting ready to attack us with atomic bombs, as the boys say, we are going to 'beat them to the draw.'"

Witch-Doctor's Logic

The language of this old supporter of lynch law would scarcely sound in place in Burnham's circle, but the idea is clearly the one Burnham took as the theme of his book. If the Mississippi Congressman must bow before the professor's virtuosity in presenting the idea, Burnham in turn should credit Rankin with priority in making it public. That's a rule of etiquette in Burnham's world. While he is at it, our metamorphosed snob might likewise give credit to a handful or so of the countless reactionaries who preceded him in such proposals as outlawing communism and ending democratic rights under guise of preserving "democracy."

Inasmuch as the arguments presented by Burnham are being widely disseminated by such reactionary outfits as the Chamber of Commerce, it will prove fruitful in combatting these efforts to examine the structure of Burnham's book a little more closely. The main girders are his "analysis" of communism and his estimate of the role of naked force in politics. Let us see how sturdy they are.

In accordance with his witch-doctor's logic, Burnham lumps almost every working class political tendency apart from the Social Democrats under the heading of "communism." Since "communism" is obviously "communism," it necessarily follows, according to Burnham, that Stalinism is communism. Trotskyism is likewise communism. Therefore, Trotskyism and Stalinism are in essence the same thing.

Because the facts, unfortunately for the learned witch-doctor won't fit into this arbitrary framework, Burnham operates on the facts and we read: "The dispute between Trotsky and Stalin, so far as it was more than a struggle for personal power, was not over 'world revolution' versus nationalism. Both Trotsky and Stalin, like all communists, believed in both world revolution and the defense of a communist Russia. The principal issue between them was a purely tactical problem. What percentage of communist resources and energies should be assigned directly to the Russian fortress, and what to operations in the still unconquered sections of the earth?"

Trotsky's great principled struggle for revolutionary communism against Stalin's championship of bureaucratic privileges at the cost of both the Soviet Union and the revolution elsewhere is thus torn out of the historical record. In its place we are given a petty squabble such as occurs any day of the week among ambitious professors struggling for prestige, position and pay.

However, this leaves unexplained, among other items, why hundreds of thousands of Russian workers—if the issues were so picayune—would rally on Trotsky's side and conduct a struggle that shook the Soviet state to the bottom and had worldwide repercussions.

Since communism and Stalinism are identical, and since the communist movement from the days of Marx has fought to build a planned world economic system on the foundation prepared by international capitalism, it therefore follows, according to the witch-doctor, that Stalin is out to conquer world power.

Burnham spends a good many pages trying to substantiate this absurdity with "evidence." He points to the Stalinist penetration of unions, their acceptance of posts in certain capitalist governments, and the seizures in Eastern Europe. Of such instances, only the one dealing with Eastern Europe merits attention. Trotskyists analyze the Kremlin's forward thrust into these countries as a defensive reflex against the onrush of American imperialism; they condemn it as worse than a poor defense because it alienates the sympathies of the working class for the Soviet Union and sets back the socialist revolution throughout the world. The Trotskyist explanation not only satisfactorily accounts for all the facts; it has withstood the test of swiftly moving events. The weakness of Burnham's argument can be measured by his failure to even refer to the Trotskyist analysis. Silence, he probably decided, was less dangerous to his case than fumbling around with an attempted answer.

Even more revealing, if possible, is what Burnham does not tell about Stalinism. He found room to decorate his book with references to the Han dynasties, the Empire of the Guptas, the Abbasid Caliphate, the Ottoman Empire, the "Empire of the Four Quarters of the World," and so on, but he didn't have room to mention the results of Stalinist policy in the Chinese revolution of 1925-27. This hiatus in his memory of great historic events serves a useful purpose. It enables him to avoid telling how Chiang Kai-shek cut the Communist Party to ribbons when it had power within reach. If an ignorant warlord can handle Stalin, what happens to Burnham's characterization of the Kremlin bureaucrats as "the shrewdest politicians in history?" If Stalin is such an easy push-over what happens to the propaganda objective of making him out to be a menace to capitalism?

A similar hiatus appears in regard to Germany. Burnham fails to tell how Stalin and his lieutenants permitted Hitler to assume power in Germany in 1933 without lifting a finger

to stop him. On top of this, our erudite professor became so entranced with the days when "Egyptaic Society was *in articulo mortis*" that he forgot to describe how the Stalinist "menace" laid the Spanish revolution of 1936-39 on the chopping block for the headsman Franco. Professors are proverbially absent-minded, but Burnham appears to abuse the privilege. He even forgot to mention the instructive case of Finland where Stalin really attempted an overthrow in 1939-40. Reference to any one of these major tests of Stalinist policy, without mentioning the countless smaller ones, would have proved that Stalin has persistently bolstered up world capitalism wherever the workers have come close to taking power.

To have mentioned such stubborn facts, would, of course, have played ducks and drakes with Burnham's carefully fitted thesis that communism and Stalinism are one and the same and that there is an immediate and "present" danger of Stalin's police state taking over America. To have analyzed Stalin's 25-year record of treachery and defeats would have raised a very pertinent question in the minds of his readers: How explain the success of Lenin and Trotsky in the 1917 revolution if, as Burnham contends, their policy was the same as the highly unsuccessful one since followed by Stalin?

Discussion of this question would not have added to the "prophetic fire" of Burnham's propaganda. It would have raised two more disturbing questions: (1) Aren't the violence, lies, frame-ups, purges, concentration camps, etc., evidence of the *instability* and *weakness* of the Stalinist regime? (2) Wouldn't the victory of communism in America mean not only the end of Wall Street's rule but also the *destruction* of Stalinism?

The Holy Grail

More than paralysis of the memory seems involved here. Can it be that Burnham deliberately distorted and falsified to make out the best possible case for the capitalist merchants of death? What then, are we to think of the following declaration: "What communists call 'mechanical logic'—that is, the rules of objective inference and proof, the rules that permit us to test for truth and falsity—is replaced by 'dialectical logic.' The law of dialectical logic is simply that whatever serves the interests of communist power is true."

Burnham's logic, it appears, does not prevent him from adopting a favorite method of Stalin—to accuse his slandered victim of the very crimes he commits himself.

Burnham's "analysis" of communism will undoubtedly give the Kremlin cynics a laugh, although a laugh more sour than the one with which they are said to have greeted the film *Mission to Moscow*. Ambassador Joseph E. Davies, who sponsored that whitewash of the Moscow frame-up trials, distorted the truth about the Soviet Union and Stalinism just as flagrantly as Burnham does today, with this difference—Davies displayed Wall Street's mask of benevolence toward the Kremlin; Burnham, Wall Street's glower. *The Struggle for the World* and *Mission to Moscow* simply stand at opposite points in the swing of the propaganda pendulum, measuring how far Wall Street policy toward the Kremlin has oscillated between pressure and concession.

If Burnham put together his "analysis" of communism strictly in accordance with Chamber of Commerce blueprints, his extraordinary faith in the capacities of naked power seems somewhat more genuine.

Burnham writes about power with all the fervor of a mystic. The professor, we repeat, flatly states that his "point of departure" is the atomic bomb. With this frightful instru-

ment of mass slaughter shining before him like the Holy Grail, this champion of Wall Street marches forth to conquer all Europe, all Asia, and, in passing, Africa, Oceania and the rest of the Americas. Believe it or not, this self-proclaimed "realist" is convinced that a handful of American militarists and coupon clippers can subjugate and rule indefinitely this entire planet with its two billion inhabitants. All that is required, according to his prescription, is the threat of atomic annihilation, and—of course!—pedagogic use of the bomb in a score or two of selected cities throughout the world, particularly the Soviet Union.

But suppose the majority of mankind refuse to bow to the yoke Wall Street holds before them? Suppose the American people too have a word to say about this insane dream? What then?

Wall Street's zealot has a ready answer: stamp out communism! Illegalize and suppress it! And here he makes an error so gross and so palpable one wonders how he expects to hoodwink anyone not already ripe for fascism. Burnham actually maintains that communism—which arises from the great economic and social needs created by *capitalism*—can be "suppressed, to stay suppressed" by passing a law, organizing a witch-hunt and, perhaps, uncoiling a few yards of lynch rope.

The conclusion that communism cannot possibly be stamped out by force, argues Burnham, is nothing but communist propaganda. All that is required for success, he insists, is a "prohibition" that is "rigorously and thoroughly enforced." And this in the land where they couldn't even prohibit beer!

Burnham's advice to J. Edgar Hoover to get going brings to mind the famous advice of the late Russian Czarina to Nicholas II. "Bring down your fist on the table," this strong-willed woman told her husband. "Don't yield. Be the boss. . . . Be Peter the Great, Ivan the Terrible, Emperor Paul—crush them all under your feet!"

The Czarina's recipe, which has again been inscribed on the Kremlin walls, is an ancient formula by which every dying regime has hoped to freeze time at five minutes before zero hour. Burnham has yet to learn how well it has worked. The Czarina for one discovered it to her cost.

Burnham's singular confidence in the efficacy of brute power is in turn closely bound up with another article of faith prevalent among Chamber of Commerce circles—that the masses are incapable of independent action, too stupid to organize in accordance with an idea that correctly reflects their own interests. Comforting as this belief must be to a rich profit-gouger, he knows that at bottom it isn't really so. That is why he is careful to keep on hand prisons, police, military and fascist thugs. Force and violence can win time. Again another rationalization comforts him. It is not he who is the brute, it is the masses, whose brutish nature enjoys the feel of a firm hand. This rationalization too was aptly expressed one time by the Czarina: "Russia loves to feel the whip. That is *their* nature."

Burnham puts it like this: "Nothing we can do will guarantee permanent peace. . . . Men have existed on the earth for at least several hundred thousand years, and probably for several million. Their common humanity has never prevented them from always being divided, from always fighting, killing, torturing and oppressing each other. . . ." Every one who has ever spoken on a street corner will recognize this argument under its academic disguise as the old objection to socialism: "But how are you going to change human nature!"

Naturally this Wall Street propagandist does not consider the possible effects of unlimited plenty under communism upon human nature. Instead he rattles the old skeleton of "universal factors" such as "man's impulse to destruction and pain . . . his need for hate, his desire for domination. . . . Warfare has always been, with only a few minor primitive exceptions, endemic to mankind as a whole." Burnham's modern conclusion is—the whip is not out-moded, it has merely changed its form. In place of the Cossack *Knout*, he substitutes atomic explosives. Mankind loves war, let them have it: "Who controls the atom will control the world."

Burnham's faith in the capacity of naked power to eradicate harmful thoughts leads him into a position that would be uncomfortably warm for anyone not equipped to cool himself off with "chilling" logic. He rejects the Marxist concept of history. The ideological superstructure of society is not determined "in the final analysis" by the development of technology, says the professor, singling out Engels for attack. As a causal force, changes in technology "must be reduced to merely one among several determining influences. Climate, custom, institutional forms, religion, morality, even intelligence and individual genius, all have at least a relative autonomy as historical forces." He quotes approvingly from Toynbee that what is "fundamental" in social life is not the "economic and political planes" but the "cultural plane." In brief, in the final analysis, thought is decisive in history, not only over technology but naked power. Thus police clubs can induce the workers to forget their thoughts about communism; but police clubs cannot stand up against the power of thought. We leave Burnham in this contradiction staring at the dancing needle on the compass of his logic.

The relationship between technology and thought is dialectical. A development of one is sooner or later reflected in the other. Police measures can only delay the process. This inter-relationship is beautifully shown in the development of atomic energy. The accumulation of atomic theory eventually made possible the tapping of sub-atomic power in uranium. This technological achievement in turn provides the basis for another great spurt forward in atomic theory. We can venture the prediction that military secrecy will not succeed in confining the use of this vast new source of energy to bombs nor prevent other nations from working out the know-how of the uranium pile. At best these military measures can only delay the inevitable developments.

In the evolution of economic systems, this law applies with incomparably greater force.

Police measures can at most only delay the advent of socialism. Mankind pays—has always paid—a terrible price for this delay. These overhead costs include: the suffering and misery of depressions, the unbridled sway of political reaction amid the continued decay of capitalism. All this, failing the proletarian revolution, leads to the monstrous bloodlettings and devastations of imperialist war and poses pointblank before mankind the alternative: atomic annihilation or socialist progress.

Burnham, the original proponent of the "third camp"—as opposed to Trotsky's camp—made his unequivocal choice. He joined Wall Street's camp, the camp which must be overthrown if mankind is to survive.

[In a subsequent issue Joseph Hansen will trace the main stages in Burnham's journey from a fellow traveler of the proletarian party to a camp follower of America's 60 families.—Ed.]

The Road to Socialism in India

An Answer to the Congress Socialists

By INDRA SEN

The following article was written by an Indian Trotskyist as an answer to the political views of Jai Prakash Narain, leader of the Congress Socialist Party. Comrade Sen presents the conception of the permanent revolution in opposition to the program of "a national democratic revolution" set forth by Narain. Narain leaves open the decisive question: which class will lead the Indian revolution? Sen asserts that only the working class can lead the people of India in victorious struggle for national liberation and Socialism.

The Congress Socialist Party is a typically petty-bourgeois party, both in its policy and in its membership, which has served the bourgeoisie under the banner of socialism. Throughout the war it formed part of the

Jai Prakash and the Road to Socialism

The Congress Socialist leader Jai Prakash (J. P.) Narain has, in an article published in the *Bharat Jyoti* of January 26, 1947, prognosticated a national democratic revolution which will place in power not the capitalist class but the toiling and middle classes. "The revolution must mobilize fully the peasants, the workers in the factories, the students, the city poor and middle classes. Such a revolution will not only lead to the establishment of a full democracy in India but also take us a considerable way on the road to Socialism." He recognizes further that the social aspirations of the peasantry as well as of the working class have to find a prominent place in the program of the revolution so that it may succeed. It is for the first time that a CSP leader explicitly recognizes that political objectives by themselves are inadequate for mass mobilization on a scale necessary for ending imperialism. It is imperative to harness and use as levers the social urges of the masses for the national democratic revolution. So far, so good.

But J. P. has failed to clearly state which class will lead the revolution. Obviously the landlords cannot, because by definition their interests are antagonistic to the interests of the revolution, of which the agrarian overturn is the pivot. The capitalist class too has been excluded by implication: "such revolution will place at the top not the capitalist class." Then is it the urban petty bourgeoisie, the city working class, or the rural peasantry that will lead? To this there is no clear answer.

Explanation of Congress Policy

J. P.'s failure to answer this question flows from two wrong premises, namely, (1) that the Congress is the united front of several classes and (2) that it can be hustled into action by the left wing (although Gandhi had made it clear at the Ramgarh Congress that those who believed that they could hustle the Congress into action were sadly mistaken).

J. P. admits that "the dominant section of the Congress . . . seems at bottom guided by capi-

talist-dominated Indian National Congress. There has been considerable ferment among the ranks of this party in protest against the timid and vacillating policies of the leadership. This article, presenting the viewpoint of the Bolshevik-Leninist Party of India, was designed to clarify the crucial questions regarding the perspectives of the revolution in India preoccupying the militants inside the CSP.

This article was published as a pamphlet by Comrade S. C. C. Antony Pillai, President of the Madras Labor Union, whose arrest by the Congress government led to a protest strike by 100,000 Madras workers on March 31, 1947.—Ed.

talistic ideas," he admits that Congress "declarations of social policy are merely tactical moves to placate the masses in order not to lose their support," he admits that "the Congress leadership seems to have decisively turned its face away from revolution." Yet he "feels convinced" that circumstances will force the Congress to resort to direct action. J. P. thus refuses to learn anything from contemporary facts, anything from history. The lessons of the August struggle* have escaped him. To him the disowning by the Congress of the August struggle, the disclaiming of responsibility for it, the condemnation of its methods, the prohibition of August 9 celebrations, are all *bonafide* mistakes of the Congress. The sabotage of the struggle in connection with the RIN mutiny is a blunder. These are all disjointed events, all of an episodic character, all miscalculations.

But to one who uses the method of class analysis, these events present no mystery. They all together constitute a pattern of class behavior, of class reaction to the growing revolutionary struggles of the masses.

Its mass membership derived from various classes has blinded J. P. to the class character of the Congress. The Chinese Kuomintang also had a mass membership, but history proved it to be the party of the Chinese bourgeoisie. This mass membership is necessary for the political parties of the colonial bourgeoisie, who need to make use of the mass movement for gaining concessions from imperialism. But mass membership does not make such parties non-class or supra-class. It does not change the bourgeois parties into united fronts. The left phraseology, in which the parties of the colonial bourgeoisie have to demagogically indulge, also cannot change their class character; cannot basically alter their social and economic policy. Such parties lead movements against imperialism not in order to lead the masses in a revolutionary onslaught on imperialism. They lead them in order to be better able to control and limit them to the interests of the capitalist class so that they can sell out,

at the opportune moment, the national struggles to imperialism.

Such a sell-out has already been effected by the Congress on behalf of the Indian capitalist class. That is why Congress has not released the RIN boys, INA men and even all the August prisoners. The sell-out is over. But the price has still to be fixed. That is why the fake Constituent Assembly is in session at Delhi. This fake Assembly serves as the bargaining counter where imperialism and the Indian capitalist class are haggling. All the tall talk of imperialism being forced to quit, are meant to cover up the surrender-settlement with imperialism.

The Dilemma of Congress Socialism

It is because of his refusal to see beneath the surface the class reality underlying it, that J. P. still hopes to cling to the apron-strings of Congress. His forecast that "the capitalist class after the capture of power would be confronted with certain responsibilities which it cannot discharge consistently with its class interest" is a forecast that has already been out-dated by swiftly moving events. For, even before it is in possession of power, the capitalist class is finding it impossible to discharge the responsibilities with which it is confronted by virtue of its undertaking to run the imperialist administration. The more apparent becomes its failure, the greater becomes its hostility to criticism.

Thus the Congress Right Wing is today in no mood to tolerate left elements inside the Congress. That is why the Congress constitution is shortly to be amended in an authoritarian direction. That is why there is all this move of shutting out left elements from elective posts in the Congress. That is why the annual session of the Congress is going to be abandoned. That is why the Interim Government as well as the provincial governments are vying with one another in the matter of smothering civil liberties. The Congress ministries have no time to check blackmarketing, to prevent the rise in the cost of living, to stop inflation, to tackle the acute housing problem, to fix a minimum wage for workers. But it found time to take away the elementary civil liberty, the right to strike. The Congress ministries have not

*The reference here is to the movement that erupted on August 9, 1942. For a detailed analysis see, "The August 1942 Struggle," by Rupsingh, *Fourth International*, October 1944.

flinched to shoot down hungry workers on strike. The Congress Party ministry did not hesitate to ban the entry of Nana Patil into Berar. The Bombay ministry sanctioned the search of the CSP office at Poona. The Madras ministry has passed a notorious ordinance incorporating the most objectionable features of the war time DIR, which virtually abolishes civil liberties. The Bihar ministry under a similar ordinance has made wholesale arrests of Congress Socialist workers in the Jharia coalfields.

This failure to face up to facts lands J. P. in an absurd position. He wants to be inside the Congress and at the same time to strengthen the class organizations of the masses and to develop the class struggles of the workers and peasants. He entirely forgets that only the other day the Bombay P.C.C. passed a resolution making it obligatory for Congressmen doing trade union work to get their unions "associated" with the Hindustan Mazdoor Sevak Sangh. (The HMSS has an irremovable All-India Working Committee comprised exclusively of right wing Congressmen, which directs the policy and nominates the provincial office bureau.) This HMSS is by constitution opposed to class struggle. It stands for class peace, i.e., class subordination of the workers to the capitalists. In short, it is a device to tie hand and foot the proletariat in the interests of the capitalists. In case of failure to get the union "associated" with the HMSS, Congressmen are directed to resign and start rival unions, thus splitting the ranks of the working class. One can therefore legitimately ask J.P. how, in the circumstances, it is possible to be inside the Congress and at the same time to strengthen the class organizations of the workers and develop their class struggle. This is the dilemma of Congress Socialism. It is a dilemma that can be solved in only one of two ways, either by remaining within Congress and betraying the workers' and peasants' cause, or by breaking away from Congress and boldly championing that cause.

Which Class Will Lead the Revolution

We would now answer the question for J.P.—the question we raised at the beginning as to which class would lead the revolution. The urban petty bourgeoisie cannot lead the revolution. It is economically dependent on the bourgeoisie. It is not homogeneous—the upper strata being bourgeois in ideology, in social milieu and in social connections, will follow the bourgeoisie; the lower strata, driven by the economic conditions of existence, can only follow the other fundamental class of modern society, the proletariat. It is therefore not possible for the urban petty bourgeoisie to formulate an independent program of its own. It may temporarily play a very clamorous role, but cannot play an independent role, far less the leading role.

The peasantry, the most oppressed class in society, also lack social cohesion. Not only are there a number of strata with conflicting interests, but the peasants are scattered over vast territories with the result that they cannot by their own forces, organize themselves for joint and coordinated action on a scale which is neces-

sary to secure the successful conclusion of the fight against imperialism. Cultural backwardness also contributes to the inability of the peasantry to take the leading part in the revolution. This does not, of course, mean that we are ignoring or minimizing the role of the peasantry in the revolution. On the contrary we hold that the agrarian overturn is the axis of the revolution. The peasantry indisputably has both powerful revolutionary aims and urges. But its social, cultural and *economic position* debars it from playing an independent role, far less a leading role.

The peasantry has ever in history followed an urban class. In the classic bourgeois revolutions, it followed the bourgeoisie. In the Russian revolution it followed the proletariat. After the near-laboratory social experiment in Russia, where all sorts of peasant parties, claiming to be independent of the bourgeoisie as well as of the proletariat, flourished, it can be definitely asserted that the peasantry is incapable of playing an independent role—it follows either the bourgeoisie or the proletariat.

The city proletariat, occupying the most strategic position in the national economy, can easily disrupt and paralyze the governmental machinery. Large scale capitalist production has imposed organization and discipline on this class, and this makes the task of organizing this class easy. Being an urban class, its cultural level is comparatively high; it easily learns from the failure and successes of the proletariat of other countries. In the present epoch of capitalist decline, only the working class can supply the peasantry with a program, a banner and a leadership. Only the proletariat can assume the role of the liberator of the peasantry from the clutches of the landlords and money lenders.

The New State That Will Emerge

The proletariat, by virtue of its leading role in the revolution, will seize the state power as the representative of the nation. The working class in power cannot but start the socialist reconstruction of society, thus making serious inroads in the system of private property. The new state thus emerging from a successful revolution would be the dictatorship of the proletariat supported by the peasantry. That is to say, the ruling class will be the proletariat and not the bourgeoisie; the dominant property forms will be of a socialist, not capitalist character.

This dictatorship would be "a particular form of class alliance between the proletariat, the advance guard of the toilers, and the numerous non-proletarian sections of toilers (the peasantry, small proprietors, the petty bourgeoisie intelligentsia, etc.), or their majority; an alliance against capital, an alliance aimed at the complete overthrow of capital, at the complete repression of the resistance of the bourgeoisie and all efforts at restoration on its side; an alliance aiming at the final creation and stabilization of socialism. This is an alliance of a particular kind, which is formed in special circumstances of civil war, this is an alliance of the firm supporters of socialism with its hesitating allies, sometimes with 'neutral' (then, from being an alliance for struggle the alliance becomes an agreement for neutrality), an alliance between

classes which are not similar economically, politically, socially or psychologically." (Lenin—"The Deception of the People.")

Within the framework of the workers' state, there will function the Workers' and Peasants' Government which will run the administration. The state forms during the transition from capitalism to socialism may be varied, but in essence it will remain the political rule of the proletariat, the proletarian dictatorship. Just as the forms of the bourgeois state are extremely varied, but remain in essence the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, so also the forms of the workers' state may vary, but continue to remain in essence the dictatorship of the proletariat. We, however, strive for workers' democracy as the form of government most suitable and most healthy for the transition period between capitalism and socialism.

Whether such a dictatorship will degenerate into totalitarianism as in Russia, depends upon a number of factors, national and international. But in all probability it will kindle the revolutionary fire in Britain and on the continent of Europe, which in its turn will inspire the Soviet masses to throw out the Stalinist bureaucracy. This revolution in advanced countries will help the Indian revolution in solving its problems. The proletariat of advanced countries through their own states will help the Indian working class in rapidly industrializing the country, in industrializing agriculture, in raising the productivity per capita, in raising the cultural level of the people, etc.

Not Democracy But Police-Military Dictatorship

But in case the Indian proletariat fails to organize its class party and snatch in time the leadership of the national struggle from the bourgeoisie, the revolution is doomed to failure. If India, on the other hand, becomes free not through her own efforts but as the outcome of a peculiar combination of international factors, the capitalist will, in the words of J. P., come out on top. But the resultant governmental set-up will not be democracy, as J. P. visualizes. The economic basis for bourgeois democracy no longer exists. In an age of capitalist decline, the capitalist class is no more in a position to give sops to the working class, and it can ill afford the luxury to rule by democratic means. The big capitalists of Spain could not allow the democratic "Popular Front" government to function, even though this government was pledged to defend the private ownership of the means of production. Today only a very few advanced capitalist countries with colonies to loot from, and of course, America with her tremendous resources and financial power, can afford the luxury of democratic state forms.

Inability to solve the problems presented by history does not, as J. P. appears to believe, prompt the capitalist class to hand over power to the proletariat. Faced with problems defying solution within the framework of capitalism, the capitalist class gives up democratic trappings and resorts to open terroristic dictatorship. In India this terroristic dictatorship, in case the proletariat fails to act, will be a police-military dictatorship, a Franco type regime. The suppression of civil

liberties, the shooting of workers and peasants, the passing of anti-working class, anti-strike legislation by Congress ministries give us a foretaste of the dish the capitalist class in power will serve the masses. No devil cuts its own claws. The Indian capitalist class will prove no exception to the historical law of class domination.

Socialism by Victory at the Polls?

Even if for arguments sake, it is granted that democracy of J. P.'s conception will flourish in the country, it is extremely naive to expect that the Socialist party of India, the successor, according to J. P., of the CSP, in free capitalist India, will "by a victory at the polls, take over the Government and legislature and use them in accordance with law to destroy capitalism and create socialism." It is possible only for J. P. to imagine that the capitalist class will accept the election defeat as final and definitive. J. P. seems to have completely forgotten that the Finnish Socialists, who won the election, were forcibly overthrown in 1918 by the Finnish capitalists with German military help. Moreover the state is not supra-class or non-class. It is an apparatus of coercion for maintaining the rule of one class over the oppressed class. The bourgeois machine and the legal system are instruments for maintaining the rule of the capitalist class over the working class. They cannot be used for emancipating labor, for ending capitalism, for ushering in Socialism. The working class will have to scrap the old state machinery and legal system and build its own, before socialist reconstruction can be started.

Both Marx and Engels before and after the Paris Commune have made this idea clear. Let us see what Marx and Engels wrote in June 1872 in their last preface to the new German edition of the Communist Manifesto. 'One thing especially was proved by the Commune, viz, that the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready state machinery and wield it for its own purpose.' The words in single quotation marks in the above-mentioned passage are taken from Marx's Civil War in France.

In support of his contention that socialism can be brought about by a victory at the polls, J. P. cites Marx. What Marx suggested in an epoch of rising capitalism by way of a possible exception to the general rule, has been raised by J. P. in an epoch of general capitalist crisis and decline, to a universal law valid for all time. The institutions or rather their absence, which might have in the Nineteenth Century made a peaceful transition to socialism possible in countries like Britain, were, as Lenin has clearly pointed out, the standing army and the bureaucracy. In the seventies of the Nineteenth Century when Marx made the remark quoted by J. P., these two institutions were absent in those countries. This absence might have rendered those countries exceptional to the historical law of revolution then. But these military-bureaucratic machines which exist elsewhere today in the capitalist world, will persist in free capitalist India also, whether democratic or not. And the capitalist class will know how to use them in case of election defeat. Let us see what the German Socialist Liebknecht says in this connection.

"Let us suppose that the government does not interfere, perhaps as a matter of policy, and that at last the dream of some imaginative Socialist politicians comes true, and there is Social Democratic majority in Parliament, what would happen? Now has come the time for reforming Society and the State! The majority makes up its mind to do something to make the day and hour memorable in history—the new era is about to begin. Oh! nothing of the kind! — A company of soldiers bids the Social Democratic majority begone; if these gentlemen do not leave quickly a few policemen will show them the way to the state prison, where they will have ample time to reflect on their quixotic conduct. Revolutions are not made by permission of the government; the Socialist idea cannot be realized within the sphere of the existing state, which must be abolished before the foetus of the future can enter into visible life." (*Ueber die Politische Stellung*, pp. 11-12.)

In case a party bearing the title Socialist is allowed to run the administration, that itself will constitute the proof that the so-called Socialist Party is not Socialist at all. It will be like the British Labor Party which serves the capitalists' interests, only in a different way suited to the present day conditions. The British Labor Party is Labor only in its social composition. But it does not represent the interests of the British working class.

British Labor Party "Socialism"

Nor is the Labor Government putting "Socialist schemes" into practice as has been claimed by J. P. The so-called nationalization of the coal industry in Britain was a demand of the mine-owners themselves. The British coal owners with their hopelessly antiquated methods of production were for a long time finding it difficult to face foreign competition. They did not have the money for modernizing and introducing technical improvements into the mines. Therefore the purchase by the state has only solved their problem. They will receive £150,000,000, for modernizations and technical improvements. Interest on the bonds given to the coal owners in exchange for ownership will be the first charge on the industry. The state industry will be run as a "business enterprise" or, in other words the state will pay for the modernization and will keep the miners quiet by threats and the coal owners will continue fattening on unearned income. Nor is this all. The management of the mines has been entrusted to a board which is almost exclusively composed of old mine owners. There is no democratic control of the miners over production. The wages and conditions of work remain almost as bad as ever. No wonder, therefore, the London *Economist* (the paper of the British financiers) in its issue of July 30, 1946 commented—"By general agreement, which is not confined to Labor ranks, coal is the most suitable candidate for nationalization."

In the transport system the story is exactly the same, even in details. The owners will be lavishly compensated even though the original capital invested has been paid as profits many times over. The interest on the bonds will be first charge on

the nationalized industry. A large sum here also has to be spent to modernize industry. Transport service will be run as a "business enterprise," i.e., strictly on capitalist lines, and with powers in the hands of the management, so that the conditions of the transport workers will remain the same as before. The supervision will be in the hands of a Transport Commission to be composed of a chairman and four members appointed by the ministers. It will be run on lines similar to those of the mining industry with its capitalist Coal Board.

In the Steel industry, even this fake nationalization has not taken place. The Labor Government has decided to keep the Steel industry a privately owned monopoly trust to work in conjunction with the state. The effective control will remain with the given group of monopolists, but the workers will be tied with the bureaucratic state regulations. This is the economic structure to which fascism has given the classic expression. It has nothing in common with the aims and aspirations of the British working class.

The London *Economist* in its August 10, 1946 issue has been constrained to write, "There is probably not a single one of these Acts (Nationalization, etc.), that the Opposition (Tories), if they were to come into power tomorrow, would repeal in its entirety, and not very many that they would seriously amend." Only this explains the half-hearted opposition from the Tory Party.

No genuine Socialist Party can come to power by democratic constitutional means—this is the teaching of history, this is the lesson from contemporary facts. If any party bearing the title Socialist comes to power thus, it can do so only with the consent of the capitalist class; it can only serve the capitalist interest. Let J. P. answer whether he really stands for the formation of a Socialist Party of the British Labor Party type; whether he stands for the brand of Socialism the Labor Party is introducing in Britain.

Three Conclusions

In the meantime, let us leave J. P. and the British Labor Party, and return to the contemporary political situation in India. Recent developments, and particularly developments in Congress policy, raise matters which Congress Socialists can refuse to face up to only at the risk of political decline and death. These developments inexorably point to three conclusions, all three of which Congress Socialists have hitherto failed to accept. Firstly, that the present Congress-Imperialist alliance is not a mere "mistake," but the inevitable outcome of the Congress being the party of the Indian bourgeoisie. Secondly, that India under Congress leadership faces not a period of democracy, but a period of brutal police-military repression of the mass movement; and that whatever democracy is secured will have to be won by the masses by their struggles. Thirdly and finally, that these struggles of the masses, as well as their struggle for complete national liberation and Socialism, will have to be led by a party which is based on the working class and which is independent both politically and organizationally of the Congress. How many Congress Socialists will be bold enough to draw these conclusions?

The Renault Strike

By T. J. PETERS

Why the Renault Strike Brought on the Crisis and How It Took Place

The strike movement launched by the Renault strike in May spread quickly in Paris and to the provinces. It toppled the old Ramadier government. It brought about the elimination of the Communists (Stalinists) from the cabinet. It caused a rapid change in policy of the Communist Party of France and the General Confederation of Labor. It divided the Socialist (reformist) party of Blum down the middle. It brought new political forces to the fore on the arena of mass action. And, according to all reports, the results threaten to affect political life thoroughly not only in France but in other countries on the Continent, such as Italy, Belgium etc.

How and why did a simple strike for a 10 franc an hour increase, by some 30,000 workers, assume such convulsive proportions? What was the causal chain that produced it? What perspective does it pose for France, for Europe in the period ahead? We shall attempt briefly to explain the background, situate the course of the strike process itself and indicate the perspective it opens up.

When the Nazi occupation army fell apart upon the invasion in the Summer of 1944, the workers of Paris and of all of France were armed and in the vanguard of the struggle for the liberation of the country from the yoke of the Hitlerite oppressor. Factory committees were in charge of the plants and the streets were held by the workers' army which the Communist (Stalinist) leadership misnamed "Patriotic Workers Militia." The masses who, before the war, were in their majority reticent to join the CPF (Communist Party of France) because they thought it too radical, now turned to it in overwhelming numbers precisely because they thought it revolutionary. They wanted to put an end to bourgeois rule, to do as the Russian workers did in 1917. They were thoroughly instructed in the reality of "national unity" as it existed before the war by the overwhelming "collaboration" with the Nazis on the part of the French capitalist class.

They thought of the Communist (Stalinist) Party of France as they remembered it in the past, when it was a revolutionary party. They thought of the USSR as the Russia which in 1917 put an end to capitalism. That is the example they wanted to follow.

A relatively small section of the workers, mostly those who had persistently followed the pre-war party of Blum known as the SFIO (French Section of the Second—or Socialist—International) because of the confusing zigzag policy of Stalinism, remained true to this party, which had become thoroughly petty bourgeois in composition, because of the continued zigzags—this time more and more in a right wing direction—of the CPF.

To these masses, ready to put an end to capitalism and looking to it for leadership, the CPF, headed by Maurice Thorez, brought the slogans of "national unity" under a new form in which Communists (Stalinists), socialists (reformists) and the bourgeois Catholic Popular Republican Movement (MRP) shared the governmental power; of "nationalization" in which the profits of the capitalists were left intact; of "production first" in which the workers were asked to sacrifice wages and conditions in order to "reconstruct" the economy which re-

mained capitalist. Everything the workers wanted would be achieved this way, Thorez promised, the "democratic" way, without violence. Not by workers' militias, not by mass action, but by parliamentary arrangements with the MRP and the other bourgeois parties, would the revolution the workers wanted come about. De Gaulle was in power by the grace of the Stalinists and reformists. He demanded that the workers lay down their arms. With a correct instinct, they demurred. It was only on the word of Maurice Thorez at the end of 1944, when in return for his services de Gaulle signed a Franco-Russian pact and absolved him of being a "deserter" as well as made him a Minister, that the "Patriotic Workers' Militia" turned in its arms. The workers returned to everyday life. They awaited the results of the policy proffered to them by the CPF whom they had come to trust.

The years since 1944 have been years of constant frustration for the French workers. They laid down their arms, transformed their factory committees into trade union locals, produced and toiled. What happened? The bourgeois army under de Gaulle reestablished itself on the old reactionary model, provoking war against the peoples of the old colonies of French imperialism such as Indo-China and Madagascar and North Africa, who were awakened to struggle for their own independence. The bourgeois "collaborators" returned to their posts of ownership and management in industry. The rotten pre-war politicians like Daladier and Reynaud and Co. returned to their seats in parliament. The "nationalizations" preserved the wealth of the 200 families of France.

Production increased 8-fold, workers' wages only 3-4 fold in the midst of continual inflation.

Still the Stalinists continued to shout "national unity," "production first," "strikes serve only the trusts" etc. For years, bitter frustration was the lot of the deceived French workers. Only a relative handful organized in the Trotskyist *Parti Communiste Internationaliste* (Section of the Fourth International) denounced the betrayals of the Stalinists, called for the disruption of the fake "national unity" with the bourgeoisie, for nationalizations without compensation and with workers' control, for a sliding scale of wages to meet the inflation, for strikes and mass actions, for a workers and peasants government based on this program, concretized in the slogan: CP-SP-CGT to power!

Towards the end of 1945 and the beginning of 1946, the French workers began to show the first signs of restlessness and dissatisfaction with the course imposed upon them by the Stalinists and their reformist partners in the tripartite government. In January 1946, the Paris printing trades launched a strike for wage raises which tied up the entire press of the capital for a week and was a contributing factor in the decision of de Gaulle to quit the presidency of the Provisional Government. In the first elections to the Constituent Assembly in October 1945, the tiny Trotskyist PCI had run only two lists of candidates in Paris—it received the astonishing amount of 13,000 votes for these two candidatures. These were first symptoms.

The printers went back to work without a decisive victory, but with some gains. A period of lull followed with isolated sporadic strikes, which were quickly squashed. In August 1946, the workers of the Postal, Telegraph and Telephone services in all France went out in a general strike. Unlike the printers'

union, traditionally syndicalist, the PTT workers' union was Stalinist-controlled. A strike committee was elected which challenged the Stalinist CGT leadership for authority and ran a strike for several weeks which, although inconclusive, brought some gains too. Moreover, the movement served as a focal point for the organization of a strong "revolutionary minority" at the annual CGT convention which followed shortly thereafter. In June, the Trotskyist PCI, running 12 lists in various parts of France, gathered 45,000 votes around its banner which, calculated on the basis of the 80-odd lists put out for the various departments of the whole country, indicated that there was a reservoir of some 250,000 revolutionary workers upon which the Trotskyists could already count for support against Stalinism and reformism. The symptoms become more distinct and more significant.

There followed sporadic strikes and stoppages, including some already in the decisive metal industry in Paris, but they still remained isolated. In the November elections for the permanent National Assembly, the PCI running 18 lists got 60,000 votes, and more or less held its own. The Stalinists began to use a little more radical phraseology. The CGT under their control adopted the Trotskyist slogan of the "minimum vital" or Basic Wage of 103,000 francs per year (or 9,000 per month) at first, later reducing it to 84,000 per year (or 7,000 per month). The Blum government issuing from the new parliament rejected all wage increases—the economy "can't stand it," which is quite true if it is to remain capitalist and compete in its shaken war-worn form with U.S. and other capitalists—and proposed instead a "price roll-back campaign" of first 5% and then 10%. The Stalinists agreed to withdraw their demand for "minimum vital" wage and await the results of the "Blum experiment."

That took place in January 1947. Meantime the Ramadier government relieved the Blum government, the tri-partite coalition gave way to a quadri-partite coalition which included the discredited pre-war "Radicals." The "price roll back" made for a great deal of psychologic effect, but the workers' pockets remained as before. Frustration began to turn to anger. Stoppages increased.

The Storm of Anger

By the end of March, sporadic stoppages in the metal plants became more frequent. In particular, agitation among the workers made itself felt at Renault. A "Study Circle" was transformed into a "Committee of Struggle." At the beginning of April, this Committee drew up petitions for a general assembly in two departments, Nos. 6 and 18. The assembly was held. Strike action was proposed, a vote taken. The vote was virtually unanimous for the strike. A joint strike committee of the two departments was elected by the assembly. On Friday, April 25, the two departments walked out with all their 1,500 odd members.

The following Monday, a mass meeting called by the strike committee at the Place National in the suburb of Billancourt where the Renault works are centered gathered thousands of workers who listened to its spokesmen explain the issues. A representative of the "revolutionary minority" organized a year ago around the paper *Front Ouvrier* and developed during the postal strike and the CGT convention last year was invited to speak. Lambert, the speaker, explained the treacherous course of the Stalinist leadership of the CGT, called for a general walk-out in support of the two departments and, contrary to the advice of anarchists and Catholic speakers, urged the workers to take over the powerful CGT themselves by pushing for a new

election of all factory section representatives as a beginning. The speech was hailed by a thunder of applause. The speaker then went on to explain the issues in the strike and how it could be won.

By Wednesday all the 30,000 Renault workers were out. On Thursday came May Day. The Stalinists "adopted" the strike and distorted the issues in order to prevent an even greater immediate eruption. They were forced to oppose the wage-freeze in the cabinet. The crisis ensued and they were out.

The democratically elected Central Strike Committee of the Renault workers called for a 10 franc an hour increase in *basic wages*. The Stalinists called first for a 3 franc, then a 10 franc increase in *incentive pay*. That is, the Stalinists wanted to tie any increase in pay to increased production, in line with their whole past policy of "production first." The Government led by the "Socialist" Ramadier, representing French capitalism, cannot afford either kind of increase because of the dilapidated state of French capitalist economy which can only "revive" on the backs of the workers. The Stalinists' solution is an attempt to conciliate between the needs of capitalist economy and the demands of the workers by means of a new speed-up drive, which has been the purpose of "incentive pay" policy from times immemorial. The capitalists want the speed-up, but not the increase. The workers want the increase, which they need to face constantly rising prices, and not the speed-up. In the differences around this central slogan of the 10-franc increase, the whole social crisis thus finds a focal point. That is why the Renault strike found such a great sympathetic response among all the angry workers. That is why the Stalinists—eager to serve the foreign policy of the Kremlin but at the same time to retain their mass support—twist and turn in their policy and finally take the road to "loyal" opposition in the government. That is why the SFIO, fearful of losing its last support among the workers, is divided down the middle. That is why the government continues to rock. That is why it is a source of unrest in all Europe.

The Renault strike met with the support of other metal plants in the suburbs of Paris such as Renaudin, Lavallois and in the provinces such as Saint-Dizier which joined the strike. Agitation mounted in the entire industry for a general strike. The Stalinists, unable to prevent strike votes, resorted to delaying tactics. The two interpretations of the 10-franc demand were put to a vote. Despite all the skullduggery, the votes for the Renault formula found increasing support in every plant. In some plants, the strikebreaking tactics of Stalinist functionaries aroused such hatred that here and there these creatures were physically ejected from the plants—a new phenomenon for France.

The agitation of the Central Strike Committee centered on the following: for a general strike, for setting up inter-factory strike committees on regional district lines, for the 10-franc minimum wage raise in line with the Basic Wage which the CGT itself adopted and betrayed, for the sliding scale of wages, for a new election of all trade union functionaries.

The Renault strike gave an impetus to strikes of government workers in the Customs service, of laundry workers, of tanners and paper workers, and of workers in the vital milk distribution network.

The capitalist government, as well as the Stalinists, still possessing many resources, have been able to temporarily arrest the strike wave. It is, of course, impossible to predict how this wave will unfold in the next period. But one thing is certain: there is no possibility of returning to the unchallenged Stalinist domination. The French workers are on the march.

From the Arsenal of Marxism

Documentary History of the Fourth International

By LEON TROTSKY

The world Trotskyist movement was built from its inception in incessant struggle not only against revisionists and centrists but also against sectarians. Especially illuminating in this connection are a series of letters written by Leon Trotsky in 1929-30 in an attempt to find, within the framework of a single organization, a common ground for collaborating with the Italian revolutionist Bordiga and his group. The attempt failed.—Ed.

* * *

Letter to the Italian Left Communists (Followers of Comrade Amadeo Bordiga)

Dear Comrades,

I have become acquainted with the pamphlet "Platform of the Left," which you issued back in 1926, but which has only just now reached me. Similarly, I have read the letter you addressed to me in issue No. 20 of *Prometeo*, as well as some of the leading articles in your paper, which enabled me to renew, after a long interruption, my more than modest knowledge of the Italian language. These documents along with my acquaintance with the articles and speeches of Comrade Bordiga, not to mention my personal acquaintance with him, permit me to judge to a certain extent your basic views as well as the degree of agreement there is between us. Although the answer to this last question depends decisively not only upon principled theses but also upon their political application to current events (we were sharply reminded of this by the Soviet-Chinese conflict), nevertheless I am of the opinion that at least our agreement on the basic questions is quite far-reaching. If I do not now express myself more categorically it is only because I want to leave to time and to events the verification of our ideological closeness and mutual understanding. I hope that they prove to be complete and firm.

The "Platform of the Left" (1926) produced a great impression on me. I think that it is one of the best documents published by the international opposition, which preserves its significance in many things to this very day.

Extremely important, especially for France is the circumstance that the Platform poses the question of the *nature of the party*, its basic principles of strategy and tactics, as the cornerstone of the revolutionary policy of the proletariat. In recent years we have seen that, for a number of leading revolutionists in France, opposition has served only as a stage on the road of retreat from Marxism—a retreat to reformism, trade unionism or simply to skepticism.

You are, of course, acquainted with the pamphlet of Lorient who has revealed complete misunderstanding of the nature of the party and its historic function in relation to the class, and who has slid down to the theory of trade union passivity, which has nothing in common with the ideas of the proletarian revolution. Lorient's pamphlet, which represents direct ideo-

logical reaction in the camp of the labor movement, is, unfortunately, still being propagated by the "Proletarian Revolution" group. The decline in the ideological level of the revolutionary movement in the last five or six years has not passed without leaving its mark on Monatte's group. After drawing close to Marxism and Bolshevism in 1917-23 this group has in recent years taken several steps back, to the side of syndicalism. But this is no longer the militant syndicalism of the early part of the current century, which represented a serious step forward in the French labor movement. No, this is a rather dilatory, passive and negative syndicalism, which falls more and more frequently into pure trade unionism. And this is hardly surprising. Everything that was progressive in pre-war syndicalism merged with communism. A retreat from revolutionary communism nowadays already leads invariably to trade unionism. Monatte's chief trouble is an *incorrect attitude to the party* and bound up with it a fetishism of trade unionism which is approached as a thing in itself, independently of its guiding ideas. Yet if both of the French labor confederations were to unite today and if they were to encompass on the morrow the entire working class of France, this would not for a moment remove the question of the guiding ideas of the syndicalist struggle and its methods, and of the connection between the partial tasks and the general, that is, the question of the *party*.

The Syndicalist League, lead by Monatte, is itself an embryonic party, selecting its members not on a trade-union but ideological grounds, on the basis of a certain platform, and seeking to influence the trade unions from the outside, or, if you prefer, to "subject" them to its ideological influence. But the Syndicalist League is a party which is neither carried through the end nor fully shaped, which has no clear theory and program, which has not become conscious of itself, which masks its nature and thereby deprives itself of the opportunity of development.

Souvarine, in the struggle with the bureaucratism and the disloyalty of the official Comintern apparatus, has also arrived, although by different route, at a denial of political activity and of the party itself. Proclaiming the [Communist] International and its French section as dead, he considers it at the same time unnecessary for the Opposition to exist, since, according to him, the necessary political conditions are lacking for it. In other words, he denies the need for the existence of the party—at all times and under all conditions, as the expression of the revolutionary interests of the proletariat.

That is why I attach such importance to our solidarity on the question of the party, its historical role, the continuity of its activity, its obligation to struggle for the influence over any and all forms of the labor movement. On this question,

for a Bolshevik, i.e., a revolutionary Marxist who has passed through Lenin's school, there cannot be any concessions.

* * *

On a number of other questions the 1926 Platform gives excellent formulations, which preserve their meaning to this very day.

Thus the Platform asserts with complete clarity that the so-called "independent" peasant parties "invariably fall under the influence of the counter-revolution" (page 36). It is possible to say boldly that in the present epoch there is not and there cannot be any exception to this rule. In those cases where the peasantry does not follow the proletariat, it follows the bourgeoisie against the proletariat. Despite the experience of Russia and China, this was not understood by Radek, Smilga and Preobrazhensky, and they stubbed their toes precisely on this question. Your platform criticizes Radek for "obvious concessions to German nationalists." Now, it is necessary to add to this: absolutely unjustifiable concessions to Chinese nationalists, the idealization of Sun-Yat-Senism and the justification of the entry of the Communist Party into a bourgeois party. Your Platform points out quite correctly (page 37), precisely in connection with the struggle of the oppressed peoples, the need of the complete independence of the Communist parties. Violation of this basic rule leads to the most ruinous consequences as we have seen in the criminal experience of the subordination of the Chinese Communist Party to the Kuomintang.

The ruinous policy of the Anglo-Russian Committee, which naturally enjoyed the complete support of the present leadership of the Italian Communist Party, grew out of the desire to hastily shift from the tiny British Communist Party over to the huge trade unions. Zinoviev openly formulated this idea at the Fifth Congress of the Comintern. Stalin, Bukharin and Tomsky nursed the same illusion. This is what comes of playing with the idea of the party! Such a play never passes unpunished.

In the Soviet Republic we see another form of the weakening and falling apart of the Communist Party: in order to deprive it of independence and self-action it is being artificially dissolved in raw masses, terrorized by the state apparatus. That is why the Opposition, selecting and educating new revolutionary cadres, is blood of the blood of the Bolshevik party, while Stalin's faction, which speaks formally in the name of a million and a half party members and two million YCL'ers is in reality undermining and destroying the party.

I note with pleasure that on the basis of your letter in *Prometeo* there is complete agreement between you and the Russian Opposition on the question of defining the class character of the Soviet state. On this question the ultra-Lefts, including the Italians (see *L'Ouvrier Communiste*, No. 1), especially strikingly disclose their break with the foundations of Marxism. In order to decide the question of the class character of a social regime, they limit themselves to the question of the political superstructure, reducing this latter question, in turn, to the degree of bureaucratism prevailing in administration and so on. *The question of the ownership of the means of production does not exist for them.* In democratic America as in fascist Italy, men are jailed, shot or electrocuted for preparing for the expropriation of factories, mills and mines from the capitalists. In the Soviet Republic, even to this day—under the Stalinist bureaucracy!—they shoot engineers who are seeking to prepare the return of factories, mills and mines to their former owners. How is it possible not to see this basic difference, which determines the *class character of a social*

order? I will not however dwell any longer on this question to which I have devoted my latest pamphlet ("Defense of the Soviet Union and the Opposition") which is aimed at certain French and German ultra-Lefts who, to be sure, do not go as far as your Italian sectarians, but who precisely for this reason can prove all the more dangerous.

* * *

In connection with Thermidor you make the reservation to the effect that it is incorrect to draw an analogy between the Russian Revolution and the Great French Revolution. I believe that this remark is based on a misunderstanding. To judge the correctness or erroneousness of a historical analogy it is necessary to clearly define its content and its limits. Not to resort to analogies with the revolutions of the past epochs would mean simply to reject the historical experience of mankind. The present day is always different from the day that has passed. Yet it is impossible to learn from yesterday in any other way except by the method of analogy.

Engels' remarkable pamphlet on the peasant wars is wholly constructed on an analogy with the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century and the revolution of 1848. To hammer out the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat Marx heated his iron in the fires of 1793. In 1903 Lenin defined the revolutionary Social Democrat as a Jacobin, tied up with the mass labor movement. At that time I raised against Lenin academic objections to the effect that Jacobinism and scientific socialism rest on different classes and employ different methods. In itself this was of course correct. But Lenin did not at all *identify* the Parisian plebeians with the modern proletariat or Rousseau's theory with the theory of Marx. He bracketed together only the common traits of the two revolutions: the most oppressed popular masses who have nothing to lose but their chains; the most revolutionary organizations, which lean upon them and which in the struggle against the forces of the old society institute the revolutionary dictatorship. Was this analogy consistent? Completely so. It proved very fruitful historically. Within the same limits the analogy with Thermidor is likewise legitimate and fruitful.

What was the distinguishing trait of French Thermidor? This, that it was the first stage of the triumphant counter-revolution. After Thermidor the Jacobins were already able (if they could do it at all) to return power to themselves only by means of an armed uprising. In this way the stage of Thermidor was in a certain sense decisive in character. But the counter-revolution was not yet completed, that is the masters of the situation did not yet assume power: for this another stage was necessary: 18th of Brumaire. Finally, the most complete victory of the counter-revolution, with the restoration of the monarchy, indemnification of the feudal proprietors, and so on, was assured with the aid of foreign intervention and the victory over Napoleon.

In Hungary the counter-revolution, after a brief Soviet period, triumphed at a single stroke and completely by force of arms. Is such danger excluded for the USSR? Of course not. But such an open counter-revolution would be recognized by everybody. It does not require any commentary. When we speak of Thermidor, we have in mind the creeping counter-revolution which is being prepared in a masked way and which is being accomplished in several stages. Its first stage, which we conditionally call Thermidor, would signify the passage of power into the hands of new "Soviet" proprietors, backed by a faction of the ruling party as was the case with the Jacobins. The power of the new proprietors, predominantly petty ones, could not last long. Either the revolution would re-

turn, under favorable international conditions, with the dictatorship of the proletariat, which would inescapably require the application of revolutionary force; or the counter-revolution would be crowned with the victory of the big bourgeoisie, of finance capital, perhaps even with a monarchy, which would require a supplementary overturn, or may be even two overturns.

Such is the content of my comparison with Thermidor. Naturally, if the legitimate limits of the analogy are transgressed, if one orients along the purely superficial mechanics of events, the dramatic episodes, the fate of individual figures, then one can without difficulty confuse himself and others. But if we take the mechanics of class relations, then the analogy becomes no less instructive than for example the comparison made by Engels with the German Reformation and the revolution of 1848.

* * *

The other day I read the above-mentioned issue No. 1 of *L'Ouvrier Communiste* published apparently by a group of Italian ultra-Lefts who split from your organization. If there were no other indications, this single issue would be sufficient proof that we live in the epoch of ideological decay and confusion which always sets in after major revolutionary defeats. The group that publishes this periodical seems to have set as its goal to compile all the mistakes of outlived syndicalism, of adventurism, left phrasemongering, sectarianism, theoretical confusion, and invest all this with a sort of sophomoric carelessness and rowdy quarrelsomeness. Two columns of this publication suffice to explain why this group had to break with your organization which is Marxist, although this group seeks amusingly enough to hide behind Marx and Engels.

As regards the official leaders of the Italian party, I had an opportunity to observe them only in the ECCI in the person of Ercoli (Togliati). A man with a rather flexible mind, and a loosely-hinged tongue, Ercoli is in the best possible way adapted to deliver the prosecutor's or defense attorney's speeches on a given theme, and in general to carry out instructions.

Barren Casuistry

The barren casuistry of his speeches is always directed in the last analysis to the defense of opportunism, representing the diametric opposite to the living, muscular and full-blooded revolutionary thought of Amadeo Bordiga. Wasn't it Ercoli, by the way, who tried to adapt to Italy the idea of the "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry" in the form of a slogan for an Italian Constitutional Assembly, resting on "workers and peasants assemblies?"

On the questions of the USSR, the Chinese Revolution, the General Strike in England, the overturn in Poland or the struggle against Italian fascism, Ercoli like the other leaders of the bureaucratic formation, invariably held an opportunist position, in order later, when the occasion offered, to correct it by means of ultra-Left adventures. At present, apparently, the season has again come for the latter.

Having on the one flank centrists of the Ercoli type and on the other ultra-Left confusionists, you Comrades, are thus called upon to defend, under the harshest conditions of fascist dictatorship, the historical interests of the Italian and international proletariat. I wish you success with all my heart.

Yours,

Leon Trotsky.

Constantinople, September 25, 1929.

An Open Letter

Dear Comrades,

A few months ago you addressed an open letter to me to which I replied at the time. Now it seems to me the time has come to address an open letter to your group.

A pre-conference of the International Left Opposition was recently held in Paris. This pre-conference is a serious step forward because it was made possible only as a result of long preparatory work of an ideological character. Your group, before whose eyes all this work unfolded, did not find it, however, possible to take part in this conference. This extremely important fact of absenteeism prompts me to pose the following questions before you:

1. Do you conceive that communism can be nationalistic in character? This is, for example, the position of Urbahns, who while ritualistically repeating the formulas of internationalism, has created a purely German sect, without any connections throughout the world, and therefore without any revolutionary perspectives. And so, *do you regard yourselves as a national tendency or as part of an international tendency?*

2. If your answer to this question were to read that you are entirely satisfied with your isolated national existence, then there would be no room for any further questions. But I have no doubt that you consider yourselves internationalists. In that case a second question arises: *to what particular international tendency do you belong?* Today there are three basic tendencies in international communism: the Centrist, the Right and the Left (Leninist). In addition there are all sorts of ultra-Left splinters floundering between Marxism and anarchism. Until now we considered that you stood closest to the Left Opposition. Your dilatory position we ascribed to your desire to acquaint yourself with the development of the Left Opposition. But a dilatory position cannot be maintained permanently. Life does not wait, neither in Italy nor throughout the world. In order to join the International Left there is no need whatever for false "monolithism" in the spirit of the Stalinist bureaucracy. What is needed is genuine solidarity on the basic questions of international revolutionary strategy that has stood the test of the last few years. Partial tactical disagreements are absolutely unavoidable and cannot serve as an obstacle for close common work within the framework of an international organization. What are your disagreements with the Left Opposition? Are they of a principled or episodic character? A clear and precise answer to this question is indispensable.

3. Your non-participation in the international pre-conference can be interpreted politically that you are divided from the Left Opposition by differences of a principled character. If that is so, then a third question arises: *Why don't you proceed with the organization of an international faction of your own tendency?* Because you cannot possibly hold the view that the revolutionary principles which are good for the whole world are no good for Italy, or vice versa. A passively conciliatory attitude toward the Left Opposition coupled with a reluctance to join it and with a refusal to intervene in the life of the communist vanguard in other countries is characteristic of nationalistic socialism or nationalistic communism which has nothing in common with Marxist communism.

Your answer to these questions is of serious importance not only from the international but, in the first instance, from the Italian point of view, insofar as these two viewpoints can be counterposed in general. The illegal character of the Italian

Communist Party makes it difficult to follow its development closely. Nevertheless it is possible to accept as unquestionable that within the framework of Italian Communism there are in addition to the official faction, your own group and the group of Rights (Tasca), numerous revolutionary elements who have not yet openly defined their positions. Under these conditions you represent one of the factors of indefiniteness. Yet it is precisely the illegal existence of the party that de-

mands with doubled force the full principled clarity of the leading groups. Your reply is bound to facilitate and hasten the ideological crystallization within the proletarian vanguard in Italy. Needless to say, the Russian Opposition would be happy to learn of your decision to join the International Left.

With Communist greetings,

L. Trotsky.

Prinkipo, April 22, 1930.

The World Struggle for Oil

By T. CLIFF

The Anglo-Iranian Oil Co. has announced an "Agreement for the Sale of Large Quantities of Crude Oil" to the Standard Oil Co. of New Jersey and the Socony-Vacuum Oil Co. for a period of 20 years.

One of the terms of the agreement is the "prior investigation by the parties of the possibility of constructing a pipeline from the Persian Gulf to the Eastern Mediterranean."

Vast Resources in Middle East

The oil reserves of the Middle East are tremendous. Although until now less than 150 "wildcat" wells have been drilled in the whole Middle East in order to tap its reserves, in the USA more than twenty times this number are drilled every year. But it is already clear that the Middle East reserves are at least comparable with those of the USA.

According to the reports prepared by experts of the United States Government Petroleum Administration for War (PAW), the Middle East has 30.7 per cent of the total proven oil resources of the world, while USA has 39.6, U.S.S.R. 11.3, Venezuela 11, Netherlands East Indies 18, Mexico 1.2, Columbia 1.0 and Roumania 0.8.

The great resources of the Middle East have hardly been touched. This region, so rich in reserves of oil, produces only 5.7 per cent of world output (1943), while USA produces 66.1 per cent. The output of Middle East oil wells is thus only 0.7 per cent of the proven oil resources in the region, while USA output is 6.3 per cent of its proven oil resources. Other estimates rate the richness of the Middle East countries in oil even higher. According to one, the oil resources in Saudi Arabia alone could satisfy the total world demand for 15 years. The quantity of oil in Iraq or Iran is estimated to be no less than that in Saudi Arabia. E. de Golyer, the noted oil expert, in a report prepared for the United States Petroleum Resources Corporation stated: "The center of gravity of world oil is shifting from the Mexican Gulf and Caribbean area to the Middle East-Persian Gulf area and is likely to continue to shift until it is firmly established in that area."

Imperialist Interests

The position of the various imperialist Powers differs as regards control of oil in the Middle East. The oilfields of Iran are in the hands of the British alone. The attempts of the USA to acquire a concession over oil in Northern Iran have failed, owing to Russian opposition. The fields of Saudi Arabia on the Persian Gulf, and Bahrein, are in American hands. The USA has also got exploratory leases for areas in Egypt. France has no company of her own, independently active in the field of oil output in the Middle East, but a French company is a

partner of the Iraq Petroleum Co. In the Iraq Petroleum Co., two British groups—Anglo-Saxon Petroleum Co. and D'Arcy Exploration Co.—own 47½ per cent of the shares, an American Company—Standard Oil Co.—23¾ per cent, and a French Company—Compagnie Francaise de Petroles—23¾ per cent; the other 5 per cent belongs to a rich Armenian who owns the fields. The Iraq Petroleum Co. has concessions in parts of the Arabian peninsula, including the whole length of the Red Sea Coast; and also in Syria, Lebanon and Palestine. The concession over Kuwait belongs half to the Anglo-Iranian Co. and half to the Gulf Exploration Co., subsidiary to the Gulf Oil Corporation of the USA.

Until now, with the oil wells of Saudi Arabia and Bahrein not developed, England has had a decisive position in the production of oil in the Middle East, as may be seen from the following figures of the distribution of oil production in the Middle East among the different interests:

	<i>Per Cent</i>
Britain	79
U. S. A.	16
France	5
Total	100

There is no doubt that with the increase in the exploitation of the oilfields in Saudi Arabia and Bahrein, the weight of the American companies in the production of oil in the Middle East will grow tremendously. Harold Ickes, American Petroleum Administrator during the war, touched on the crux of the matter when he said: "The capital of the oil empire is on the march to the Middle East. The United States had better move in a big way—and fast."

Connected with the question of the oil resources of the Middle East is the problem of refining. There are today five refineries in the Middle East; in Abadan (Iran), Haifa, Tripoli, Bahrein and Suez, besides small refineries in Iraq which work only for local consumption. At the moment 80 per cent of the refinery capacity is in the hands of the British, but the position will change with the construction of additional American refineries. One of them, the Ras Tanura refinery, is already nearing completion.

Extension Plans

There is much talk about the extension of the network of pipelines in the Middle East. At the moment only one pipeline exists leading from Kirkuk in Iraq to Haifa. The length of the whole line is 974 miles. There has been talk recently of doubling the carrying capacity of the Iraq-Haifa pipeline by building a line parallel to it. There is also an American plan to construct

a new pipeline from Saudi, Bahrein, Qatar and Kuwait to the Mediterranean coast—either to Haifa or to Alexandria. The length of the line to Haifa would be 1,000 miles; this would mean a great reduction in the route of the Arabian oil, since the route around the Arabian peninsula through the Suez Canal is 3,300 miles long.

According to another calculation, if the American plan for constructing this pipeline materializes, it will be necessary to build refineries in Haifa to refine 300-350 thousand barrels a day, i.e., two or three times the output of all the four refineries existing in the Middle East together. The annual output of Haifa will then reach 16 million tons.

The construction of refineries owned by Socony Vacuum, in Tripoli and in the Lebanon is also being spoken about. The new agreement speaks about connecting the oilfields in Iran with the Mediterranean.

It is estimated that the materialization of all the existing oil plans of the American companies and the American Government would cost 300 million pounds. Such a gigantic sum would cause a tremendous economic, social and political change in the Middle East, and would subjugate it entirely to a handful of English and American oil magnates.

For American Imperialism Middle East oil can be one of the most important fields of investment. The great development of American capitalism has deepened manifold the contradictions within it, and the capitalists will try to overcome them by imperialist expansion on a terrific scale. After World War I the British military authorities in Palestine arrested a geologist employed by the United States Standard Oil Company who had the audacity to discover a source of oil round the Dead Sea. They confiscated his sketches and deported him; today, after World War II, USA's power compared to Britain's is too strong for such actions to be taken against her. Ickes declared in unambiguous terms that the stability of the peace depended on agreement being reached about the division of oil resources, and among the matters to be put before the Peace Conference, there was nothing more important than oil. In the tussle over the question behind the scenes of the Peace Conference, the American capitalists, of course, expect to get the lion's share of the concessions.

The relative weakness of British imperialism compared to American, reveals itself very clearly in all the oil deals in the Middle East. As we have already shown, the American oil companies are taking the biggest part in all the new plans to construct refineries, oil pipelines, etc. The new agreement shows that the American capitalists have entered even the holy of holies of the British Empire, the Anglo-Iranian Oil Co. This agreement is motivated not only by economic, but also by strategical reasons. The concentration of the refineries in Abadan (which today refines about three-fifths of all the Middle East Oil output) will be a drawback, in case of a war with Russia.

Russia and Oil

Middle East oil, particularly that of Northern Iran, plays a great role in the plans of the Stalinist bureaucracy too. This is the result primarily of the tardiness in the execution of the oil extraction plans in Russia. Thus, for instance, the Second Five-Year-Plan set the increase in production from 23.3 million tons in 1932 to 47.5 million in 1937. In fact, it increased only to 30.5 million tons. In 1940 production did not reach more than 35 millions, although the plan laid down a level of over 50 million tons. With these miscalculations, the new Five-Year-Plan sets a more moderate aim for 1950—35.4 million tons.

On examining the general plan for increase of production it is clear that oil will be one of the most important bottlenecks in Russia. The Stalinist bureaucracy tries to get over its difficulties—the result of bureaucratic mismanagement, in a simple way: by gaining control of rich new fields.

It is quite clear that the masses in Iran were not very enthusiastic about the Russian-Iranian Agreement, which gave a concession to operate the oilfields in the north of the country to a joint company (Russia to have 51 per cent of the shares and Iran 49 per cent). The Tudeh Party (Stalinist dominated) suffered a great loss in influence through this agreement. The fact that after the unrest among the workers in the oil fields and refineries of the Anglo-Iranian oil company, British imperialism succeeded in strengthening the Shah's government position, in strengthening the Persian army, in overthrowing the autonomous puppet Stalinist government in Azerbaijan—all go to show that the attitude of the Iranian masses to Stalin's plans as regards their country is by no means sympathetic. The recent Anglo-American agreement is a new point scored for Anglo-American imperialism in their struggle with Russia.

In the struggle against the American and British oil octopus, the toilers of the Middle East cannot rely on any of the great powers. They can rely only on themselves, on their own strength, and on the help of the millions of fighters for national and social independence of the East and the working class of the West.

The struggle for oil reflects the aims of all the great powers. In their desire to dominate the sources of this important raw material which offers new prospects of enormous profits and wealth to the magnates of Anglo-American imperialism, the seeds of a new world war will be sown. It is oil which is determining the importance of the Middle East in the calculations of all the great powers. And the wealth which will be gained will not benefit the peoples of the Middle East or the masses of the Western powers. It can only lead to the further enslavement of the Arab peoples. Plot and counter-plot, strategic and political maneuvers round this area will be endless. A Socialist Federation of the Middle East in a Socialist World would be the only means of utilizing the tremendous resources of the Middle East, as of the world, for the enrichment and benefit of all.

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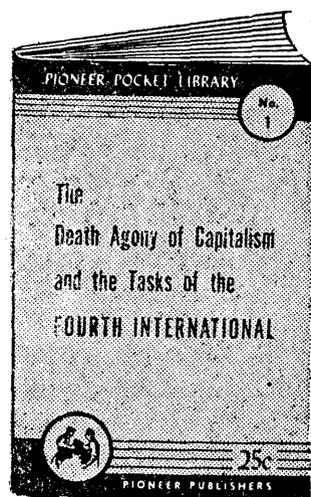
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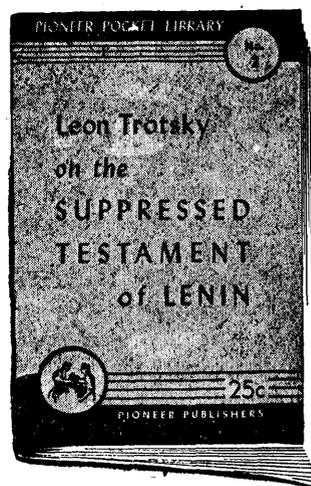
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