

A MARXIST
QUARTERLY

WINTER
1955

Fourth International

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(My commission expires March 30, 1956.)

The Political Situation In America Today

by M. Stein

ended with a similar carving up of the country.

The revolutionary forces in the world lack a leadership capable of forcing a final and definitive settlement of accounts with world capitalism. But the capitalist system lacks the power to force a military showdown with any hope of victory at present. Consequently the immediate threat of a Third World War has receded.

Whether Washington and Moscow reach a formal agreement, marking the interim of a temporary truce, is immaterial. Formal agreement or not, their basic policies will remain essentially unchanged.

An easing of world tension, a deal, no matter how it is painted up for diplomatic and propagandistic purposes, does not mean of course that the frightful destructiveness of the new weapons has made war a thing of the past as an instrument of policy. Not at all. The fact is that although the outbreak of war has been delayed, the powers continue to jockey for the most favorable position as if little had changed. That is because they understand very well that the capitalist system inevitably gravitates toward war and that it is only a question of time.

Line-up Already Set

The line-up of powers is already determined. It is true that it is not only the U.S. that is enjoying prosperity. The Western European countries have also registered a rise in productivity and an increase in living standards since the end of war. When this comes to an end, as it inevitably will, the inter-imperialist rivalries will grow keener. But they will not lead to an inter-imperialist war as was the case in the past. No combination of capitalist powers is capable of waging war successfully against the United States, and they all know it. Thus it is certain they will combine for war against the Soviet bloc, Stalin's thesis to the contrary notwithstanding.

What is important for us at the present stage is that the threat of war

THE 16th National Convention of the Socialist Workers Party, held in Chicago in December, was highly successful. The several hundred delegates and visitors from all over the country demonstrated in their three-day discussion of the key economic, political and trade union questions facing the American working class that the party has developed qualitatively since the 1952 convention.

The adoption of the general line of the main resolution on the political situation in America marked an important turning point in the orientation of the party. I will deal mostly with that.

What is a general line and how do we arrive at it? A general line is simply the determination of the party's tasks for the coming period in the light of the objective situation and the party's relative strength or weakness. This requires first of all a scrupulous, realistic, cool-headed analysis of the objective situation both internationally and at home. Secondly, it requires a sober appraisal of the relation of class forces and the party's size, influence and possibilities for action as compared with its enemies. There is no room for wishful thinking in arriving at a general line.

We must begin, as we always do in accordance with the Marxist method, with the world situation—not as we would like to see it, nor as Eisenhower or Knowland, or Malenkov or Mao Tse-tung would like to have it, but with the actual power relationships.

Our resolution characterizes the

The following extract is from a report made by M. Stein to the New York Local of the Socialist Workers Party in December 1954.

major relationship on the international arena between the capitalist world on the one hand and the Soviet Union with its satellites plus China on the other as one of stalemate. This means that at the present conjuncture the power balance between these two giant combinations is close to equal.

Even though the United States has increased its might, stockpiling large numbers of atom and hydrogen bombs, extending its military bases, and even scoring some counter-revolutionary successes, as in Iran and Guatemala, all this has been largely canceled out by the Soviet development of atom and hydrogen bombs, by the superiority of planned economy over capitalist anarchy, and by the tremendous potential of the colonial revolution, above all China.

China, symbolized in the past by the rickshaw and the most terribly exploited labor, China that lay prostrate under the imperialist boot, is today giving the imperialists stern lessons in etiquette about their relations with the Asian peoples.

The power stalemate is best indicated perhaps by the inability of the two blocs of countries to resolve a single disputed question except through compromise. That is why Austria and Germany, for instance, remain divided. The Korean war was fought to a stalemate, ending in an uneasy truce. The war in Indochina

has receded for the time being. This has a specific meaning for us in the United States.

It enables us to understand for one thing why the Eisenhower of today is so different from the Eisenhower of 1952. As the Republican candidate for the White House two years ago, he rejected "containment" and raised the banner of "liberation" in relation to the Soviet bloc. Today he counsels reasonableness in foreign policy even when an American plane is shot down in a place where it had no business being or when Americans captured where they had no business being are sentenced as "spies."

This shift in the war perspective is especially important because of the political role played by the trade-union bureaucrats. At the last AFL convention the top union brass competed with the Knowlands, the McCarthys and the American Legion in rattling the saber and shaking their fists at the countries on Wall Street's blacklist. Here they displayed crass stupidity — which is nothing new for them — showing that they cannot even read their master's mind correctly; they are whooping it up for war in the wrong season. It is our special task to build a fire under these bureaucrats for their class treachery and their war-mongering.

McCarthy Setback

The delay in the war perspective was recognized by us some time ago and we explained it publicly in articles and speeches. What we did not do prior to the convention was correlate this factor with the prosperity that still holds despite considerable oscillations. These two factors — the deferment of war and the continued prosperity — preclude McCarthyism, the American form of fascism, from a feverish growth that could make it a contender for power in the immediate period before us.

Yet it must be admitted that we tended to give a contrary impression in our otherwise excellent campaign against McCarthyism during the past year, both in the press and in the first draft of our main political resolution, drawn up some months before the election, where we still made the fight against McCarthyism the main axis of our general line. While we

recognized the possibility of a check being administered to McCarthy and his movement suffering a setback, we placed so much stress on the ultimate danger of fascism that it did not appear ultimate but immediate, and we failed to grasp the full implications of the censure move in the Senate as a severe tactical defeat for McCarthy.

Naturally the decisive section of the capitalist class, which decided to pull McCarthy back for the time being, has no intention of destroying him. They only want him under better control. However, that is what is important in the immediate period before us. The monopolists, as we know from the European experience, don't like to resort to the costly fascist method of rule so long as any other alternative exists. As of now they are doing very well under Eisenhower and when this fails they have the alternative, thanks to the labor bureaucracy, of a Democratic-Labor coalition, a far cheaper way of governing than through fascism.

And it was the trend toward a renewal of the Democratic-Labor coalition that stood out in the November elections. McCarthy was pushed to the background. Where outright McCarthyites ran for office, like Meek in Illinois and Clardy in Michigan, they were defeated. In New Jersey, where McCarthy singled out Case for defeat as the Republican candidate, the action turned out to be a boomerang. Case claimed that he was actually elected because of McCarthy's smears. Following the elections came the censure as recommended by a bipartisan committee.

Someone might say that we are now exaggerating McCarthy's reverses, since they are all on the parliamentary arena. The electoral reverses and parliamentary blows, however, are only a barometer that helps us to interpret public sentiment in the country.

Moreover there are additional signs pointing to the drift against McCarthyism. The attempt of the McCarthyites to fill Madison Square Garden, for instance, turned out to be a failure. It takes more than disgruntled admirals and generals plus some priests and rabbis to counteract the setback dealt to the fascist Senator.

Our basic analysis of McCarthyism as incipient fascism was completely correct, as was our campaign when McCarthy was riding high and it was necessary to stress the meaning of this new phenomenon on the American political scene. It was a necessary task to educate the advanced workers on the nature of McCarthyism, its origin, and its danger to the labor movement. What was out of place was not the educational work we did but such action slogans as "Smash McCarthyism Before It Smashes You," which implies an immediate danger.

I will return to the question of slogans later after dealing with the central axis of the party's political orientation for the next period as outlined in the main resolution.

Trend Toward Democrats

The elections, which revealed the trend away from McCarthyism, also revealed a trend toward restoration of the Democratic-Labor coalition in Washington. To be sure, no sweep or landslide for the Democrats was registered at the polls, but when we break the figures down by states and cities we see a strong shift in such traditionally Republican states as Michigan, Illinois and Pennsylvania. In these states the Democratic candidates won by big majorities due to the solidity of the labor vote.

In Michigan the sweep for governor carried even such a total nonentity as McNamara, whose only claim to distinction was that he was a candidate by accident. He was entered in the primaries by the AFL Teamsters as a factional move against Moody, the choice of Gov. Williams and the CIO. Moody's death did not change the outcome. The candidate nobody knew and nobody really wanted won out against a relatively popular Republican politician, Ferguson. It was a demonstration of the power of the unions to get out the vote; and this applied to the AFL as well as the CIO.

The growing realization of the trade union bureaucracy that all issues are ultimately settled politically stands out in contrast to be old Gompers policy of abstention. This realization impels them into politics. It is also the main factor that has forced them to take up in a more serious way than formerly

the question of uniting the AFL and CIO.

The unions today are up to the ears in politics and this is unquestionably progressive even though it takes such distorted form as involvement in the politics of the Democratic Party. At one time there were probably as many Republicans as Democrats in the labor bureaucracy. They tended to cancel each other out, not endorsing presidential candidates except in 1924 when they backed LaFollette. The 1952 endorsement of Stevenson by the AFL marked a turning-point in this respect. Two years of Republican rule did not succeed in enticing any section of the labor bureaucracy away from the Democrats despite such lures as giving a cabinet post to the president of the Plumbers Union. In fact, that attempt boomeranged against the Republicans. This solidity signifies that the labor bureaucracy is no longer divided as a political force.

This means that a falling-out with the Democrats should help propel them toward formation of a Labor Party instead of into the arms of the Republicans as in the past. To help that process out, we must subject the bureaucrats to merciless criticism for their ties with the Democratic Party, one of Wall Street's political machines. That in a nutshell constitutes our general line for the next period.

The labor bureaucracy, we are all well aware, does not function as an independent force. Politically it is a faithful servitor of monopoly capital. But it is under pressure from the rank and file of the unions who are potentially the mightiest independent power in America. In his summary speech at the convention, James P. Cannon dealt forcefully with this in relation to the perspective for the next two years.

The workers, as he pointed out, voted for Roosevelt four times in a row. They voted for him because they thought he had given them something — social security, unemployment insurance, the right to organize, and so on. Now they vote for the Democratic Party, not for what the Democrats are giving them but for what they expect to get. In other words, they are presenting demands.

The first and foremost of these

demands is for full employment, no depression.

Can the Democrats, if they get back in power, satisfy that demand? I say let them try. An experience with a Democratic depression is what the workers can expect. This will set them on the road to independent political action. They know the Republicans, but they haven't got fully acquainted yet with the Democrats.

Use of Slogans

But this is the music of the future. Right now the workers are striving to bring the Democrats back to power. They believe they made a good beginning in 1954 and that they can finish the job in 1956. This being the case, our slogan "Build a Labor Party Now!" needs to be adjusted; the "Now!" part falls on deaf ears, no matter how correct the general proposition is from an educational point of view.

In order to make sure that no one gets the impression that we are abandoning the Labor Party slogan, I think it would be worthwhile to take a few minutes to discuss the question of slogans and their correct use in greater detail.

What is a slogan? It is the expression of an idea in the most concise, concentrated form, preferably in a few words — sometimes in one word. A first-rate example is the three slogans of the Russian Revolution: Bread! Peace! Land!

Each word stands for a clear, distinct idea: (1) The need to feed the hungry. (2) The need to end the carnage of imperialist war. (3) The need to satisfy the land-hunger of the peasants.

Together, these slogans spelled the end of an outworn economic and social system through the revolutionary action of the masses.

To be successful, slogans must meet two conditions. They must correspond to the burning objective needs of the masses; and they must correspond to their subjective desires.

A slogan does not seek to convince. It cannot because of its brevity. Like a banner raised for people who want to fight in common for something they already desire, it points to action. A slogan serves to mobilize people to carry out a definite act which they themselves want.

We have a rich experience with successful slogans advanced by the Socialist Workers Party. For example, some ten years ago we raised the slogan "End the No-Strike Pledge." That was during the latter part of the war when the workers were smarting under the no-strike pledge given to Roosevelt by the labor bureaucrats at the outset of the conflict. The cost of living was rising, profits were mounting, but wages remained frozen. The party's campaign to end the no-strike pledge meant, "Get rid of the strait-jacket and fight for higher wages."

The slogan caught on, especially in the United Automobile Workers Union where it became the main issue in the 1944 and 1945 conventions. The party gained tremendously in the two years it pressed this slogan, winning recruits and sympathizers and prestige in the labor movement.

Again in 1946 when Gerald L. K. Smith toured the country with his fascist propaganda, we succeeded in mobilizing important sections of the labor movement in several cities under the slogan "Smash Fascism." We gave this fascist demagogue a hard time and even prevented him from staging a fascist rally in the Twin Cities. The point is that it was clear to everyone that Smith was a fascist, and in the atmosphere following the war the most alert sections of the labor movement were ready and willing to mobilize against him.

When we say we cannot sloganize today for a Labor Party, it does not mean that no need exists for a Labor Party. It means that this slogan does not coincide with the current desires of the masses for action and consequently it can be used only in a propagandistic, that is, an educational sense. For the time being we must patiently explain the need for independent political action.

Our Task

Our task is to pedagogically explain to the advanced workers what the objective situation is in the world around us and to educate them about what must be done. That means specifically to develop the socialist view and the socialist solution, explaining our socialist ideas in detail. This is not exactly a small job; in fact, its importance cannot be over-

estimated. Propaganda work is one of the chief party tasks at all times and will remain so up to the socialist revolution and after it.

The difference, so far as propaganda is concerned, between periods of revolutionary upsurge and periods of reaction such as we are living in at present is mainly a difference of scope. When the workers are in motion, they learn fast through the experiences they undergo in mass actions undertaken in accordance with this or that slogan. The propaganda task of the revolutionary party then is to generalize these experiences, to illuminate them in the light of Marxist science and thus make conscious revolutionists out of instinctive rebels. When the wide mass is not in motion that does not mean the arena closes down completely. Even in periods of reaction, when conservatism grips the workers, there are always individuals and groups in rebellion against the status quo.

This applies particularly to the youth on the campus and in the factories. They aren't tied down to payments on a house or television set. And they tend to think in terms of social justice and the future and what it has to offer in the way of opportunities and a cause worth devoting your life to.

Of course many of them support the present system because they have been sold a bill of goods by the paid propagandists of the press, radio, TV, the church and the schools. But they will listen to socialist ideas. They want to know and they consider it their birthright to be free to think for themselves. They are the ones we must reach with our socialist ideas, appealing to their spirit of rebellion. And we can do it because we are not saddled with the crimes of Stalinism and can point to our record, the only one in the world of consistent opposition from the beginning to Stalinist injustice and special privilege. That is one of the main reasons why we propose to pay special attention to educational activities in the period immediately before us.

All of us must learn to become better socialist propagandists. Our socialist press must strive for improvement so that its articles become more pedagogic; more convincing. And along

Lessons of the Square D Strike

by Frank Lovell

A STUDY of the Square D strike in Detroit reveals some developments in the relationship of class forces in the area that should prove of interest to union militants throughout the country. First, the facts:

(1) The strike was called June 15 as a result of the uncompromising attitude of management. From then until September 2, when the company announced its intention to open the plant with strikebreakers, there was nothing different about this strike from hundreds of others.

(2) The decision to open the struck

plant marked a new development in the general anti-union drive. This decision was not made by the Square D management alone—it was a considered decision, supported by important segments of the employing class in Detroit, and was prompted by the enactment of the "communist infiltration" law.

This was clearly stated by the Detroit Free Press in an editorial on September 4 that declared, "The company is pitted against a union whose very existence and right to consideration has come into question under new Federal law. It is the United Electrical Workers, long since thrown out of

with this we must devote ourselves to building its circulation.

That such activities offer encouraging prospects, we can judge from the experience of both the Chicago and Detroit branches in the past year where noteworthy gains were made.

* * *

I would fail to convey the militant spirit of the convention if I didn't mention the decision of the delegates to collect a \$15,000 propaganda fund. We came to the convention hoping somewhat timidly that \$12,000 might turn out to be a feasible figure, al-

though we were aware that it would not be sufficient to cover actual needs. We felt reluctant about asking our self-sacrificing members to assume a heavier burden. But our timidity was beaten down by the delegates and the final figure turned out to be \$3,000 higher than our hopes.

This was an impressive symptom of the internal health of our party and by that token an auspicious indication of the gains that we can expect to make in the coming period. I am sure that the New York comrades will, as in the past, do their part to make the fund campaign a full success.

the CIO because its leadership was incurably in the hands of Communists."

(3) The appearance of CIO United Automobile Workers flying squadrons on the picket line, September 9, under the leadership of left-wing locals was an important and significant event in recent labor history.

New Relation of Forces

These events clearly demonstrate that a new relationship of class forces has developed during the past ten years, i. e., since the end of World War II and the 1946 strike wave.

The significant part of it is that a new understanding of the class forces in this country is beginning to appear — on both sides of the battle lines that are being drawn.

The understanding the union spokesmen had of the matter is expressed in the leaflet distributed at the picket line when the left-wing locals appeared.

It said in part, "We know that this strike is an industry experiment to see how far they can go in the breaking of unions and we cannot stand idly by while the Detroit Police Department, who are the public servants of the people of Detroit and paid by the taxpayers, are used for the purpose of herding scabs and playing the company's game in an attempt to break this strike.

"We call upon all union members, whether they be CIO, AFL, or members of independent unions, to give all-out support to this strike."

This call was signed by 13 officers of nine local UAW unions.

It is not surprising that this particular leaflet did not mention the direct connection between the passage of the "communist infiltration" law and the strikebreaking move of the employers. But it is important to note that nowhere at any time during the strike did any representatives of the UAW mention the effects of the new law.

Reuther remained silent, but Reutherite locals joined the picket line a few days after the left-wing locals came out. A "co-ordinating committee of UAW-CIO local presidents" was established, comprising both right-wing and left-wing officials.

This "coordinating committee" issued a statement on "where we stand in the Square D Strike," which read in part:

"We of the UAW-CIO support the strikers themselves. We do not support the UE international union, with which the local union representing Square D workers is affiliated. Our support is for the workers directly, and is for the purpose of helping them win a just settlement, no matter what the political tinge of the International UE.

"Our concern is for the welfare of Detroit workers. No matter how much irrelevant matter and emotional hoopla is injected in the strike, we will continue to work for decent collective bargaining and against any return to the law of the jungle in our city."

The change in line, after the Reutherite locals came out in support of the Square D strikers, is apparent in the statement of the "Coordinating Committee." The overtone of CIO raiding was spelled out in statements by Emil Mazey who advised the Square D strikers to join the CIO International Union of Electrical Workers.

Employers Crack Down

(4) On September 23 the employers cracked down. An injunction was issued against mass picketing, the riot act was read over loudspeakers, union leaders were arrested, the pickets were dispersed. Only a token picket line was allowed to remain.

During the two weeks from September 9, when the UAW reinforcements first appeared, until September 23 pressure continued to mount.

The left-wing local leaders tried to mobilize greater forces at the scene of action — under cover of pacifist statements that were suitable to the UAW right-wing leaders. At the height of the action the UAW never at any time had more than 1,000 members at the strike scene.

They were lacking in organizational experience, and they were stymied at every turn by the restrictions and limitations which the right-wing leaders insisted upon.

Nevertheless, the presence of more and more union men at the scene of the strike — culminating in an at-

tempted motor blockade of the struck plant on September 21, and sporadic fights between pickets and scabs (or potential scabs) — was obviously leading to a showdown.

It was clear that the strikers were learning how to handle themselves better and that the growing numbers of pickets were making for a more even battle between police and union battalions.

At this point the bosses decided to act.

Strike Supporters Arrested

They began arresting UAW strike supporters. Some of the union leaders were rounded up (including Paul Silver). And the following day, the city administration — headed by Mayor Cobo — moved all its forces against the strike in a show of strength designed to smash the mounting union pressure to close the Square D plant.

Judge Ferguson issued a court order limiting pickets to 30 outside the plant gates. He also invoked the Riot Act under an 1846 Michigan law. Cobo gave instructions to Police Commissioner Piggins to "follow the court order to the letter."

This placed the next move squarely up to the leadership of the UAW — and apparently the employers were not sure what the union movement would do.

(Piggins was sent to confer with the UAW "Coordinating Committee" in order to get agreement that the injunction would be respected.)

The issue was decided next day on the picket line. There had been much talk of a "labor holiday" . . . but this was not the answer of the UAW officialdom.

The UAW leadership remained silent when the Riot Act was read. The police dispersed the rank and file UAW members.

The UAW Answers

(5) An answer was forthcoming from the UAW executive board, headed by Reuther, two days later — on September 25 — after the union forces had forfeited the battle.

This answer came in the form of a paid advertisement in the capitalist press. It proposed arbitration of

the issues in dispute in the strike. In addition to this proposal, Reuther took the occasion to give advice to the employers. The ad said that "efforts to exploit the issue of communism as a means of denying Square D workers that measure of justice to which they and their families are entitled is both morally wrong and tactically stupid, for such irresponsible action would play into the hands of the communists."

The Settlement

(6) A settlement was reached and a new contract between the UE and management signed on September 30.

The outcome of the strike was — and remains — indecisive. The employers decided to retreat in the face of the union resistance they had encountered. They did not go through with their union-busting plans.

The settlement, terminating the 108-day strike, was hailed by the capitalist press as a victory for the employers. Time magazine: "A victory for management, face-saver for union." The Detroit News: "A new one-year contract, pay boosts of 4 cents an hour, a seventh paid holiday which would cover Good Friday, improved vacation benefits for employees with long service, and a no-strike clause patterned after one in a contract between the UE and a company in Evansville, Ind."

Twenty-seven militant leaders of the strike were fired by the company and their fate is to be decided by arbitration.

* * *

The above is an outline of the developments in the strike. Several questions are presented to us:

(1) What was the meaning of the settlement?

A union contract is a legal reflection of the relationship of forces at the time it is drawn up. This relationship changes constantly — sometimes the contract itself provides the means for one side strengthening its position at the expense of the other. (This was true of nearly all contracts signed in the thirties when the union movement was on the march.)

There is little doubt that the company intends to use this contract at Square D to strengthen its position. The meaning of the no-strike clause was caught by the editors of Time magazine: "If a wildcat strike is called, the union can be sued if it supports the strike . . . employees can be fired if union does not support the strike." It is clear that under the terms of this agreement the militants can be weeded out of the plant. Besides this, the fact that 27 of the leading union men and women have not returned is a blow from the start to the union.

On the positive side, the fact that the union still exists, that the contract runs for only one year, allows the workers in the plant to prepare for the next battle — on the basis of what they learned this time.

Political Lesson

(2) What is to be learned from this strike?

The most important lesson will not be immediately grasped by the workers at Square D. That is the *political* lesson. It is a lesson that has to be explained. It is the key to an understanding of the whole development of the strike.

It was apparent all along that the rightwing leaders — including those who joined the picket line — were motivated in their cautious tactics partly out of concern for the re-election of their friend, Governor Williams.

We now know that the left-wing leaders went along with the policy dictated by the Reutherites — largely out of concern for Williams' fortunes at the polls — because they were unprepared to give any other answers.

The Reutherites thought the employers and their agents were being provocative when they suggested that only the Governor had the power to step in and close the plant. (The UAW had suggested that if the police wanted to be impartial and avoid violence, they should order the struck plant closed down. The answer they got was that only Williams, as Governor, had the power to do this. Williams' office then issued a statement that the Governor could do nothing until called upon by the local authorities.)

The UAW officialdom explained on the picket line: The employers have everything to gain, they want Williams to expose himself. The unions have everything to lose. If Williams comes to the aid of the strike, it will cost him the election.

This reveals an important change.

There was a time when a self-styled "friend of labor" could remain impartial and his impartiality actually weighed on the side of the union in a struggle of this sort.

But that was in another era. That was in the days when unions were younger and had just demonstrated their invincible power, when the local authorities — like Cobo — who were the open representatives of the corporations had either been cowed or replaced by more tractable officials. These local authorities were afraid to move then without some assurance that they would be supported by State and Federal backing.

All that is changed today.

Slowly the power of the labor movement has been undermined by restrictive legislation — Federal (T-H), State (secondary boycott, etc.), Local (injunctions) — which gives the legal basis for the authorities most closely tied to the corporations to move against strikers. This renders the "impartial friend of labor," like Williams, helpless — and useless to the labor movement.

Need for Labor Party

This is the process that must be reversed. And the only way a counter political trend can be set in motion is by the unions breaking out of the strait-jacket of the Democratic party and entering their own independent candidates for public office. This, of course, means the formation of a Labor Party.

The Labor Party is the key to many of the present problems of the labor movement — including the most basic question of all, the *right to strike* . . . as was demonstrated in this recent strike at Square D.

But that does not mean that nothing can be done until the union officials — as a result of some further and more bitter experiences than were provided at Square D — arouse themselves to the need for a Labor Party

and issue the call for the founding of such a party.

If the labor movement has to wait for that — then there will *never* be a Labor Party in this country.

The Labor Party will arise out of the aggressive and provocative actions of the employing class which will produce countless battles like Square D — that will be much broader in scope and more bitterly fought — and it will be brought into being by the struggle within the labor movement over policy to meet this new menace — the menace of strikebreaking and union-busting.

This strike pretty clearly revealed what the UAW is. It is a slumbering giant — that only began to stir a little bit under the prodding of the left wing.

But this left wing as it is presently constituted and organized was not capable of arousing a single segment of the UAW into action.

The reason for this is to be found partly in the program of the left wing. When the decisive moment arrived, and these left-wing leaders had either to call upon the UAW ranks to defy the court injunctions or remain silent — even the best of them like Silver and Stellato followed the lead of Reuther and remained silent. We know the immediate reason for this: they didn't want to embarrass Williams.

But this is only the surface aspect of the matter. It is an "explanation" given by Silver and Stellato themselves when they faced the moment of decision and found themselves unprepared.

We say they were unprepared because they lacked a program. They don't yet understand the need for a Labor Party as clearly and fully as we do, and they don't know how to fight for the formation of a Labor Party.

But every program — even the most limited and elementary one — requires an organization to effect it. The program announced by Stellato for the Square D strike was very elementary, direct, and could have proved adequate.

When he first appeared on the picket line he was asked by newspaper reporters why he was there. He answered: "To help win the strike."

Q: How many are with you?

A: Quite a few.

Q: How many can you bring?

A: 60,000.

Q: How long do you expect to stay?

A: Until we win.

That is a program of sorts. But like any program it can be realized only through organization. And like any program it contains within it a certain logic.

The decision to support the UE picket line brought the UAW flying squadrons into action. Members of these squadrons were the first to be called upon to reinforce the picket line.

The first day revealed that these units of the UAW, like the whole union organization, had undergone a change during the past 15 years.

Rebuilding Necessary

This was apparent to many. Most conscious of the change were those who had been through the hardest fights in 1937. They knew what had to be done, but they also knew they had to find some men today who are like they were in those years.

The rebuilding process had to be started immediately, on the picket line. And this began to occur, but without much conscious leadership. The leadership failed to prepare carefully to challenge the police. They made no selection of group leaders. No survey of the most important elementary steps that had to be taken to stop the scabs. No meetings of action groups. As a result of this lack of preparation the motor blockade of the plant failed.

If the elementary organization work had been undertaken, the action groups could have been busy not only on the picket line but throughout the labor movement soliciting aid for the strike. It was clear that great sympathy for the strike existed. Locals of the AFL donated money and other aid without being asked. A little well-planned work could have got out the support for a local Congress of Labor when the first big clash between pickets and police occurred. And this Congress of Labor would have been the logical body to call for a Labor Holiday when the reactionary Cobo administration cracked down on the strike.

Once the organization of such a sequence of events is undertaken and rolls on from one to the next—the argument that "we don't want to embarrass Williams" doesn't have much effect.

Under the circumstances as they developed—with the union forces poorly organized and the police retaining the initiative—this argument about poor Williams was more of an excuse not to do anything than a serious reason for calling off the strike. The real reason was the apparent weakness—due to lack of organization—of the union forces.

Lessons Summarized

The lessons of the Square D strike may thus be summarized: A carefully thought-out plan of action, the most necessary part of any strike, was missing. It was not supplied by the left-wing UAW leadership, who understood the need for victory and who had forces sufficient to easily win, because they were not willing to take a political course independent from the official Reutherite bureaucracy. The Reutherites, in turn, committed to backing Democratic politicians, feared embarrassing them during the election campaign. In addition, they were swayed by the possibility of raiding the UE in favor of the IUE. Thus the full victory that was in the bag was dissipated.

On the other hand the strikebreaking and union-busting plans of the employers suffered a setback. The rank and file of all sections of the Detroit labor movement proved that they were alert to the implications of smashing the Square D strike as a test case and showed their readiness to rally against the bosses despite years of intensive redbaiting against the union under attack and despite repressive legislation.

On the picket line considerable weaknesses were revealed, primarily of an organizational character. These, however, can readily be remedied in future struggles, particularly under a leadership capable of standing on its own feet politically.

The Square D experience is well worth the attention of every militant interested in getting better armed for the big battles that lie ahead.

The American Motion Picture Today

by Trent Hutter

THE MOTION picture is the youngest art form and the most popular one. In 1952—the latest year for which statistics are available on the movie industry—an average of 55,000,000 people went to see a movie each week in the United States. Some 32,000 motion picture theaters were in operation. In the two-year period of 1951 and 1952, 1,000 closed down, mainly due to competition from television. Production was the lowest in six years; only about 400 feature films being released. Yet the industry continued to make money, the gross yearly take amounting to \$1.2 billion. To keep business from slumping still further, Hollywood launched a big campaign in 1952 under the slogan, "Movies are better than ever." Are they? Recalling films like those of Charles Chaplin or "The Grapes of Wrath," "Of Mice And Men," "The Best Years of Our Lives," etc., we are tempted to doubt that claim.

Of course, most Hollywood movies—movies everywhere for that matter—were never genuine works of art, and the double feature further encouraged the production of grade B and C pictures in America, since the theater owner or manager, even if he happens to be "independent" from trusts like Loew, Inc. or MGM,

is forced to show a grade B or C picture with almost every grade A picture he gets, movies being rented in package deals.

But considering grade A films alone, we notice that they certainly have not become more meaningful if we compare today's best American movies to the best of the era before the witch hunt, the witch hunt that was to charge the cultural atmosphere of America with hatred, fear, suspicion and cowardliness, the temporary triumph of anti-intellectual forces.

A few good American movies still appear despite this situation. After all, a surprisingly large number of quality pictures appeared even in Germany under Hitler. But the German films avoided the issues of the time. German script writers escaped into the past or created stories without any social or political significance. There were a few exceptions—very few indeed. Reality was too dangerous a field. America's present political situation is not the same; American fascism is far from victorious; but the danger it represents cannot be overlooked, and in the movie industry the witch hunt has cast such a dark shadow that the parallel between Hollywood and the German studios of 1933 is impressive.

American movies, too, avoid social and political issues more than they once did. In the rare cases where they do touch such themes, they are careful not to stir the ire of the ruling class, not to leave the safe ground of class collaboration. "On The Waterfront" is an example of this (although it briefly hints at connections between gangsters and a powerful, unidentified person). "Viva Zapata" was an exception, but it dealt with a revolutionary movement of more than forty years ago and outside the U.S.

The motion picture is an art form like the drama or painting. It does not follow that every motion picture is a work of art, any more than every play or every painting; yet despite the complexity of its creation, a motion picture can be a work of art like a painting, a drama, a novel. When do we call a motion picture a work of art? What is our main criterion in determining its value?

If a motion picture is to be a work of art it must have more than technical smoothness, a clever plot and brilliant actors: It has to be sincere. If the script writer expresses his own real feelings, emotions and ideas without being censored, the groundwork for a valuable movie is laid—even if his ideas don't happen to be Marxist. It would be at least sectarian and perhaps worse to condemn every picture that does not correspond to our ideology. Of course, we do not in the least renounce our ideas, come what may, and never cease preparing for the socialist tomorrow. Marxist analysis is our key to interpreting and changing the world. But that should not prevent us from admiring genuine works of art that express a different ideology. We also admire the masterworks of medieval painters and sculptors without believing in Catholicism. Why? Not for their craftsmanship alone. Mainly for the sincere feeling they express. Their emotion is not faked.

This does not signify that a Marxist compromises with religion in his esthetic appreciation of such works of art. It simply means that in medieval times ideology knew no other form of expression outside the religious one. The artists, too, grew up in those forms and utilized them to mirror the life of their times. From our vantage point we can look through the religious form, grasping the essence of life it embodies and feeling it as the "sincerity" of the artist. Thus we are able to appreciate even those artists of our day who are unable to transcend religion such as Rouault, a modern religious painter of genius.

It is no coincidence that we do not see any genuine work of art defending the decaying capitalism of our time as such. It is no coincidence that the script writers of the better pictures, insofar as they deal with problems of our time, try to find a way out without glorifying capitalism, even if they compromise with it and cling to impossible illusions. Nor is it a coincidence that most of the anti-communist pictures are bad pictures.

When a movie inspired by Marxism comes along, we rejoice, and justly so. But while this is not so uncommon in Europe's movie production, it rarely happens in today's U.S.A. It is something if an American picture attempts to sincerely grapple with reality. Even if the conclusions are unrealistic and bear the mark of class-collaborationism, they do not completely spoil the picture where they honestly represent an actual stage of the author's thinking. On the other hand, the pseudo-Marxist pictures cut to the pattern ordered by the Stalinist bureaucrats of the USSR falsify history, lack sincerity and have no artistic value. Sergei Eisenstein, it is true, tried to express himself as much as possible despite the dictatorship. He produced some outstanding pictures even under Stalin—and lost favor with the dictator.

I prefer a sincere non-Marxist movie that attempts to solve or at least to indicate some of the riddles and miseries of our time, to a dis-

honest product of the Kremlin's propaganda kitchen falsely labeled "Marxist" by both the Stalinists and the imperialists. In the long run, the sincere non-Marxist picture will contribute more to making people think, and thereby contribute more to the cause of genuine, Marxist socialism, than any caricature of Marxism. We Marxists welcome any book, play or movie that stimulates thinking. And we condemn any attempt to prevent people from doing so, any attempt at mental tutelage, the deliberate hiding of the truth.

Hollywood's World of Fear

A recent picture, "A Star Is Born," shows certain aspects of Hollywood quite realistically, much more honestly than many other movies dealing with this theme. But such films are exceptional and by no means present the complete picture.

Hollywood is an artificial world of dreams and despair. The people who work in the big studios easily lose contact with the reality that faces other people. Moreover, their thinking is shaped to a large extent by business, not by artistic considerations—by the rules of film moguls who, in their turn, frequently depend on the big banks much more than the theatrical producers on Broadway do. A tight system of self-censorship has been set up by the movie industry itself in order to prevent its pictures from being attacked by anybody—churches, women's clubs, veterans' organizations, state and municipal censors, etc.

The Breen Office is the particularly narrow-minded organ of this self-censorship. (It even condemned the witty but harmless comedy "The Moon Is Blue" because it hinted at sexual questions.) Its aim is to make Hollywood's pictures "non-controversial." A serious picture that is non-controversial tends to be insignificant. The Breen Office dislikes significant pictures, but does not prevent the production of smutty, sadistic or horror films. The sadistic and horror pictures win its stamp of approval; the smutty ones are produced outside the range of its censorship by smaller firms and shown in special theaters.

The Breen Office does what it can to prevent the American motion picture from giving a realistic account of the small and big worries faced by the average American in his daily existence. This becomes obvious when we see the realistic pictures produced in Italy, France and a few other European countries. Those who are always afraid of hurting somebody's feelings will hardly engage in bold deeds. And that certainly goes for Hollywood.

Witch-Hunt Atmosphere

The general witch-hunt atmosphere has, of course, increased the movie producers' reluctance to approve anything that contains social criticism. The result is a frantic search for non-controversial stories with box-office appeal. And since censorship and the witch hunt do not encourage inventiveness and creative moods, Hollywood frequently digs up old plots, remaking successful movies of the past ("The Jazz Singer," "Living it Up" [based upon "Nothing Sacred,"] "Quo Vadis," "Rose-Marie," "A Star Is Born," etc.), especially French movies ("The Raven," "The Blue Veil," "Human Desire," [based upon "La Bete Humaine"], "Flame and the Flesh" [based upon "Naples Au Baiser De Feu"] etc.) and watering them down inevitably. This sterile rehashing and stealing of stories that were already used for motion pictures is significant.

Lavish technicolor musicals make up a high percentage of current production. There is no reason why we should oppose purely entertaining pictures, screen biographies of famous artists and similar productions for which a legitimate demand exists. They, too, can and should be good pictures, like "An American In Paris," "Singing In The Rain," "The Jolson Story," "The Eddie Cantor Story." But when too many of them appear, something is wrong. The big studios simply want to get away from today's issues.

Another avenue of evading realism is offered in science-fiction: a combination of childish "science" and horrors. ("The Neanderthal Man," "Cat Women of the Moon," "Them.")

It has been pointed out that the average American movie corresponds to the intellectual level of a twelve- or thirteen-year-old adolescent.

Hollywood has an even more subtle method for skipping the social question: American pictures often solve complicated human problems through pseudo-psychoanalysis. Human problems are treated as purely individual and superficial disturbances without social implications. We recognize psychoanalysis as one of the great scientific discoveries of modern times; but we do not isolate the individual from his social situation. (The benefits of psychoanalysis are difficult for workers to obtain because of the time and exorbitant fees involved. This very fact confirms the importance of the social factor in both causing and healing neuroses!) Capitalist society submits the individual to tremendous daily pressures. Tens and even hundreds of thousands break under the strain. Hollywood wants to hush this "unpleasantness." Social pressures are taboo.

It would be quite wrong to think that Americans have no gift for social or political satire. Even if we consider Chaplin an Englishman, although he belongs to the history of American movies, films like "Nothing Sacred," "The Senator Was Indiscreet," "Born Yesterday," and others bear witness to the satirical talent of Americans. But political or social satire has become almost extinct in Hollywood.

Ostracism

It is well known that those who have submitted to moral servitude hate those who are unwilling to so degrade themselves. The very existence of upright persons is a constant reproach to the cowards and opportunists who have capitulated to conformism and thought control. That is why the Hollywood moguls, second-rate actors, columnists and innumerable parasites of the show business all hate Charles Chaplin, who never made concessions to the imperialist hysteria, never renounced his integrity as an artist, and who has given us masterpieces like "The Kid," "The Gold Rush," "City Lights," "Modern

Times," "The Great Dictator," "Monsieur Verdoux," "Limelight." Chaplin, the greatest genius of the motion picture, is the man who more than anybody else made American movies famous from Iceland to India. Yet Hollywood never awarded him its famous "Oscar." The reactionaries have tried to boycott his pictures, to slander him. They suppressed "Monsieur Verdoux" in this country. Chaplin has been exiled. . . . The exile of the talented Orson Welles is a voluntary one, but he too is unpopular in Hollywood because of his artistic convictions and frankness.

Boycott Tactics

The biggest Hollywood "purge" took place several years ago when Stalinists and radicals were expelled from the studios. However, it didn't spell the end of Hollywood's boycott tactics, which are directed not only against political non-conformists, but also against several non-political personalities who have refused to abdicate their artistic conscience, to compromise with the studio bosses, to flatter the columnists, and who do not belong to the film world's "smart set." The columnists hardly ever criticize a "star" who is on good terms with his studio. They never praise an actor who refuses to obey every studio dictate. Nor are they much interested in drawing the public's and the studios' attention to an artist who is not sufficiently recognized by the Hollywood moguls. What did the columnists ever do for Albert Bassermann, one of the finest dramatic actors? This great artist was used by Hollywood as a feature player for small parts only.

The Quality Pictures

The producers of second- or third-rate movies affirm: "The public does not want 'intellectual' pictures. It wants tear-jerkers, light entertainment and adventure." It is true that a need for light entertainment exists. But light entertainment does not have to be trashy; and as for serious pictures, it just isn't true that they don't pay if they are good. Most of the better pictures have been successful, or would have been were it not

for the organized sabotage of reactionary pressure groups. Besides, the public's taste is not static. It can be educated. If the public is offered a great number of better movies, it will finally reject the trash it is so often offered at present.

A few Hollywood producers believe in quality pictures. (Kazan, Huston, Kramer, Preminger; independents like Hugo Haas.) Why do men like Kazan still get the green light from time to time? A sizeable part of the public ask for adult pictures. Millions of Americans see countless second- or third-rate movies at home on their television screen. When they go to a theater, they want to see a picture that is worth their money. Hence the studios not only have to defend themselves against their competitors; they also have to defend the prestige of the motion picture as such, to attract the crowds, to prove they can do things that television can't.

The big studios therefore favor production of a small quota of quality pictures and some colossal ones (like "Quo Vadis," "The Robe," "The Egyptian," De Mille's "Ten Commandments"). For the super-duper productions the Bible provides a wealth of stories with the advantage of spectacular costume, dramatic situations—and approval by all the defenders of bourgeois society. Making a biblical or another religious film is considered meritorious and box-office, too. . . .

Several quality pictures are film versions of famous plays ("A Streetcar Named Desire," "Death of a Salesman," "Julius Caesar," "Carmen Jones," etc.) or remarkable novels ("The Treasure of Sierra Madre," "Carrie," "A Place in the Sun" [based on "An American Tragedy"], "Intruder in the Dust," "From Here to Eternity," "The High and the Mighty," "The Caine Mutiny," etc.). Some cinematographic adaptations were satisfactory or excellent, while in other cases Hollywood took the bite out of the novels it brought to the screen. Occasionally the spectacular is combined with good taste, a good original story and good acting. ("Hans Christian Anderson.") On the other hand, the independent producers have

created a few masterpieces on a small budget. ("Little Fugitive," "Pick-Up," and above all "Salt of the Earth.")

Realistic Pictures

It is true that a realistic picture can be filmed in a studio if the right spirit prevails. It is equally true, however, that producers and directors who haven't left the synthetic world of Hollywood for many years tend to forget what a realistic picture looks like. The birth of the realistic school of Italian movies was facilitated by the fact that after World War II, Italian movie makers did not have well-equipped studios and enormous funds. They went out into real life, filming on location, mingling with the people, creating pictures about their experiences, sorrows, fears and modest heroism. In France, too, producers, directors, actors live much closer to the people than their colleagues do in Hollywood—Beverly Hills. France has big movie studios but no Hollywood. . . . American producers generally cling to artificial plaster-and-wood cities in the studios, to the artificial people of Hollywood, filming on location only when they make a Western or an exotic picture. And when they film abroad because it's cheaper, they take the Hollywood spirit with them.

Social Questions

Social realism necessitates at least a willingness to observe people and their living conditions. When Kazan made "On the Waterfront" he went to Hoboken and filmed Budd Schulberg's longshore story on location. The picture leaves out some important aspects of the struggle on the waterfront and has a class-collaborationist tendency; but filmed on location (with an able cast) it nonetheless conveys a realistic impression and is superior in this respect to many other American movies.

When American producers and screen writers have to deal with social questions in their more ambitious ventures, they tend to play them down, trying to present class conflicts as mere conflicts between individuals. However, around 1950 Hollywood decided it would be useful to

demonstrate that American Negroes now have a better chance to gain equality, to overcome prejudice and social handicaps. Several movies about the Negro question quickly followed each other. Even if they generally tried to prove that in the end democracy is victorious and justice prevails, they could not avoid describing real-life segregation, cruelty, hatred. At least this important social problem was no longer ignored in Hollywood. It is indeed an interesting fact that in contemporary America the increasingly prominent Negro question could not be indefinitely hushed up by the studio bosses. Some American movies have shown exceptional understanding of minority problems and the class struggle in the U.S. ("No Way Out" and the union-made "Salt of the Earth"); but those treats are miraculous rarities at present.

Similarly, Hollywood has touched on police brutality and corruption in recent years, pitting the "good" cop against the "bad" cop ("Rogue Cop"). Of course the "good" cops are cut to the usual Hollywood pattern that requires them to defeat the "bad" ones, but in the process some fair examples are presented of the sadists and crooks who make the "guardians of the law" such hated figures in the eyes of working people, especially the minority groupings.

The Gadgets

One of Hollywood's tactics, aimed at making up for its reluctance to face real-life problems, for its ensuing lack of interesting stories, is the introduction of new optical and technological devices to generate thrills more sensational than television programs: 3-D, Cinerama (which is still a mere curiosity and an extremely expensive process), Cinemascope, and now Vista Vision.

We do not oppose technical progress—if it is real progress. For certain types of pictures, Cinemascope and other devices are useful. When artistic feeling and Cinemascope unite in making a picture whose "star" is the landscape or a city ("Three Coins in a Fountain"), the result is gratifying indeed. But on the

whole, the value of a motion picture is determined much more by an idea, a story, a cast, than by technical improvements. And beautiful camerawork is possible even in black and white and without special gadgets. The latter cannot replace either artistic inspiration or a sound story.

Cinemascope could help in the improvement of non-fiction pictures on nature, geography, architecture, etc. Yet such pictures are not numerous in America. Hollywood does not actually believe in movies as a popular means of instruction. Walt Disney is one of the rare pioneers who have engaged in the production of first-rate pictures on nature.

Movies and the Unions

Hollywood produces many pro-capitalist, pro-imperialist pictures and very few that even mildly criticize Big Business. The Hollywood crowd ignore the worker's viewpoint. In American movies the worker too often appears as a caricature or as an honored friend of the industrialist. The poor, their homes, their troubles are not shown, although there are millions of them. The capitalist is not an exploiter—in Hollywood's movies; he is a patriot, a servant of the community, an incarnation of industrial progress. The "bad" capitalist is an exception, and the "good" capitalist promptly ousts the parasite. ("Executive Suite.")

Capitalism uses the movies as a means of ideological propaganda. The big studios are closely linked to the capitalist network that dominates America. In the capitalist camp, the Catholic Church is the most active ideological force. It has become far more influential than the percentage of Catholics in America's population would warrant. An authoritarian, totalitarian organization, it invades every mass medium—the press, TV, radio, and the movies. The Church knows how important motion pictures are in captivating the masses. It systematically tries to influence the studios and individual performers, and its efforts are overwhelmingly successful. No other religious denomination can boast of as many pic-

tures disseminating its views and dedicated to its glorification.

Even in Schulberg-Kazan's "On the Waterfront," a Catholic priest plays a heroic role, although the picture was not made by Catholics. The Catholic directors, writers, actors, and actresses in Hollywood are organized in the Christopher Society, an order of laymen (headed by a priest), struggling for the triumph of Catholic thought in the arts and public life. (Bing Crosby is one of the prominent members of the Christophers.)

Labor's Viewpoint Not Given

What has labor got to counteract the reactionary propaganda? The union leaders still believe in outmoded propaganda and defense methods. They don't seem concerned over the fact that America hardly ever gets a glimpse of labor's viewpoint. There are no dailies sponsored by the labor movement except one, and the capitalist dailies like to distort the facts or cover them up. With the outlawing of the Communist Party, the growth of McCarthyism, and the anti-labor drive, the reactionary offensive gains in momentum. Isn't it about time to start planning labor's counter-offensive?

Labor's case should be put before the American people, especially before the more backward layers of the working class and the petty bourgeoisie. They should understand the struggle of organized labor.

The unions have considerable funds. Union-sponsored movie-production would be one of the most effective means of spreading the outlook of the American worker. Pictures about the reality of present-day America, the problems and life of the American proletariat would appeal to millions of Americans (for it is not true that the people do not like to see pictures dealing with real-life problems).

A few years ago, the ILGWU made a full-length feature "With These Hands." It was a class-collaborationist movie and certainly not a brilliant one. But it was a beginning. Then, in 1953, the International

Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers produced "Salt of the Earth," filmed on location in New Mexico despite enormous difficulties—one of the finest social pictures ever made. And if a relatively small (and persecuted) union like the IUMMSW was able to do this, it is obvious that mighty federations like the CIO, the AFL, the United Mine Workers and the Railroad Brotherhoods could set up production of movies that would revolutionize the American motion picture and seriously challenge Hollywood. They could do it if they wanted to, if they were aware of the opportunity and necessity. And in order to make them aware of the issue, the vanguard in the unions should popularize the idea until the union leaders can no longer ignore it.

If the unions went into movie production on a large scale, they would attract talented young artists who don't get a chance in Hollywood, as well as experienced veterans of the movie industry who have been witch-hunted or are simply disgusted with the way things are run in Hollywood. America is full of talent. It is one of the decisive tasks of our time to mobilize this talent for the fight against the witch hunt, fascism and obscurantism; not by opposing capitalist thought-control with another brand of thought-control, but by respecting and defending the freedom

of artistic creation, of expression and thought. The great majority of true artists will not be on the side of reaction if they are given a fair opportunity to freely express their feelings.

On Sept. 1, 1954, the N. Y. Herald Tribune reported: "Samuel Goldwyn, who has often complained about the lack of creative writing talent in Hollywood, established . . . an award of \$1,000 to be given annually for the best creative writing submitted in a competition. . . ." It's not lack of talent, but lack of freedom of expression that has sterilized the scriptwriters' brains. Awards will not change this. The unions should provide the better writers with the freedom they don't get in Hollywood, and thereby destroy the power of the Breen Office. This would spell a boom for sincere writers who have something to say. Hollywood could keep the others, the pro-capitalist hacks and those who re-hash the same old plots for the hundredth time.

Trotsky pointed out that the movies draw the workers away from churches and bars. Let us make sure that motion pictures do not serve as just another means of intoxicating and dulling the mind, but as an instrument of enlightenment, helping the people to live more consciously.

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Early Years Of the American Communist Movement

by James P. Cannon

The "American Question" at the Fourth Congress

May 10, 1954

Dear Sir:

I arrived in Moscow on June 1, 1922 as the official delegate of the American Communist Party to the Plenum of the ECCI and to the pending Fourth Congress of the Comintern. I remained there until the following January. Besides attending to my duties in the ECCI and in the Congress, I had a good chance to look around and form some impressions of the country in the fifth year of the revolution.

After my return to the U.S., I covered the country on a five-month tour, speaking on "The Fifth Year of the Russian Revolution." This lecture was published in pamphlet form at the time and has since been reprinted by Pioneer Publishers, together with another lecture, under the title "The Russian Revolution."

I was seated as the American representative on the ECCI and was also made a member of its presidium, the smaller working body, which met frequently and handled all current political work of the Comintern in the same manner as the smaller political bureau of the national committee of a national organization.

This was my first view of the func-

A student who is doing research work on the history of early American communism asked James P. Cannon, as well as other participants, a number of questions about the events and prominent figures of the pioneer movement. Cannon's answers, which began in the Summer 1954 issue of *Fourth International*, are continued here.

tioning of the Comintern, and my first chance to see the great political leaders at work in discussion and decision on questions of the world movement. I was well satisfied to sit quietly, to listen and try to learn. I really think I learned a lot in this priceless experience.

The problems of the various national parties, one after another, came up for review in the sessions of the presidium. The big questions of the time, as I recall, were the continuing crisis in the French party and the application of the tactics of the united front generally. All the important parties had permanent delegates in Moscow. They presented periodic reports on new developments in their respective countries and joined in the discussion.

The decisive lead was taken by the Russian delegation assigned to per-

manent work in the Comintern. There were Zinoviev as chairman, Radek and Bukharin. As a member of the presidium, I saw these leaders at work and heard them speak on an average of about once a week during the entire period of my stay in Moscow. There was no question whatever of the leading role played by the Russian representatives. This was taken as a matter of course and was never questioned. But the reasons for it were entirely just and natural.

They were the veterans who were schooled in the doctrine and knew the world movement, especially the European section of it, from study and first-hand experience in their years of exile. In addition, they had the commanding moral authority which accrues by right to the leaders of a victorious revolution. The delegates of the other parties, like myself, were mainly apprentices of a younger generation. I think all of us, or nearly all, felt that we were privileged to attend an incomparable school, and we tried to profit by the opportunity.

* * *

I also worked in the Executive Body of the Red International of Labor Unions (Profintern). There I became well acquainted with the leading figures in the trade-union work of different countries. I particularly remember Losovsky, Nin and Brandler. The Profintern Committee enjoyed a wide autonomy at that time in all the practical affairs of the international trade-union movement. Questions involving political policy, however, were coordinated with the presidium of the Comintern and eventually decided there.

* * *

In pursuit of my special objective—to gain Comintern support for our policy in the U.S.—I talked personally to Zinoviev, Radek, Bukharin and Kuusinen (the secretary of the ECCI). Bittleman came along to Moscow in the summer of 1922 on a special mission—to report on the Jewish movement in the U.S., I think. Bittleman and I worked closely together in Mos-

cow. We cooperated in preparing written reports on the situation in the U.S. and attended the conversations with the various leaders together.

I noted that all the leaders, as though by a prior decision on their part, remained noncommittal in all these discussions of American policy at that time. They were extremely friendly and patient. They gave us freely of their time, which must indeed have been strictly limited, and asked numerous pointed questions which showed an intense interest in the question. None of them, however, expressed any opinion. The net result of the first round of conversations, which extended over a considerable period of time, was an informal decision to wait for the arrival of the delegates from the other faction, who would be coming to the World Congress, and to defer any decision until that time.

Nothing was said directly to indicate a definite position; but I did get the impression at that time that the Russian leaders were inclined to regard me as a "liquidator" of the type they had confronted in the Russian party in the period of reaction following the defeat of the 1905 revolution. These Russian "liquidators" had wanted to abandon the illegal party organization and to adapt Social Democratic activity to Czarist legality. The Bolsheviks had been traditionally opposed to such capitulatory liquidationism; and I felt that the reserved attitude of the Russian leaders in 1922 was at least partly conditioned by the memory of that old battle.

I noticed that one of the technical functionaries in the Comintern apparatus, a woman comrade who spoke English, told me that she had been assigned to help me study the experiences of the old Bolshevik struggle against the liquidators. She took me to a library and translated for me a number of Lenin's polemical articles of that time. I agreed with the articles, but I thought there was a difference between Czarist Russia and Harding's America. I had the uneasy feeling, throughout the summer of 1922, that I wasn't making a bit of headway in my effort to gain support for our policy.

Possibly the reserve of the Russian leaders was due to the fact that previously the ECCI had sent a representative to America—Valetski, a Pole—and that they awaited his report.

* * *

Those were the good days of the Communist International, when its moral authority was the highest and the wisdom of its advice to the young parties from the various countries was recognized and appreciated by all. We knew nothing of any conflict or rivalry among the Russian leaders. We thought of the Russian leadership as a unit, with Lenin and Trotsky standing above and somewhat apart from all the rest.

Trotsky led the debate on the French question at the June Plenum of the ECCI of that year, and also at the Fourth Congress which followed some months later. Trotsky also appeared a few times at the meetings of the presidium, but only for a special purpose each time. I saw and heard Lenin only once, when he spoke for an hour at the Fourth Congress. We knew, of course, that he was ill; but there was confident optimism on every side that he would recover. As I said, all the daily work of the presidium of the ECCI was led by the special Russian delegation assigned to that function—Zinoviev, Radek and Bukharin. I can't recall that I either saw or heard of Stalin that time.

* * *

Meantime, at home the factional fight between the liquidators and the leftists was raging. Additional delegates to the Fourth Congress began to arrive from America. It was a big delegation, nearly a score all told, and all tendencies were represented. Max Bedacht came for the liquidators; L. E. Katterfeld, Rose Pastor Stokes and others for the undergrounders. There was a youth delegation headed by Martin Abern. A number came as trade-union delegates; I remember Jack Johnstone and others. The youth and trade-union delegates both supported the liquidators. There was also a Negro delegate whose name has escaped me, who seemed to support

the leftist faction. Trachtenberg represented the Workers Council group, which had not joined the CP. The seceding group of leftists (United Toolers) had two delegates who had been invited to come and present their appeal.

In addition, a number of individuals had come to Moscow on their own account. Among them were Max Eastman; the Negro poet, Claude McKay; and Albert Rhys Williams. In Claude McKay's autobiographical book, "A Long Way from Home," he devotes a section to his Russian visit and the Congress. Zinoviev and the other Russian leaders made a great fuss over him. They included him in group pictures with them and other Congress leaders for propaganda purposes in the colonial world. In Chapter 16 of his book, beginning page 172, McKay speaks about the Congress and the American Commission, which he attended. You might find this interesting, as the independent impression of an artist.

After the full delegation had arrived and the Fourth Congress began to drag out its month-long course, the preliminary fight over the American question began in earnest. The first skirmishes took place in the special department of the Comintern for English speaking countries. Rakosi, the recently deposed Stalinist boss of Hungary, was in charge of this department. He spoke English fluently and I got to know him quite well. He was one of the younger members of the Hungarian leadership who had made their way to Moscow after the defeat of the Hungarian revolution.

Rakosi impressed me then as a rather rigid formalist and sectarian and he did not conceal his suspicion of us as "liquidators." We didn't mind that so much because we didn't take him too seriously. But the possibility that he might be reflecting the point of view of the official leaders made us rather uncomfortable. I must say that this was the general impression at that time, and it was reflected in the attitude of other technical functionaries in the Comintern apparatus.

They began to give me a bad time. On the eve of the Congress they shifted me from my privileged room

in the Hotel Lux to a roughly improvised dormitory for overflow delegates. I really didn't mind that very much, being an old hobo, but political significance was attached to it, and my friends joked about my banishment from the Lux. This is what I meant when I referred in my "History" to my status during that period as a sort of "pariah." These "apparatchniks" were real weather vanes. I never liked this breed, then or ever.

* * *

Toward the end of the Congress we finally secured an interview with Trotsky. That changed everything overnight. We don't deserve a bit of credit for this decisive interview because, as far as I can remember, we never even thought of asking for it. The interview was arranged by Max Eastman on his own initiative.

Trotsky, the most businesslike of men, set the interview for a definite time. His fearsome insistence on punctuality, in contrast to the typical Russian nonchalance in matters of time, was a legend, and nobody dared to keep him waiting. Eastman only had about one hour to arrange it, and came within an inch of failing to round us up. He got hold of us at the last minute, as we were blithely returning from a visit to the Russian steam baths—my first and only experience with this formidable institution—and hustled us to Trotsky's office by auto just in the nick of time to keep the appointment.

Those who attended the interview, as I recall, were Max Bedacht, Max Eastman and myself. If any other American delegates were present, I don't remember them. Trotsky, bristling with businesslike precision, wasted no time on formalities. He asked us right away to state our case, and reminded us that we had only one hour.

I was struck by the difference between his manner and method and Zinoviev's. The latter had impressed me as informal and easy-going, even somewhat lackadaisical. He always seemed to have plenty of time, and could always be counted on to open a meeting two or three hours late. In spite of that he obviously did an

enormous amount of work. It was just a difference in his way of working.

The greatness of Lenin and Trotsky receded before them, but on a lesser scale he was a great man too. I had a soft spot for Zinoviev, and my affectionate regard for him never changed. I still hope, someday, to write something in justice to his memory.

The main exposition at the interview with Trotsky was made by me, supplemented by some remarks from Bedacht. My thesis, as I recall, had four points: (1) The lack of class



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consciousness of the American workers, and as a result, the elementary tasks of propaganda imposed on the Communist Party. (2) The actual political climate in the country which made possible and necessitated a legal party. (3) Our proposal to support the formation of a labor party based on the trade unions. (4) The necessity of Americanizing the party, of breaking the control of the foreign-language federations and assuring an indigenous national leadership.

Trotsky asked only a few questions about the actual political situation in the country, with respect to the laws, etc. He expressed astonishment, and even some amusement, over the theory that underground organization is a

question of principle. He said the attempt of the foreign-language groups to "control" the American party was unrealistic and untenable. If they persisted, he said facetiously, the Russian party would invite them to return to Russia.

(It might be remarked, parenthetically, that the return to Russia of Hourwich, Staklitzky, Ashkenudzie and other strong and fanatical leaders of the Russian Federation, did contribute to the eventual solution of the problem of party "control.")

I don't recall what, if anything, Trotsky said about the labor party question.

At the end of the discussion, which probably didn't last more than an hour as he had specified, Trotsky stated unambiguously that he would support us, and that he was sure Lenin and the other Russian leaders would do the same. He said that if Lenin didn't agree, he would try to arrange for us to see him directly. He said he would report the interview to the Russian Central Committee and that the American Commission would soon hear their opinion. At the end of the discussion he asked us to write our position concisely, on "one sheet of paper—no more," and send it to him for transmission to the Russian leadership.

It struck me at the moment, as a formidable task, after a solid year of unlimited debate, to be asked to say everything we had to say on one sheet of paper. Nevertheless, with the help of Eastman we did it that very day and sent it in. I would give a good deal today for the original of that document "on one sheet of paper."

* * *

That interview with Trotsky was the great turning point in the long struggle for the legalization of the American communist movement, which should never have accepted an illegal status in the first place. Soon afterward, the formal sessions of the American Commission of the Fourth Congress were started. The Russians showed their decided interest in the question by sending a full delegation—Zinoviev, Radek and Bukharin—to the Commission.

Nothing was hurried. There was a full and fair debate, in a calm and friendly atmosphere. Nobody got excited but the Americans. Katterfeld and I were given about an hour each to expound the conflicting positions of the contending factions. Rose Pastor Stokes, Bedacht and others were called upon to supplement the remarks of the main reporters on both sides. A representative of the seceding underground leftist group was also given the floor.

Then the big guns began to boom. First Zinoviev, then Radek and then Bukharin. The noncommittal attitude they had previously shown in our personal conversations with them, which had caused us such apprehension, was cast aside. They showed a familiarity with the question which indicated that they had discussed it thoroughly among themselves. They all spoke emphatically and unconditionally in support of the position of the liquidators.

Their speeches were truly brilliant expositions of the whole question of legal and illegal organization, richly illustrated from the experience of the Russian movement. They especially demonstrated that the central thesis of the underground leftists, namely, that the party had to retain its underground organization as a matter of principle, was false. It was, they explained, purely a practical question of facts and possibilities in a given political atmosphere.

They especially castigated the tendency to transplant mechanically the Russian experiences under the Czar, where all forms of political opposition were legally proscribed, to America which still retained its bourgeois democratic system intact and where the Workers Party was already conducting a satisfactory communist propaganda without legal interference. Illegal underground work, said Zinoviev, is a cruel necessity in certain conditions; but one must not make a fetish of it, and resort to costly and cumbersome underground activities, when legal possibilities are open. He told an amusing story of an old Bolshevik underground worker who insisted on carrying her old false pass-

port even after the Bolsheviks had taken over the state power.

The result of the discussion in the American Commission was the unanimous decision: (1) to legalize the party; (2) to recommend that the party advocate and work for the construction of a labor party based on the trade unions; and (3) to appeal to the seceding leftists to return to the party, assuring them a welcome and rightful place in its ranks.

* * *

That was one time when a great problem of American communism, which it had not been able to solve by itself, was settled conclusively and definitely by the Comintern for the good of the movement.

All subsequent experience demonstrated the absolute correctness of this decision. It is appalling to think what would have been the fate of the American communist movement without the help of the Comintern in this instance. The two factions were so evenly matched in strength, and the leftists were so fanatically convinced that they were defending a sacred principle, that a definitive victory for the liquidators within a united movement could not be contemplated.

The main energies of the American communists would have been consumed in the internal struggle, at the expense of public propaganda and the

recruitment of new forces. The prospect was one of unending factional struggles and disintegrating splits until the movement exhausted itself, while the great country rolled along and paid no attention to it. The intervention of Trotsky, and then of the Russian party and the Comintern, saved us from that.

This decision showed the Comintern at its best, in its best days, as the wise leader and coordinator of the world movement. Its role in this crucial struggle of the infant movement of American communism was completely realistic, in accord with the national political conditions and necessities of that time. Moreover, the Russian leaders, to whom American communism owed this great debt, showed themselves to be completely objective, fair and friendly to all, but very definite and positive on important political questions.

I always remembered their friendly help in this affair with the deepest gratitude. Perhaps that was one reason why I could never reconcile myself to the campaign against them and their eventual expulsion a few years later. I could never believe that they had become "enemies of the revolution," and I believe it even less today, 32 years afterward.

Yours truly,

James P. Cannon

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The Character Of the State in China

by David Miller

IN THE fall issue of *Fourth International*, I presented the view that, for organic economic and political reasons, the revolutions in Asia have given rise to a group of new, independent bourgeois states whose economies are essentially dominated by the state; that this was the only way in which the bourgeois task of primary capital accumulation could now be realized, due to the capital shortage, the need for a planned integrated development, and also because it provides the indispensable means for the most effective control and exploitation of the working class. A historical and statistical effort was made to demonstrate the essentially similar methods, programs and perspectives of these states.

The Chinese State

Despite the numerous admitted basic similarities between the Chinese revolution and regime, and that of other colonial countries in Asia, the claim of organic identity will appear unsupported to many Marxists. It will be argued that the analysis ignores the supposedly revolutionary significance

On the basis of his study of the role of "statism" in the colonial countries, which appeared in the Fall 1954 issue of *Fourth International*, the author discusses some key problems of the Chinese revolution.

of the land reforms, the role of consciousness in politics (the history of the Communist Party as a supposedly working class party), the problem of the dynamics, the direction of the economy, and the significance of the political line-up of the regime internationally.

The Land Problem

At the risk of beating down a straw man, we must reject the significance of the land redistribution as a decisive criterion for designating the class character of the state. The spectacular character of land redistribution in China has obscured for many the fundamental class character of this transformation. The political and social characterization of this movement is determined by its relation to the revolution in the city; land reform can

be an anti-capitalist act only in conjunction with an effort to destroy urban capitalism. Short of that it remains a bourgeois-democratic act irrespective of its scale, intensity, or revolutionary manifestation. In the case of China, the land reform must be seen as a subordinate aspect of a system of industrial reorganization similar to that being experienced in an entire welter of under-developed areas. This is not to say that the agrarian revolution does not pose problems for us (the permanent revolution, the role of the peasantry) but the class character of resultant society should not be one of them.

This estimate of the land problem becomes even simpler to integrate when we recall that China is not the only country of this type, in this period, to undergo drastic land reform. Burma has experienced a reform that parallels the Chinese in every basic feature, even going them one better by actually nationalizing the land. However, in the present state of industry and agriculture, this is likely to remain a mere juridical difference.¹

The entire unfortunate question, the fact that Marxists should be at all awed, or even slightly disoriented by the land distribution, derives from two misunderstandings.

Firstly, the mechanical application of Trotsky's version of the theory of permanent revolution, converting it into the assumption that under no circumstances can the colonial bourgeoisie solve any or all of its demo-

¹ Nationalization of land, in and of itself, is of course no more progressive than nationalization of industrial property. It simply paves the way in backward areas of small-scale agriculture for the development of industrial agriculture when that development must take place rapidly and at a forced pace just as is the case in industry. In the U.S., the reorganization of land tenure for our industrial agriculture simply uses more subtle, slower means. Burma has already allocated funds for the establishment of exploratory collective farms for industrial agriculture.

cratic demands in this epoch. This vulgarization of his theory is simply inconsistent with the facts (Burma, Guatemala, Bolivia) and should die of this inconsistency alone. We shall return to the question of permanent revolution below.

Secondly, the ahistorical conception that land reform is an indispensable feature of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, without which the revolution cannot be said to have been substantially accomplished. Unfortunately all history cries out against this. What the bourgeois revolution does demand, as a minimum, is the destruction of landlord dominance of the state, and of *feudal* property relations. Neither of these requirements *organically* involves land distribution. Japan is a perfect example of the complete destruction of *feudal* property relations *without* any significant land distribution. The German and Italian bourgeoisie did not succeed in complete elimination of all feudal property forms until just shortly before World War I. The actual seizure of power by the bourgeoisie, however, often necessitates a political alliance, not always a voluntary one, with the peasantry whose price is land reform. But this form and content of bourgeois revolution, despite its classical character, is actually the exception and not the rule.

The Role of Consciousness

E. Germain, in his desperate effort to demonstrate the revolutionary character of the CP of China, has defined it as an essentially working class party, *despite its composition* (rural and urban petty-bourgeois), and despite its "opportunistic and menshevik conception of struggle on the bloc of four classes, the construction of democratic capitalism, and the equality of labor-capital;"² i.e., *despite its basically bourgeois ideology as well*. His grounds are that in doctrine it is communist, and that it educates its cadres in the spirit of devotion to the USSR; thus the materialist conception of the class character of a party is replaced with one stroke by a wholly idealistic one (and in this case a purely Stalinist criterion).

² Fourth International, Dec. 1950, p. 115.

There is really little that anyone can add, in criticism of this light-minded, anti-Marxist conception, to what Trotsky has already written about it in 1932, in anticipation. (*Fourth International*, Jan. Feb., 1950.)

Trotsky's Conceptions

"The fact that individual Communists are in the leadership of the present armies does not at all transform the social character of the armies, even if their Communist leaders bear a definite proletarian stamp. . . ." "It is one thing when the Communist Party, firmly resting on the flower of the urban proletariat, strives, through the workers, to lead the peasant war. It is an altogether different thing when a few thousands or even tens of thousands of revolutionists assume the leadership of the peasant war, and are in reality Communists, or take that name without having serious support from the proletariat. . . ." In Russia the proletariat was in power, the leadership in the hands of a strong and tempered party, and "the entire commanding staff of the centralized Red Army was in the hands of the workers. Notwithstanding all this, the peasant detachments, incomparably weaker than the Red Army, often came into conflict with it. . . ." ". . . the revolutionary peasantry of China, in the person of its ruling stratum, seems to have appropriated to itself beforehand the political and moral capital which should by the nature of things belong to the Chinese workers. Isn't it possible that things may turn out so that all this capital will be directed at a certain moment *against* the workers?"

The peasantry cannot follow an independent course; it must follow either urban class. "The peasantry does not find the road to the proletariat easily. . . . The bridge between the peasantry and bourgeoisie is provided by the urban petty bourgeoisie, chiefly by the intellectuals, who commonly *come forward under the banner of Socialism and even Communism*. . . . Thus in China, the causes and grounds for conflict between the army, which is peasant in composition and petty-bourgeois in leadership, and the workers, not only are not eliminated but on the contrary all the circumstances are such as to greatly increase the

possibility and even the inevitability of such conflicts; and in addition the chances of the proletariat are in advance far less favorable than was the case in Russia." (My emphasis.)

In the event that the workers are led by Trotskyists, then the struggle for hegemony between peasant and worker, between Communist and Left-Opinionist, "bears in itself an inner *tendency* toward transformation into a class struggle."

Perhaps it would not be amiss here to call attention to the fact that the class composition and character of the dominant parties in the other revolutionary colonial regimes is also petty-bourgeois; i.e., not the direct representatives of the bourgeoisie. And indeed this peculiarity is not peculiar at all since it is almost the norm for the urban petty bourgeoisie to provide the spearhead, organizationally, as well as the most radical ideological face of the revolution.³ The bourgeoisie itself often enters the revolution, or rather accepts it *after* other classes have destroyed the old order, or, to curb an irresistible movement (Russia, 1917).

Thus it was in China too. The regime of Chiang, incompetent, bankrupt, dominated by the feudal landlord class (according to Germain), and utterly incapable of dealing with the spreading peasant revolution, is replaced by that movement, led by the urban petty bourgeoisie mobilized in the CP. *It was this landlord regime of Chiang — accustomed during 10 years of war to the need and indispensability of planned industrial development—anticipating the proletarian danger, and hoping to secure its own dominance in the future state by minimizing the strength of the Shanghai*

³ In almost none of these new colonial regimes is political power likely to be turned over to the bourgeoisie directly. One of the important elements supporting this development is the new weight assumed in these states and economies by the petty bourgeoisie (administrators, professionals, the new vastly expanded state bureaucracy). The organization of society on these lines creates a new role for the petty-bourgeois. His future lies not in classical bourgeois independent economic activity, but rather in his role, his place in the state apparatus. The state is the source of all perspective, of economic growth, "necessary" repression, and above all, jobs.

bourgeoisie, that nationalized industrial property in a last-ditch effort to save itself! Upon the seizure of power, the bourgeoisie gratefully enters the regime and the state, which it hopes will be better able to deal with the revolutionary peasantry and the dangerous, if repressed, proletariat.

The Direction of the Economy

It can be argued that though China and the others have many economic structural similarities, they are essentially different in terms of the direction of movement, and that therefore the coincidence of policy and forms is merely conjunctural.

It is in this role of the dynamics of the situation, that Germain and others seek supplementary support for his up-to-this-point idealistic conception of the CP as a working class party forced to move left. Let us therefore examine Germain's dynamics.

For him, a state of dual power exists today in China, characterized by the fact that "economic power is still predominantly in the hands of the bourgeoisie." As a result of international and internal crises, the regime will be forced to move left. This will be manifested economically by the "completion of the expropriation of the urban bourgeoisie." But Germain has shown us that this "expropriation" is already 80% complete in heavy industry, and 30% in light industry. Furthermore, he himself believes that, as regards light industry and commerce in China, even "a dictatorship of the proletariat would have to be accompanied by a period of NEP, considerably broader and more protracted than in Russia, without the complete suppression of private property in the domain of small urban and village industry and commerce of the artisans, etc." If this is so, then actually *no qualitative change is possible in economic terms*, (as defined in terms of nationalization) and therefore one would suppose, *by his criteria* that the "economic power (would be) still predominantly in the hands of the bourgeoisie" even under a dictatorship of the proletariat; i.e. a move to the left from dual power is impossible by Germain's criteria.

The source of this confusion, this internal contradiction on Germain's

part, lies in a long unresolved dilemma, and consists of repeating the same error he committed in his early provocative but disastrous discussion of the buffer zone in Europe. There he offered as one proof of the bourgeois character of these states, the fact that not more than 60% of industry was nationalized. Neither then nor now does the distinction between a bourgeois and a proletarian state rest upon such narrow quantitative distinctions as the exact proportion of statified industry. Once again, the abstraction of nationalized property has thrown him.

Problems of Capital Accumulation

But, false as it may be, Germain is not really interested in the theory of increased expropriation except as it provides him with an economic rationale for his idealistic conception of the CP. For the real qualitative change for Germain lies in a more limited goal, in the final elimination of the classical bourgeois elements from the state apparatus (and not from the economy, which we agree with Germain, is quite impossible), and the necessary turn of the CP toward the proletariat in this process.

And here once again the grossest idealism rears its head. For the *main* obstacle to the growth of the Chinese economy and the *stabilization* of the regime, is neither the remaining private industry nor the pre-revolutionary elements in the bureaucracy, but rather the dangers stemming from the problem of capital accumulation and the inevitably "necessary" repressions of the proletariat and peasantry from whose hides this capital must come under present circumstances. The ideological commitments of the Chinese CP will no more interfere with this course than they did in limiting Stalin's course toward the Russian proletariat. Once in power, the main enemy of the bureaucracy is always the masses whom it must exploit; with the impotent remnants of the classical bourgeoisie, it can do as it likes, or, at worst, can always come to some understanding with it, for the bourgeoisie recognizes perfectly well that only the CP stands between it and the workers. *It is about the ensuing con-*

sequences of the efforts at capital accumulation that the next stages in the development of the Chinese revolution will take place, and not about the subordinate problem of classical bourgeois residues! It is of course axiomatic that a workers state in China would organize a major part even of its industrial perspective around the pursuit of a genuinely internationalist policy. But naturally, this is quite alien to the spirit of the present Chinese regime.

In brief therefore, the dynamics of the Chinese economy are toward increasing state dominance in heavy industry and growing role in light industry as well. This process does *not* involve any qualitative change in the class character of the regime. And this is no different from the tendency in the other countries we have discussed: Formosa, Burma, India, Indonesia. Variations of degree and tempo doubtless exist. But the all-important method and process remain parallel.

The Association of China With the USSR

The intimate alliance of one state with another, granting for the moment its working-class character, would certainly be a significant criterion for the consideration of the nature of the regime, if there were any indication that the act was an expression of proletarian internationalism. Unfortunately, only the grossest misconception of the policy of the Chinese CP could conceive of its alliance with the USSR as subordination to internationalism or even to the Kremlin. The policies of the Chinese CP on the contrary are essentially independent of Russian interests or of those of the world working class, and reflect only the needs and interests of collective Chinese capital. That these interests should, in the immediate conjuncture of events seem to lie in alliance with the USSR is easily determined by the recent history of China—the fact that the U.S. was and remains *the* threatening colonial master. Just as in Yugoslavia, the needs of China, as interpreted and comprehended by the narrow, national, empiricist bureaucrats of the CP, come first, and, if the U.S. would allow it

(no longer likely) a change in policy of the CP would be only too likely.⁴

The Permanent Revolution

The theory of the permanent revolution had demonstrated its vitality in all its nuances—in the events of the Russian Revolution and throughout the inter-war period—providing the movement with a series of predictions and analyses repeatedly, brilliantly, confirmed by events.

But it must be equally clear that the colonial revolutions of the past decade have proceeded along a pattern of development quite unforeseen by us—that the emergence of a new group of bourgeois states in Asia is inconsistent with our expectations derived from the theory of permanent revolution. We cannot but recognize the existence of a new bourgeois state in India (and elsewhere) despite the irresolution on the land question (fatal as that may prove, it is only one source of organic disequilibrium). To attempt to solve the theoretical problem this poses by the notion that India is not “really independent” would seem to be the most dangerous scho-

⁴That China was at least partially pushed into the Russian alliance, despite its wish to pursue a policy similar to that of the other Asiatic states, was noted by James P. Cannon in 1953:

“And one bright day, the world was suddenly confronted by a new China, which was really independent, but backward in its industrial development and eager to get foreign loans and credit. The government of Mao Tse-tung offered to guarantee the capitalist system of production, and to guarantee all loans on that basis.

“The statesmen and leaders of British capitalism, who are older, wiser and more experienced in world affairs wanted to come to terms with the new reality, to recognize the new revolutionary government and continue trading with the new China.

“But the American statesmen and leaders wouldn't have it that way. They can't understand how it happened. They feel that somebody gyped them, and they are as indignant as a farmer who has been played for a sucker in a carnival shell game. China, according to their thinking, ‘belongs’ to them, and somehow or other, by some trick or other, they ‘lost’ it.”

lasticism. Yet, so long as the problem of the place of these states in history and in theory has not been resolved, there will always remain some, who, seeking the simplest resolution, will maintain that nothing has changed: that the former colonies are not independent states but disguised satellite states and tributaries. And since a closely related view even finds some reflection in Germain, we must touch upon it briefly.

This conception rests on the “fact” that the bourgeois democratic demands have not been completely realized in these new states. As in Russia, the bourgeoisie is proved incapable of creating a truly independent national state, resolving its historic tasks; and the next point on the agenda therefore remains a proletarian resolution of the democratic demands. In this way, Trotsky's theory is kept intact.

Unhistorical Conception

Unfortunately, this conception of an absolute minimum of democratic bourgeois demands is completely unhistorical. The nature of the demands, the minimum consistent with, and indispensable to the creation of bourgeois rule, will obviously vary considerably with the manner in which the bourgeoisie comes to power, its history, and the epoch in which it enters upon its tasks. Certainly, concrete bourgeois world history supplies ample evidence of this. It is impermissible to refuse to distinguish between an imperfectly resolved (i.e., non-classical) revolution, and a revolution that is unresolved, between form and essence. The qualitative transformation to a new bourgeois state can be achieved without radical land reform, in spite of secondary territorial incompleteness, and remnants of outmoded social and economic classes, and certainly without the apparatuses of the parliamentary state.

But if these new states are a fact, is this development as crucial a test of the validity of the theory of the permanent revolution as it appears? Does it strike at the letter or the spirit of the theory? To this end, a closer look at what the theory really says is necessary.

In his address to the general council of the German Workingmen's Associa-

tion where the theory of permanent revolution is first propounded, Marx expresses the view that once a revolutionary situation has developed, the proletariat must pursue its own aims under its own independent organization, even when engaged in a common struggle alongside the bourgeoisie. Once the process is under way, the perspective is opened for the proletariat to carry the revolution beyond its bourgeois goals—the revolution in permanence. The key conception and interest is not that the bourgeoisie would or would not fear to enter the revolutionary path, but that once begun, the door was open to the possibility of combined development—that an independently organized and motivated working class need not, should not, and would not stop short of workers' power.

Starting from this conception, Trotsky refined it to fit the epoch of capitalist decay. Introducing, with Lenin, the notion that the bourgeoisie no longer dared carry through its own revolution, and that the task would have to be executed by the working class, Trotsky added the conception that the proletariat could not stop at this point, but would proceed to the workers state.

Heart of the Theory

The real heart of the theory is that once involved *as a class*, the workers cannot stop short of full power. The conception that *only* the workers can carry through the bourgeois revolution is *not* the key to the theory of permanent revolution, for Lenin's policy too was based on the impotence of the bourgeoisie, while rejecting the theory of permanent revolution. In the concrete historical circumstances in which Marx's theory of permanent revolution was restored and reshaped to the needs of the times, it is only natural that what was essentially a historical aspect of the theory (the impotence of the bourgeoisie) should have appeared as one of its major postulates. For the really original element in Trotsky's conception of the permanent revolution, the aspect that makes it his, is that if the workers participate in the bourgeois revolution *as a class* (i.e., unlike the major aspects of their participation in the

French and English revolutions), then the colonial areas too can be ripe for the direct transition to a workers state. Furthermore, due to the peculiar development of their economies, and the world situation of capital, the backwardness of the economy and the small size of the proletariat will not interfere with this perspective of combined development. (Even Lenin had only envisaged the task of the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry to be the creation of a bourgeois state.) *But always the unspoken premise (very explicit in Marx)—the presence of a revolutionary party which understands the need for independent class organization, action, and goals.*

It is the overwhelming revolutionary pressure, in the absence of this indispensable catalyst, that permitted and forced the bourgeois classes, native and foreign, to accept the developing revolution, to tolerate it before attempting to housebreak it and direct it into channels of new bourgeois states.

Seen from this perspective and conception of the theory of permanent revolution, the fact that for an interlude, the bourgeoisie is able to establish its rule is a matter of distinctly secondary theoretical importance, though of course, of the greatest historical significance. But more important, it permits the unimpeded perspective of revolutionary working-class action; i.e., the retention of the theory of permanent revolution.

A revolution is not identical with its first phase. The distance between February and October is not always eight months. The French revolution took four years to reach its peak, and the English revolution even longer. On the morning of its assumption of power, the new ruling class must discover that the immediate problems of society, of the revolution, are beyond its capacities, and in its first acts, it lays the basis for the next stage of the revolution, the necessary intervention of the proletariat, in its own name!

There is of course another way out of the difficulty posed by the problem of the new bourgeois states. That is, to argue that the new states are indications of a new force in the po-

litical arena, a bureaucracy able to revolutionize society *with or without the proletariat.*

Pablo and the Permanent Revolution

As if to remove this alternative from the realm of speculation, a resolution reproduced in the *Fourth International*, July-August 1952, indicates that it is precisely this road that Germain and Pablo propose to follow (thus far, only for China).

Germain's work is undoubtedly a brilliant tour de force. However, the elegant style cannot conceal the confused, opportunistic character of his politics. We have argued previously that Germain had to develop an idealistic conception of the character of the Chinese CP, and of the future course of development of Chinese economy. We now come to the core of his reasoning on these issues.

In this thesis, Germain attempts to interpret the history of the Chinese revolution, as well as its perspectives, in such a manner as to conform in *almost* every respect to the classical pattern envisaged in the pure theory of permanent revolution. One slight detail is missing—for the revolutionary role of the proletariat, Germain substitutes the revolutionary role of the CP bureaucracy.

The theory in brief is as follows: The bourgeois-democratic tasks have not been fully realized in China up to this point. The process of full realization will here, classically, involve the transition to a workers state. In this transition, the history and character of the CP leadership indicate that it will be able to consummate the final revolution.

Spacious as they may be, Germain actually sees in the secondary aspects of incompleting bourgeois tasks, the major forces compelling the revolution in permanence! If this issue is really so crucial to Germain, and if his case really rests upon such shaky foundations, it is necessary to take a closer look at it.

Since Germain prides himself on not being a sectarian, a purist in his demands upon revolutionary movements, he must maintain, if he is to be taken seriously, that these areas of incompleteness are of such magni-

tude that they vitiate, or at least severely cripple the unquestionable partial achievements of the bourgeois revolution up to this date. An examination of his five measures of irresolution of the bourgeois-democratic demands will dispell any such misconception.

Germain's Five Indices

(1) All foreign capital is not yet expropriated. How absurd, as a vital criterion, this objection becomes, when it is clearly incontestable that the decisive voice in China today (for the first time in 100 years) lies not with foreign capital but native.

(2) Incomplete national unity (Hong Kong, Formosa, the Russian enclaves and Russian influence in Sinkiang). With the exception of "Russian" Sinkiang, are these really more than the fringes of the national state? How innumerable is the list of just such imperfections, *today*, in unquestionably bourgeois lands.

(3) The incomplete agrarian reform, by which Germain means the existence and constant recreation of rich peasants. But how this is an indication of incomplete *bourgeois* land reform, (one of whose laws is precisely the tendency toward capital accumulation on the land, and land concentration) is somewhat obscure.

(4) "In the domain of the state the symbiosis between bourgeois property and the bureaucratic tendencies of the CP apparatus represents a powerful obstacle to a genuine democratic upheaval." Naturally. But isn't that an organic phase at the close of every bourgeois revolution—the attempt to consolidate the ruling classes against the masses, who threaten to get out of bounds after the first days of the revolution; i.e., who instinctively search for the permanent revolution? Indeed, if anything, this symbiotic process is indicative of the relative completion of the revolution, and not of its partial character.

(5) The imperialist menace to China through armies in Korea, Vietnam, Burma, Formosa, Japan. This is certainly the crudest example of how desperately Germain must search to substantiate his fantasy that "none of the tasks of the Chinese (bourgeois)

Revolution has yet been definitely resolved."

Only by the most desperate determination to fit the situation to one's formula could Germain construe the real content of his five indices as more than secondary qualifications to an essentially completed resolution of the bourgeois tasks. Does there exist a strong national state, free of imperialist domination, able and willing to organize society about the goal of capitalist society, the accumulation of capital? To the degree that this pursuit is possible under bourgeois conditions today, this situation has definitely been achieved, *above all, in China.*

But, deprived of this unhistoric fantasy of the incomplete bourgeois revolution what basis for revolutionary perspective is left to Germain? Does it pose a serious problem for Pablo? Unfortunately, Pablo is hardly likely to pay much attention. For, as is so often the case, many of his rank-and-file disciples, unable, or too careless, to follow the sophisticated rationalizations of Germain (and, perhaps, also a bit more "flexible," more rashly prepared to drop all Marxist analysis for impressionistic empiricism) have already been calling China a "workers state" for quite some time. And indeed, why not? There is nothing in Germain's analysis or method that prevents their doing so. The only distinction left to Germain between the present regime and a workers state is the problem of democratic workers committees. But this "anachronistic" prerequisite has long since been abandoned by Germain and Pablo in their analyses of other situations, so why not here?

New Line Emerges

Fortunately, the history of Pabloite development should make the reason for Germain's hesitancy, his lag, apparent. As in all transitional statements, even in cases of the greatest personal integrity, it is inevitable that we shall find the emerging new line cloaked in the traditional framework, which it is really trying to destroy. The old and the new, side by side, reveal the all-decisive direction of thinking. Viewed in the context of the entire recent evolution of ideas in

Pablo, it is evident that the new element in the analysis, the role of the bureaucracy, provides the real line, and not the lip service to revolutionary perspectives.

If History pays any attention to their theory at all, it will be to note the irony of a situation, in which the theory of permanent revolution was used by Germain to explain the absence (past and future) of the primary role of the proletariat, and to rationalize the revolutionary role of the bureaucracy in the creation of a new "workers state"—how in this moment of transition, for the Pabloites the revolutionary essence of the theory was destroyed to preserve the mask of orthodoxy.

Problems and Perspectives

A Marxist view of the permanent revolution requires the clearest distinction between the incidental and the essential. Trotsky's theory must be cleared of the historic specific element in order to preserve its genuine contribution to revolutionary theory. We need the candid recognition of the fact of these state-capitalist bourgeois states, and the theoretical understanding of this development. We must be prepared to endure Germain's list of one and twenty erudite reasons why these revolutions are incomplete. Nevertheless, the bourgeois-democratic demands can no longer provide the *central focus* here, of our program or perspectives. Only in this way can we avoid the pitfall of surrender to the bureaucracy as the harbinger of revolution—and preserve a clear working-class perspective.

As was indicated above, one of the chief driving forces in the revolutionary developments in Asia was the deepening economic crisis, manifesting itself in a drastic decline in the standard of living, and this at a time when the demand had risen for a better way of life, improvement not stagnation. The end of direct imperialist rule therefore meant to the masses an end also to the shackles impeding growth. An independent but stagnant economy would be intolerable.

Under these circumstances, the question is, can the new regimes reverse the trend of decades; can they meet

the basic problems of production and consumption?

Rate of Capital Accumulation

Colin Clark, the most noted authority on world income and production statistics, is of the opinion that the rate of capital accumulation in Asia today (1953) is not even up to the pre-war rate, and that the most likely course for these economies is absolute stagnation, and a *growing disparity* between their development and that of even contemporary western economy.⁵ By and large the available figures bear out this thesis.

For India, where information is relatively abundant, *planned* capital development is not much greater than the pre-war period. When one considers the likelihood that the plan will be under-realized, then a planned increase in investment, a mere 25% above the depressed pre-war years is not a happy omen.

In Clark's view, instead of the approximately 4% of national income currently devoted to capital accumulation, a rate of 12.5% would be necessary to absorb the annual population increment and maintain even the pre-war rate of growth. (U.N., Statistics of National Income and Expenditures.)

Under existing plans it is *conceivable* that food consumption could be returned to its depressed pre-war level (the plan's maximum goal), but little else is to be expected. Without great industrial development, concealed unemployment in agriculture must continue to rise, production per man to fall, and the vital reorganization of the tiny-scale agriculture can not be attempted; i.e., the crisis is unresolved.

With all due historical variants, the situation is essentially similar in the other countries under discussion.

In Burma, despite a redistribution of the investment pattern increasing the share of the government, investment remains the same as 1938—12% of national income. However the prolonged civil war has cut that income to two-thirds its 1938 level; apart from rice mills, the income from

⁵ C. Clark, *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, Jan. 29, 1953.

industry and mines is only one-third that of 1938.⁶

Indonesia's greatly depressed state is especially bitter in view of the fact that the 1930's witnessed an enormous rate of industrial development, whose dimensions are best indicated by the fact that employment in modern-type factories tripled in the decade.⁷

From the little information available, it seems that between the unrepressed peasant war, the inflation, and the "strike-happy" working-class, the government is just barely able to hold on, and cannot even restore the pre-war level of output, much less organize capital investment on any significant scale.

The fact that to this day, elections have not been held in Indonesia (an appointed parliament rules) should be a sufficient index of the depth of the current crisis.

Regarding China, insufficient information is available to permit a comparison of economic growth over the different periods of the past 20 years. But despite Pablo's confidence, there are no indications as yet that the Chinese have or will succeed where the Indians have failed. A meager indication of the prospects can be gleaned when one considers that the Sino-Soviet pact grants China a loan of just \$50 million annually, barely half of the U.S. Government loans and grants to India, not to speak of several private projects of considerable magnitude.

Effect of the Class Struggle

Above all of course, it is the class struggle in city and farm which provides the insuperable obstacle to the requisite accumulation. Not a rising but a falling standard of living is required for significant capital growth. At the moment the worker is still able to assert somewhat his demand for improved hours and conditions of work. The victory of the revolution against imperialism is translated by the workers from the first into a victory against capital (synonymous with imperialism), yielding an era of legitimized new expectations and

⁶ Economic Bulletin for Asia & Far East. Vol. III, No. 1-2.

⁷ Labor Problems in S. E. Asia.

demands. But despite the workers' resistance, the facts of the situation are becoming manifest. In India, consumer goods output per capita falls while output of producer goods rises. On this score there can be no relaxation.

The political consequences are equally inevitable—proletarian revolution or the imposition of the naked non-parliamentary rule of capital in a last convulsive effort to perform its outdated historic mission. The polarization which proceeds this decision is already far advanced in Indonesia. Hence the markedly rebellious workers who, with *some* legitimacy, are held responsible by the government and the bourgeoisie for the dearth of capital investment and the failure of production to reach its pre-war level. Hence the pressing demands of the Chinese workers (and their hasty repression) when the agrarian revolution conquered. Here we see the permanent revolution in action, in its incipient stages.

The Problem of Land Distribution

If the class situation in the cities poses organic obstacles to capital development, this is no less the case with the problem of land distribution.

In a situation of concentrated land ownership, where the landed class is not feudal, and does not use its power to obstruct industrial development, the fact of concentrated ownership can be a great support to the process of capital accumulation. Even in China, for example, considerable capital was provided by Chinese landlords. In Kiangsu, 7.5% of the large landholders owned small factories (handicraft), and 3.2% were shareholders in large (modern) plants. (Chen Hansheng, *The Present Agrarian Problem*.) Once this mediating, expropriating class is removed, sums that formerly might have gone into capital accumulation are more likely to be diverted to consumption goods (this is particularly true in backward areas), a tendency that is likely to accentuate enormously the difficulties of an economy trying to accumulate and able to produce few consumer goods. Under such circumstances the initial gains of land distribution are often

dissipated when the government attempts to meet the situation by directly "relieving" the agriculturalist of his new unspent surplus (taxation, forced sales, etc.) in order to convert it into capital.

In any case, distributed or not, the problem of accelerating primitive accumulation means unceasing unrest in the villages. Nor does distribution by itself countermand the low productivity, which is essentially a function of small-scale operation, backward techniques, and surplus labor.

The fearful economic backwardness, the decay of western capitalism, the irrepressible revolutionary movement, and the absence of the revolutionary party, have combined in our epoch to present us with examples in Asia (and elsewhere) of the theoretically ultimate stage of capitalist development. (There is of course no reason to believe that this theoretical possibility will be realized as a qualitatively changed structure of western capitalist society, short of a tremendous proletarian defeat.) But even this rationalized expression of capital is both theoretically and empirically quite incapable of resolving the problems that called it into being. Nowhere has this spasmodic effort resulted in any stabilization; everywhere, from its very first entry upon the scene of power, it runs headlong into the most implacable class war, and is capable of mere survival only to the degree that the crisis of leadership remains, as the final missing link in the transformation of humanity. For it is only through the utilization and increase, by and under aegis of the working class, of the resources of the entire world that the problem can begin to be met.

THE PERMANENT REVOLUTION

by Leon Trotsky

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Two Conceptions Of Socialism

by Leon Trotsky

Preface to the German and English editions
of THE PERMANENT REVOLUTION

A new translation by John G. Wright

AS THIS book goes to press in various foreign languages, the entire thinking section of the world working class and, in a sense, the whole of "civilized" humanity is following with particularly keen interest the economic turn, and its reverberations, now taking place over most of the former Czarist empire. The greatest attention in this connection is aroused by the problem of collectivizing the peasant holdings. This is hardly surprising: in this sphere the break with the past assumes a particularly sweeping character. But a correct evaluation of collectivization is unthinkable without a general conception of the socialist revolution. And here on a much higher plane, we once again become convinced that in the field of Marxist theory there is nothing that fails to impinge on practical activity. The most remote, and it would seem, the most "abstract" disagreements, if they are thought out to the end, will sooner or later be invariably expressed in practice, and practice does not allow a single theoretical mistake to be made with impunity.

The collectivization of peasant holdings is, of course, the most necessary and fundamental part of the socialist transformation of society. However, the scope and tempo of collectivization are not determined by

the government's will alone, but, in the last analysis, by the economic factors: by the height of the country's economic level, by the interrelationship between industry and agriculture, and consequently by the technical resources of agriculture itself.

Industrialization is the motor force of the whole new culture and by this token the only conceivable basis for socialism. In the conditions of the Soviet Union, industrialization means first of all the strengthening of the base of the proletariat as a ruling class. Simultaneously it creates the material and technical premises for the collectivization of agriculture. The tempos of these two processes are interdependent. The proletariat is interested in the highest possible tempos for these processes to the extent that the new society in the making is thus best protected from external danger, and at the same time a source is created for systematically improving the material level of the toiling masses.

However, the tempos that can be achieved are limited by the general material and cultural level of the country, by the relationship between the city and the village and by the most pressing needs of the masses who are able to sacrifice their today for the sake of tomorrow *only up to a certain point*. The optimum tempos,

i.e., the best and most advantageous ones, are those which not only promote the most rapid growth of industry and collectivization at a given moment, but also secure the necessary stability of the social regime, that is, first of all strengthen the alliance of the workers and peasants, thereby preparing the possibility for future successes.

From this standpoint, of decisive significance is the general historical criterion in accordance with which the party and state leadership direct economic development by means of planning. Here two main variants are possible: (a) the course outlined above toward the economic strengthening of the proletarian dictatorship in one country until further victories of the world proletarian revolution (the viewpoint of the Russian Left Opposition); and (b) the course toward the construction of an isolated national socialist society, and this "in the shortest historical time" (the current official position).

These are two completely different and, in the last analysis, directly opposed conceptions of socialism. Out of these flow basically different strategy and tactics.

In the limits of this preface we cannot deal in detail with the question of building socialism in one country. To this we have devoted a number of writings, particularly "The Criticism of the Draft Program of the Comintern." [Published as "The Third International After Lenin," by Pioneer Publishers.] Here we confine ourselves to the fundamental elements of this question. Let us recall, first of all, that the theory of socialism in one country was first formulated by Stalin in the fall of 1924, in complete contradiction not only to all the traditions of Marxism and the school of Lenin, but even to what Stalin himself had written in the spring of the same year. From the standpoint of principle, the departure from Marxism by the Stalinist "school" on the issues of socialist construction is no less significant and drastic than, for

example, the break of the German Social Democracy from Marxism on the issues of war and patriotism in the fall of 1914, exactly ten years before the Stalinist turn. This comparison is by no means accidental in character. Stalin's "mistake," just as the "mistake" of the German Social Democracy, is *national socialism*.

Marxism takes its point of departure from world economy, not as a sum of national parts but as a mighty and an independent reality which has been created by the international division of labor and the world market, and which in our epoch imperiously dominates the national markets. The productive forces of capitalist society

have long ago outgrown the national boundaries. The imperialist war (of 1914-1918) was one of the expressions of this fact. In the productive and technical respect, socialist society must represent a stage higher than capitalism. To aim at building a *nationally shut-in* socialist society means, in spite of all temporary successes, to pull the productive forces backward even as compared to capitalism. To attempt, regardless of geographic, cultural and historical conditions of the country's development, which constitutes a part of the world unity, to realize a self-sufficient proportionality of all the branches of economy within a national framework, means to pursue a reac-

tionary utopia. If the heralds and supporters of this theory nevertheless participate in the international revolutionary struggle (with what success is a different question) it is because as hopeless eclectics they mechanically combine abstract internationalism with reactionary utopian national socialism. The crowning expression of this eclecticism is the program of the Comintern adopted by the Sixth Congress.

In order to expose graphically one of the main theoretical mistakes underlying the national socialist conception we cannot do better than quote from a recently published speech of Stalin, devoted to the internal ques-

Editor's Note

Leon Trotsky formulated the essential features of his theory of the permanent revolution before the events of the first Russian Revolution (1905) had brought their decisive confirmation. As a youth, he made the fullest, systematic exposition of the theory in 1905-06 in a number of essays written, as he put it, "in sections and for different purposes," which were then published as a book, **Summaries and Perspectives**. Subsequent systematic treatment came in **The Criticism of the Draft Program of the Comintern (1928)**; **The Permanent Revolution (1929)**; and **Two Conceptions**, written as a preface (1930) to the German and English editions of the 1929 book, and reprinted here in a revised translation by John G. Wright.

Stemming directly from Marxism, Trotsky's theory takes as its starting point **social relations** as they have evolved historically, as they exist today. For Trotsky, as for his Marxist teachers, the material base is constituted by the relations of production.

These are world-wide in character. As Marx taught, the world-economy, the world-market is "the basis and vital element of capitalist production." Developing within a national framework, the productive forces tend to, and do, become supra-national, i.e., international, in nature.

One cannot begin to understand the dynamic of modern industry (technology) in any other light. Worse yet, every attempt to by-pass this basic and vital world system of relations, to which all the other relations are subordinated as parts are to the whole, leads to the disease of mechanistic thinking which can end with burial in the cemetery of vulgar "economic" materialism.

The correlation of classes and class forces today cannot be grasped except as they have been shaped by this overriding, imperious reality of world-economy, of world productive forces, world division of labor and the dynamics resulting therefrom.

Whatever the world-economy is ripe for, that is what stands on the agenda of each national segment of this international whole. Here we come to the direct application of Trotsky's theory to the colonial and semi-colonial world-sector of capitalism embracing the major part of our planet and of the humans living on it. For all these countries — Eastern Europe, Asia (including Japan), Africa and Latin America — the dynamics of the socialist transformation of society combines and interpenetrates with the dynamics of belated bourgeois revolutions. This world reality was foreseen by none, neither by Marx nor Engels nor by Lenin, that is, the Lenin of the pre-1917 days. Trotsky alone saw it.

The basic Trotskyist proposition in regard to colonial and semi-colonial countries is that they cannot solve, belatedly, their democratic tasks, above all the agrarian problem (more accurately, the agrarian revolution), in any way except through the methods of the proletarian revolution. To put it differently, once started, the revolution cannot be halted indefinitely within the framework of capitalist relations. Immediately, incipient forces are generated that break through the outlived social fetters. Trotsky's correct formulation reads: The dynamics of a belated bourgeois revolution inexorably leads to the proletarian dictatorship; this is historically determined by the correlation of class forces in colonial and semi-colonial countries confronting their belated bourgeois revolutions. This dialectic, to-

gether with the forecast drawn from it for Russia by Trotsky, was confirmed by the October 1917 Revolution; it was accepted by Lenin and his party; it served as the basis for Soviet construction, under Lenin and Trotsky; it became the line of the first four Congresses of Lenin's International.

The question is posed almost automatically: How are these anti-capitalist revolutions in the colonies related to the socialist revolutions in the metropolises of the West? This central problem of our epoch was likewise solved by Trotsky. "The permanent revolution, in the sense which Marx attached to the conception," he wrote on Nov. 30, 1930, "means a revolution which makes no compromise with any form of class rule, which doesn't stop at the democratic stage, which goes over to socialist measures and to war against the reaction from without, that is, a revolution whose each successive stage is anchored in the stage before, and which can terminate only in the complete liquidation of all class society."

Such a lofty flight of creative thought has not been common in the evolution of the human mind. Among the few comparable modern achievements, one may cite Georg Hegel, systematizer of the dialectic method at the turn of the 19th century; next, Hegel's two disciples, who transcended their teacher, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, founders of scientific socialism and creators of the materialist dialectic; and, finally, at the turn of the 20th century, V. I. Lenin, architect of the Russian Revolution, continuator of Marx-Engels' theoretical work.

Events keep confirming to the hilt, as they will continue to do, this remarkable theory of Marxism.

tions of American Communism.* "It would be wrong," says Stalin, arguing against one of the American factions, "not to take into consideration the specific peculiarities of American capitalism. The Communist party must take them into account in its work. But it would be still more wrong to base the activity of the Communist party on these specific features, for the foundation of the activity of every Communist party, the American included, on which it must base itself, are the *general features* of capitalism, which are basically the *same for all countries*, and not the specific features of one country. *It is precisely on this that the internationalism of the Communist parties rests.* The specific features are merely *supplementary* to the general features." (Bolshevik, No. 1, 1930, p. 8. Our emphasis.)

These lines leave nothing to be desired in the way of clarity. Under the guise of providing an economic justification for internationalism, Stalin in reality presents a justification for national socialism. It is false that world economy is simply a sum of national parts of one and the same type. It is false that the specific features are "merely supplementary to the general features," like warts on a face. In reality, the national peculiarities represent an original combination of the basic features of the world process. This originality can be of decisive significance for revolutionary strategy over a span of many years. Suffice it to recall that the proletariat of a backward country has come to power many years before the proletariat of the advanced countries. This historic lesson alone shows that in spite of Stalin, it is absolutely wrong to base the activity of the Communist parties on some "general features," that is, on an abstract type of national capitalism. It is utterly false to contend that this is what the "internationalism of the Communist parties rests upon." In reality, it rests on the insolvency of a national state, which has long ago outlived itself and which has turned into a brake upon the

development of the productive forces. National capitalism cannot be even understood, let alone reconstructed, except as a part of world economy.

The economic peculiarities of different countries are in no way of a subordinate character. It is enough to compare England and India, the United States and Brazil. But the specific features of national economy, no matter how great, enter as component parts, and in increasing measure into the higher reality, which is called world economy, and on which alone, in the last analysis, the internationalism of the Communist parties rests.

Stalin's characterization of the national peculiarities as a simple "supplement" to the general type, is in crying and therewith not accidental contradiction to Stalin's understanding (that is, his lack of understanding) of the law of uneven development of capitalism. This law, as is well known, is proclaimed by Stalin as the most fundamental, most important and universal. With the help of the law of uneven development which he has converted into an empty abstraction, Stalin tries to solve all the riddles of existence. But the astonishing thing is that he does not notice that *national peculiarity is nothing else but the most general product of the unevenness of historical development, its summary result, so to say.* It is only necessary to understand this unevenness correctly, to consider it to its full extent, and also to extend it to the pre-capitalist past. A faster or slower development of the productive forces; the expanded, or, contrariwise, the contracted character of entire historical epochs—for example, the Middle Ages, the guild system, enlightened absolutism, parliamentarianism; the uneven development of different branches of economy, different classes, different social institutions, different fields of culture—all these lie at the base of these national "peculiarities." The peculiarity of a national social type is the crystallization of the unevenness of its formation.

The October Revolution came as the most momentous manifestation of the unevenness of the historic process. The theory of the permanent revolu-

tion gave the prognosis of the October overturn; by this token this theory rested on the law of uneven development, not in its abstract form, but in its material crystallization of Russia's social and political peculiarity.

Stalin has dragged in the law of uneven development not in order to foresee in time the seizure of power by the proletariat of a backward country, but in order, after the fact, in 1924, to foist upon the already victorious proletariat the task of constructing a national socialist society. But it is precisely here that the law of uneven development is inapplicable, for it does not replace nor does it abolish the laws of world economy; on the contrary, it is subordinated to them.

By making a fetish of the law of uneven development, Stalin proclaims it a sufficient basis for national socialism, not as a type, common to all countries, but exceptional, Messianic, purely Russian. It is possible, according to Stalin, to construct a self-sufficient socialist society only in Russia. By this alone he elevates Russia's national peculiarities not only above the "general features" of every capitalist nation, but also above world economy as a whole. It is just here that the fatal flaw in Stalin's whole conception begins. The peculiarity of the USSR is so potent that it makes possible the construction of its own socialism within its own borders, regardless of what happens to the rest of mankind. As touches other countries to which the Messianic seal has not been affixed, their peculiarities are merely "supplementary" to the general features, only a wart on the face. "It would be wrong," teaches Stalin, "to base the activities of the Communist parties on these specific features." This moral holds good for the American CP, and the British, and the South African and Serbian, but—not for the Russian, whose activity is based not on the "general features" but precisely on the "peculiarities." From this flows the thoroughly dualistic strategy of the Comintern. While the USSR "liquidates the classes" and builds socialism, the proletariat of all the other countries, in complete disregard of existing national conditions,

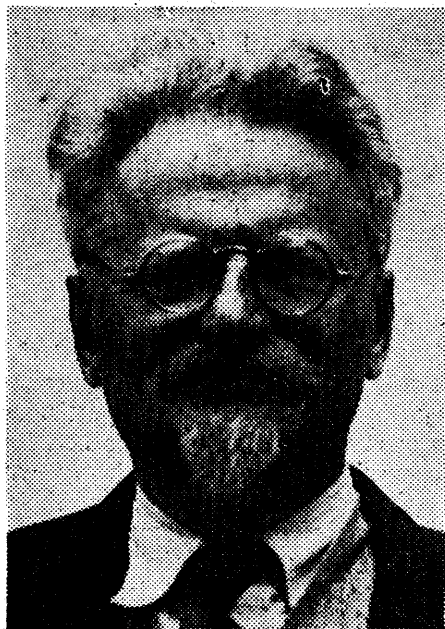
* Stalin delivered this speech on May 6, 1929; it was first published early in 1930, under circumstances that cause it to acquire a sort of "programmatically" significance. — L. T.

is obligated to carry on uniform activity according to the calendar (First of August, March Sixth, etc.). Messianic nationalism is supplemented by bureaucratically abstract internationalism. This dualism runs through the whole program of the Comintern, and deprives it of any principled significance.

If we take Britain and India as polar varieties of the capitalist type, then we are obliged to say that the internationalism of the British and Indian proletariat does not at all rest on an *identity* of conditions, tasks and methods, but on their indivisible *interdependence*. The successes of the liberation movement in India require a revolutionary movement in Britain, and vice versa. Neither in India, nor in England is it possible to build an independent socialist society. Both of them will have to enter as parts into a higher whole. Upon this and only upon this rests the unshakable foundation of Marxist internationalism.

Recently, on March 8, 1930, Pravda expounded anew Stalin's ill-starred theory, in the sense that "socialism, as a social-economic formation," that is, as a definite system of productive relations, can be fully realized "on the national scale of the USSR." Something else again is "the *complete victory of socialism*" in the sense of a guarantee against the intervention of capitalist encirclement—such a complete victory of socialism "actually demands the triumph of the proletarian revolution in several advanced countries." What an abysmal decline of theoretical thought was required for such shoddy scholasticism to be expounded with a learned air on the pages of the central organ of Lenin's party! If we assume for a minute the possibility of realizing socialism as a finished social system within the isolated framework of the USSR, then that would be the "complete victory"—because in that case what talk could there be about a possible intervention? The socialist order presupposes high levels of technology and culture and solidarity of population. Since the USSR, at the moment of complete construction of socialism, will have, it must be assumed, a

population of not less than 200,000,000, and perhaps 250,000,000, we then ask: What intervention could even be talked of then? What capitalist country, or coalition of countries, would dare think of intervention in these circumstances? The only con-



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ceivable intervention could come from the side of the USSR. But would it be needed? Hardly. The example of a backward country, which in the course of several Five-Year Plans was able to construct a mighty socialist society with its own forces, would mean a death blow to world capitalism, and would reduce to a minimum, if not to zero, the costs of the world proletarian revolution. This is why the whole Stalinist conception actually leads to the liquidation of the Communist International. And indeed, what could be its historical significance, if the fate of socialism is to be decided by the highest possible authority—the State Planning Commission of the USSR? In that case, the task of the Comintern, along with the notorious "Friends of the Soviet Union," would be to protect the construction of socialism from intervention, that is, in essence, to play the role of frontier patrols.

The foregoing article attempts to prove the correctness of the Stalinist conception with the very newest and

fresh economic arguments: ". . . Precisely now," says Pravda, "when productive relations of a socialist type are taking deeper root not only in industry but also in agriculture, through the growth of state farms, through the gigantic rise, quantitatively and qualitatively, of the collective-farm movement and the liquidation of the kulak as a class on the basis of complete collectivization, precisely now what is shown clearest of all is the sorry bankruptcy of Trotskyite-Zinovievite defeatism, which has meant in essence 'the Menshevik denial of the legitimacy of the October Revolution' (Stalin)." (Pravda, March 8, 1930.)

These are truly remarkable lines, and not merely for their glib vulgarity which covers a complete confusion of thought. Together with Stalin, the author of Pravda's article accuses the "Trotskyite" conception of "denying the legitimacy of the October Revolution." But it was exactly on the basis of this conception, that is, the theory of the permanent revolution, that the writer of these lines *foretold the inevitability* of the October Revolution, thirteen years before it took place. And Stalin? Even after the February revolution, that is, seven to eight months prior to the October overturn, he came forward as a vulgar revolutionary democrat. It was necessary for Lenin to arrive in Petrograd (April 3, 1917) with his merciless struggle against the conceited "Old Bolsheviks," whom Lenin ridiculed so at that time, for Stalin carefully and noiselessly to glide over from the democratic position to the socialist. This inner "growing over" of Stalin, which by the way was never completed, took place, at any rate, not earlier than 12 years after I had offered proof of the "legitimacy" of the seizure of power by the working class of Russia before the beginning of the proletarian revolution in the West.

But, in elaborating the theoretical prognosis of the October Revolution, I did not at all believe that, by conquering state power, the Russian proletariat would exclude the former Czarist empire from the orbit of world economy. We Marxists know the role and meaning of state power. It is not at all a passive reflection of economic

processes, as the Social Democratic servants of the bourgeois state depict it. Power can have a gigantic significance, reactionary as well as progressive, depending on which class holds power in its hands. But state power is nonetheless an instrument of the superstructural order. The passing of power from the hands of Czarism and the bourgeoisie into the hands of the proletariat, abolishes neither the processes nor the laws of world economy. To be sure, for a certain time after the October Revolution, the economic ties between the Soviet Union and the world market were weakened. But it would be a monstrous mistake to make a generalization out of a phenomenon that was merely a brief stage in the dialectical process. The international division of labor and the supra-national character of modern productive forces, not only retain but will increase twofold and tenfold their significance for the Soviet Union, depending upon the degree of Soviet economic ascent.

Every backward country, integrated with capitalism, has passed through various stages of decreasing or increasing dependence upon the other capitalist countries, but in general the tendency of capitalist development is toward a colossal growth of world ties, which is expressed in the growing volume of foreign trade, including, of course, capital export. Britain's dependence upon India naturally bears a qualitatively different character from India's dependence upon Britain. But this difference is determined, at bottom, by the difference in the respective levels of development of their productive forces, and not at all by the degree of their economic self-sufficiency. India is a colony; Britain, a metropolis. But if Britain were subjected today to an economic blockade, it would perish sooner than India. This, by the way, is one of the convincing illustrations of the reality of world economy.

Capitalist development—not in the abstract formulas of the second volume of *Capital*, which retain all their significance as a *stage in analysis*, but in historic reality — took place and could only take place by a systematic expansion of its base. In the process

of its development, and consequently in the struggle with its internal contradictions, every national capitalism turns in an ever increasing degree to the reserves of the "external market," that is, the reserves of world economy. The uncontrollable expansion growing out of the permanent internal crises of capitalism constitutes its progressive force, until the time when it turns into a force fatal to capitalism.

Over and above the internal contradictions of capitalism, the October Revolution inherited from old Russia the contradictions, no less profound, between capitalism as a whole and the pre-capitalist forms of production. These contradictions possessed, as they still do, a material character, that is, they are incorporated in the material relations between the city and country, they are lodged in the particular proportions or disproportions between the various branches of industry and in the national economy as a whole. The roots of some of these contradictions lie directly in the geographic and demographic conditions of the country, that is, they are nurtured by the abundance or scarcity of one or another natural resource, the historically created distribution of the popular masses, and so on. The strength of Soviet economy lies in the nationalization of the means of production and their planned direction. The weakness of Soviet economy, in addition to the backwardness inherited from the past, lies in its present post-revolutionary isolation, that is, in its inability to gain access to the resources of world economy, not only on a socialist but even on a capitalist basis, that is, in the shape of normal international credits and "financing" in general, which plays so decisive a role for backward countries. Meanwhile the contradictions of the Soviet Union's capitalist and pre-capitalist past not only do not disappear of themselves, but on the contrary they rise up from the anabiosis of the years of decline and destruction, they revive and are aggravated with the growth of Soviet economy, and in order to be overcome or even mitigated they demand at every step that the resources of the world market be put in circulation.

To understand what is happening now in the vast territory which the October Revolution awakened to new life, it is necessary to take clearly into account that to the old contradictions recently revived by the economic successes, there has been added a new and most powerful contradiction between the concentrated character of Soviet industry, which opens up the possibility of unexampled tempos of development, and the isolation of Soviet economy, which excluded the possibility of a normal utilization of the reserves of world economy. The new contradiction, bearing down upon the old ones, leads to this, that alongside of exceptional successes, painful difficulties arise. These find their most immediate and onerous expression, felt daily by every worker and peasant, in the fact that the conditions of the toiling masses do not keep step with the general rise of economy, but even grow worse at present as a result of the food difficulties. The sharp crises of Soviet economy are a reminder that the productive forces created by capitalism are not adapted to national markets and can be socially coordinated and harmonized only on an international scale. To put it differently, the crises of Soviet economy are not merely maladies of growth, a sort of infantile sickness, but something far more significant—namely, they are the harsh curbing of the world market, the very one "to which," in Lenin's words, "we are subordinated, with which we are bound up, and from which we cannot escape." (Speech at the Eleventh Party Congress, March 27, 1922.)

From the foregoing, however, there in no way follows a denial of the historic "legitimacy" of the October Revolution, a conclusion which reeks of shameful philistinism. The seizure of power by the international proletariat cannot be a single, simultaneous act. The political superstructure—and a revolution is part of the "superstructure"—has its own dialectic, which intervenes imperiously in the process of world economy, but does not abolish its deep-going laws. The October Revolution is "legitimate" as the *first stage of the world revolution* which unavoidably extends over dec-

ades. The interval between the first and the second stage has turned out to be considerably longer than we had expected. Nevertheless it remains an interval, and it is by no means converted into a self-sufficient epoch of the building of a national socialist society.

Out of the two conceptions of the revolution there stem two principal lines on (Soviet) economic questions. The first swift economic successes, which were completely unexpected by Stalin, inspired him in the fall of 1924 with the theory of socialism in one country as the culmination of a practical perspective for an isolated national economy. It was precisely in this period that Bukharin advanced his famous formula that in fencing ourselves off from world economy by the monopoly of foreign trade, we would be in a position to build socialism "even at a tortoise pace." This was the common formula of the bloc of the Centrists (Stalin) with the Rights (Bukharin). Already at that time, Stalin tirelessly propounded the idea that the tempo of our industrialization is our "own affair," having no relation whatever to world economy. Such a national smugness, however, could not last long, for it reflected the first, very brief stage of economic revival, which necessarily revived our dependence on the world market. The first shocks of international dependence, unexpected by the national socialists, created an alarm, which in the next stage turned into panic. We must gain economic "independence" as speedily as possible with the aid of the speediest possible tempos of industrialization and collectivization!—this is the transformation that has taken place in the economic policy of national socialism in the past two years. Creeping and penny-pinching was replaced all along the line by adventurism. The theoretical base under both remains the same: the national socialist conception.

The basic difficulties, as was shown above, derive from the objective situation, primarily from the isolation of the Soviet Union. We shall not pause here to consider to what extent this objective situation is itself a product of the subjective mistakes of the

leadership (the false policy in Germany in 1923, in Bulgaria and Estonia in 1924, in Britain and Poland in 1926, in China in 1925-27; the current false strategy of the "Third Period," etc., etc.). But the sharpest convulsions in the USSR are created by the fact that the incumbent leadership tries to make a virtue out of necessity, and out of the political isolation of the workers' state constructs a program of an economically isolated socialist society. This has given rise to the attempt at complete socialist collectivization of peasant holdings on the basis of a pre-capitalist inventory—a most dangerous adventure which threatens to undermine the very possibility of collaboration between the proletariat and the peasantry.

And how remarkable! Just at the moment when this became delineated in all its sharpness, Bukharin, yesterday's theoretician of the "tortoise pace," composed a pathetic hymn to the present-day "furious gallop" of industrialization and collectivization. It is to be feared that this hymn, too, will presently be declared the greatest heresy. For there are already new melodies in the air. Under the influence of the resistance of economic reality, Stalin has been compelled to beat a retreat. Now the danger is that the adventurist offensive dictated by the panic of yesterday may turn into a panic-stricken retreat. Such an alternation of stages flows inexorably from the nature of national socialism.

A realistic program for an isolated workers' state cannot set itself the goal of achieving "independence" from world economy, much less of constructing a national socialist society in the "shortest time." The task is not to attain abstract maximum tempos, but the optimum tempos, that is, those that flow from internal and world economic conditions, strengthen the positions of the proletariat, prepare the *national elements* of the future internationalist socialist society, and at the same time, and above all, systematically improve the living standards of the proletariat, strengthening its alliance with the non-exploiting masses of the village. This perspective remains in force for the whole preparatory period, that is, until the

victorious revolution in the advanced countries liberates the Soviet Union from its present isolated position.

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Some of the thoughts expressed here are developed in greater detail in other works of the author, particularly in "The Criticism of the Draft Program of the Comintern." In the near future I hope to publish a pamphlet specially devoted to an evaluation of the present stage of economic development of the USSR. To these works I am obliged to direct the reader who seeks a closer acquaintance with the way in which the problem of the permanent revolution is posed today. But the considerations brought out above are sufficient, let me hope, to reveal the full significance of the struggle over principles that was carried on in recent years, and is being carried on right now in the shape of two contrasting theories: *socialism in one country vs. the permanent revolution*. Only this timely significance of the question justifies the fact that we present here to foreign readers a book that is largely devoted to a critical reproduction of the pre-revolutionary prognoses and theoretical disputes among the Russian Marxists. A different form of expounding the questions that interest us might, of course, have been selected. But this form was never created by the author, and was not selected by him of his own accord. It was imposed upon him partly by the opponent's will and partly by the very course of political development. Even the truths of mathematics, the most abstract of the sciences, can best be learned in connection with the history of their discovery. This applies with even greater force to the more concrete, that is, historically conditioned truths of Marxist politics. The history of the origin and development of the prognoses of the revolution under the conditions of pre-revolutionary Russia will, I think, bring the reader much closer and far more concretely to the essence of the revolutionary tasks of the world proletariat than a scholastic and pedantic exposition of these political ideas, torn out of the conditions of struggle which gave them birth. *March 29, 1930.*

A Liberal Looks at The World Map

by Joseph Hansen

"In 1900, over 1.3 billion people inhabited our globe. Of those, four out of every thirteen were Europeans. Nearly eight were Asians, and the other areas of the planet, all together, did not account for more than half as many as Europe alone. Fifty years later, the earth's population is nearly doubled. If we lined up humanity in the form of twenty-five figures, each standing for a 100 million, Europe would be represented by the same four who stood for her in 1900. But then, it was four out of some thirteen; now, it would be the same four out of twenty-five. Next to the four Europeans would stand twelve and a half Asians and two Africans; followed by two for the Soviet Union; one and a half for the U.S.A.; the same for Latin America; and another one and a half standing for Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the other areas of the world lumped together. In our line of twenty-five, fifteen at least would represent so-called men of color.

"But, our world is fairly clearly divided into three distinct zones, roughly corresponding to their technological progress. The 'developed' areas would be represented by four immaculately dressed and bejewelled figures in the same line of twenty-five. The 'underdeveloped' ones would constitute a long row of sixteen ragged skeleton-like bodies. Between the two would stand five better (but still cheaply) clad figures, representing the people who have already managed to put some flesh on their bones and to clothe their bodies with some ready-mades."

Tibor Mende's book is a discussion of the determination of the "sixteen ragged skeleton-like bodies" to lift their standard of living up to the level of the developed countries, and the impact of this drive on the old metropolitan centers. To show what it means for the future, he begins with "The Map of Our Grandfathers," that is, the world as it

World Power in the Balance, by Tibor Mende. The Noonday Press, Inc., New York, 1953. 188 pp. \$3.

appeared to the imperialist powers in 1899.

"The century was coming to an end, and the white man was supreme. The planet was mapped out. Slowly it had become clear that further gain to one state could henceforth be only at the expense of another. The territories under European control grew to enormous dimensions. Britain ruled over lands 140 times bigger than the United Kingdom; the colonies of little Belgium grew to eighty times the size of the mother country; Holland's colonial Empire was sixty times her own size; France's possessions were beginning to surpass twenty times her metropolitan territory; and even Portugal managed to keep her flag flying over an area twenty-two times greater than she possessed in Europe. England, alone, was master of the fate of about a quarter of the land surface of the globe. Great Britain, France, and the Czar's empire, combined, controlled over half the world. Clearly, the expansive force of the new economic techniques, perfected by the white man, had given him influence and power unprecedented in history."

How arrogant these lords of the world were at the turn of the century can be judged from an editorial in the London Times, Nov. 5, 1900, cited by the author. The Boxer Rebellion had just been put down, a rebellion in which a band of Chinese nationalists expressed their fury against the colonial oppressors from abroad by massacring some Europeans and attacking their legations in Peking. Now it was a question of what to do next. "In these conditions," said the Times, "the course of the Powers seems clear. They cannot punish the rabble and they cannot punish the minor officials so

as to instill into either the one or the other an abiding and an efficacious terror of Europe. They can, by a relatively small number of executions amongst the higher ranks of the official hierarchy, create this terror. . . . If they are punished . . . all China will realize that in the future no power in the land can protect the real authors of crimes against Europeans from the penalty they deserve."

As everyone is aware, Great Britain's attitude toward China today is much more diplomatic than a half century ago when its leading journal openly advocated a reign of terror. The map of the world, as "our grandfathers" saw it, has undergone profound alteration.

"Compared to the apparent finality of the world of 1900," says Mende, "half a century later, the world is in tortured transition. In the years between, most of the components which had supported that idyllic edifice of the outgoing century have been smashed."

Europe no longer leads the world. Rivalries among the European powers brought mutual ruin. The starved, exploited, long-suffering colonial peoples are on the march. Two great new powers vie for supremacy. "Within the span of half a century, the world has witnessed greater and graver events than in any comparable period in history. During scarcely more than the lifetime of a generation, there occurred two global wars; two of the greatest revolutions of modern times; the emergence of two colossi, incomparably more powerful than any former community under single control; the invention of tools to harness energy beyond the wildest dreams of utopians; and the development of psychological techniques to create conformity and artificial obedience, more deadly than the satirists' nightmare. It seems, indeed, as if, in the twentieth century, mankind has entered the apocalyptic phase of its relentless march toward grave and irrevocable decisions."

The dissolution of the 19th century balance of power is due, according to Mende, primarily to the development of the economic forces. The indexes he uses to illustrate what has happened, especially in the United States, are graphic: ". . . machines were built which could do more work than the entire slave population of the United States at the time of the Civil War. In a West Coast steel mill in America, for instance, four electric motors can do a job equal to the manpower of thirty-eight army divisions."

"Between 1903 and 1926, no less than 181 companies manufactured passenger cars in the United States. By 1926, their

number narrowed to forty-four. By 1930, though the output had expanded a thousand-fold since the beginning of the century, over 90 per cent of the business was done by six companies, which remained in the arena of production like victorious gladiators. The concentration of financial power showed a similar development. By 1930, there were fifteen American companies with assets over one billion dollars. By 1951, there were only thirteen, but six of them, all oil concerns, owned combined assets of nearly thirteen billion dollars. They, together with a Dutch and a British company, were supposed to control all the non-Soviet world's petroleum, from oil field to consumer."

"Approximately as many people as the population of a country like Norway are dependent on the U.S. Steel Corporation for their livelihood."

"A prominent leader of modern industry, John D. Rockefeller, has given away, in charity alone, over \$300 million — as much as the earnings of one thousand Calcutta jute-mill workers if they had begun to put aside their total wages some fifty years before the foundation stone of Notre Dame of Paris was laid. (Taking the present average monthly wage of \$30, for a thousand workers it would have taken 833 years.)"

The accelerated development of the West, which occurred by draining and impoverishing the colonial areas, led to the division of the globe into three areas: the developed one, headed today by the U.S., the underdeveloped region (Latin America, Africa, Asia), and between these two extremes, the semideveloped (the Soviet bloc, Japan, and a few other countries). The differences, in terms of tools to grow food or manufacture necessities of life, are indicated by the fact that in international units "the average American commands over twenty-five times more such tools than the average Chinese; while the average Japanese is still seven times superior in the quantity of his equipment to his closest continental neighbor."

How can an underdeveloped country catch up with the most advanced? This is the big question facing the majority of mankind today. Two alternatives are open, in Mende's opinion. An underdeveloped country "can obtain industrial equipment from one of the 'developed' lands, at the latter's terms, or it can choose to lower its living standards even further in order to accumulate enough commodities to pay for modern means of production. Those inclined to attempt this development are necessarily influenced — if not attracted — by the experience of the 'semideveloped' countries which have already made the same choice. What is new is the increased value of raw material resources within the borders of these lands."

The enormous development of eco-

nomical forces is "just one aspect of the general trend which is rendering national frontiers obsolete." Another aspect is the development of military techniques. "Modern and, therefore, large-scale war is a measure of any participant's ability to distribute, free of charge, large quantities of capital equipment in the shortest possible time." The costs are beyond the capacities of many countries. "A relatively obsolete single weapon, like a heavy bomber, costs as much, in 1952, as the public assistance system of a highly advanced country like Sweden could afford to spend on maternity and child care during a full year." Some weapons cannot even be produced by countries lacking large and advanced industrial apparatus. "It is no wonder, then, if these developments compel nations to merge their industrial capacity for the sake of sheer survival, in the military sense of the word." Thus the trend toward formation of units transcending national boundaries "is one of the salient features of our period."

The developed countries, bound closer and closer to the giant United States, are less and less willing to help the underdeveloped countries. They in turn, are unable to obtain help from the halfway countries, and must depend for modern tools from the developed countries whom they fear.

"Here, in a nutshell, is the economic dilemma of a fast-shrinking, unevenly developed world, whose multiplying masses make rapid progress in social consciousness, and the least privileged of whom are the most impatient in their clamor for redress of their grievances."

Taking up specific areas on the map of the world today, Mende deals first with the United States, that country "where, on the mere effort to influence people's choice between plentiful, rival products, more is spent each year than the total national income of the continent of Australia. . ."

The author briefly sketches the rise of America as a result of capitalist exploitation of a virgin continent; then its conversion from a debtor to a creditor country due to its victory at the expense of Europe in World War I. "Today, the average American citizen enjoys greater prosperity than has ever been known by any community in history. The average consumer buys one-third more goods and services than in the boom year of 1929: one-third more suits, autos, steaks, doctor's bills, television sets, and vacations than in that year when American prosperity was already legendary. By 1951, the average American's share of the national income reached \$1,785 a year compared to less than \$700 for the citizens of the United Kingdom, over \$500 for the French, and around \$50 a year for the Indian and the Chinese."

All this is only preliminary to what is about to occur. America is at the

threshold of becoming a colossus. "She will have either the power of a Samson to bring economic ruin on the rest of the world, or that of the mythological goddess of eight arms to bring relief to the sickness of our globe. The awe-inspiring might, conjuring up these alternatives, is being shaped before our eyes."

Here is what is happening: Following the outbreak of the Korean war, a program was embarked upon to enlarge the country's industrial base. "A new economic sector, devoted to military needs, but capable also of civilian production is to be completed within four or five years. In 1950 America's industrial capacity was already two-thirds greater than in 1939. By 1955 . . . it will be double what it was at the outbreak of the second World War."

"During these fateful five years of hurried expansion, plants are being added to the existing industrial machine, that are equal, in value, to the total yearly national output of Great Britain and Germany — the two most developed industrial nations in the rest of the Western world. Once the new expansion is completed, the U.S.A.'s steel producing capacity will reach a yearly 120 million tons, or over twice as much as the 1951 output of non-communist Europe. Chemical production will expand fivefold; production of aluminum will double; and the output of electrical energy will increase by half."

"These are dramatic figures, and this gigantic addition to the American productive machine will release new floods of industrial products. Some plants, now pouring out tanks, airplanes, and ships, will, sooner or later, revert to civilian production and will swell the flow of already plentiful goods into streams of automobiles, washing-machines, and a thousand other kinds of goods — far in excess of what the Americans are willing or able to purchase."

What then? "By the time armament production is expected to slow down, around 1954 or 1955, it is estimated that, in addition to the already plentiful supplies, the United States will immediately be flooded by over \$10 billion worth of goods. Who will buy them? The only possible answer is that, instead of the same \$15 billion worth of goods sent out of the country in 1951, America will have to ship abroad almost twice as much — and vastly more if armaments can seriously be reduced — to avoid large-scale unemployment and serious dislocation of her economic and social structure."

But to sell goods abroad, the U.S. must make huge investments abroad in order to convert the people of other lands into customers. However, American investors are currently displaying considerable reluctance to risk their fortunes abroad. Instead the government has made gifts

and loans. These must be greatly increased, according to Mende. The alternative is a grim one. ". . . America's manufacturers would be compelled to restrict their output, to fire their workers, and to start rolling that fatal economic snowball, which carries with multiplied force even a modest recession in one country to the smaller and weaker lands. The sudden drop in the American public's purchasing capacity in 1931 wrought havoc all over the globe; it heralded mass unemployment, revolutions, the coming of dictators, and, finally, the second World War itself. Today, most of the world is far more closely tied economically to the United States than it was in 1931, and the results would be proportionately more catastrophic."

Mende thinks that a happy solution would be to invest abroad as in Canada during the past ten years. Soaring American investments in Canada, he points out, have doubled Canadian production and developed that country into "one of the most important industrial powers in the Western world." And happily enough, 14 million Canadians now "buy nearly as much from the United States as do over 100 million South Americans."

The remarkable expansion of the American productive system has raised another acute problem. Outside of the Soviet bloc, "a single state, occupying some 6 per cent of the globe's land-surface and comprising only 6 per cent of its population, consumes over half the raw material produced in the world. This phenomenal rate of American consumption is going to increase by some 50 per cent during the next two decades. Slowly, all the world's raw-material resources will be geared to the American industrial giant, and the economies of all the supplying countries will become even more exposed to the hazards of the U.S. economy."

To secure and gain access to raw materials thus increasingly becomes a precondition for the further expansion of the American economy. "To secure and maintain such access, or to free it where it is under potentially hostile control, is bound to become the principal preoccupation of the makers of American policy."

On the map of today, Mende sees little hope for Western Europe. "The Reckless Pensioner," as he labels Europe, is living beyond its means and has proved incapable of uniting. Its program should be "Swiss-ification." "For Western Europe as a whole, British jet liners and electrical equipment; German lenses, cameras, and pharmaceutical products; Dutch electronics equipment; French artificial jewelry, fine silks, and creations of haute couture stand for what watches mean to Switzerland." Besides Swiss-ifying themselves, the Europeans should "return to the land" and reduce their

standard of living. This would bring them to "a protected harbor." Besides, there is no alternative in sight "but to drift along in a mounting storm, oscillating between panic and illusion."

In addition to the position of Europe on the map of today, Mende considers the Soviet Union, Asia, and the Southern Hemisphere. As in the case of Europe, his treatment is painfully superficial. He believes that the brutal methods of Stalinism were inevitable and necessary to industrialize the Soviet Union. The colonial peoples today, he thinks, if they depart from what he regards as the beneficent system of capitalism, will have no choice but to follow the Stalinist pattern.

Such mistaken conclusions flow from the major fault of the book, which is to avoid as much as possible mentioning those aspects of world reality that include classes and castes and their narrow interest in special privilege. He considers each country as if its population were a united whole whose common aspirations are faithfully reflected by the current government no matter how oppressive. And despite all the facts he himself presents about the world-wide ramifications of the U.S. economy, he insists on viewing capitalism through 18th century eyes, as if it were not an indivisible world system, but particularized into many capitalisms existing side by side in either enmity or collaboration.

This false way of looking at reality leads Mende into ludicrous errors. He believes that "lust for power surpasses even economic self-interest among the desires of men and, consequently, is a principal motive force of social change." Yet he advances a program that is nothing but a pitiful appeal to the humanitarianism of the wolves who wield power. Christian ethics must govern the rulers of the West from here on out, Mende pleads.

This means specifically vast loans and other forms of charitable aid for the colonial peoples on a gigantic scale. There is no other way of preventing them from taking the road of revolution, he holds. The colonial peoples "should be promised new equipment to make them prosperous enough to be turned into customers who will sufficiently appreciate refrigerators, automobiles, power generators, and airplanes to speed up their output and to offer their excess food, raw materials, and grateful loyalty in exchange for these products."

Mende recognizes he "may sound utopian," but he has nothing better to offer than this Salvation Army approach. He also recognizes that it has little chance of adoption. A United Nations report, he points out, came to the conclusion that to raise the output of the colonial areas by 2 per cent a year would require some \$14 billion of im-

ported capital every twelve months. But they receive much less. "In fact, what they do receive each year is only about a tenth of this recommended sum, and even that is very unevenly distributed. Most of it goes to Latin America, the nearest of the needy continents to the United States; and, even there, it is concentrated on the expansion of the production of oil. Enormous and vastly more populous regions obtain next to nothing."

Our humanitarian author gloomily observes: ". . . to tackle a problem that is threatening the very foundations of Western society and the future peaceful relations of the races of this world is, apparently, less compelling than investments promising quicker profits or dividends." He is dead right about that. America's 60 ruling families are willing to put a nickel on the drum and be saved, but \$14 billion a year?

He notes that "to talk about the promotion of the economic development of three-quarters of the world, while no nation is prepared to put into it a twentieth of what it is spending on armaments" can only mean preparation for war and disbelief in the cheaper way of buying their way out.

The cause for this he believes exists "in the moral field." "Western civilization suffers from the lack of a universal code or measure of value, a new purpose that could replace the present widespread feeling of futility and hopeless drift towards catastrophe." In talking about morals he apparently has forgotten his thesis that the "lust for power" is the most basic drive in people, otherwise he could scarcely continue outlining "the first practical utopia"; that is, a rekindling of "zeal, enthusiasm, and missionary energy" and "that humanitarianism which alone might save what is noble and worth rescuing in our threatened civilization."

The feeling of impending doom is strong in this advocate and apologist of the capitalist system: "However numerous or widespread the landmarks of its positive achievements, the Western world will have few defenders and no alibi in the approaching reckoning. From the bestialities of Cortes and Pizarro, to the extermination of North America's and Australia's native peoples; from the shameless robbing of the lands of the African tribes, to the contemporary terrifying callousness to its responsibility in bringing devastation and agony to millions of men in distant lands; the example the white man has given to the so-called colored races has been an unspeakable horror. The mobile courtroom of history, moving against the West, leaves little time for rectification."

A period of "coexistence" with the Soviet Union, he thinks, would be brief. "Inevitably, it would be no more than a pause for humanity to try what may be its last chance." Then, unless his utopian

plan is adopted, the third World War would "turn our grandchildren's map into a mass of radioactive deserts, strewn with ruins, with no other centers of gravity, but a few remaining death-dealing machines."

Mende suffers from the typical astigmatism of a liberal. Society blurs before his eyes into a confused whole where nothing can be made out distinctly save a few general hues that run together. The most convincing proof of this is the utopian program he ends up with.

The Marxist method, directing the analyst's attention to the internal structure of society, brings more realistic results. Facts, such as Mende dramatizes, confirm these results. They show that capitalism is heading toward catastrophe. The colossal productive capacity of the United States, that has expanded with such astonishing speed in the past decade and a half, is not in-

tended to help raise the world's standard of living. If the present masters have their way, it will go into a war of prodigious destruction.

But the Marxist method also reveals another class, the class that actually constructed this huge industrial machine, the workers. They have neither interest nor desire to destroy civilization. And they can change the whole direction of the present drift simply by turning to the political field and fighting there for their own interests, which happen to be the same as those of the overwhelming majority of mankind.

The realistic program therefore is the one that seeks to further this natural tendency, that is, speed up the turn of the working class toward independent political action. This can be realized because it expresses the real economic interests of the working people, which happen to be basic as a motive power. The drive toward control of the country's

destiny, toward the establishment of a Workers and Farmers Government, follows as a consequence.

A Workers and Farmers Government in America would make possible unification of the entire world into a scientifically planned economy that could speedily raise living standards not only in the most famine-stricken and disease-ridden areas plundered by capitalism but in the boasted United States itself where millions still live in subnormal conditions. That would mean the end of war, the end of national and race hatreds, the end of police states and slave labor camps and witch hunts, the birth of genuine civilization.

Mende will not appreciate it, I am sure, but may I suggest that his book, critically used, its utopian suggestions and impractical pleas discarded, its apologies for capitalism and Stalinism contemptuously dismissed, may help a bit in the process?

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