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The Testament of Lenin

The Minneapolis Strike

The Convention of the Socialist Party

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Strikes and the Economic Cycle

Book Reviews of Eastman, Celine,  
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Etc., Etc.

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A MONTHLY ORGAN OF REVOLUTIONARY MARXISM

# THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

A MONTHLY ORGAN OF REVOLUTIONARY MARXISM

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## *The* MILITANT

Organ of the Communist League of America

*The Militant* is the only American paper that reviews events in the class struggle in this and other countries and analyzes them from a Marxian point of view. It expresses the opinions of the Communist Internationalists, and is invaluable as a record of its activities and standpoint on current problems of the working class of the world. The writings of Leon Trotsky and other leaders of the International Communist League appear in its columns.

## War and the 4th International

Theses Adopted by the International  
Secretariat of the League of  
International Communists

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# THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

## A MONTHLY ORGAN OF REVOLUTIONARY MARXISM

VOL. I

JULY 1934

NO. 1

# For the Fourth International!

OUR periodical appears at a most critical juncture in the life of the international labor movement. The mighty mechanism of capitalist society is crumbling in the sight of all. Once it tore whole nations out of the backwardness of feudalism and erected that colossal productive machine which is capable of keeping all mankind at a high level of comfort and culture. Having surmounted Alpine peaks of progress, it is now rolling at breakneck speed down a precipitous incline. In its ascension, it encountered obstacles, but it overcame them and mounted higher. As it hurtles into the abyss to which it is historically doomed, the tiniest impediment subjects it to the most convulsive shocks. It leaks at every joint and gives off suffocating fumes of decomposition like the gases of a gangrened body which empoison the atmosphere. All the retrogressive and parasitic abominations inherent in the very existence of capitalism, are pressed upward to the surface in a last effort to evade paying the final note on its overdue doom.

The lusty young bourgeoisie, which once dealt such crushing revolutionary blows at feudal and clerical reaction, has aged to a decrepit senility when life depends upon reviving and forming an alliance with all that is archaic and reactionary in the world's economy and politics. The once progressive capitalist class can no longer live without preserving feudalism and serfdom in more than half the world, and resorting to Fascist barbarism in the rest of the globe. Where it once relied for its victory upon the support of the working class and peasantry, which liberated it and society from their common foe, capitalism can now maintain itself only by reducing its former allies to a standard of life and culture no higher than the feudal.

Capitalism has outlived its usefulness! It cannot expand the productive forces of mankind—it contracts them. It cannot feed the masses—it starves them. It cannot bring peace to the people—it drives them to war. It can no longer justify its supremacy—it maintains it with the Fascist bayonet.

If we can write, as von Hutten said in his day, that this is a time for the joy of living, then only because we live in the period of revolution, the triumphant culmination of which will open up a new era to humanity. The forces of production of the things men live by are in rebellion against the anachronistic fetters which impede their fullest development. The proletariat is in rebellion, now blindly, now consciously, against its exploiters. The colonial slaves are in rebellion against their metropolitan oppressors. The class struggle, which no human or natural agency can suppress without suppressing society—at least not until classes themselves have been abolished—has reached an unprecedented degree of acuteness. Yet, outside the Soviet Union, capitalism still prevails. Instead of receiving its mortal blow, it has inflicted upon the proletariat some of the cruelest defeats in history.

On the one side, an outlived social order, revealing within itself the objective necessity and inevitability of a new society; on the other side, a proletariat socially developed to the point where it can inaugurate this new society which nevertheless has not yet summoned sufficient forces to overthrow the old. The unknown factor is only too well known, and can be established with the exactness of a mathematical equation:

The two parties of the proletariat, into whose hands history successively gave the imposing task of overthrowing the bourgeoisie and opening the road to socialism, have failed abysmally. Social democracy and Stalinism both collapsed at the first blow, like egg-

shells sucked dry, in Germany, then in Austria, then in Latvia, then in Bulgaria. (The social democracy, be it noted, died politically twenty years ago; it proved no less despicable in its second incarnation.)

The whole history of the modern proletarian movement has only served to underscore the all-importance and indispensability of that most highly perfected of all its instruments: the political party. Especially in our time has it become the master key to all problems. The class war is fought by class armies. The working class as a whole—to say nothing of its necessary allies in other sections of the population—is not characterized by firm homogeneity. It is stratified at different levels of consciousness, it is divided by conflicting ideologies, by separatist interests of caste, religion, nationality, sex, age. Emerging from its ranks—but transcending these differences and consequently able to overcome them—is its vanguard, the revolutionary political party. The party embodies the accumulated experiences of the proletariat distilled into its revolutionary theory. It is the repository of the consciousness of the class. It embraces the most advanced, the most militant, the most devoted, unites them firmly on the basis of tested principles and welds them together in rigorous discipline.

The proletariat as a class, as a whole, cannot directly plan and guide its battles, any more than each platoon in an army can elaborate the strategy and tactics of war. For that a staff, a vanguard is imperative—not imposed from above as in a capitalist army, without the possibility of control and verification from the ranks, but rising from the ranks by tested ability and common approval. It is all the more imperative in this epoch because of the extreme concentration of power in the enemy camp, its increased mobility, and because of the abruptness with which changes take place in the objective situation. These necessitate a trained, vigilant vanguard equipped with foresight and consequently capable of pre-arrangement. Foresight is made possible by the searchlight of Marxism, whose powerful batteries are merely the condensed experiences of history, illuminating the path ahead.

For lack of just such a party, the working class has suffered one defeat after another, until the dreadful climax in 1933-1934 fully disclosed the bankruptcy of the existing organizations.

Neither of the two parties came to their miserable end because of some aberration, springing out of conditions peculiar to Germany, or Austria. Their demolition is rather to be traced to the fundamental theories and practises common to their respective Internationals. The generic name of these theories is nationalistic opportunism.

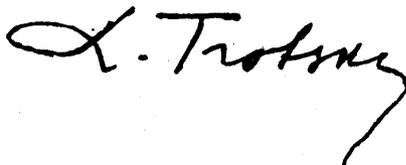
The modern social democratic parties were nurtured on the skimmed milk of the imperialist expansion of their respective national fatherlands. Grown mighty and fabulously wealthy on the vast profits of colonial exploitation, the imperialist powers found it necessary and possible to corrupt and thus enlist the support of a whole section of its own working class. The social democracy based itself upon the aristocracy of labor, upon the reforms which an indulgent imperialism vouchsafed it, and upon sections of the middle class. It was gradually absorbed into the machinery of the capitalist state and interlaced its destiny with the fate of the bourgeois nation. Thence the unforgettable treason of the social democracy during the war, each party digging bloodsoaked fingers into the throat of the other for the greater glory of its own fatherland.

## A GREETING

Editorial Board  
THE NEW INTERNATIONAL  
Dear Comrades:

*The fact that you have established a theoretical organ, I consider as a festival occasion. Its name, THE NEW INTERNATIONAL, is a program of an entire epoch. I am convinced that your magazine will serve as an invaluable weapon in the establishment of the new International on the foundations laid by the great masons of the future: Marx, Engels, Lenin.*

*With Communist greetings,*



Thence the rabid loyalty to the capitalist state when the spontaneous post-war revolutionary wave threatened to inundate the bourgeoisie. Thence the theory of gradually converting capitalism into socialism just as smoothly and miraculously as the transubstantiation of the wafer and the wine into the body and blood of Christ. Thence the repudiation of the dictatorship of the proletariat and its replacement by the theory and practise of coalitions with the democratic bourgeoisie for the preservation of capitalism, as a necessary transition to socialism. Thence the theory of the lesser evil—capitalism is preferable to Bolshevism—the theory which facilitated the victory of Fascism.

What distinguishes the Stalinist parties from the social democratic is not so much the outcome of their policy—the effects have been equally calamitous in both cases—as it is the different origin of their nationalism. The Stalinist parties were not poisoned at the well of imperialist nationalism, but at the well once fed exclusively by the springs of a proletarian revolution. The theory of “socialism in one country” is an expression of the nationalist degeneration of the Soviet Union. There is not, nor can there be, an inherent conflict between the interests of the Soviet Union and the interests of the world revolution. The interests of a parasitic Soviet bureaucracy, however, can and do conflict with the interests of the world revolution. The generalized formulation of this conflict is implicit in the theory of “socialism in one country”.

The Soviet bureaucracy, myopically attributing longevity to phenomena of a temporary character, does not believe in the possibilities of a world revolution for several decades to come. With this conviction pervading all their thoughts, the bureaucrats want above all else the safeguarding of Russia's territorial integrity in order to construct a nationally walled-off utopia. This course has led inexorably to the transformation of the Third International from the general staff of the world revolution into a Soviet border patrol. Internationalism requires the subordination of each country to the interests of the world revolution. Nationalism means the subordination of the world movement to the interests of the Stalinist bureaucracy in the Soviet Union.

Their nationalist degeneration, however much it differs in origin and complexion, led both the social democracy and Stalinism to their Waterloo in Germany. *Fundamentally*, there is no other explanation for the collapse of the existing Internationals. All the blunders and crimes, the big ones as well as the little and less dramatic ones, flowed from a central fountain-head.

History and the events that compose it, do not occur for nothing. They afford the possibility of theoretical generalization, of learning from them. The great strength of the Communist International in its early years lay in the fact that it learned from the collapse of the Second International.

The lesson of the collapse of the *two* Internationals is not the renunciation of internationalism but its revival. And not on paper, but in deeds. Revolutionary internationalism must be active and concrete. At the present time that can mean only one thing: *unfurl the banner of the Fourth International and work unremittingly to rally the vanguard elements throughout the world around it!*

\* \* \* \*

—We too are internationalists, but will it not be a better and stronger International if we first build up solid revolutionary parties in each country and then unite them throughout the world?

—Dear friend, so many stupendous events have been experienced in the last twenty years that it would appear as if everybody must have learned something. But it seems that one cannot judge by appearances.

How will you build up “solid revolutionary parties” nationally without unceasing activity for the reconstruction of the International at the same time? The day of *national* revolutionary parties ended long ago, as did the day of national party programs. In the period when world politics and world economy exist as distinct entities, there can be only one revolutionary party—the International, with sections in every country. The International cannot be a mere arithmetical sum of various national parties, that is, it must not be. What you will have, if ever you reach the stage of forming your International, will be a somewhat less repulsive edition of the Second, composed of disparate parties, which have developed by themselves in divergent directions, which are jealous of their “national independence”, which resent “interference by outsiders”. You propose to turn back to twenty-five years ago. We prefer to go forward.

—But must the International be formed this very moment, when there is so much confusion in the ranks of the working class?

—Just because of that. Hide and seek is no game to be played with the masses. The revolutionary vanguard needs a new Communist International. The masses are confused, it is true. They are being confused by the social democrats of all shades and disguises, who tell them that the Second International is good enough, that it can be reformed, if not today then tomorrow, if not tomorrow then . . . after Fascism triumphs in a few more countries. They are being confused by the Stalinists who tell them that the Third International was right yesterday, today, tomorrow and forever. They are being confused by the vacillators and opportunists who deceive them with stories about uniting the Second and the Third, or about forming some other International—not a “sectarian” one, god forbid! but one in which all “good revolutionary parties outside the Second and the Third” will find shelter for the night. The Fourth International will not bring confusion into the ranks of the working class. It will bring a flaming sword whose edge cuts through the web of lies and deceit and hypocrisy, and whose light brings clarity.

—But who wants a Fourth International now? You are too weak, it is a period of defeats, and even Lenin formed the International only a year and a half after the triumphant revolution.

—Your arguments do not improve with age, dear friend. Lenin proclaimed the need for the new, the Third International, not after the Russian victory, but in the darkest days of reaction, in August 1914. At Zimmerwald in 1915 he fought bitterly against those who, like you, argued that “now is not the time” because “we are too few”. A year later at Kienthal his persistence had brought to his side new and greater forces. The basis for the Comintern was not laid in Moscow in March 1919, but four years before. The struggle for the building of the new International can no more be postponed than the struggle for the rebuilding of the new parties in each country. It is just as unpostponable as the class struggle itself. For us the International is not, as Kautsky said, merely an instrument in peace times which does not function in war. That is all his International was. The International is the general staff of the world proletariat, and consequently it is indispensable *at all times*. The general staff, like the army, is demobilized or has its functions drastically curtailed only at the end of a war. But our class war is far from ended.

—But already some of those who were for the new International have begun to vacillate, haven't they?

—Indeed, indeed. So much the worse for them; so much the worse for those who take the same course. Not all those who began with the Zimmerwald Left wing of Lenin, stayed with it. Some developed reservations, some quit, others even deserted to the enemy. But do not judge by superficial phenomena. Today the vacillators murmur softly or not at all about the Fourth International to which they firmly pledged themselves before. They want to “win the masses” of Tranmael's Norwegian Labor Party and Brockway's Independent Labour Party. How? By keeping still. Tomorrow, when Tranmael and Co. have gone the way of the Austro-Marxists, it will not be thanks to the vacillators that Tranmael's present followers will have learned necessary lessons. But when they do, and they will, they will join hands all the more firmly with those who fought persistently for the Fourth International.

—But why must it be the Fourth, and not just the new International?

—Words have a meaning, or they should have. The Fourth International—that means new *Communist* parties and a new *Communist* International. The Second means all the varieties of social reformism. The Third means Stalinism, bureaucratic centrism. But in addition there are those who want to bridge the gap between reformism and Communism, those who want the unity of the two, those who want a Two-and-a-Half International, a home for the politically homeless, a night's lodging until the storm in the ranks blows over and they can resume their peaceful journey back to the Second International, as they did in 1923 at Hamburg.

The Fourth International? This is no meaningless phrase. *It is a fighting program!* It means a fight to the death against Fascism, imperialism, war. It means an intransigent struggle against treacherous social reformism, bureaucratic Stalinism, cowardly compromising centrism of all species. It means the unconditional struggle to defend the Soviet Union which social democrats and

Stalinists left in the lurch in Germany when they permitted the arch-anti-Sovietist Hitler to come to power without a battle. It means the militant struggle for revolutionary Marxism, for the final victory of the working class.

*For the Fourth International! For revolutionary Marxism!*

That is the unsullied banner our periodical will defend. In periods such as the one we are passing through now, it becomes fashionable in certain quarters to seek the reasons for defeat and reaction in all corners except where they are to be found, to trace the causes everywhere except to their roots. Not the traducers of internationalism are at fault; perhaps it is internationalism itself. Not the traducers of Marxism; perhaps it is Marxism itself which

requires revision or "re-interpretation". As yesterday, so today, we shall continue to work with all our strength for all the fundamental theories of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky, which have been tested through and through and confirmed a thousand times over and from every angle. With its modest resources, THE NEW INTERNATIONAL will defend the revolutionary teachings of Marxism in every domain, taking up every challenge and refuting all over again those "new" anti-Marxists who have merely refurbished the well-riddled views of old revisionists. Our banner is hoisted and unfurled. The class conscious militants will rally to it and plant it on the citadels of capitalism.

*For the Fourth International! For revolutionary Marxism!*

## Minneapolis and Its Meaning

**S**TANDING by itself, the magnificent strike of the Minneapolis truck drivers would merit recognition as an extraordinary event in modern American labor history. Its connection with the second wave of labor struggles to sweep the country since the inception of the N.R.A., however, and its indubitable place as the high point of the present strike wave, invest the Minneapolis demonstration with an exceptional importance. Therefore it has come by right to be the subject of serious and attentive study and of heated discussion. This discussion, despite all the partisan prejudice and misrepresentation injected into it, is bound on the whole to have a profitable result. The best approach to the trade union question, the key question of revolutionary politics in the United States, is through the study and discussion of concrete examples.

The second strike wave under the N.R.A. rises higher than the first and marks a big forward stride of the American working class. The enormous potentialities of future developments are clearly written in this advance. The native militancy of the workers, so impressively demonstrated on every strike front in recent months, needs only to be fused with an authentic leadership which brings organization, consciousness and the spirit of determined struggle into the movement. Minneapolis was an example of such a fusion. That is what lifted the drivers' strike out above the general run. Therein lies its great significance—as an anticipation, if only on a comparatively small, local scale, of future developments in the labor movement of the country. The determining rôle of policy and leadership was disclosed with singular emphasis in the Minneapolis battle.

The main features of the present strike wave, on the background of which the Minneapolis example must be considered, are easily distinguishable. Now, as in the labor upsurge of last year, the attitude of the workers toward the N.R.A. occupies a central place. But the attitude is somewhat different than it was before. The Messianic faith in the Roosevelt administration, which characterized the strike movement of a year ago and which, to a certain extent, provided the initial impulse for the movement, has largely disappeared and given place to skeptical distrust. It is hardly correct, however, to say, as some revolutionary wish-thinkers are saying, that the current strikes are consciously directed *against* the N.R.A. There is little or no evidence to support such a bald assertion. It is more in keeping with reality to say that the striking workers now depend primarily on their own organization and fighting capacity and expect little or nothing from the source to which, a short year ago, they looked for everything. Nevertheless they are not yet ready even to ignore the N.R.A., to say nothing of fighting against it directly. What has actually taken place has been a heavy shift in emphasis from faith in the N.R.A. to reliance on their own strength.

In these great struggles the American workers in all parts of the country are displaying the unrestrained militancy of a class that is just beginning to awaken. This is a new generation of a class that has not been defeated. On the contrary, it is only now beginning to find itself and to feel its strength. And in these first tentative conflicts the proletarian giant gives a glorious promise for the future. The present generation remains true to the tradition of American labor; it is boldly aggressive and violent from the start. The American worker is no Quaker. Further developments of the class struggle will bring plenty of fighting in the U. S. A

It is also a distinct feature of the second strike wave, and those who want to understand and adjust themselves to the general trend of the movement should mark it well, that the organization drives and the strikes, barring incidental exceptions, are conducted within the framework of the A. F. of L. unions. The exceptions are important and should not be disregarded. At any rate, the movement begins there. Only those who foresaw this trend and synchronized their activities with it have been able to play a part in the recent strikes and to influence them from within.

The central aim and aspiration of the workers, that is, of the newly-organized workers who are pressing the fight on every front, is to establish their organizations firmly. The first and foremost demand in every struggle is: *Recognition of the union*. With unerring instinct the workers seek first of all the protection of an organization. William S. Brown, president of the Minneapolis union, expressed the sentiment of all the strikers in every industry in his statement: "The union felt that wage agreements are not much protection to a union man unless first there is definite assurance that the union man will be protected in his job." The strike wave sweeping the country in the second year of the N.R.A. is in its very essence a struggle for the right of organization. The outcome of every strike is to be estimated primarily by its success or failure in enforcing the recognition of the union.

And from this point of view the results in general are not so rosy. The workers manifested a mighty impulse for organization, and in many cases they fought heroically. But they have yet to attain their first objective. The auto settlement, which established the recognition of the company union rather than the unions of the workers, weighs heavily on the whole labor situation. The workers everywhere have to pay for the precedent set in this industry of such great strategic importance. From all appearances the steel workers are going to be caught in the same run-around. The New York hotel strike failed to establish the union. The New York taxi drivers got no union recognition, or anything else. Not a single one of the "Red" unions affiliated to the Trade Union Unity League has succeeded in gaining recognition. Even the great battle of Toledo appears to have been concluded without the attainment of this primary demand. The American workers are on the march. They are organizing by the hundreds of thousands. They are fighting to establish their new unions firmly and compel the bosses to "recognize" them. But in the overwhelming majority of cases they have yet to win this fundamental demand.

\* \* \* \*

In the light of this general situation the results of the Minneapolis strike stands out preëminent and unique. Judged in comparison with the struggles of the other newly-formed unions—and that is the only sensible criterion—the Minneapolis settlement, itself a compromise, has to be recorded as a victory of the first order. In gaining the recognition of the union, and in proceeding to enforce it the day following the settlement, General Drivers' Union No. 574 has set a pace for all the new unions in the country. The outcome was not accidental, either. Policy, method, leadership—these were the determining factors at Minneapolis which the aspiring workers everywhere ought to study and follow.

The medium of organization in Minneapolis was a craft union of the A. F. of L., and one of the most conservative of the A. F. of L. Internationals at that. This course was deliberately chosen by the organizers of the fight in conformity with the general trend of

the movement, although they are by no means worshippers of the A. F. of L. Despite the obvious limitations of this antiquated form of organization it proved to be sufficient for the occasion, thanks to a liberal construction of the jurisdictional limits of the union. Affiliation with the A. F. of L. afforded other compensating advantages. The new union was thereby placed in direct contact with the general labor movement and was enabled to draw on it for support. This was a decisive element in the outcome. The organized labor movement, and with it practically the entire working class of Minneapolis, was lined up behind the strike. Out of a union with the most conservative tradition and obsolete structure came the most militant and successful strike.

The stormy militancy of the strike which electrified the whole labor movement is too well known to need recounting here. The results also are known, among them the not unimportant detail that the serious casualties were suffered by the other side. True enough, the striking workers nearly everywhere have fought with great courage. But here also the Minneapolis strike was marked by certain different and distinct aspects which are of fundamental importance. In other places, as a rule, the strike militancy surged from below and was checked and restrained by the leaders. In Minneapolis it was organized and directed by the leaders. In most of the other strikes the leaders blunted the edge of the fight—where they could not head it off altogether as in the case of the auto workers—and preached reliance on the N.R.A., in General Johnson or the president. In Minneapolis the leaders taught the workers to fight for their rights and fought with them.

This conception of the leadership, that the establishment of the union was to be attained only by struggle, shaped the course of action not only during the ten-day strike but in every step that led to it. That explains why the strike was prepared and organized so thoroughly. Minneapolis never before saw such a well-organized strike, and it is doubtful if its like, from the standpoint of preparatory organization, has often been seen anywhere on this continent. Having no illusions whatever about the reasonableness of the bosses or the beneficence of the N.R.A., and sowing none in the ranks, the leadership calculated the whole campaign on the certainty of a strike and made everything ready for it. When the hour struck the union was ready, down to the last detail of organization. "If the preparations made by their union for handling it are any indication," wrote the Minneapolis *Tribune* on the eve of the conflict, "the strike of truck drivers in Minneapolis is going to be a far-reaching affair. . . . Even before the official start of the strike at 11:30 P.M. Tuesday the 'General Headquarters' organization set up at 1900 Chicago Avenue was operating with all the precision of a military organization."

This spirit of determined struggle was combined at the same time with a realistic appraisal of the relation of forces and the limited objectives of the fight. Without this all the preparations and all the militancy of the strikers might well have been wasted and brought the reaction of a crushing defeat. The strike was understood to be a preliminary, partial struggle with the objective of establishing the union and compelling the bosses to "recognize" it. When they got that they stopped and called it a day. The strong union that has emerged from the strike will be able to fight again and to protect its membership in the meantime. The accomplishment is modest enough. But if we want to play an effective part in the labor movement we must not allow ourselves to forget that the American working class is just beginning to move on the path of the class struggle and, in its great majority, stands yet before the first task of establishing stable unions. Those who understand the task of the day and accomplish it prepare the future. The others merely chatter.

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As in every strike of any consequence, the workers involved in the Minneapolis struggle also had an opportunity to see the government at work and to learn some practical lessons as to its real function. The police force of the city, under the direction of the Republican mayor, supplemented by a horde of "special deputies", were lined up solidly on the side of the bosses. The police and deputies did their best to protect the strikebreakers and keep some trucks moving, although their best was not good enough. The mobilization of the militia by the Farmer-Labor governor was a threat against the strikers, even if the militia-men were not put on the street. The strikers will remember that threat. In a sense it

can be said that the political education of a large section of the strikers began with this experience. It is sheer lunacy, however, to imagine that it was completed and that the strikers, practically all of whom voted yesterday for Roosevelt and Olson, could have been led into a prolonged strike for purely political aims after the primary demand for the recognition of the union had been won.

Yet this is the premise upon which all the Stalinist criticism of the strike leadership is based. Governor Olson, declared Bill Dunne in the *Daily Worker*, was "the main enemy". And having convinced himself on this point, he continued: "The exposure and defeat of Olson should have been the central political objective of the Minneapolis struggle." Nor did he stop even there. Wound up and going strong by this time, and lacking the friendly advice of a Harpo Marx who would explain the wisdom of keeping the mouth shut when the head is not clear, he decided to go the limit, so he added: "This [the exposure and defeat of Olson] was the basic necessity for winning the economic demands for the Drivers' Union and the rest of the working class."

There it is, Mr. Ripley, whether you believe it or not. This is the thesis, the "political line", laid down for the Minneapolis truck drivers in the *Daily Worker*. For the sake of this thesis, it is contended that negotiations for the settlement of the strike should have been rejected unless the state troops were demobilized, and a general strike should have been proclaimed "over the heads of the Central Labor Council and State Federation of Labor officials". Dunne only neglected to add: over the heads of the workers also, including the truck drivers.

For the workers of Minneapolis, including the striking drivers, didn't understand the situation in this light at all, and leaders who would have proceeded on such an assumption would have found themselves without followers. The workers of Minneapolis, like the striking workers all over the country, understood the "central objective" to be the *recognition of the union*. The leaders were in full harmony with them on this question, they stuck to this objective and, when it was attained, they did not attempt to parade the workers through a general strike for the sake of exercise or for "the defeat of Governor Olson". For one reason, it was not the right thing to do. And, for another reason, they couldn't have done it if they had tried.

The arguments of Bill Dunne regarding the Minneapolis "betrayal" could have a logical meaning only to one who construed the situation as revolutionary and aimed at an insurrection. We, of course, are for the revolution. But not today, not in a single city. There is a certain unconscious tribute to the "Trotskyists"—and a not inappropriate one—in the fact that so much was demanded of them in Minneapolis. But Bill Dunne, who is more at home with proverbs than with politics, should recall the one which says, "every vegetable has its season". It was the season for an armed battle in Germany in the early part of 1933. In America, in 1934, it is the season for organizing the workers, leading them in strikes and compelling the bosses to recognize their unions. The mistake of all the Stalinists, Bill Dunne among them, in misjudging the weather in Germany in 1933 was a tragedy. In America in 1934 it is a farce.

\* \* \* \*

The strike wave of last year was only a prelude to the surging movement we witness today. And just as the present movement goes deeper and strikes harder than the first so does it prepare the way for a third movement which will surpass it in scope, aggressiveness and militancy. Frustrated in their aspirations for organization by misplaced faith in the Roosevelt administration and by the black treachery of the official labor bureaucracy, the workers will take the road of struggle again with firmer determination and clearer aims. And they will seek for better leaders.

Then the new Left wing of the labor movement can have its day. The revolutionary militants can bound forward in mighty leaps and come to the head of large sections of the movement if they know how to grasp their opportunities and understand their tasks. For this they must be politically organized and work together as a disciplined body; they must forge the new party of the Fourth International without delay. They must get inside the developing movement, regardless of its initial form, stay inside and shape its course from within. They must demonstrate a capacity for organization as well as for agitation, for responsibility as well as for militancy. They must convince the workers of their ability, not

only to organize and lead strikes aggressively but also to settle them advantageously at the right time and consolidate the gains. In a word, the modern militants of the labor movement have the task of gaining the confidence of the workers in their ability to lead the movement all the year around and to advance the interests of the workers all the time.

On this condition the new Left wing of the trade unions can

take shape and grow with rapid strides. And the Left wing, in turn, will be the foundation of the new party, the genuine Communist party. On a local scale, in a small sector of the labor movement, the Minneapolis comrades have set an example which shows the way. The International Communists have every right to be proud of this example and to hold it up as a model to study and to follow.

James P. CANNON

# The Soviets and the League of Nations

THE press is filled with persistent reports that the Soviet Union is about to join the League of Nations. Unlike past rumors, the reports this time bear the earmarks of verisimilitude. None of the official Communist papers has denied it. Quite the contrary. The latest turn in Soviet diplomacy, which marks such a sharp departure from former days, is being justified not only in the Russian governmental press but also in the press of the Stalinist parties. Karl Radek has already fished out of the slime pools the theoretical apology for the approaching entrance into the League and all the other choir boys in the *Daily Worker*, *L'Humanité* and the rest of the talking machines solemnly join in with their mechanical obbligation.

The Black International, as we once called it, is no longer, do you see, as sinister as it was painted. It has gone through spiritual fires from which it emerged with a good deal of the dross burned out. Japan has quit the League; Germany has quit the League—which eliminates from its ranks the two most direct antagonists of the Soviet Union. "But those powers remained in the League," observes Radek, "who are interested in the maintenance of peace."

In this quarter-truth is revealed the essence of the new Stalinist turn, that is, its *nationalism*. France is, it is true, interested for the sake of its own momentary imperialist interests in the maintenance of peace with the *Soviet Union*; so is the United States; so is Italy; so are a number of other reactionary states. From this it does not follow, neither necessarily nor in fact, that they are interested in maintaining peace with each other or with other countries. Italy is actually engaged in war in the Near East behind the cloaks of its Arabian satraps. France continues to put its Africans to the sword, and to preserve the Versailles *status quo* with the aid of vassal bayonets and its own. England still wars on Egyptian and Hindu. None of them has slackened the frenetic armaments pace at which mankind is being driven to the nightmarish devastation of that war about which the Stalinists babble with more conviction than understanding. But for Radek peace with the Soviet Union is the equivalent of peace in general. The pacific qualities of imperialism are measured exclusively by its temporary attitude towards the Soviet Union, that is, by the worthless yardstick of socialism in one country. Having found that the "remaining powers" reach the proper height, the Soviet Union is prepared to join the League.

Not so many years ago, to the question "Why does not the Soviet Union participate in the League of Nations?"—Stalin replied:

"The Soviet Union is not a member of the League of Nations and does not participate in its work, because the Soviet Union is not prepared to share the responsibility for the imperialist policy of the League of Nations, for the 'mandates' which are distributed by the League for the exploitation and oppression of the colonial countries, for the war preparations and military alliances which are covered and sanctified by the League, preparations which must inevitably lead to imperialist war. The Soviet Union does not participate in the work of the League because the Soviet Union is fighting with all its energy against all preparations for imperialist war. The Soviet Union is not prepared to become a part of that camouflage for imperialist machinations represented by the League of Nations. The League is the rendezvous of the imperialist leaders who settle their business there behind the scenes. The subjects about which the League speaks officially, are nothing but empty phrases intended to deceive the workers. The business carried on by the imperialist ring-leaders behind the scenes, that is the actual work of imperialism which the eloquent speakers of the League of Nations hypocritically cloak." (*Questions and Answers, A Discussion with Foreign Delegates by J. Stalin. Moscow. November 13, 1927.*)

The departure of Germany and Japan from the League changes its political complexion, however little it alters its imperialist char-

acter. If England thereby becomes increasingly isolated on the continent, France becomes more desperately concerned with the preservation of its European hegemony. This objective requires the maintenance of the debilitated League, and the prestige and power of the Soviet Union are to help bring some color back to the hag's cheeks.

For Russia, joining the League is a sharp departure in policy only in the sense that a leap is the sudden culmination of a running start and a tensing of the muscles. Faced on the eastern and western fronts by two foes of serious caliber whose immediate aim is military attack, the Soviet Union hopes to take advantage of their breach with the League by joining with those who have remained within it, manoeuvring between the rival imperialist powers, and leaning upon France.

A workers' state surrounded by capitalist powers cannot refrain from utilizing any and every rift in the imperialist lute, or from sharpening every quarrel among the imperialist thieves. Often enough this means concessions to one of the bandits or another. It is the price which the proletariat in power must pay for its isolation.

But what a price is being paid this time! It means that the Soviet Union will be helping to cover up all those misdeeds, crimes, hypocrisies and deceptions of which Stalin spoke in 1927. It means that the Soviet Union will be watering the powder used by every Communist party in the past to fire at the Black International. From its irreconcilable antagonist, the Soviet Union will become at best a sort of Loyal Opposition, sowing Kautskyan illusions among the masses, about disarmament and peace, using the good name of the Russian revolution to disseminate the fatal teaching about the bad powers who want war, the half-bad powers who are not so anxious for war themselves but are egging on the others, and the good powers who want no war at all—the latest department of the Friends of the Soviet Union which embraces those newly discovered countries that are now "not interested in war, and would wish to avert it, and therefore agree now to cooperate with those who are interested in the consolidation [!] of peace" (*Pravda*, June 1, 1934).

The Stalinists will explain it all away, for to what other end did nature produce Radek and Browder and Cachin? But how will they explain the flagrant contradiction between the new turn in Russia's foreign policy and the clamorous revolutionism of the thirteenth plenum of the Third International which proclaimed the struggle for Soviet power as the next step? Very easily: they will not explain it at all. Yet the apparent enigma is solved only by an understanding of the real situation in the Third International and the working class as a whole.

The Stalinist center knows just as well as we do that the Third International is a political corpse! Barthou may be a weak reed to lean on, but the impotent, paralyzed "Communist parties" are no reed at all. All doubts on that score were conclusively dispelled by the showing made by the largest of them, the German. The Soviet bureaucracy long ago lost its belief that the world revolution would triumph—at least not for decades to come. Germany, Austria, Latvia, Bulgaria—defeats which were determined by the treacherous course of the social democracy and the Stalinists—only mean to the latter that the world proletariat is no longer an effective ally. *They attribute their own incurable impotence to the proletariat!*

Were there a powerful world Communist movement capable of restoring and organizing the power of the proletariat, the Soviet Union would not today try to bolster itself up by bolstering up the decrepit League of Nations.

"Were there a powerful world Communist movement"—but there isn't one! The windbags who talk so much about the defense of the Soviet Union, have done their utmost to smash this movement. We will build it up anew.

# The Testament of Lenin

THE post-war epoch has brought into wide currency the psychological biography, the masters of which art often pull their subject up out of society by the roots. The fundamental driving force of history is presented as the abstraction, personality. The behavior of the "political animal", as Aristotle brilliantly defined mankind, is discomposed into personal passions and instincts.

The statement that personality is abstract may seem absurd. Are not the super-personal forces of history really the abstract things? And what can be more concrete than a living man? However, we insist upon our statement. If you remove from a personality, even the most richly endowed, the content which is introduced into it by the milieu, the nation, the epoch, the class, the group, the family, there remains an empty automaton, a psycho-physical robot, an object of natural, but not of social or "humane", science.

The causes of this abandonment of history and society must, as always, be sought in history and society. Two decades of wars, revolutions and crises have given a bad shake-up to that sovereign, human personality. To have weight in the scales of contemporary history a thing must be measured in millions. For this the offended personality seeks revenge. Unable to cope with society on the rampage, it turns its back upon society. Unable to explain itself by means of historic processes, it tries to explain history from within itself. Thus the Indian philosophers built universal systems by contemplating their own navels.

## *The School of Pure Psychologism*

The influence of Freud upon the new biographical school is undeniable, but superficial. In essence these parlor psychologists are inclining to a belletristic irresponsibility. They employ not so much the method as the terminology of Freud, and not so much for analysis as for literary adornment.

In his recent works Emil Ludwig, the most popular representative of this genre, has taken a new step along the chosen path: he has replaced the study of the hero's life and activity with dialogue. Behind the answers of the statesman to questions put to him, behind his intonations and grimaces, the writer discovers his real motives. Conversation becomes almost a confession. In its technique Ludwig's new approach to the hero suggests Freud's approach to his patient: it is a matter of bringing the personality out into the clearing with its own coöperation. But with all this external similarity, how different it is in essence! The fruitfulness of Freud's work is attained at the price of a heroic break with all kinds of conventions. The great psychoanalyst is ruthless. At work he is like a surgeon, almost like a butcher with rolled-up sleeves. Anything you want, but there is not one hundredth of one per cent of diplomacy in his technique. Freud bothers least of all about the prestige of his patient, or about considerations of good form, or any other kind of false note or frill. And it is for this reason that he can carry on his dialogue only face-to-face, without secretary or stenographer, behind padded doors.

Not so Ludwig. He enters into a conversation with Mussolini, or with Stalin, in order to present the world with an authentic portrait of their souls. Yet the whole conversation follows a program previously agreed upon. Every word is taken down by a stenographer. The eminent patient knows quite well what can be useful to him in this process and what harmful. The writer is sufficiently experienced to distinguish rhetorical tricks, and sufficiently polite not to notice them. The dialogue developing under these circumstances, if it does indeed resemble a confession, resembles one put on for the talking pictures.

Emil Ludwig has every reason to declare: "I understand nothing of politics." This is supposed to mean: "I stand above politics." In reality it is a mere formula of personal neutrality—or to borrow from Freud, it is that inward censor which makes easier for the psychologist his political function. In the same way diplomatists do not interfere with the inner life of the country to whose government they are accredited, but this does not prevent them on occasion from supporting plots and financing acts of terrorism.

One and the same person in different conditions develops different sides of his policy. How many Aristotles are herding swine,

and how many swineherds wear a crown on their heads! But Ludwig can lightly resolve even the contradiction between Bolshevism and Fascism into a mere matter of individual psychology. Even the most penetrating psychologist could not with impunity adopt such a tendentious "neutrality". Casting loose from the social conditioning of human consciousness, Ludwig enters into a realm of mere subjective caprice. The "soul" has not three dimensions, and is therefore incapable of that resistance which is proper to all other materials. The writer loses his taste for the study of facts and documents. What is the use of these colorless evidences when they can be replaced with bright guesses?

In his work on Stalin, as in his book about Mussolini, Ludwig remains "outside politics". This does not in the least prevent his works from becoming a political weapon. Whose weapon? In the one case Mussolini's, in the other that of Stalin and his group. Nature abhors a vacuum. If Ludwig does not occupy himself with politics, this is not saying that politics does not occupy itself with Ludwig.

Upon the publication of my autobiography some three years ago, the official Soviet historian, Pokrovsky, now dead, wrote: "We must answer this book immediately, put our young scholars to work refuting all that can be refuted, etc." But it is a striking fact that no one, absolutely no one, responded. Nothing was analyzed, nothing was refuted. There was nothing to refute, and nobody could be found capable of writing a book which would find readers.

A frontal attack proving impossible, it became necessary to resort to a flank movement. Ludwig, of course, is not a historian of the Stalin school. He is an independent psychological portraitist. But a writer foreign to all politics may prove the most convenient means for putting into circulation ideas which can find no other support but a popular name. Let us now see how this works out in actual fact.

## *"Six Words"*

Citing the testimony of Karl Radek, Emil Ludwig relates after him the following episode: "After the death of Lenin we sat together, nineteen members of the Central Committee, tensely waiting to learn what our lost leader would say to us from his grave. Lenin's widow gave us his letter. Stalin read it. No one stirred during the reading. When it came to Trotsky the words occurred: 'His non-Bolshevik past is not accidental.' At that point Trotsky interrupted the reading and asked: 'What does it say there?' The sentence was repeated. Those were the only words spoken in that solemn moment."

And then in the character of analyst, and not narrator, Ludwig makes the following remark on his own account: "A terrible moment, when Trotsky's heart must have stopped beating; this phrase of six words essentially determined the course of his life." How simple it seems to find a key to the riddles of history! These unctuous lines of Ludwig's would doubtless have uncovered to me myself the very secret of my destiny if . . . if this Radek-Ludwig story did not happen to be false from beginning to end, false in small things and great, in what matters and in what matters not.

To begin with, the testament was written by Lenin not two years before his death as our author confirms, but one year. It was dated January 4, 1923; Lenin died on January 21, 1924. His political life had broken off completely in March 1923. Ludwig speaks as though the testament had never been published in full. As a matter of fact it has been produced dozens of times in all the languages of the world press.\* The first official reading of the testament in the Kremlin occurred, not at a session of the Central Committee, as Ludwig writes, but in the council of seniors of the thirteenth party congress on May 22, 1924. It was not Stalin who read the testament, but Kamenev in his then permanent position as president of the central party institutions. And finally—most important—I did not interrupt the reading with an emotional exclamation, because of the absence of any motive whatever for such an act. Those words which Ludwig wrote down at the dictation of

\*The English text is to be found by Leon Trotsky.—TRANS. in *The Real Situation in Russia*

Radek are not in the text of the testament. They are an outright invention. Difficult as it may be to believe, this is the fact.

If Ludwig were not so careless about the factual basis of his psychological patterns, he might without difficulty have got possession of an exact text of the testament, established the necessary facts and dates, and thus avoided those wretched mistakes with which his work about the Kremlin and the Bolsheviks is unfortunately brimful.

The so-called testament was written at two periods separated by an interval of ten days: December 25, 1922 and January 4, 1923. At first only two persons knew of the document: the stenographer, M. Volodicheva, who wrote it from dictation, and Lenin's wife, N. Krupskaja. As long as there remained a glimmer of hope for Lenin's recovery, Krupskaja left the document under lock and key. After Lenin's death, not long before the thirteenth congress, she handed the testament to the secretariat of the Central Committee, in order that through the party congress it should be brought to the attention of the party for whom it was destined.

At that time the party apparatus was semi-officially in the hands of the trinity (Zinoviev, Kamenev, Stalin)—as a matter of fact, already in the hands of Stalin. The trinity decisively expressed themselves against reading the testament at the congress—the motive not at all difficult to understand. Krupskaja insisted upon her wish. At this stage the dispute was going on behind the scenes. The question was transferred to a meeting of the seniors of the congress—that is, the leaders of the provincial delegations. It was here that the oppositional members of the Central Committee first learned about the testament, I among them. After a decision had been adopted that nobody should make notes, Kamenev began to read the text aloud. The mood of the listeners was indeed tense in the highest degree. But so far as I can restore the picture from memory, I should say that those who already knew the contents of the document were incomparably the most anxious. The trinity introduced, through one of its henchmen, a resolution previously agreed upon with the provincial leaders: the document should be read to each delegation separately in executive session; no one should dare to make notes; at the plenary session the testament must not be referred to. With the gentle insistence characteristic of her, Krupskaja argued that this was a direct violation of the will of Lenin, to whom you could not deny the right to bring his last advice to the attention of the party. But the members of the council of seniors, bound by factional discipline, remained obdurate: the resolution of the trinity was adopted by an overwhelming majority.

In order to grasp the significance of those mystical and mythical "six words", which are supposed to have decided my fate, it is necessary to recall certain preceding and accompanying circumstances. Already in the period of sharp disputes on the subject of the October revolution, certain "old Bolsheviks" from the Right wing had more than once pointed out with vexation that Trotsky after all had not formerly been a Bolshevik. Lenin always stood up against these voices. Trotsky long ago understood that a union with the Mensheviks was impossible—he said, for example, on November 14, 1917—"and since then there has been no better Bolshevik". On Lenin's lips those words meant something.

Two years later, while explaining in a letter to the foreign Communists the conditions under which Bolshevism had developed, how there had been disagreements and splits, Lenin pointed out that "at the decisive moment, at the moment of the seizure of power and the creation of the Soviet Republic, Bolshevism had proved a unit, it had drawn to itself *all that was best among the currents of socialist thought close to it*". No current closer to Bolshevism than that which I represented up to 1917 existed either in Russia or the West. My union with Lenin had been predetermined by the logic of ideas and the logic of events. At the decisive moment Bolshevism drew into its ranks "all that was best" in the tendencies "close to it". Such was Lenin's appraisal of the situation. I have no reason to dispute him.

At the time of our two months' argument on the trade union question (winter of 1920-21) Stalin and Zinoviev had again attempted to put into circulation references to the non-Bolshevik past of Trotsky. In answer to this, the less restrained leaders of the opposite camp had reminded Zinoviev of his conduct during the

period of the October insurrection. Thinking over from all sides on his death-bed how relations would crystallize in the party without him, Lenin could not but foresee that Stalin and Zinoviev would try to use my non-Bolshevik past in order to mobilize the old Bolsheviks against me. The testament tries incidentally to forestall this danger, too. Here is what it says immediately after its characterization of Stalin and Trotsky: "I will not further criticize the other members of the Central Committee in their personal traits. I will merely recall the fact that the October episode of Zinoviev and Kamenev was not an accident, but that it may be as little used against them personally as non-Bolshevism against Trotsky."

This remark that the October episode "was not an accident" pursues a perfectly definite goal: to warn the party that in critical circumstances Zinoviev and Kamenev may again reveal their lack of firmness. This warning stands, however, in no relation with the remark about Trotsky. In regard to him it is merely recommended not to use his non-Bolshevik past as an argument *ad hominem*. I therefore had no motive for putting the question which Radek attributes to me. Ludwig's guess that my heart "stopped beating" also falls to the ground. Least of all did the testament set out to make a guiding rôle in the party work difficult for me. As we shall see below, it pursued an exactly opposite aim.

#### *"The Mutual Relations of Stalin and Trotsky"*

The central position in the testament, which fills two typewritten pages, is devoted to a characterization of the mutual relations of Stalin and Trotsky: "the two outstanding leaders of the present Central Committee". Having remarked upon the "outstanding ability" of Trotsky ("the most able man in the present Central Committee") Lenin immediately points out his adverse traits: "excessive self-confidence" and "excessive absorption in the purely administrative side of things". However serious the faults indicated may be in themselves, they do not—I remark in passing—bear any relation to "underestimating the peasants" or "lacking faith in the inner forces of the revolution", or any other of the inventions of the epigones in recent years.

On the other side Lenin writes: "Stalin, having become general secretary, has concentrated an enormous power in his hands, and I am not sure that he always knows how to use this power with sufficient prudence." It is not a question here of the political influence of Stalin, which at that period was insignificant, but of the administrative power which he had concentrated in his hands, "having become general secretary". This is a very exact and carefully weighed formula: we shall return to it later.

The testament insists upon an increase of the number of members of the Central Committee to fifty, even to one hundred, in order that with this compact pressure it may restrain the centrifugal tendencies in the Political Bureau. This organization proposal has still the appearance of a neutral guarantee against personal conflicts. But only ten days later it seemed to Lenin inadequate, and he added a supplementary proposal which also gave to the whole document its final physiognomy: ". . . I propose to the comrades that they devise measures for removing Stalin from his position, and appoint to this post another man who in all other respects\* is distinguished from comrade Stalin only advantageously—namely, more patient, more loyal, more polite and more attentive to the comrades, less capricious, etc."

During the days when the testament was dictated, Lenin was still trying to give to his critical appraisal of Stalin as restrained an expression as possible. In the coming weeks his tone would become sharper and sharper right up to the last hour when his voice ceased forever. But even in the testament enough is said to motivate the demand for a change of general secretary: along with rudeness and capriciousness, Stalin is accused of *lack of loyalty*. At this point the characterization becomes a heavy indictment.

As will appear later, the testament could not have been a surprise to Stalin. But this did not soften the blow. Upon his first acquaintance with the document, in the secretariat, in the circle of his closest associates, Stalin let fly a phrase which gave quite unconcealed expression to his real feelings toward the author of

\*We must not forget that the culties in places; but the testament was dictated and not thought is completely clear. corrected; hence stylistic diff-

the testament. The conditions under which this phrase spread to wide circles, and above all the inimitable quality of the reaction itself, is in my eyes an unqualified guarantee of the authenticity of the episode. Unfortunately this winged phrase can not be quoted in print.

The concluding sentence of the testament shows unequivocally on which side in Lenin's opinion the danger lay. To remove Stalin—just him and him only—meant to cut him off from the apparatus, to withdraw from him the possibility of pressing on the long arm of the lever, to deprive him of all that power which he had concentrated in his hands in this office. Who, then, should be named general secretary? Someone who, having the positive qualities of Stalin, should be more patient, more loyal, less capricious. This was the phrase which struck home most sharply to Stalin. Lenin obviously did not consider him irreplaceable, since he proposed that we seek a more suitable person for his post. In tendering his resignation, as a matter of form, the general secretary capriciously kept repeating: "Well, I really am rude . . . Ilych suggested that you find another who would differ from me *only* in greater politeness. Well, try to find him." "Never mind," answered the voice of one of Stalin's then friends. "We are not afraid of rudeness. Our whole party is rude, proletarian." A drawing-room conception of politeness is here indirectly attributed to Lenin. As to the accusation of inadequate loyalty, neither Stalin nor his friends had a word to say. It is perhaps not without interest that the supporting voice came from A. P. Smirnov, then People's Commissar of Agriculture, but now under the ban as a Right oppositionist. Politics knows no gratitude.

Radek, who was then still a member of the Central Committee, sat beside me during the reading of the testament. Yielding easily to the influence of the moment and lacking inner discipline, Radek took instant fire from the testament and leaned to me with the words, "Now they won't dare go against you." I answered him, "On the contrary, they will have to go the limit, and moreover as quickly as possible." The very next days of that thirteenth congress demonstrated that my judgment was the more sober. The trinity were compelled to forestall the possible effect of the testament by placing the party as soon as possible before a *fait accompli*. The very reading of the document to the local delegations with "outsiders" not admitted, was converted into a downright struggle against me. The leaders of the delegations in their reading would swallow some words, emphasize others, and offer commentaries to the effect that the letter had been written by a man seriously ill and under the influence of trickery and intrigue. The machine was already in complete control. The mere fact that the trinity was able to transgress the will of Lenin, refusing to read his letter at the congress, sufficiently characterizes the composition of the congress and its atmosphere. The testament did not weaken or put a stop to the inner struggle, but on the contrary lent it a disastrous tempo.

#### *Lenin's Attitude Toward Stalin*

Politics is persistent. It can press into its service even those who demonstratively turn their backs to it. Ludwig writes: "Stalin followed Lenin fervently up to his death." If this phrase expressed merely the mighty influence of Lenin upon his pupils, including Stalin, there could be no argument. But Ludwig means something more. He wants to suggest an exceptional closeness to the teacher of this particular pupil. As an especially precious testimony Ludwig cites upon this point the words of Stalin himself: "I am only a pupil of Lenin, and my aim is to be his worthy pupil." It is too bad when a professional psychologist operates uncritically with a banal phrase, the conventional modesty of which contains not one atom of intimate content. Ludwig becomes here a mere transmitter of the official legend created during these recent years. I doubt if he has the remotest idea of the contradictions into which his indifference to facts has brought him. If Stalin actually was following Lenin up to his death, how then explain the fact that the last document dictated by Lenin, on the eve of his second stroke, was a curt letter to Stalin, a few lines in all, *breaking off all personal and comradely relations?* This single event of its kind in the life of Lenin, a sharp break with one of his close associates, must have had very serious psychological causes, and would be, to say the least, incomprehensible in relation to a pupil who "fervently" fol-

lowed his teacher up to the end. Yet we hear not a word about this from Ludwig.

When Lenin's letter breaking with Stalin became widely known among the leaders of the party, the trinity having by that time fallen to pieces, Stalin and his close friends found no other way out but to revive that same old story about the incompetent condition of Lenin. As a matter of fact the testament, as also the letter breaking off relations, was written in those months (December 1922, to the beginning of March 1923) during which Lenin in a series of programmatic articles gave the party the most mature fruits of his thinking. That break with Stalin did not drop out of a clear sky. It flowed from a long series of preceding conflicts, both matters of principle and upon practical matters, and it sets forth the whole bitterness of these conflicts in a tragic light.

Lenin undoubtedly valued highly certain of Stalin's traits. His firmness of character, tenacity, stubbornness, even ruthlessness and craftiness—qualities necessary in a war and consequently in its general staff. But Lenin was far from thinking that these gifts, even on an extraordinary scale, were sufficient for the leadership of the party and the state. Lenin saw in Stalin a revolutionist, but not a statesman in the grand style. Theory had too high an importance for Lenin in a political struggle. Nobody considered Stalin a theoretician, and he himself up to 1924 never made any pretense to this vocation. On the contrary, his weak theoretical grounding was too well known in a small circle. Stalin is not acquainted with the West; he does not know any foreign language. He was never brought into the discussion of problems of the international workers' movement. And finally Stalin was not—this is less important, but not without significance—either a writer or an orator in the proper sense of the word. His articles, in spite of all the author's caution, are loaded not only with theoretic blunders and naïvetés, but also with crude sins against the Russian language. Stalin's value in the eyes of Lenin was all comprised in the sphere of party administration and machine manœuvring. But even here Lenin made substantial exceptions, and these increased during the last period.

Lenin despised idealistic moralizings. But this did not prevent him from being a rigorist of revolutionary morals—of those rules of conduct, that is, which he considered necessary for the success of the revolution and the creation of the new society. In Lenin's rigorism, which flowed freely and naturally from his character, there was not a drop of pedantry or bigotry or stiffness. He knew people too well and took them as they were. He would combine the faults of some with the virtues of others, and sometimes also with their faults, and never cease to watch keenly what came of it. He knew also that times change, and we with them. The party had risen with one jump from the underground to the height of power. This created for each of the old revolutionists a startlingly sharp change in personal situation and in relations with others. What Lenin discovered in Stalin under these new conditions he cautiously but clearly remarked in his testament: a lack of loyalty and an inclination to the abuse of power. Ludwig missed these hints. It is in them, however, that one can find the key to the relations between Lenin and Stalin in the last period.

Lenin was not only a theoretician and technician of the revolutionary dictatorship, but also a vigilant guardian of its moral foundations. Every hint at the use of power for personal interests kindled threatening fires in his eyes. "How is that any better than bourgeois parliamentarism?" he would ask, to express more effectively his choking indignation. And he would not infrequently add on the subject of parliamentarism one of his rich definitions. Stalin meanwhile was more and more broadly and indiscriminately using the possibilities of the revolutionary dictatorship for the recruiting of people personally obligated and devoted to him. In his position as general secretary he became the dispenser of favor and fortune. Here the foundation was laid for an inevitable conflict. *Lenin gradually lost his moral trust in Stalin.* If you understand that basic fact, then all the particular episodes of the last period take their places accordingly, and give a real and not a false picture of the attitude of Lenin to Stalin.

#### *Sverdlov and Stalin As Types of Organisers.*

In order to accord the testament its proper place in the development of the party, it is here necessary to make a digression. Up to

the spring of 1919 the chief organizer of the party had been Sverdlov. He did not have the name of general secretary, a name which was then not yet invented, but he was that in reality. Sverdlov died at the age of 34 in March 1919, from the so-called Spanish fever. In the spread of the civil war and the epidemic, mowing people down right and left, the party hardly realized the weight of this loss. In two funeral speeches Lenin gave an appraisal of Sverdlov which throws a reflected but very clear light also upon his later relations with Stalin. "In the course of our revolution, in its victories," Lenin said, "it fell to Sverdlov to express more fully and more wholly than anybody else the very essence of the proletarian revolution." Sverdlov was "before all and above all an organizer". From a modest underground worker, neither theoretician nor writer, there grew up in a short time "an organizer who acquired unimpeachable authority, an organizer of the whole Soviet power in Russia, and an organizer of the work of the party unique in his understanding". Lenin had no taste for the exaggerations of jubilee or funeral panegyrics. His appraisal of Sverdlov was at the same time a characterization of the task of the organizer: "Only thanks to the fact that we had such an organizer as Sverdlov were we able in war times to work as though we had *not one single conflict worth speaking of.*"

So it was in fact. In conversations with Lenin in those days we remarked more than once, and with ever renewed satisfaction, one of the chief conditions of our success: the unity and solidarity of the governing group. In spite of the dreadful pressure of events and difficulties, the novelty of the problems, and sharp practical disagreements occasionally bursting out, the work proceeded with extraordinary smoothness and friendliness, and without interruptions. With a brief word we would recall episodes of the old revolutions. "No, it is better with us." "This alone guarantees our victory." The solidarity of the center had been prepared by the whole history of Bolshevism, and was kept up by the unquestioned authority of the leaders, and above all of Lenin. But in the inner mechanics of this unexampled unanimity the chief technician had been Sverdlov. The secret of his art was simple: to be guided by the interests of the cause and that only. No one of the party

workers had any fear of intrigues creeping down from the party staff. The basis of this authority of Sverdlov's was *loyalty*.

Having tested out mentally all the party leaders, Lenin in his funeral speech drew the practical conclusion: "Such a man we can never replace, if by replacement we mean the possibility of finding one comrade combining such qualities. . . . The work which he did alone can now be accomplished only by a whole group of men who, following in his footsteps, will carry on his service." These words were not rhetorical, but a strictly practical proposal. And the proposal was carried out. Instead of a single secretary, there was appointed a collegium of three persons.

From these words of Lenin it is evident, even to those unacquainted with the history of the party, that during the life of Sverdlov Stalin played no leading rôle in the party machinery—either at the time of the October revolution or in the period of laying the foundations and walls of the Soviet state. Stalin was also not included in the first secretariat which replaced Sverdlov.

When at the tenth congress, two years after the death of Sverdlov, Zinoviev and others, not without a hidden thought of the struggle against me, supported the candidacy of Stalin for general secretary—that is, placed him *de jure* in the position which Sverdlov had occupied *de facto*—Lenin spoke in a small circle against this plan, expressing his fear that "this cook will prepare only bitter dishes". That phrase alone, taken in connection with the character of Sverdlov, shows us the differences between the two types of organizers: the one tireless in smoothing over conflicts, easing the work of the collegium, and the other a specialist in bitter dishes—not even afraid to spice them with actual poison. If Lenin did not in March 1921 carry his opposition to the limit—that is, did not appeal openly to the congress against the candidacy of Stalin—it was because the post of secretary, even though "general", had in the conditions then prevailing, with the power and influence concentrated in the Political Bureau, a strictly subordinate significance. Perhaps also Lenin, like many others, did not adequately realize the danger in time. (*To be concluded.*)

TRANSLATED BY MAX EASTMAN

PRINKIPO, December 21, 1932.

Leon TROTSKY

# Dictatorship of Party or Proletariat?

## Remarks on a Conception of the A.W.P. . . . and Others

EVER since the Russian revolution restored the idea of proletarian dictatorship to its rightful place in living Marxian doctrine, the social reformists of all varieties have condemned it as obsolete or rejected it with a contemptuous reference to its possible or exclusive applicability to Uzbecks, Bashkirs and other Asiatic Bolsheviks. In the last year, however, the titanic shock of the Austrian cataclysm has blown breaches through the democratic dogmas of official socialism and everywhere in its ranks new voices are being heard.

"The establishment of the proletarian dictatorship," declares the latest program of the American Socialist Party's "Militants Group", "is again being proclaimed by one party after another as the first step on the road to socialism." Otto Bauer has somewhat belatedly reminded himself that the "revolutionary dictatorship of the working class" ought to be established when next the opportunity is afforded in Austria. The Detroit convention of the Socialist Party voted for the idea, after which a corps of National Executive Committee lawyers, apparently oblivious of the fact that the United States Supreme Court would willingly and freely do the job for them, was sent scurrying through law libraries to find out if the dictatorship of the proletariat is constitutional. Even Mr. Norman Thomas is in the mode and dallies distantly with one of the less impolite pseudonyms for the dictatorship, workers' democracy.

If the late Elbert H. Gary could say, "We are all socialists now"—it can be said today, "We are all for the dictatorship of the proletariat now." And exactly in the same spirit. For, are we not to be permitted a meek skepticism about the sudden conversion to proletarian dictatorship on the part of many who up to yesterday were justly considered congenial Right wingers? Alas, the skepticism is more than warranted the minute one looks a line further

than the formula itself in the various new documents that multiply like rabbits.

The resolution of the "Left" wing minority at the Paris conference of the Second International last August declares itself, for example, for the "dictatorship of the revolutionary party". The Militants Group, which supported this resolution, has tardily discovered that this is a bad translation (*cf.*, their program, p. 15). It should read "the dictatorship of the revolutionary *classes*". Which classes? The proletariat and what other? To muddle up what is already obscure, we are told further that proletarian democracy "is the only guarantee for the development of the dictatorship by the revolutionary classes *into* a dictatorship of workers and peasants". Assuming for the moment that by the time this article appears it will not have been discovered that another bad translation has been made, it is not improper to ask just what is to be the content of the dictatorship by the revolutionary *classes* which, with the aid of one thing or another, is to *develop into* what is apparently something else, a dictatorship of workers and peasants.

We are further confounded by the proposal (p. 16) that the "phrase 'dictatorship of the proletariat' may not be advisable to express the ideas for which it stands . . . it is desirable to designate it by some other term, such as 'workers' democracy'". The American Workers Party thus gains an adherent, for it advances essentially the same idea in its program and discussions. But the Militants Group is not the only one. Norman Thomas (*New Leader*, May 12, 1934) shows just what can be done with this "pseudonym" for the dictatorship of the proletariat, by saying "that even in a transitional period the ideal to hold up and to work for is workers' democracy *rather than* a dictatorship of the proletariat,

which means a dictatorship of one party".\* The Militants Group program (p. 14) which is for the proletarian dictatorship (but not for the "Russian way") is, however, opposed to the "one party dictatorship for which Stalinism stands". (We shall see presently who stands for that.) One of the latter-day Militants who wisely hopped on its bandwagon at the last moment as the most effective way of saving reformism and who instantly became a prominent luminary—Haim Kantorovitch—rounds out the conception: "What we have in Russia at present is not a dictatorship of the proletariat, but a dictatorship *over* the proletariat." (*Towards Socialist Reorientation*, p. 19, Italics by H. K.)†

So they are all for one kind of dictatorship of the proletariat or another, just as even Morris Hillquit was in 1921 when he cleverly adjusted himself to the spirit of the day in order to save the spirit of yesterday. But they all recoil like one man from the Medusa: "dictatorship of the party", or "dictatorship of one party". (The Militants Group proposes the re-legalization of the Mensheviks in Russia!) To some, that is pure Bolshevism. Others, who wrap themselves in a few shreds of Bolshevism against the winds of Left wing criticism, shrewdly make the idea seem odious by calling it Stalinism.

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The hostility to a dictatorship of the party is shared by the American Workers Party. In its open letter to the Revolutionary Policy Committee of the Socialist Party it assails the Stalinists for their "revisionist identification of workers' democracy with party dictatorship". In the discussion session between its sub-committee and the Communist League of America's (June 6, 1934), a warm polemic developed because of our refusal to accept their standpoint on this question. Now, the dictatorship in all its aspects and implications remains the fundamental question of the program. The conception of comrades Budenz, Burnham and Hook was not only that the dictatorship of the proletariat and the dictatorship of the party are not identical (which they are not, to be sure), but that they exclude each other, the latter producing the degeneration of the former; that there is an *immanent contradiction and conflict* between the two. Our own standpoint was not only gratuitously compared with Stalin's, but we were confidently challenged to present and defend it.

It is not in the spirit of accepting a challenge that we intend to do precisely that, but more out of consideration for the obviously urgent need of establishing clarity in this highly important question, mindful not only of the A. W. P. position but also of the position of those thinking socialists who no longer shy away from either the phrase or the idea of the proletarian dictatorship (even in America).

Is the dictatorship of the proletariat identical with the dictatorship of the party? Obviously not. That would be as absurd as to ask if the proletariat itself is identical with its party. Did any representative Bolshevik ever entertain such an idea, before or after Lenin's death? Never, to our knowledge. In 1922, the eleventh congress of the Russian Communist Party "especially underscored" the resolution of the eighth congress, in 1919, on the mutual relations between party and Soviet organs: "The functions of the party collective must in no case be confounded with the powers of the state organs, such as are the Soviets. Such a confusion would yield disastrous results, particularly in the military field. The party endeavors to direct the activity of the Soviets, but not to replace them." (*Russische Korrespondenz*, April-May 1922, p. 283.)

—Then it is not a dictatorship of the party, said the Bolsheviks!

—Not so fast! It is a dictatorship of the proletariat. So the Bolsheviks said, and so indeed it was. But never did they put the

\*Unless otherwise indicated, all italics are my own. M. S.

†Kantorovitch's Militants demand the defense of the Soviet Union, where a dictatorship *over* the proletariat prevails. Why? What class is dictating over the proletariat? What system of property relations does this class represent and defend,

well or ill? In any other country where there exists a dictatorship *over* the proletariat (Italy, Germany, France, United States) we regard it as simple social patriotism to "defend the fatherland". Loose and ambiguous language does not always mean a loose mind; sometimes it means an extremely "astute" one.

question: dictatorship of the proletariat *or* dictatorship of the party, dictatorship of the proletariat *versus* dictatorship of the party. They left that kind of metaphysic to two classes of opponents: the reformists, led by Kautsky, and the ultra-Leftist, semi-anarchist or semi-syndicalist groups, led by the German Communist Labor Party. The reason why they never *counterposed* the two will be seen from the writings of Lenin and other authoritative spokesmen. *Magister dixit*—that does not prove the validity of one side of the argument or the other. Not necessarily or at all times. But this time what is involved is precisely what these authentic teachers did say on the question. Consequently we permit ourselves to confine the dispute essentially to quotations from Lenin, Trotsky and others so as to establish whether the dictatorship of the party is Leninist or "revisionist", i. e., a Stalinist innovation.

"The question arises:" asked one group of German ultra-Leftists in its pamphlet of 1920, "Who should be the wielder of this dictatorship; the Communist Party or the proletarian class . . . ? On principle, should we strive towards the dictatorship of the Communist Party or the dictatorship of the proletarian class?"

To which Lenin, who advised western revolutionists to praise the Bolsheviks less and learn from their experiences more, retorted: "The very posing of the question: 'Dictatorship of the party or dictatorship of the class?—Dictatorship (party) of the leaders or dictatorship (party) of the mass' is proof of a quite incredible and hopeless mental confusion. People wear themselves out in order to concoct something extraordinary, and in their intellectual zeal make themselves ridiculous." (*Collected Works*, Vol. XXI, p. 225 [German edition].)

At the end of the same year, in a speech to the party fraction in the eighth all-Russian Soviet congress, Lenin dealt with exactly the same question from a somewhat different angle: "The dictatorship of the proletariat cannot be realized by means of an unbroken organization, for not only with us, in one of the most backward capitalist countries, but in all the other capitalist countries as well, the proletariat still remains so split up, so bowed down, here and there so corrupted (particularly by imperialism in the separate countries), that an all-embracing organization of the proletariat cannot directly realize its dictatorship. The dictatorship can be realized only by that vanguard which has absorbed the revolutionary energy of the class. In this manner there arises to a certain extent a system of cog-wheels. That is what the mechanism of the foundation of the dictatorship of the proletariat looks like, the essence of the transition from capitalism to Communism." (*Selected Works, The Struggle for the Social Revolution*, p. 590. [German edition].)

Again, in his speech to the educational congress held shortly after the revolution, Lenin declared: "When we are reproached for establishing the dictatorship of a single party and the single socialist front is proposed to us, we reply: 'Yes, dictatorship of a single party and on that score we shall not yield, for it is this party which, in the course of many years, has won its place as vanguard of the whole industrial proletariat.'" (G. Zinoviev, *Le Léninisme*, p. 303.)

In this spirit, the twelfth congress of the Russian Communists adopted a resolution stating: "The dictatorship of the working class can be secured in no other way than through the form of the dictatorship of its advanced vanguard, that is, the Communist party."

In far greater detail, we have the view of Trotsky, written down in a work which enjoyed the official approval of the Russian Communists and the Communist International as well as a wide distribution in several languages. "The exceptional rôle of the Communist party in the victorious proletarian revolution is quite comprehensible. The question is of the dictatorship of the class. Into the composition of the class there enter various strata, heterogeneous moods, different levels of development. The dictatorship, however, presupposes unity of will, direction, action. Along what other road then can it be attained? The revolutionary supremacy of the proletariat presupposes within the proletariat itself the political supremacy of a party, with a clear program of action and an inviolable internal discipline.

"The policy of coalitions contradicts internally the régime of the revolutionary dictatorship. We have in view, not coalitions with bourgeois parties, of which of course there can be no talk, but a

coalition of Communists with other 'Socialist' organizations, representing different stages of backwardness and prejudice of the laboring masses.

"The revolution swiftly undermines all that is unstable, wears out all that is artificial; the contradictions glossed over in a coalition are swiftly revealed under the pressure of revolutionary events. We have had an example of this in Hungary, where the dictatorship of the proletariat assumed the political form of a coalition of the Communists with the compromisers decked in red. The coalition soon broke up. The Communist party paid heavily for the revolutionary incompetence and political treachery of its companions. It is quite obvious that for the Hungarian Communists it would have been more advantageous to have come to power later, after having afforded the Left compromisers the possibility of compromising themselves once and for all. How far this was possible, is another question. In any case, the coalition with the compromisers only temporarily hid the relative weakness of the Hungarian Communists, at the same time prevented them from growing stronger at the expense of the compromisers, and brought them to disaster.

"The same idea is sufficiently illustrated by the example of the Russian revolution. The coalition of the Bolsheviks with the Left Social Revolutionists, which lasted for several months, ended with a bloody conflict. True, the reckoning for the coalition had to be paid, not so much by us Communists as by our perfidious companions. It is obvious that such a coalition, in which we were the stronger side, and therefore were not taking too many risks in the attempt to make use of the extreme Left wing of petty bourgeois democracy for the duration of an historical stretch of the road, tactically must be completely justified. But nonetheless, the Left S. R. episode quite clearly shows that the régime of compromises, agreements, mutual concessions—for that is what a coalition régime is—cannot last long in an epoch in which situations change with extreme rapidity, and in which supreme unity in point of view is necessary in order to render possible unity of action.

"We have more than once been accused of having substituted for the dictatorship of the Soviets the dictatorship of our party. Yet it can be said with complete justice that *the dictatorship of the Soviets became possible only by means of the dictatorship of the party*. It is thanks to the clarity of its theoretical vision and its firm revolutionary organization that the party assured the Soviets the possibility of becoming transformed from amorphous parliaments of labor into the apparatus of the domination of labor. In this 'substitution' of the power of the party for the power of the working class there is nothing accidental, and in reality there is absolutely no substitution at all. The Communists express the fundamental interests of the working class. It is quite natural that, in the period in which history places these interests on the order of the day in all their magnitude, the Communists should become the recognized representatives of the working class as a whole. . . . The Kautskyans accuse the Soviet power of being the dictatorship of a 'section' of the working class. 'If only,' they say, 'the dictatorship was carried out by the *whole* class!' It is not easy to understand what they actually have in mind by this. The dictatorship of the proletariat, by its innermost essence, signifies the direct domination of the revolutionary vanguard, which rests upon the heavy masses, and where necessary, obliges the backward rear to conform with the head." (*Terrorismus und Kommunismus*, p. 90ff.)

By this time a fairly accurate idea should exist as to where the "revision" is located, or rather where it is *not* located. Now let us inquire into where a revision, without quotation marks, actually did occur. The results will not prove uninteresting, and to some—surprising.

In 1924, a brochure called *The Results of the Thirteenth Congress of the Russian Communist Party* commented on the phrase "dictatorship of the party" as follows: "I remember that in one of the resolutions of our congress, it even appears, in the resolution of the twelfth congress, such an expression was permitted, naturally as an oversight [!] . . . Then Lenin is wrong in speaking of the dictatorship of the proletariat and not of the dictatorship of the party," concludes the author with that irony peculiarly his own.

The author is no other than the same Stalin to whom Kantorovitch and others, with such cruel injustice, attribute the introduction into Soviet life of the idea of party dictatorship as against the

dictatorship of the proletariat! Had they said black is white they could not be further from the truth.

Immediately after the appearance of the brochure, Zinoviev penned a stiff reply in which the Lenin position was reproduced and which, with the approbation of the overwhelming majority of the members of the Central Committee and the Political Bureau, appeared in *Pravda* (No. 190). By 1926, however, not only had Zinoviev joined with Trotsky in the famous Opposition Bloc but Stalin had gained sufficient control of the party apparatus to attack more impudently and with greater impunity every fundamental idea for which Lenin and the party ever stood. Stalin now took the offensive on the question and raked Zinoviev fore and aft for his views on the dictatorship of the proletariat and the party, especially as expressed in his book *Leninism*, compiled from lectures delivered in 1924 which were, in their time, anonymously directed at Stalin. The polemic can be found, among other places, in the speeches delivered by the two opponents at the November-December 1926 plenary session of the executive committee of the Communist International (seventh plenum).

The theoretical import of the dispute is far from trifling, but the practical results of Stalin's position are of even greater concern. Stalin's standpoint did not mean, as might be superficially indicated, that he stood for the rule of million-headed masses instead of its "undemocratic usurpation" by a comparatively tiny party. Just the opposite tendency should be discerned. After mechanically counterposing the one to the other, Stalin has strangled Soviet democracy by strangling party democracy. The Soviets themselves have been hollowed out into shells because the Stalinist apparatus has systematically clubbed the party into an amorphous, impotent pulp. (The reformist elucubrations about Stalin's "dictatorship of the party" are positively ludicrous, even in the sense in which it is used; it is precisely the party that Stalin has crushed!) The indispensable pre-requisite for the reestablishment and the widest extension of Soviet democracy, for the reconsolidation of the proletarian dictatorship which Stalinism has undermined, is nothing short of the rebuilding and restoration to its former supremacy of the revolutionary Communist party in the U. S. S. R.!

To probable critics:

Shouldn't the real (?!) power lie with the Soviets, after all? Yes, but not *as against* the revolutionary party (see, Germany and Austria in 1918, Cronstadt, Miliukov's slogan: "Soviets without Communists"). The Soviet system is the political form of the dictatorship of the proletariat which is firmly realizable only through its vanguard, the party.

Isn't a Soviet-party conflict theoretically possible, and in that case who would submit to whom? All sorts of things are theoretically possible; consequently, "theoretically" the party would submit and seek to convince the Soviets.

Aren't you presupposing an ideal, incorruptible revolutionary party, which you really cannot guarantee? We guarantee nothing in the class struggle. If the party degenerates, fight inside for its regeneration; if that becomes hopeless, fight to build a new one. Without it—no dictatorship of the party, nor of the proletariat; no Soviet democracy—only the triumph of reaction.

How can you one-party-dictatorship people win the socialists when you tell them that after the revolution their party will be suppressed? (The Stalinists often ask us how we can propose a united front with the party that betrayed the workers!) We do not, however, tell the socialists anything of the kind. The revolutionary dictatorship will suppress only those who take up arms against it—the Bolsheviks never did more than that in Russia (see, Trotsky's article in 1932 on Socialist and Communist relations in the struggle to seize power in Germany, *The Militant*, No. 168.)

How can you be so sure that events, let us say, in the United States will follow the Russian pattern in such details? 1. It is not the "Russian" pattern; 2. The Hungarian revolution broke its neck on this "detail"; 3. History is not for professors, but something to learn from, and truth being always concrete, the lessons to be drawn from the history of the last seventeen years, at least, of revolutionary struggle lead to certain inescapable conclusions. We leave it to Kantorovitch to mumble (at this late date!) about the "possibility" of following several "non-Russian" roads to power. We follow Lenin. Max SHACHTMAN

# The Socialist Party Convention

IT HAS been remarked before that the ferment which heralds the struggle to solve the crisis in the international labor movement is now manifested conspicuously in the camp of social democracy. The Detroit convention graphically demonstrated that this international trend has struck the Socialist Party of America with full force.

The influence of events impresses itself on the labor movement in peculiar and seemingly contradictory ways. Shut out of the Comintern by the frightful and unprecedented bureaucratization and ideological decay of recent years, the discussion of new paths is breaking out in the socialist parties. The Comintern stagnates and dies before our eyes. The international organization which arose out of the crisis of the world war and the Russian revolution, having failed in its mission, is passing from the scene amidst incredible corruption and degeneration. No doubt further developments of the crisis will bring cataclysmic eruptions in the Stalinist parties also. But, for the present, new life asserts itself most prominently in the social democracy.

In many respects we are witnessing today a repetition of certain peculiarities which marked the first emergence of American Communism. The official Communist party is reenacting the rôle of the I.W.W. This organization, which had stood in advance of the S. P., failed to react to the great international events of war and revolution. The new Left wing, which was destined to become the Communist party, took shape in the S. P. and passed over the head of the I.W.W., leaving it behind. A striking analogy is to be seen today. There is one important difference however. An independent body of Communists, armed with the program of the future movement, has long since separated itself from decaying Stalinism and is in a position to exert an independent influence on the development of the new movement. Their task is to see where the living movement is and to strive to influence its course. This obligates them at the moment to devote special attention to the ferment in the S. P. The Detroit convention revealed the depth of this ferment more clearly than before.

The strong sweep of radical sentiment in the ranks of the Socialist party was officially registered at Detroit. At the same time the inadequacy of all the present radical groupings in the party was cruelly demonstrated. The convention marked the definite official shift of the party from social reformism to Centrism, even if it is a diluted form of European Centrism. The happenings at Detroit prepared the way for an accelerated development of the genuine Left wing forces. And, finally, the Detroit convention met under the predominating influence of international events. Its whole course, from beginning to end, was decisively affected by the trend of developments in the European movement. Here, once again, the determining rôle of internationalism in the labor movement was made manifest.

The reaction of the American Socialist party to international events, and to the devastating crisis at home, revealed several distinct groupings in this once more or less homogenous body of social reformism. The Old Guard, who control all the important and rich institutions and are in the habit of ruling, fought a desperate battle at the convention. They appeared there in struggle for the first time without the leadership of Hillquit, and the loss they have suffered was painfully evident. Hillquit, in such a situation, would have tacked and manoeuvred and cheated the convention majority with a compromise. Without the adroit leadership of Hillquit, the Old Guard was able only to bludgeon.

The leaders of the Old Guard, by far the outstanding personalities of the convention with the exception of Thomas, impressed one as a group of Tories who have learned nothing and forgotten nothing and who are incapable of recognizing the frightful debacle that has been suffered by social reformism in Europe. They are old and aging men, settled in life, well satisfied with the *status quo*. They gave the impression of wanting everything to remain as it is in the Socialist party, and in social life also. They are grey, hard-faced men. "Socialism" is their business, and it has paid. They are getting their socialism now. They are mostly lawyers or officials, with lucrative positions, salaries, fees and other fat emoluments which cushion their sacrifices for the cause and enable them to live comfortable, middle-class lives. They enjoy honors and run

no risks. The prospects of a disruption of this idyllic situation arouses in them sentiments of indignation. This broke out in their voices every time they spoke.

They are ready men on the floor, fluent speakers, skilled debaters, dogged fighters for their own interests. From their die-hard attitude at the convention, to say nothing of the furious offensive they have launched to overthrow its decisions in the party referendum, any grown-up person could understand that the leaders of the Old Guard will never give up their positions, the institutions they control or their way of living. They will live in the same party with the faltering amateurs of the "Militant" group, and suffer the pious exhortations of Norman Thomas, only so long as they are left with their positions and their possessions.

The term "Militants" is a very loose and decidedly inappropriate name for the new party majority established at Detroit. If the term "militant" means fighter, the Old Guard deserve it more. The "Militants" would better be described as combinationists. Horse-trading to line up votes for the National Executive Committee was their principal occupation at the convention. Lacking dynamic personalities and leaders, except for Thomas, and making a miserable showing in the forensic conflicts with the Old Guard, they nevertheless did an effective job of vote-wangling behind the scenes.

Among the majority which they patched together were delegates of every type and tendency. There were the New York and Chicago "Militants"—typical Centrists. There were the Municipal Socialists from Milwaukee, who were primarily interested, as one delegate expressed it, in "overhead sewers and steam-heated sidewalks". There were trade union bureaucrats such as Krzycki, Vice-President of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, and Graham, President of the Montana Federation of Labor—officials who would risk their positions by getting crossways with Hillman and Green as readily as you would give up your right eye. There were old "post-office socialists" from the hinterland, smelling faintly of moth balls. There were the Christian Pacifists, such as Norman Thomas and Devere Allen. And, in this motley assemblage—that constituted the convention majority in Detroit—there was included the Revolutionary Policy Committee which had raised the flag of the dictatorship of the proletariat a short while before.

The R. P. C. was under fire for the first time at Detroit. There it appeared as a weak, amateurish and ineffective group which was unable to grasp its opportunity or to measure up to the expectations which had been aroused by its manifesto. 25 to 30 delegates, it was reported, were ready to follow the leadership of the R.P.C. in a principled fight. Instead of concentrating on that, they got involved in caucus manoeuvres with the "Militants" for a place on the National Executive Committee. A fatal error which ended in a miserable fiasco for the R.P.C. In the end they got their representative on the N.E.C. But for that they gave up their independent position and never presented it to the convention. A wonderful bargain—like that of the farmer who traded his farm to a confidence man for a half interest in the City Hall.

The political instability of the majority of the convention was shown in the fights on the floor over the three main questions: The International Report, the Trade Union Question and the "Declaration of Principles". The Militants didn't carry a single one of these fights to victory on the basis of their pre-convention program. Their resolution of the international report was cut to pieces by an amendment of Thomas. On the trade union question they capitulated before the offensive of the Old Guard. The famous declaration of principles, as it was presented and adopted, was primarily a document of militant pacifism.

An interesting debate developed around the international report, originally slated for the central place in the convention. The resolution proposed to endorse the report of the majority of the American delegation at Paris—supporting the standpoint of the Centrist majority there—and to declare this to be the official policy guiding the work of the American party. The Old Guard attacked the resolution in the name of "democratic socialism" and already began to mutter their threats about a split. Mayor Hoan of Milwaukee, who was to combine with the Militants in the majority bloc, testified to his interest in revolutionary internationalism as

follows: "I don't give a hoot in hell which report is adopted. . . . Only let's not get excited or bitter about it . . . for my part, I'm in favor of not sending any more international delegates if they come back here and stir up trouble in the party." As the debate came to a climax Thomas came forward with his amendment to strike out that paragraph which committed the American party to the policy supported by a majority of its delegation at the Paris conference of the Second International. This amendment was carried by a majority of delegates present. On the roll call according to membership represented, the entire resolution was defeated.

Here, early in the convention, Thomas appeared in the rôle which he hoped to play at Detroit and afterwards. His aim was to stand somewhat above the factions, to conciliate and compromise and keep peace in the family. But in this attempt he encounters the stubborn intransigence of the Old Guard. They want no mediator between themselves and anything that suggests radicalism. They want "democratic socialism" without any radical frills or phrases. Besides, they hate the pious idealism of Thomas. They envy him his popularity and moral influence and do not wish to add to it.

The debate on the trade union question was a real test of the S. P. and especially of the convention majority. The result was a sorry picture of timidity and cowardice. The trade union resolution proper was a routine declaration that did not touch the vital question of attitude to the treacherous officialdom of the A. F. of L. In the resolution on the N.R.A. and Socialism, however, one mild paragraph of criticism was smuggled in. It read as follows:

"The N.R.A. has also shown fundamental weaknesses in the American labor movement. It has shown up more clearly than any other event the obsolete ideology of the A. F. of L. The many instances in which leaders have counselled workers against striking or even ordered them back to work in the face of an overwhelming indication by the membership of a desire to strike, has indicated their abandonment of the belief that unions are fighting organizations. It has shown that inadequacy of the A. F. of L. structure in organizational work and the positive harm of the craft form of organization."

But even this plaintive bleat at the labor agents of capital was too much. The Old Guard launched a ferocious offensive at this mild criticism of their blood brothers, and in this offensive they were joined by a heavy section of the "allies" of the Militants. "Don't attack the unions," they shouted in chorus, conveniently identifying the unions with the bureaucracy. "What the trade unions want of us," said Vladeck, "is not advice but service. . . . The leaders are often more radical than the rank and file." Judge Panken took off on a flight of oratorical denunciation of the offending paragraph and warned the convention of disaster for the party if it ventured to make faces at the labor skates. Mayor McLevy of Bridgeport declared the S. P. should "stop telling the trade unions what to do. Let's attend to our own political business and let them attend to theirs", said the Mayor.

Krzycki and Graham, part of the majority that voted for the "Declaration of Principles", broke over the traces on this question that brought principle too close to home. Krzycki prophesied the doom of the party if this innocuous paragraph was left in the resolution. "I can't speak to the unions any more if you carry this," he said. Most entertaining of all were the fulminations of Graham—later put on the N.E.C. by a deal with the Militants—against the "college professors" and other high-brows who want to violate the independence of the trade unions. "These monkeys don't know what they're talking about," he shouted, in language not too professorial, to the accompaniment of loud applause from the Old Guard and the trade union officials. It was a field day for trade union conservatives. Thomas, retreating under the barrage, declined to speak on the question except to express agreement with "what has been said and well said". The Militants who had sponsored the paragraph, made a sorry showing in the debate. They appeared to be as frightened by the ferocity of the attack as a group of boys caught stealing apples in a private orchard. They ran for cover, and the debate ended with the announcement that the Resolutions Committee had withdrawn the contested paragraph.

It was a miserable and shameful capitulation on the key question of proletarian policy. The real caliber of the Militants was well demonstrated in this skirmish. For the trade union question is

precisely the question which puts theories and general declarations to the concrete test and brings immediate repercussions in the class struggle. All the great questions—war, Fascism, revolution—converge on this point. Without a real basis in the trade unions, conquered in relentless struggle against the reactionary officialdom, no serious resistance to war and Fascism is conceivable, not to speak of the revolutionary overthrow of capitalist society which rests on its supports in the labor movement represented by the conservative bureaucracy.

The feverish internal life of the Socialist party is centered now on the campaign of the Old Guard to overthrow the "Declaration of Principles" adopted at Detroit. To a revolutionist who takes formulations seriously, the clamor raging around this Declaration seems entirely uncalled for. There is an element of unreality, even of burlesque, in the exaggerated denunciations poured out on this document, which reminds one of the campaign of the super-reactionaries against such "dangerous Reds" as the editors of the *New Republic* and the director of the American Civil Liberties Union.

This Declaration in reality is pretty thin soup. It is not a document of revolutionary Marxism on the question of war, as has been maintained, but rather of militant pacifism. It is the program of the pacifist preachers, not of the revolutionary workers. The war section under dispute was written by Devere Allen, a prominent worker in the "peace" movement and an avowed pacifist. In his speech for the Declaration he announced himself as "a pacifist and proud to bear the name". As for the other sections of the Declaration, they are shot through and through with ambiguous formulations and characteristic Centrist bombast. A bizarre combination was assembled to make up a majority for the Declaration as a whole. It extended from the Milwaukee advocates of municipal reform to the Revolutionary Policy Committee. Everybody was for it. Except the Old Guard. They are not even radical pacifists. Thomas made the most eloquent speech for the Declaration and ended by committing himself into the hands of his Maker with the invocation, "God give me the grace to live up to it." After that there was no way to stop the stampede to carry the Declaration. By the grace of God—and a more terrestrial horse-trade for the N.E.C.—the resolution was adopted with a large majority and the S. P. shook its fist at war and Fascism. But there is nothing in the fist. Neither war nor Fascism will be impeded by it.

There were Left wing delegates at the convention—quite a few of them. But they were juggled and manoeuvred out of their rights by the caucus sharks, railroaded and denied the floor by the chairman of the day, Vladeck, who frankly stated that he was selecting speakers according to the lists prepared by the caucus leaders. One delegate, Peter Fagin of Michigan, managed after a long fight to get the floor to explain his vote and to denounce "the Centrist steam-roller in the convention which suppressed the voice of the Left wing".

The convention took no position on the Soviet Union. On this pivotal question of proletarian policy the Centrist majority simply "ducked" and referred the matter to the new N.E.C. The weakness, confusion and cowardice which is the soul of Centrism were manifested on this question with singular clarity. Does the S. P. propose to defend the Soviet Union or not? Does it support the Stalin bureaucracy? What is its standpoint on the foreign policy of the Soviet Union? Or, is it indifferent to the position of the workers' fatherland in the sphere of diplomacy? Does the S. P. demand "freedom of expression" for the counter-revolutionists in the Soviet Union or does it confine its demands to democracy for the loyal defenders of the revolution? Is the S. P. for "socialism in one country" as the guiding policy of the Soviet Union, or does it take the standpoint of revolutionary internationalism? The convention gave no answer to any of these fundamental questions; and, sad to relate, there was no other group in the convention to force an answer one way or the other. Delegates were there ready to support such a fight, but there was no one to lead them.

The Revolutionary Policy Committee was confronted at the convention with an exceptional opportunity to show its colors and establish itself firmly as a principled faction in the party. Formed only a short while ago, it rapidly developed a surprising strength. The revolutionary elements in the party took the R.P.C. leaders at their word and were ready to shove them to the front of the genuine Left wing movement. But when the opportunity came, perhaps because it came too soon, they lost (*Continued on page 32*)

# The Legend of the Vienna Commune

THE Austrian working class, especially the workers of Vienna, displayed in the February armed struggles a magnificent courage, the grim determination of their class, heroic self-abnegation. Whereas in Germany the bloody Fascist régime of Hitler was able to take over full power, the state apparatus, the press, the army, the police and immediately pounce upon the working class with unexampled bestiality without the working class offering any resistance; whereas in Germany the numerically strong Communist party and certainly the numerically even stronger Social Democratic party did not show a *single* sign of their *existence* when the firing of the German Reichstag gave the signal for the well-prepared Fascist campaign of terror against *all* labor organizations—the Austrian workers turned with arms in hand against the trailblazers of open Fascism, against Dollfuss, whose function consisted in enforcing an equilibrium “above the parties” between the Nazis driving towards power and the social democrats already driven out of even any semblance of power, an equilibrium which crumbled under the cannon balls of Floridsdorf, of Ottakring, of Simmering.

The Austrian working class, by rising with arms in hand against the bloody, burlesque hangman Dollfuss, showed the workers of the whole world how *mighty*, how *invincible* the working class *could* be would it but bethink itself in time of its own strength, and if this strength possessed a political leadership and a revolutionary organization. The Austrian working class suffered a heavy, a sanguinary defeat in its struggle. But the *defeat* of the class was not determined and sealed by the *military* defeat in the brief civil war of those February days—the defeat of the Austrian working class was only outwardly revealed by the sanguinary crushing of the February uprising. And this revelation, this defeat *in struggle* provides the working class of the whole world with a great lesson. The defeat was sealed by the policy of the Austrian social democracy, which furnished the clearest proof that a working class which follows the reformists and opportunists organizes its own defeats. The historical sense of the defeat of the Austrian workers is: the “strongest”, the “most radical”, the most influential Social Democracy led the working class which followed it almost without exception into the heaviest of defeats.

In Austria, the working class was not “split”: the Communist party never played any rôle in Austria, least of all in 1933 and 1934. The blame for the defeat can, thus, be ascribed by nobody to the “unfortunate splitting” of the proletariat, as is always the sentimental argument above all of the professional splitters and disorganizers of the working class, the reformists, the leaders of the Second International. Nowhere else on the globe was the Social Democratic party so large, in specific weight, as in Austria. This Austrian Social Democracy, with its “Austro-Marxian” theory, was considered the élite section of the Second International.

And that is just why the valorous struggle of the Austrian workers, who were defeated because they followed the Social Democracy, must under no circumstances be falsified by a Social Democratic legend.

If the heads of the Third International make the attempt, after the event, to present the struggle of the Austrian workers as a struggle under the “leadership” and under the “slogans” of the Austrian Communists, that is one of the customary empty bluffs of wretched bureaucrats who for years have known only how to limp behind *all* the workers’ struggles, but likewise after the event to take the credit in all the struggles for having “led” them.

Far more dangerous, however, is it that the heroism of the workers of Austria and Vienna, whose *struggle* can create a tradition despite the defeat, should be exploited by the Second International which has been dead as an International since August 1914, and by the bankrupt Austrian Social Democracy with its Austro-“Marxism”, for the purpose of galvanizing the corpse and of veiling the *historic crime of the Austro-Marxists*. This lies in the fact that matters could even come to such a pass as the defeat.

As a means of veiling their crime, the men of the Second International employ the traditional memory of the Paris Commune. “Long live the Commune of Vienna,” cries the chorus of the “sons

of the Communards”, from Léon Blum to Frossard, and the royal Belgian minister Vandervelde joins in the cry only to lament, a few days later, in heart-rending terms and with far more feeling, the “tragic decease” of “his” king. The Second International comes forward again as the International of ghouls. Don’t they shed tears over Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg too? Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg were murdered by Noske, Ebert, Scheidemann. The “Vienna Commune”? And the Austro-Marxist leaders as the new Communards? The same leaders who *disarmed* the Austrian workers, who “battled” Dollfuss just as the German Social Democrats battled against Brüning and Schleicher?

The shabby legerdemain of the leaders of the Second International must not be permitted. It ill becomes them, the theorists and practitioners of the coalition and toleration policy and of the disarming of the Austrian proletariat, to credit themselves with the desperate attempts at a final resistance by the Austrian workers. The dead victims of the Vienna bombardment must not galvanize and refurbish the Second International.

But there is still another and at least just as important a reason why the catchword of the “Commune of Vienna” is to be rejected: this catchword is *false*.

For in the Paris Commune it is not the *defeat* of the Paris workers that is important. It is not the massacres of the bourgeoisie of France under the protectorate of the Prussian army that gave the Commune of Paris its historical significance, but exactly the contrary. That the Parisian workers were beaten in 1871, that was not historically new. That they were beaten, however, after they had attempted to create in the Commune of Paris a *new type of state*, that it was the *first attempt at the dictatorship of the proletariat*—that is the significance of the Paris Commune.

Marx scrupulously analyzed the Paris Commune. *The Civil War in France* contains that analysis. The Commune of Paris was *above all a government of the working class*, it arose out of the *struggle* of the working class against the exploiting class, it was finally the *political form* under which the *emancipation of the working class* was realizable. In the *type of state* which the Paris Commune created, it created the model of the *proletarian state*; the bourgeois state apparatus was not “taken over”, but *smashed*.

In *State and Revolution*, Lenin carried this Marxian analysis of the Paris Commune further and deepened it by means of the experiences of the Russian revolution. When the working class studies the lessons of the Paris Commune, it is *this* side that it studies. Indeed do we commemorate the valor of the Parisian Communards, indeed do we keep alive the memory of the brutish fury of the *soldateska* of the French bourgeoisie and the joy of this class over the massacres, but that *alone* far from constitutes the significance of the Commune. Its significance is: to have realized the concrete *state form* of the proletarian dictatorship, imperfectly, feebly, provisionally, but still in such a manner that Marx and Lenin were able to unfold out of *this* experience of the living struggle one of the greatest lessons of scientific socialism.

*And this is precisely the lesson which is rejected by all the reformists, including the Austro-“Marxists”.*

Just because the Austro-“Marxists” did not transmit *this* lesson to the Austrian workers, just because they persuaded them since 1918 (no differently than the Noskes and Eberts, the Welses and Breitscheids, the Hilferdings and Kautskys, the Vanderveldes and de Mans, the Blums and Frossards, in brief: all the reformists, all the supporters of the Second International who expressed opinions on this question politically or theoretically), just because *all* of them trained up the Austrian workers in the illusion that all that is necessary in order to get “into power” is to take over the bourgeois state apparatus only in the good democratic way, with the aid of the ballot—the Austrian proletariat was defeated, just as the German proletariat was. Confused and undeveloped though the leaders of the Paris Commune were, it is precisely on *this* score that they were superior to all the Austro-Marxists: they did not stand up against the spontaneous action of the Parisian workers (like the Austro-Marxists in 1918) when they *smashed* the bourgeois state apparatus and created a new one, the *Commune*.

With the overpowering of the Viennese workers in February 1934, a balance sheet is brought to an end which must not be hidden under the phrase of the "Vienna Commune". It is a question of the balance sheet of the whole post-war policy of the Second International and its élite section, the Austro-"Marxists". But it is a question of something more. The lessons of this struggle in Austria affect the world's working class not only as a "theoretical" dispute with reformism.

With the crushing of the Austrian working class by the *Heimwehr*, the pseudo-equilibrium there is destroyed. The dispute in Austria transcends the frontiers of that state. Already all the European cabinets are uneasy, the war which everybody knows to be inevitable (and it cannot be averted unless the working class prevents it internationally by its revolution) is approaching. Who is to prevent the war? The open antagonisms and contradictions of the individual states among each other as well as within their national boundaries, the imperialist contradictions and antagonisms as well as the social, are growing and at any moment may explode the framework within which they are barely held together. Fifteen years after the conclusion of the first imperialist world war, we stand on the threshold of a cycle of new imperialist wars. Little Austria has suddenly become one of the junctions around which the war may break out. And after the German defeat of 1933, after the tremendous defeat of the German working class, which can be denied only by the most impudent, the defeat of the Austrian workers in February 1934 shows plainly enough just what the working class of Central Europe has lost. That is what makes the

Austrian experiences so important, that is why the developments must be known which led to the February struggle. Not in order to lament the neglected, not in order to wail after the event, no, but in order to *learn* for the future—the working class of the world must visualize the theory and practise of Austro-Marxism and grasp the lessons of this development and this defeat.

The revolutionary upsurge produced at the end of the first imperialist war in 1917, 1918, 1919, brought into being but one state of the type of the Paris Commune, the republic of the Soviets. Historical experience since 1871 has shown that *only* this type of state corresponds to the taking over of power by the proletariat. All the attempts to transform the bourgeois democracy into a proletarian state in a bourgeois-democratic way, peacefully, by avoiding "unnecessary sacrifices", all the reformist panaceas, utopian from start to finish (for the most part, moreover, deliberately nothing but the salvation of the capitalist system and its ruling class), all these attempts which were sincerely accepted by many workers as valid attempts, only led to a thousandfold more victims, to a hundredfold more misery, to the defeat of the working class and to bringing on a new round of wars. The international proletariat must, in a certain sense, begin again at the point where it should have begun twenty years ago. Had Vienna really become a *Commune* in 1918, 1919, 1927 or even 1933—the history of the world would have taken a different course. But Vienna did not.

That is why the Austrian experiences are so likely to contribute to an acceleration of the clarification process—that is why they must be studied.

A. MAX

# Friedrich Engels on Bimetallism

London, March 10, 1882

DEAR Mr. Bernstein!

I am availing myself of an afternoon that has set in to write to you. As regards the Virgin Mary-Isis, this is a detail into which I would be unable to enter if only because of space, Mariolatry however belonging like all hagiolatry to a far later period than the one considered by me (a time when priestly calculation in the realm of the saints reproduced for the polytheistic peasant people its many tutelary gods), and finally the derivation would have to be *proved* historically too, for which special studies are required. Likewise with the halo and moonshine.\* As for the rest, the Cult of Isis was part of the state religion in the imperial days in Rome.

*Bimetallism.* The main thing is that we, particularly after the ghastly boasting and bragging of many "leaders" about the economic superiority of our party over the bourgeois, something for which these same gentlemen are totally blameless—that we must be on our guard against laying ourselves open to such economic attacks, as these same gentlemen do so unceremoniously the minute they believe they can thereby flatter a certain type of worker, obtain an election victory or some other advantage. Just because silver is extracted in Saxony, they believe it is necessary to go in for the double standard swindle. In order to gain a couple of voters, our party is supposed to make itself awfully ridiculous in the field where its strength certainly *ought* to lie!

But that's what our Messrs. literati are. Just like the bourgeois literati they believe they have the privilege of learning nothing and of arguing about everything. They have concocted a literature for us which seeks its equal in economic ignorance, new-fangled Utopism and arrogance, and which Bismarck did us a great favor to interdict.

In the question of the double standard it is not a question today so much of the double standard in general as of a specific double standard in the ratio: gold to silver as  $15\frac{1}{2} : 1$ . This, then, to be singled out.

The double standard is rendered more impossible every day by

\*The question was the historical connection between the cult of the Virgin Mary with the Jesus child and the cult of the goddess Isis, who bears the young god Horus in her arm. It has more

than once been presumed that Mariolatry arose as an imitation of Isololatry at about the time when the statues of the latter had lost their object.—Note by EDUARD BERNSTEIN.

the fact that the value relationship of gold and silver, formerly at least approximately constant and changing only slowly, is now subjected to daily and violent fluctuations, and first of all in the direction that silver falls in value as a result of the immensely increasing production, especially in North America. The exhaustion of gold is an invention of the silver barons. But be the reason for the change in the value what it will, the fact remains, and that is above all what we have to deal with. Silver loses more and more each day the capacity of serving as a measure of value, gold retains it.

The value relationship of the two is now around  $17\frac{1}{2} : 1$ . The silver people, however, want once more to dictate to the world the old relationship of  $15\frac{1}{2} : 1$  and that is just as impossible as to maintain constantly and generally machine-spun yarn and fabrics at the price of hand-woven yarn and fabrics. The coiner's die does not determine the value of coins, it guarantees the recipient only weight and alloy, it can never transfer to  $15\frac{1}{2}$  pounds of silver the value of  $17\frac{1}{2}$ .

All this is so clearly and exhaustively dealt with in *Kapital*, chapter on money (chapter 3, pp. 72 to 120) that there is nothing more to say about it. For material with regard to the latest fluctuations, cf. Soetbeer: *Edelmetall, Produktion und Wertverhältnis*, etc. (Gotha, Perthes, 1879). Soetbeer is a first-rate authority in this field and the father of German coin reform—he advocated the "Mark" of one-third of a Taler even before 1840.

So then: if silver is coined at  $15\frac{1}{2}$  pfennig=1 pfennig gold, then it flows back into the state coffers, everybody tries to get rid of it. That was the experience of the United States with its silver dollar coined with the old content, which is worth only ninety cents, and likewise Bismarck, when he tried to put into circulation again by force the withdrawn silver Talers which had been replaced by gold.

Mr. Bank President Dechend imagines it possible by means of the double standard to pay off Germany's debts abroad in bad silver instead of full-valued gold, and thus avert every gold crisis, which would certainly be very convenient for the Reichsbank [Federal Bank] if it would only work. But the only upshot of the whole thing is that Mr. Dechend himself demonstrates that he is totally incompetent to be bank president and belongs much rather on the school bench than on the Reichsbank.

The Prussian junker would, to be sure, be likewise happy if he were able to pay back or pay interest in silver à  $15\frac{1}{2} : 1$ . And as this would have to be settled at home, such a bamboozling of the

creditors by the debtors would certainly be workable—if—the nobility could only find people to feed it silver à  $17\frac{1}{2} : 1$  so that it might pay back at  $15\frac{1}{2} : 1$ . For his own means do not permit him the repayment. But he did have to take his silver at  $15\frac{1}{2}$ , and so everything remained for him as of old.

Insofar as the German silver production is concerned, the extraction from *German* ore takes on a slighter position every year by the side of the (Rhenish) extraction from *South American* ore. 1876 total production in Germany about 280,000 pounds, of which 58,000 out of South American ore, since then increasing even higher.

That the forcing down of silver to small change must still more reduce the value of silver, is clear; the consumption of silver for other purposes is trifling compared with its consumption for

money, and therefore it does not increase because demonetization calls more silver on the market.

That England will ever introduce the double standard, is not to be thought of. No country which has the gold standard can *now* introduce the double standard again for any length of time. A *general* double standard is moreover already a general impossibility. If everybody were to agree that silver today is once more to have the value of  $15\frac{1}{2} : 1$ , they cannot alter the fact that it is worth only  $17\frac{1}{2} : 1$ , and there is absolutely nothing to be done about it. You could just as well adopt a decision that  $2 \times 2$  should be 5.

Bamberger did us any number of services in our first period of exile, he was a very decent and obliging man, the secretary of Karl von Braunschweig. Afterwards we lost sight of him. Best greetings.  
Fr. ENGELS.

## New Trends Under the New Deal

**S**TARVATION in the midst of plenty, that distinguishing mark of the capitalist system of production, is intensified a hundred-fold during a crisis. The tremendous power of organized factory production produces commodities far beyond the possibilities of control by the profit system. The anarchy of overproduction for the market brings about a catastrophic fall in prices, the shutdown of plants, widespread unemployment for the masses of workers, bankruptcies, disruption of world trade, disturbance of the monetary system, the frantic search of capitalists for new outlets and new markets. In the past the bourgeoisie overcame the general crisis by the wholesale destruction not merely of surplus commodities but of machinery and means of production, as well as by conquering new markets and intensifying exploitation of the old.

In the present crisis the old *laissez-faire* method of recovery no longer suffices. That method worked in the hey-day of "free competition" when capitalism could still expand. The present epoch has witnessed the virtual destruction of free competition, the growth of monopolies, the division of the world market among international capitalist combines. The national capitalist states, taking on a corresponding imperialist structure, have divided the entire earth, with the exception of China, into politically controlled territories for exploitation. Capitalism as a world system has no further way of expanding, all its forces have been developed and it has reached its decline.

The N.I.R.A. can be understood only against this world background. Forced reluctantly and despite itself to treat the means of production as social, *insofar as this is possible under capitalism*, the bourgeoisie has had to permit the government to step in not merely to supplement but to *direct* recovery and to wield its police powers to salvage the wreck. Behind all the regulations of the "authoritarian" state is the simple program of restoring profits to the capitalists, of pumping new blood into the weakened frame of capitalism. In accomplishing this purpose, the government, as executive committee of the capitalist class, faced the task of halting the seemingly never-ending drop in prices, and of driving down the living standards of the masses of workers and farmers in order to place the national capitalism in a stronger competitive position.

To stabilize industry (which means to render it static and unprogressive), Roosevelt was compelled to follow the inevitable trend toward ever greater concentration of capital. Cartels, resorted to previously by financiers to stop losses due to competition and to bring in maximum profits, are established on a national scale. This truce in industrial warfare ratified by the system of codes permits the regularizing of production schedules, the apportioning of quotas, fixing of prices (under the mediæval concepts of "fair competition" and "fair price" indicative of decay). Under the codes the control of the cartels is handed over to the tender mercies of big finance capital which acts to concentrate its power still further by squeezing out the little fellows in accordance with the dictum of Proudhon that "Competition is civil war, and monopoly a massacre of the prisoners".

To start the wheels of industry going, the capitalist government pours rivers of gold in the form of loans, subsidies, orders into the banks and trusts. The state budget takes on undreamed-of proportions. Its balancing becomes ever more precarious and in fact impossible. The national debt increases at a dizzying pace. Taxes become an unbearable burden to the middle class, especially to the

debt-ridden farmers—on whom, with the working class, the entire back-breaking load of the crisis is laid—and this at a time when they can least afford to pay. The big bourgeoisie evades and escapes taxation—the Morgans and the Rockefellers pay little or nothing. The problem of obtaining money when hard cash is scarce, the problem of increasing the national debt and yet casting it off, of expropriating the middle class while releasing big finance capital from debt (throwing off of bank deposits, insurance, stocks and bonds) is solved—presto!—by inflation. The big bankers not only defend themselves but profit anew (note the vast stream of gold that flowed back to America when the dollar was temporarily "stabilized"). Inflation is used to stop the fall of prices and to reverse their trend. It acts as the subtlest means of wage-cutting, for the cut goes into effect over a prolonged period as the inflationary process makes itself felt throughout the price system. Depreciation of the dollar is a powerful way of regaining foreign trade and of meeting the monetary manipulations of Japanese and English capitalism. But inflation is a dangerous weapon to capitalism for it is a cumulative process beyond the control of any single national state, since no one state controls world economy. Instead of stabilizing the national economy, inflation introduces new disturbances and repercussions, each requiring fresh intervention by the state.

The benefits to finance capital of trustified industry depend upon mass production, upon socialized production on a vast scale. The exploited masses at home cannot absorb the tremendous surpluses resulting from this type of production and they must be sold abroad. The fierce competition of expanding imperialist capitalism results, and leads to a combined system of high (protected) prices in the home market and dumping of goods at low prices abroad. This chaotic price structure introduces unbearable stresses and strains into world economy and disrupts foreign exchange. The bourgeoisie, whose first historic act of power was to stabilize the currency, is forced in its decline to introduce all the uncertainties and chaos of "managed" (manipulated) currencies. To preserve the home market for its own national capitalism against dumping, each country sets up high tariff walls, restrictions, import and export quotas, embargoes. This system of "autarchy", due to "planned" dumping, leads to the almost complete disruption of world economy. American capitalism, hit the hardest by the crisis because of its advanced technique, is preparing the machinery (export banks, tariff power to Roosevelt) to take over imports and exports on a national scale. To what extent these further weapons of state capitalism will be adopted depends on the extent of liquidation of the crisis in the near future. There can be little doubt that the inevitable war, clearly visible just ahead, will inaugurate rigid state control on an unprecedented scale.

The capitalist "planned economy" of the N.I.R.A. is totally different from that of the Soviet Union which has released the forces of production from the fetters of the profit system and permitted them to expand on a grandiose scale. Roosevelt's method is shot through and through with reaction and exposes to full view the decay of modern capitalism chained within the national boundaries. The N.I.R.A. is the organizing of waste, the sabotage of production, the restriction of output—in its ultimate aspect it is the organizing of mass hunger for greater profits. The American farmer, in competition with the backward spots of the earth coveted by U. S. imperialism, is asked to go out of business to the extent

that this is safe for capitalism. For a reserve army to be used against the working class in revolt, subsistence peasant farmers are to be created, producing not for a world market but for themselves. The N.I.R.A. and the A.A.A., far from solving the agricultural crisis, intensify it still more. The present world-wide drought aids the program of imperialism for the farmer on the one hand, but on the other unbalances the state budget still further, so that the spectre of unlimited inflation hovers over the entire "recovery" program. The N.I.R.A. emphasizes all the disproportions that exist in present American economy, giving greater power than ever to vast monopolist empires over the rest of economy. The Roosevelt program is unreservedly the program of imperialism.

Embodying the same needs for national capitalist salvation that drove Italy and Germany to Fascism (the state system of reactionary imperialism resulting when the workers fail to achieve power through the proletarian revolution), the Roosevelt program nevertheless still operates behind the screen of bourgeois democracy. Whereas the crisis in Germany found a working class disciplined and organized in powerful unions and political parties which could offer organized resistance to the beating down of wages and living standards (a resistance that, under proper Communist leadership, could have resulted without question in the taking of power by the proletarian dictatorship), here the workers are poorly organized and extremely backward politically. Here the bourgeoisie can still rely on the method of democratic illusions to balk and bind the masses and to carry out the will of the ruling class.

Bourgeois democracy is long on promises for mass welfare, short on performance, so that there is an ever recurring contradiction between words and deeds. The organizing of capitalist industry into powerful cartels to deal effectively with labor in revolt is called "self-government in industry". The vicious capitalist drive to beat down the living standards of the workers is conducted under a barrage of propaganda concerning raising these living standards at the expense of profit. Roosevelt talks of increasing the purchasing power of the masses by raising wages and decreasing unemployment—and then proceeds to have industry adopt the stagger plan which puts the burden of unemployment on the employed workers. With the shortening of hours and the increased hourly rates, the worker finds himself short one week's wages out of every four. And the boss class saves the difference without more than a pretense of hiring more unemployed. When wages do go up, inflation steps in to drive up the price level much faster than wages with the result that the worker receives less in real wages. Roosevelt is engaged in "spreading the national income"—by emptying the treasury into the pockets of the big financiers (R.F.C., P.W.A., etc.). Mousing the phrases of a "social program", Roosevelt avoids unemployment insurance and adequate relief (they will be left for that elusive "next session" of Congress) by a system of starvation relief and forced labor camps (C.C.C.). On the international arena the New Dealers, the Brain Trust rationalizers for democratic capitalism, speak of coöperation and disarmament when they mean the sharpest trade war and arming to the teeth. Industry is "regimented" for the next imperialist war; the army liaison officers are at their posts in industry; the contracts for vast war supplies need only a signature to mobilize the factories for instant service to the war machine.

The main illusion fostered by bourgeois democracy is that of the state as being above the classes, as adjusting the "common" interest. Thus in the N.I.R.A. program for saving the exploiting class, an apparent concession is also made to the working class. The 7A clause permits them to organize freely and without coercion or interference from the bosses. In actuality this clause, shrouded in ambiguity from the start, served to lull workers into passivity by making them think that the government would "protect" their interests, to harness the newly awakening labor movement to reformism and class collaborationism, to permit the capitalist government to discriminate against militant unionism, and to involve the workers in that fake mixture of obstacles, delays and strike betrayals so aptly called the National Run Around.

The upturn in business, due in large measure to government spending, permitted workers to organize and engage in renewed struggles to regain the conditions they had lost during the crisis. There took place a tremendous influx into the unions, particularly

into the A. F. of L., which has almost as many members now as at any time in its history. But the upturn gave to the big bourgeoisie, by permitting them the taste of profits, a new sense of power and confidence. When the wave of organization of the workers spread to the unorganized mass production industries, autos, steel, electrical machinery, the Fords and Sloans and Swopes decided that the time had come to put a stop to any further building-up of even the reformist trade unions. Finance capital will brook no resistance to the expansion of profits by the wage slaves! The new unions, "federal" or industrial unions, threaten furthermore to advance the class struggle to a new plane at a bound. Heeding the voice of his masters, Roosevelt proceeded to legalize, by use of the self-same 7A clause, the company unions and through them the open shop. At the same time the slight "recovery" has made finance capital chafe at government control, so that part of the N.I.R.A. is being abandoned, but not its essential features.

The club used in the N.I.R.A. to subdue the rebellion of the productive forces, breaking through the capitalist integuments, (witness the prohibition against installation of new machinery in textile plants, the shutting off by the militia of oil pipe lines, etc.), descends also on the heads of the workers as the class that represents socialized production in its antagonism to the bourgeois system of private property. The state organizes starvation and unemployment for the proletariat. Within the confines of bourgeois democracy, the working class by its own bitter struggle and bloody sacrifice utilizes the rights won by it to organize opposition to capitalist exploitation, to organize its own democracy in the form of trade unions and political parties. But the bourgeoisie uses its power to tie the new organizations, the elements of the new society within the womb of the old, to the capitalist system by controlling them through professional leaders, labor lieutenants of capitalism in the unions, labor politicians in the reformist mass parties. These "leaders" are experts in organizing sham battles through which they "deliver" (betray) the organized workers to the ruling class. The A. F. of L. bureaucracy, added to the councils of the capitalist government to continue their betrayals, forms the greatest menace to the working class. Unless a Left wing armed with correct policies and guided by a truly international Communist party, is constituted within the trade unions, the influx of workers into the unions will be halted and the reverse process will start. In the present situation the workers are being rapidly disillusioned with the Roosevelt N.I.R.A. and in the recent strike wave gave every indication of reliance upon their own organized forces to carry on a militant fight against the capitalist class to regain their losses.

The crisis has uprooted all the "normal" interrelationships of the classes in American society. The middle class, including the farmers, has been pauperized. A *lumpenproletariat* has been formed out of elements of the middle class and the working class. These are the elements that constitute the recruits for Fascism. The N.I.R.A. has not brought and could not bring any real cure for the capitalist crisis. At best it has only laid the basis for a new and even worse crisis in the nearest future. Starting as a struggle over collective bargaining the present conflict between the working class and the capitalist class may very well assume larger proportions and take on a mass character. The struggle for the closed shop can easily develop into one for workers' control of production, for nationalization of industries, for "state socialism" instead of state capitalism.

The N.I.R.A., still organizing the forces of capitalist industry under a form of "autarchy", will inevitably become more and more openly imperialist under the explosive character of forces of production that demand expansion. Intensive preparations take place for war. Imperialism expands its markets abroad at the expense of the living standards of the masses at home. Imperialism means the end, sooner or later, of all democracy, it means outright Fascism. The economic program of imperialism thus gives rise to its political counterpart. Only a new internationalist Communist party can organize the struggle against imperialism, Fascism and the imperialist war. Only that party can lead the workers to victory and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat. Then only will it be possible to really plan economy.

Jack WEBER

# Strikes and the Economic Cycle

IN A feature article entitled "The Wave of Strikes: A Vast N.R.A. Problem" (N. Y. Times, October 15, 1933) R. L. Duffus writes as follows of the strikes which were taking place at that time: "Why should strikes and lockouts multiply at this particular time? The historic fact is that they have always increased at the beginnings of periods of prosperity and that they have always decreased during depression. They rose from 1886 to 1892, a time once regarded as the golden age of American labor. They declined with the depression of 1893, to rise as business improved in 1899 and thereafter. They dropped in 1907 and 1908, which were bad years, went up in the good years of 1909 and 1910, climbed during the early years of the World War, fell off during the post-war depression, mounted again when good times came back."\*

This statement is not accidental. In it is represented the viewpoint of the responsible spokesmen of the "New Deal" administration: Believing an industrial upturn to be taking place, the N.R.A. strike-breaking machinery was set up as a curb on the upsurge of strikes which it was expected would (and did) follow.

The American bourgeoisie have here shown great sagacity. Not all sections of the working class movement, however, are as aware as they of the relationship of the tempo of the class struggle to the different stages of the cyclical economic crisis. The Stalinists, for example, deny any connection whatsoever.

One typical example will suffice. In the *Communist*, March 1932 a certain C. Smith writes as follows: "The main obstacle to the organization of broad strike struggles is the theory that in times of crises it is impossible to conduct strikes successfully. This theory is systematically fostered among the workers by the reactionary trade unions, as well as by all renegades from Communism. Trotsky wrote the following on the economic strikes in France in an article entitled *The Third Period of the Mistakes of the Comintern*:

"By no means does the perspective of the chronic economic crisis necessarily have to be followed by the perspective of the extension of the economic strikes. . . . With a sinking economic trend, with the increase of unemployment . . . increased exploitation calls forth not a radicalization of the masses, but on the contrary, discouragement and demoralization."

"But facts speak louder than words. The past year, 1931, was a record [?!?!] year of economic struggles in all [?] capitalist countries. Furthermore all statistics show [what statistics?] that in the past it was in the periods of good times and of crises that the workers conducted a great many strikes of great extent. . . . The question is only the method by which economic struggles must be conducted in the period of crisis. We find in every period of crisis that the strikes increase [??] not only in extent but also in sharpness. . . ."

The following table indicates the course of events from 1881 to 1890 inclusive, the period which includes the crisis which broke out in 1884:

\*The bourgeoisie, in addition to using such knowledge for its own purposes, consoles itself with it. Duffus, for example, by abstracting from the different historical periods, implies that the ruling class has no reason to fear that a strike wave in 1933 will necessarily be of greater danger to them than those of the past.

†Page 244. Smith decrees the class struggle to suit the "general line"; the "statistics" and "facts" exist only in his imagination. When he states that strikes occurred at all stages of past crises he merely says that the class struggle does not . . . of any time. Of the rela-

tive extent of the strikes during the years of decline and upturn he is totally ignorant. Afraid to face the fact that during the deepening of a crisis, the majority of the *workers themselves* may not, due to objective circumstances, be willing to strike even with the best of leadership, he reduces the problem to the manner in which a strike should be conducted.

Whether or not, *at any time*, a particular strike or strikes should be called or can be won is another matter entirely, and should not be confused with a general perspective as to how the working class as a whole can be expected to react to economic changes.

BI-MONTHLY INDEX OF INDUSTRIAL ACTIVITY\*

Year	Jan. &	Mar. &	May &	July &	Sept. &	Nov. &	No. of Workers on Strike†
	Feb.	Apr.	June	Aug.	Oct.	Dec.	
1881	112	110	110	110	109	109	101,090
1882	110	110	106	105	108	109	120,860
1883	108	105	103	103	103	98	122,198
1884	95	96	97	94	91	90	117,313
1885	88	89	89	89	89	95	158,584
1886	95	98	101	103	103	105	407,152
1887	106	111	104	103	108	106	272,776
1888	100	99	100	101	105	105	103,218
1889	106	103	101	103	104	106	205,068
1890	109	111	112	109	112	107	285,900

Commons speaks of this period as follows (*History of Labor in the United States*, Vol. 2): "The strike which had been overshadowed by the boycott during the latter half of 1884 and the first half of 1885, again came into prominence in the latter half of the year. This coincided with the beginning of an upward trend in general business conditions. . . . American Labor movements have never experienced such a rush of organization as the one in the latter part of 1885 and during 1886."

It is clear that the big strike wave of 1886 took place during the upward swing in the economic cycle. For the years 1889 and 1890 the increase in the number of strikers over that of the year 1888 also corresponds to a general rise in industrial activity. The years 1882 to 1884 were accompanied by a practical standstill in the number of workers on strike; the years 1887 to 1888 by a drop. In both these latter periods an economic decline took place.

The events for the years 1891 to 1905 inclusive are indicated by the following table:

BI-MONTHLY INDEX OF INDUSTRIAL ACTIVITY

Year	Jan. &	Mar. &	May &	July &	Sept. &	Nov. &	No. of Workers on Strike
	Feb.	Apr.	June	Aug.	Oct.	Dec.	
1891	101	94	101	109	113	111	245,042
1892	114	109	106	102	105	108	163,499
1893	107	109	107	89	81	84	195,008
1894	85	87	81	89	95	96	505,049
1895	93	91	94	99	105	105	285,742
1896	99	96	94	88	83	87	183,813
1897	90	90	89	91	99	101	332,570
1898	102	101	100	99	100	101	182,067
1899	101	103	103	105	109	110	308,267
1900	111	110	108	100	96	96	399,656
1901	101	104	104	104	103	103	396,280
1902	102	103	104	104	104	104	553,143
1903	104	106	106	103	99	91	531,682
1904	95	97	95	94	95	100	375,754
1905	104	108	109	108	110	112	176,337

The general downward trend of the first of these three crises began near the middle of 1893 and reached bottom in about four months, the upturn lasting for about two years. The rise in industrial activity during the years 1894 and 1895 was accompanied by

\*These figures are from a chart published by the Cleveland Trust Company entitled "American Business Activity Since 1790". On the original chart the "normal" is taken as zero, and the figures are given for every month. To avoid negative numbers and conserve space I have changed the "normal" to 100, and have given the index numbers bi-monthly. The index figure in each case represents the arithmetical average of the two monthly figures given on the chart. These figures must be used with caution. I use them here only to indicate the stages of the cyclical crisis. It must

also be borne in mind that these index figures would be affected by the strikes themselves, production necessarily falling off because of them.

†All figures for the number of strikers are from the U. S. Department of Labor. Their absolute accuracy may justly be called into question. What is of importance however is their trend for the various stages of a crisis, for which these statistics are adequate.

I have been unable to find any data on the number of workers on strike in this country for the years 1906 to 1915 inclusive.

a considerable increase over the previous year in the number of workers on strike, particularly during the year 1894.\*

The period of economic decline immediately following was accompanied by a drop in the number of workers on strike. A marked increase in the extent of strike activity over this period came with the economic upturn of 1897 to 1899. During 1898 the volume of industrial activity remained practically stationary, the strike activity was considerably less than in 1897. If we consider the entire three year period of industrial rise, however, the increase in the number of strikers over that of 1896, the year of decline, even if considered as a yearly average, is apparent.

During the six years, 1900 to 1905, the "prosperity" years of 1900 to 1903 are those in which the greatest number of workers went on strike. 1904 and 1905, the years of recovery from the short crisis of 1903 did not bring with them any increase in strike activity over the previous period; on the contrary, the statistics indicate a decrease.

The reasons must be sought in the effects which the crisis had upon the workers' standard of living. The following table throws some light on this matter. (*Real Wages in the U. S., 1890-1926*, by P. H. Douglas, p. 230):

AVERAGE ANNUAL EARNINGS OF EMPLOYED WAGE EARNERS							
Year	Earnings	Year	Earnings	Year	Earnings	Year	Earnings
1890	\$439	1894	\$386	1898	\$412	1902	\$473
1891	442	1895	416	1899	426	1903	486
1892	446	1896	406	1900	435	1904	477
1893	420	1897	408	1901	456	1905	494

Translated into the strike statistics the foregoing states: In the strike wave which occurred during the rise from the crisis of 1893 the workers were partly successful in regaining what had been taken from them. The crisis which followed brought with it a further successful onslaught on their wages. As soon, however, as industrial activity increased, a strike wave resulted. Not being entirely successful in regaining what had been taken from them, the workers continued the fight into the "prosperity" years which followed, winning back practically all. The tempo of strike activity decreased on the economic upturn following the 1903 crisis, since that which had been taken from the workers during the slump was returned with an increase to boot. They had so strengthened themselves by their previous struggles that it was hardly necessary to fight in order to recoup their losses. (Note the increase in trade union membership during this period.) The wage increases were granted by the capitalists in order to avoid a fight.

The following table indicates what happened during the years 1916 to 1932 inclusive:

Year	BI-MONTHLY INDEX OF INDUSTRIAL ACTIVITY							No. of Workers on Strike†
	Jan. & Feb.	Mar. & Apr.	May & June	July & Aug.	Sept. & Oct.	Nov. & Dec.		
1916	113	114	114	112	115	115	1,599,917	
1917	114	114	114	113	110	109	1,227,254	
1918	103	107	108	110	109	106	1,239,989	
1919	98	94	96	106	103	102	4,160,348	
1920	112	106	106	104	98	86	1,463,054	
1921	77	73	75	75	79	79	1,099,247	
1922	83	87	92	93	99	108	1,612,562	
1923	108	113	114	111	107	104	756,584	
1924	106	102	91	90	98	102	654,641	
1925	107	105	104	104	103	108	428,416	
1926	106	106	106	107	109	106	329,592	
1927	105	105	104	102	98	97	349,434	
1928	102	102	101	102	106	109	357,145	
1929	110	110	113	112	109	97	230,463	
1930	96	95	91	84	81	77	158,114	
1931	77	80	77	73	68	67	279,299	
1932	64	59	55	54	60	60	242,826	

\*Commons speaks of this period as follows:

"The year 1894 was exceptional for labor disturbances. The number of employees involved reached nearly 750,000, surpassing even the mark set in 1886." (Note that this figure is much larger than the one given by the U. S. Dept. of Labor.)

†It is interesting to note how closely the class struggle in

Canada follows that in the United States. The figures for strikers in the Dominion for the years given above follow:

Year	Strikers	Year	Strikers
1917	50,255	1925	28,949
1918	79,743	1926	23,834
1919	148,915	1927	22,299
1920	60,327	1928	17,581
1921	28,257	1929	12,946
1922	43,775	1930	13,768
1923	34,261	1931	16,738
1924	34,310	1932	23,390

The tremendous strike wave of 1919, the largest in the country's history, occurred during a period of economic upturn, following a rather sharp decline; the upturn beginning about March 1919 and reaching a high point about February 1920\*

1921, a year of steady decline in economic activity, shows a falling off in strike struggles; 1922, a year of continuous upturn of the economic curve, witnessed an increase in the number of workers on strike.†

It will be of interest to see the result which crises have had on trade-union membership (*Recent Economic Trends*, Vol. 2, p. 832):

Year	Membership	Year	Membership	Year	Membership
1897	447,000	1909	2,047,400	1920	5,110,800
1898	500,700	1910	2,184,200	1921	4,815,000
1899	611,000	1911	2,382,800	1922	4,059,000
1900	868,500	1912	2,483,500	1923	3,592,500
1901	1,124,700	1913	2,753,400	1924	3,536,600
1902	1,375,900	1914	2,716,900	1925	3,567,700
1903	1,913,900	1915	2,607,700	1926	3,504,700
1904	2,072,700	1916	2,808,000	1927	3,498,200
1905	2,022,300	1917	3,104,600	1928	3,449,100
1906	1,958,700	1918	3,508,400	1929	3,444,000
1907	2,122,800	1919	4,169,100	1930	3,407,600
1908	2,130,600			1931	3,298,000

In his book *Growth of American Trade Unions*, Leo Wolman comments as follows: "Losses in membership were in each case associated with and were probably, in part at least, the effect of business depression. Thus the periods of loss in membership, 1904-1906, 1908-1909, 1913-1915, and 1920-1923, correspond roughly with the periods of business decline. There is no question that monthly statistics of membership would show even closer correspondence. Except, also, for the year 1923 and possibly 1922, the years of business revival are generally those of gain in membership."‡

The history of American economic crises thus states unequivocally that during periods of economic decline the labor movement has suffered or at best remained stagnant; and that the large waves of strikes have occurred during the periods of economic revival.

Despite the deep-going wage cuts, rationalization, etc. which take place during a period of economic decline, the worker, fearing on the one hand the possible scabbery of the unemployed, and on the other hand the possibility of becoming unemployed for a long time in the case of a lost strike, goes out on strike only under extremely favorable objective conditions, or where such severe conditions are being imposed upon him that he would just as soon "starve striking

\*According to a chart prepared by Leo Wolman (*Recent Economic Changes in the United States*, Vol. 2, p. 463, Pres. Hoover's Conference on Unemployment) the index for employment at the beginning of 1919 was about 103 (1926=100) whereas that of payrolls was 93, indicating the extent to which pay had been slashed. By March of 1920 the index for employment rose to about 113, whereas that of payrolls rose to about 121, indicating that the struggles had surely not been in vain.

rised to about 105, indicating that the losses due to wage-cutting had probably been won back.

‡1905 was a year of economic upturn, and 1906 a year of "prosperity". 1909 and 1915 were years of industrial revival. The statistics indicate a loss in union membership for each of these years. Wolman's statement, therefore, would not be strictly accurate if judged by these figures alone. (Wolman is responsible for these figures.) There is no reason, however, to doubt his general remarks on the effect which crises have had on labor organizations. In all probability, the figures for losses in trade union membership lagged behind the true state of affairs—union secretaries hesitating to drop members from the books for some time after they had really ceased to belong to the organization. Thus a decrease in members which would have taken place in 1904, would in all likelihood be recorded as having occurred in 1905 and 1906.

†The number of strikers is nowhere nearly as large during this period as in 1919, the workers evidently having won back what was taken from them during this crisis with less effort. During the period of economic decline the index for payrolls dropped from about 121 to about 73, that of employment from about 113 to about 80, thus indicating an average pay cut of about 15 percent. By the early part of 1923 both indices had

as to starve while working".\* The fact that the workers in many industries notice that the boss is constantly on the verge of closing down in no way increases their incentive to struggle. The dissatisfaction of certain favored sections of the proletariat is allayed somewhat by the offsets to the drop in their real wages which comes about through a fall in commodity prices. Due to a falling off of dues payments and a lack of immediate perspective, the trade unions suffer.

With an industrial upturn, however, all this changes. At the same time that the closed factories begin to open, and unemployment decreases, the workers are confronted with an increase in prices, an indirect wage cut. The boss begins to show that he is anxious to maintain production. The worker again begins to feel his importance in the productive process. He is less afraid of scabbery, and feels that, even if he loses his job as the result of a lost fight, he can soon get another. A strike fever breaks out which sweeps with it even the most backward. The trade-unions grow. The working class movement flourishes.

\*The Bureau of Labor strike statistics bear out this contention, indicating that the percentage of strikes wholly successful during the years of industrial decline has been larger than for the years of economic upturn, although the absolute number of

Years of Industrial Decline	Establishments on Strike	Partly Successful	%	Wholly Successful	%	Partly & Wholly Successful
1885	2,284	217	9.5	1,206	52.8	62.5
1888	3,506	192	5.5	1,831	52.3	57.8
1893	4,552	470	10.3	2,315	50.8	61.2
1896	5,462	408	7.5	3,233	59.1	66.7
Years of Industrial Rise						
1886	10,036	1,892	18.9	3,463	34.6	53.5
1894	8,196	1,106	13.5	3,122	38.2	51.5
1902	14,248	3,255	22.8	6,741	47.3	70.3
1903	20,244	4,736	23.4	8,274	40.8	64.3

strikes won during the latter period is considerably larger. Both the percentage and absolute number of strikes partially successful is larger for the periods of industrial rise. This is shown by the following table:

It can therefore be said with a good deal of certainty, that, considering the present historic period, and the deep-going wage cutting, speed-up, and general suffering (unemployment, etc.) which the present crisis has brought to the American proletariat, any appreciable revival of industry carries with it the perspective of a strike movement of hitherto unseen proportions. With a really revolutionary Communist party, such as has yet to be built in this country, standing at the head of such struggles, the American workers may well advance towards their goal to final emancipation.

December 1933

Alfred WEAVER

\* \* \* \*

Subsequent events have fully confirmed the conclusions of six months ago.

It is now clear that the general trend of industrial activity since March 1933 has been upward. The N. Y. Times index of business activity, which stood at 60 in March of last year rose to 98 in July and then declined to 72 in November. Today it stands at about 86, having risen quite steadily since that time. The capitalists are showing profits, the National City Bank reporting that "210 industrial companies show for the first quarter of 1934 a combined balance of net profits over deficits of \$98,000,000 which compares with . . . a deficit of \$23,000,000 in the first quarter of 1933". 64 class I railroads report net earnings of \$28,700,000 for February of this year as compared to \$9,854,000 for the same month last year. General Motors, Chrysler, etc. report big profits. Car-loadings and electric power production are up about 20%. Steel which was working at less than 20% of capacity now operates at about 55%.

Meanwhile there is no questioning the increase in strikes. As compared to the 242,826 strikers in 1932 there were 774,763 in 1933, the largest number since 1922. Of this number, 704,325 were on strike between April 1 and the end of the year; that is, during that part of the year which comes within the period of economic upturn. The present wave of strikes (longshoremen, Toledo, Minneapolis, the fermenting textile and steel strikes, etc.) hardly requires comment.

JUNE 1934

A. W.

## The Decay of the Stalinist Party

ONE of the great American contradictions finds its expression in the backward ideology of the working masses existing alongside of the advanced technology of the country. But the crowning height of this contradiction is attained by the official Communist party. An examination of its position made in the light of a comparison with the gigantic tasks of the American revolution will reveal it beyond a shadow of a doubt as the one party in the Stalinized Comintern which is the least equipped with the indispensable weapons of Marxism.

It is necessary to remember that Marxism both interprets the world and teaches how to change it. Without the Marxian interpretation and estimate of world events, there can be very little hope of finding the correct road for the change. Nor will there be a possibility of deepening and extending the revolutionary practise. Lacking these prerequisites the official party has already become a force of disorientation and working class defeats in the day to day struggles as well. Marxism does not exist in its theory or practise, neither in the sense of interpreting the world nor in the sense of teaching how to change it. It would be difficult to conceive of a party which more stupidly parrots the trite formulæ, devoid of revolutionary realism, of Stalin, Manuisky and Molotov. The pernicious mistakes of the Third International on a world scale it duplicates on the national scene—and in worse form. All that is needed to prove this is furnished by the party itself.

With the world crisis, American capitalism arrived at a fundamental turning point in its political history. The economic self-sufficiency formerly proclaimed and the American provincialism which resulted from it, together with the celebrated "rugged individualism", are, historically speaking, at an end. In their place we will have a more centralized monopoly capitalism assisted by a definite system of attempted governmental control of class relations. This change is perhaps most clearly typified in the contrast between the Hoover régime and the Roosevelt régime. The Hoover

régime was the last staunch representative of the past while the Roosevelt régime represents the beginning of new methods in the course of American capitalism toward its more complete world hegemony.

From this the question arises: To what extent has the official party taken notice of or made a theoretical analysis of the deep going changes in class relations that this new situation presents? Has it taken notice of the vast new problems facing the working class vanguard? It has, of course, been cognizant of the increasing misery and lowered standard of living imposed on the working class by the crisis. It is true that it has also recognized the increasing and multiplying difficulties that now confront American capitalism. But that is still far short of a theoretical analysis of the fundamental changes involved. Such an analysis would be obligatory upon a revolutionary general staff, for without it there can be no correct conclusions at all for the tasks that are pending. This, however, cannot be expected from the official party which in all of its practise remains entirely true to the empiricist methodology of the epigones.

Instead of an analysis we have the pompous proclamation of the discovery of Fascism in both the Hoover and the Roosevelt régimes. In the Fascism of the Hoover régime was included, according to the seventh convention thesis of 1930, the A. F. of L., the Socialist party and the Muste group. The latter two, said the thesis, were covering their Fascism with pseudo-revolutionary phrases. It may be granted that the party is now trying to make a distinction by specifying the Fascist methods of the Hoover régime and the Fascist economic system of the Roosevelt régime. But that is only so much nonsense. Of course, the official party qualifies its "theoretical" conclusions by saying that it is not speaking of developed Fascism, but Fascism nevertheless. In this respect the American party leaders only repeat the fatal errors of the German party and the Stalinist as a whole. And from such premises it would be

impossible, even in the remotest sense, to make a sound estimate of what Fascism actually is, of the conditions under which it arises, its special characteristics as a social phenomenon of a certain epoch, or its historical rôle.

In view of this, the speech made by Browder to the party plenum in January 1934, is not at all surprising. After the usual attempt at justifying the capitulation of the German C. P. by explaining that the social democracy still held the majority of the working class under its influence, he projects the question, which he says has been asked by many: Why did the German party not lead the revolutionary section of the German working class in struggle against Fascism? And listen to the wisdom of his answer: To hold such a position, he says, would mean "nothing but capitulation to the social democracy. It is a complete acceptance of the social democratic understanding of the significance of the rise of Fascism and of Hitler. Along with it necessarily goes the view that the victory of Hitler inaugurates a protracted period of Fascist reaction and long time defeat of the revolution".

Browder has no such view, and he could therefore declare nonchalantly to the Cleveland convention in discussing the question of the rise of Fascism in the United States, "it [Fascism] destroys the moral base for capitalist rule, discrediting bourgeois law in the eyes of the masses; it hastens the exposure of all demagogic supporters of capitalism, especially its main support among the workers—the Socialist and trade union leaders. It hastens the revolutionization of the workers, destroys their democratic illusions, and thereby prepares the masses for the revolutionary struggle for power".

What is said here is full of false and dangerous propositions. It is the covering of one's tracks in the most treacherous manner. It is said to justify the criminal capitulation in Germany and to maintain the fiction that the German party is consolidating and strengthening itself as a political force. According to this statement, Fascism does not denote a new period existing on the ruins of the working class organizations, requiring entirely new methods of struggle, particularly the struggle for the democratic demands, and under much greater difficulties. Fascism is a mere incident. It is really not different from any preceding régime, except that it hastens disillusionment and speeds up the revolution. That the proletariat will conquer ultimately, even in spite of Fascism, is incontestable. But what Browder is attempting here is an advance justification of the capitulation of the party to Fascism. There is really no point to the Leninist demand for the united front to crush Fascism before it overcomes the proletariat and destroys its organizations.

In regard to the question of changing class relations in the United States the official party position is no less astounding and no less stupid. Already in 1930 it saw a "revolutionary upsurge of the working masses of the United States", which was "opening the road to the Communist party for organizing and leading these masses into struggles". This was evidenced among many other things "by increasing militancy of the workers in resisting the violent suppression of strikes and demonstrations . . . by the mass interest in revolutionary trade unionism" and "by the rapid growth of the Communist party in membership and influence". This is quoted from the seventh convention thesis presented in March 1930. But at the eighth convention, held recently, we are informed that the party at that time did not grow at all. And what the interest in the "revolutionary unions" amounted to at the time might as well not be mentioned. It was nil. Suffice it to recall that the "revolutionary upsurge" had been announced by Molotov when he inaugurated the "third period" at the tenth Comintern plenum, and this upsurge therefore had to be discovered everywhere, including the United States. Such was the "theoretical" analysis and evaluation of class relations made by the official party in 1930. Would we not be justified in assuming that conclusions for a general strategy should have been made therefrom which would be in accord with this perspective of revolutionary upsurge? Marxism would impose such a duty upon a revolutionary party leadership. But the perspective was false and Marxism was non-existent in the party. History completely refuted this perspective. Apparently, then, so much the worse for history. The adventurist commands which were issued for the "capture of the streets" in the daily "revolutionary" practise of the official party led only to futile and isolated exercises.

In the thesis of the eighth convention the official party outlines the same perspective as in 1930, even though in formulation it is

stated a little more circumspectly. Meanwhile, gigantic events have intervened on a world scale: the conquests of Fascism in Germany and Austria, its growth elsewhere, and the collapse of the Second and the Third Internationals. However, in the eighth convention thesis this is not even mentioned. Not the least trace can be found to indicate that a single lesson has been learned from these world-shaking events. Again it is necessary to remember that Marxism both interprets the world and teaches how to change it. That is the weapon which is already forged. Actually applying Marxism, however, would mean first of all to learn the bitter lessons from all of the criminally false policies and the final capitulation which helped Fascism come into power and brought about the destruction of the workers' parties. The party bureaucracy could not even begin to permit that. It would have meant its own undoing. Therefore it pursued the opposite course and with worse consequences to the party.

In view of this it would be ludicrous to expect a correct theoretical analysis of the changes now taking place in class relations in the United States. The crisis has been a great levelling process, reducing economically the various working class strata much nearer to one common low level. The turn in the economic cycle finds the masses entering the trade unions in numbers running into hundreds of thousands with the unions extending into the very heart of the basic and the mass production industries. There is a surging revival of the A. F. of L. unions, a radical change in its position and composition and new processes are beginning within its ranks. Back in 1930 the official party proclaimed the A. F. of L. a company union and moribund. It had only one regret, that it "did not sooner clearly analyse and characterize the open Fascism of the A. F. of L." (1930 convention thesis). From this it drew the conclusion that its "most fundamental task in mass work is the building of the revolutionary unions of the Trade Union Unity League".

The party had entirely forgotten the warning of the *Communist Manifesto* that: "They [the Communists] do not set up any sectarian principles of their own, by which to shape and mould the proletarian movement." History has made a mockery of the official party prognosis. A whole series of false policies foisted upon a party membership which has been denied the elementary right and privilege of inquiring into reasons, and has lost the ability to distinguish, has brought its cruel retaliation. While the mass unions are experiencing new growth and, regardless of the desires and policies of the reactionary leaders, are drawn into the vortex of new great class battles, the T.U.U.L. unions remain paper institutions, devoid of life, an obstruction in the path of working class advance. In the present sharpening of class lines in the United States events in the trade union field are of a decisive character. The question of correct trade union policy is at present the key to the working class problems. A workers' party which cannot approach a solution of this problem cannot be counted upon at all to lead the proletarian revolution in America. It will function instead as a brake and a force for disintegration and defeat.

Is it any wonder that the official party is now compelled to bewail the results of its handiwork in the following admission panned in the eighth convention thesis? "The leadership of the party in the trade union work remains extremely weak despite the Open Letter and control tasks adopted by the C. C. and the Districts. The majority of the party members remain outside of the unions in most of the districts (including such concentration districts as Chicago, Detroit): in the party as a whole the important progress made was with but a small section of the party membership active in the economic struggles. Communist fractions, without which there can be no real leadership by the party in the work of the trade unions, remain weak and receive little attention."

Further proof—if further proof is needed—of the bankruptcy of the party is furnished in the Open Letter referred to above (July 7, 1933). There we are informed that: "The clearest expression of the failure to carry out this concentration is the fact that during the past year the majority of strikes were led by reformists. . . . In fact the reformists in Eastern Ohio, a concentration district of the party, succeeded in taking over the leadership of miners who had previously carried on a heroic strike under the leadership of the National Miners Union." Finally it must be said that in the splendid class battles of most recent date, in Minneapolis and Toledo, the official Communist party was no political factor at all. The inspiring influence and conscious direction given came from other political forces in the country. as appeared from official party

far as these battles are concerned only as a demoralizing and disorganizing factor.

A comparison today between Stalinism and social democracy will reveal that within the latter, including the American Socialist party, serious repercussions have been produced by recent world events. New tendencies and new groupings are emerging which acknowledge the defeats and the collapse of the workers' parties. Hazily some of these groups are beginning to draw conclusions in a revolutionary direction. Within the official Communist party, however, "unanimity" prevails. Its theoretical level is unquestionably the lowest ever recorded. With implicit faith the celebrated "general line" is adopted again and again no matter what history records. Utterly incapable of reasoning otherwise than according to its own bureaucratically constructed dogmas, alien to Marxism, but accepted by the membership in a spirit of religious fervor, the party stumbles into ever greater contradictions. While the American workers in ever greater numbers become attracted to Communism,

thousands leave the official party ranks. From 1930 to February 1934, Browder admits in his eighth convention report, the party had recruited 49,050 new members, but the actual membership in this period rose only from 7,545 to 24,500. These figures attest the membership turnover. But there would be little grounds for accepting the announced gains at face value when we recall that the 1930 convention thesis estimated the party membership to be, not 7,545 but "approximately 15,000".

The bureaucratic triumph of the little epigones recorded at the eighth convention climaxed in the one and only infallible general secretary, apparently presents the party as having reached new and hitherto unknown heights. But stripped of all the pompous convention trimmings, the exact opposite is revealed. What remains is a picture of theoretical decline, bankruptcy and degeneracy. It is high time to clear the road for the new revolutionary party.

Arne SWABECK

## Two Congresses and One Opposition

**I**N order to acquaint oneself with the present internal political situation in France, whose point of departure and at the same time clearest revelation was February 6, as it has been reflected in the various sections of the working class and its leaders, one should above all consider three things: the congress of the Socialists this Easter, the congress of the "Neo-Socialists" (a Right wing group which was expelled from the Socialist party towards the end of last year and constituted itself a separate party), and finally the Doriot "case".

We speak *deliberately* only of a "reflection" of the situation in the camp of the working class: the shifting of the political relationship of forces, of which the present Doumergue government is the expression, is to be reckoned entirely to the account of the French bourgeoisie, however much of an indirect rôle the proletariat may have played in it. An independent influence, it did not exert; it did not emerge from its passive attitude in the whirlpool of events—apart from the general strike on February 12—and to this day it has not yet acquired a creative force. It contented itself with registering the changes that took place in the country, with digesting them, with reacting to them as a "mass". But the "mass" reacted gropingly, questingly, unclearly, more instinctively than with political consciousness. Occasions for coming forward as an active factor in the interplay of class forces are born spontaneously. But for the time being there is nothing capable of elevating these instinctive reactions to a higher level of consciousness, nothing that could give the instinct of the masses a conscious, propulsive expression. Nothing—that is, no truly Marxian-Leninist party.

Congresses of socialist parties should be the guides and trailblazers of the clearest and boldest revolutionists of the working class. The two congresses which we will deal with were melancholy gatherings, where fusty bureaucrats and intellectuals pointed out roads backward, roads into the swamp, to reaction, where sterile "leaders" of the Second International fondled and rolled out the thoughts and ideas of the most backward sections of the proletariat, where—it is hardly conceivable—former "great men" of the Second International dropped even the flimsy veil of their pseudo-Marxism and erected the Fascist ideas of their petty bourgeois following into a finely woven system of a "corporative state" after the Italian model. But what else was to be expected from a party which for twenty years has perpetrated one betrayal of the working class after another, which has brought the proletariat in two countries, not to socialism, but to the gallows and the penitentiaries!

### *The Congress of the Social Democracy*

Nevertheless, after all the political convulsions which France has experienced in recent months, one would have expected a stormier convention. That this was not the case only shows, on the one hand, how firmly the leadership still holds the membership in its grip, and on the other hand, however, also how weak is the political maturity of these members.

Hitler's seizure of power in Germany and the demolition of the social democracy set afoot a certain movement among the supporters of the Second International in every country. The leadership instantly reacted to this and draped itself in "red". The leaders of the French party, Léon Blum and Paul Faure, also yielded to the

pressure of the stirred up masses and preened themselves with revolutionary phrases, aiming in this manner to prove to their followers that they were something different from Stampfer-Wels. Radical phrases, radical gestures (like the expulsion of the Neos, who were only compromising them from the Right), could be employed without running any risk, so long as the play of class forces in France pursued the old, well worn democratic paths. The 6th of February showed that the epoch of democracy had reached the end of its rope even for France. A truly Marxian party would then have had to take to the offensive. But agents of the bourgeoisie that they are, the Blums and Faures, quaking with fear, threw off their red garments as rapidly as possible: they were gripped by the eternal fear of all the lords of the Second International, the fear that the masses might get the upper hand over them, might elude their control. And so they appeared at the congress in their plain democratic-reformist every day clothing, permitting of no "revolutionary" deviations, no rash speeches.

To be sure, the floor was taken by every possible shading in which the reformist parties, in contrast to the Stalinists, are so extremely prolific. There was the Right wing current which came out openly in favor of continuing hand in hand with the Radical-Socialists—who have their people, like Herriot, in the Doumergue government. There were the Left wingers who declared that the bourgeois parties had finally fallen into (!) the camp of the counter-revolution, of "anti-democracy", who rejected any coalition with the Radical-Socialists, who even approved, under certain circumstances—with countless ifs and buts—of an armed seizure of power. Finally, there was a group which even flung the words "civil war" into the debate at one time—to be sure, to the great amusement of the majority of those present. But none of them, not even the most Leftward, actually ever rose above the level of the narrow-minded parliamentarian of the last century—insofar as clarity of thought and ideas is concerned—and on that score they were distinguished in no respect from the Blum-Faure center which carried off the "victory" over all of them.

More by what was *not* said at this congress than by what was said, is it possible to perceive what a thoroughly petty bourgeois counter-revolutionary company is at bottom represented by these people, over whose intellectual effects not even a *trace* of Marxism casts a disturbing shadow.

This February, their pride and joy, the Austrian brother party, was smashed by cannon and machine gun. Ground enough for a party, which is a member of an International, thoroughly to discuss this event in all its scope, even if the corresponding lesson could never be drawn without self-dissolution. But not a single delegate as much as tapped the Austrian question! Oh yes, one of the speakers, using the example of the Vienna struggles, proved Paul Faure's ingenious discovery that nowadays, in face of the well-organized power of the state, barricade fighting is hopeless for the working class. The engineer Weissel\* certainly did not believe

\*Georg Weissel, 35 year old head of the Floridsdorf fire brigade, who commanded a small detachment of the *Schutzbund* during the Austrian uprising. He was the second man to be condemned to death by hanging by the drumhead court martial. Defiant and unrepentant, his last cry was: "Hurrah for revolutionary socialism!"—  
ed.

that his death would prove sufficient grounds for a reformist knave to develop "theories" of past and future treacheries!

The central question of any labor congress today would have to be the war question. Certainly it is not the French working class for whom this theme is remote. Yet on this point there was literally not a *single word* said at this congress! That the parties of the Second International will bring out a new edition of their betrayal of 1914 in the event of a war is clear beyond a doubt. That even today nobody wracks his brain any longer about how to make this coming betrayal "palatable" to his followers shows that in the minds of these fellows there is no longer any room for questions of an international character, that they have finally reached the level of mediocre, bigoted parliamentarians. For these people it is more important to discuss for hours as to what policy to pursue at the coming elections in October; that there might conceivably come a time when ballot boxes will disappear and all parliamentary dodges will be worthless—such a notion does not occur even at *this late date* to a genuine social democrat. These people succeed in accomplishing the feat of speaking in one and the same breath of the "conquest of power" and of a "plan" for the salvation of (capitalist) economy. For "plans" à la Henri de Man are in style now, and the words "seizure of power" smell so terribly revolutionary. But everything is avoided that might look as if this seizure of power is being seriously prepared in any way: in the final resolution of this congress it says characteristically:

"The party authorizes its districts to form their defense and youth groups, not fashioned after the armed military organizations of Fascism, nor storm troops for an assault upon the capitalist fortress, but only as a means of protecting our propaganda, our organizations and members."

No, there was no need at all of saying it so plainly, we can assert in good conscience that Messrs. Léon Blum and Paul Faure have never even grasped the idea of a workers' militia!

#### The "Neos"

As to the congress of the Neo-Socialists, what needs to be said can be put briefly. What is of interest here, is the very existence of such a party. It arose at the end of last year after the expulsion from the Socialist party of 29 deputies who refused to submit to party discipline (in the question of their conduct in the parliament). Its tendencies have meanwhile become more clearly delineated. The party may be regarded as the organizational expression of the reflection of a Fascist trend of thought among certain types of labor leaders who base themselves upon the most backward sections of the working class and their petty bourgeois following, which is particularly large in France. From the fact that the party of Blum and Faure has lost 2,000 youth comrades since February 6 alone (the Socialist Youth today numbers only something over 8,000 members!), the Neo-Socialists draw the conclusion that above all the "youth" must be *offered* something in order to keep them and to win them over: expressive of this was a debate on "uniforms", where pleas were made for and against the acquisition of uniforms for the young members. This party bears within it the tendency to slip down into the Fascist camp. This is plainly shown in the speeches of some of its leaders, Marquet, for example, who said among other things:

"Put yourselves at the head of the movement which will liberate the working class lulled to sleep by Marxism" or "Tomorrow our little group will be the rallying center for the proletariat, the middle classes and even certain capitalist elements."

Yet it would be false to depict the party and its leaders as already now being one hundred percent Fascist, as some zealots would have it (and naturally the Stalinists among them).

#### The Doriot "Case"

But that there are in the French proletariat also sections which are reacting positively to the events of recent months—at least to a certain degree—is shown by the Doriot case. Opposition in the Comintern! How long ago is it since an oppositional voice penetrated into this storage-room of broken-down revolutionary fossils! No wonder the Doriot case arouses the greatest interest everywhere, in every working class circle.

Doriot has been a Communist party member since its foundation in 1920. At first, he was leader of the youth, then a member of the Central Committee, the Political Bureau, the Chamber of Deputies. In addition, he has been mayor of the workers' suburb of Paris, St. Denis, since 1929. Back in November of last year, then again in January, Doriot sharply attacked the Political Bureau

because it "underestimated the Fascist danger". How right he was is shown by February 6; two days before, *L'Humanité* had written an editorial: "*Don't Get Excited!*" What confusion prevailed in the minds of the membership is further shown by the fact that on the same day they demonstrated at the heels of the Fascists and likewise demanded the retirement of the Daladier government. Even after these events the party has learned nothing. The same insane slogans, the same tactic of the united front only from "below", have remained.

On the basis of the struggle against this united front tactic of the party, there arose—and has remained to this day—the Doriot opposition. In St. Denis, a united front committee of all the proletarian parties was formed under the presidency of Doriot during the stormy days following February 6—contrary to the instructions of the Central Committee. The party sought with every means at its disposal to smash this first genuine combination of the whole working class for the purpose of self-defense and for a subsequent assault upon Fascism. But it met with no success here, for the overwhelming majority of the Communist workers stood behind Doriot. Thereupon it invoked the Communist International. In the meantime, Doriot voluntarily withdrew from his post as mayor, had new elections called, and ran again as a candidate. By means of this plebiscite he aimed to show that the working class of St. Denis fully approved of his policy. And therein he succeeded: he was reelected with an overwhelming majority. Meanwhile the decision of the Executive Committee of the Comintern arrived, signed at the very top by the parade-revolutionist, Dimitrov: Doriot must instantly cease his struggle, otherwise the Central Committee may resort to appropriate organizational measures against him.

One must read this declaration in order to appreciate it at its full value. It struck even the most ossified Stalinist that it doesn't even attempt to argue ideologically with Doriot, that it doesn't even deal with his arguments which he set out in an open letter to the Comintern in the form of a brochure *For Unity in Action*, that it merely declares in the full consciousness of its dignity:

"Doriot's open letter . . . is only a mask to cover up his splitting policy. Thus Doriot has entered upon the path once travelled by the counter-revolutionist Trotsky in his struggle against the Russian Communist party and against the Comintern."

On this point Doriot himself writes in his local journal:

"It has now been proved that it is not possible to discuss loyally inside the party without being visited with the disciplinary sentence of excommunication. The system is bad and only two perspectives are left to a Communist: either to swallow the line and the mistakes of his party without ever discussing, or else to discuss this line and its mistakes and be expelled."

As this is being written, Doriot is still a member of the party. Nevertheless he is now making the acquaintance of the "political" arguments against his line. They consist of calumny, of "disclosures" by mail, and—simplest method of all—strong arm stuff. In other words, he is making the acquaintance of Stalinism in its basest form. . . .

Commendable as this opposition is, in one sense, so may it prove to be pernicious in perspective, in another. And all signs point that way. Doriot has remained standing half way along the road: a question of tactics has brought him into conflict with his party. And there the matter has rested. It is a national opposition on a tactical question. Not a single question of an international character has been touched by Doriot. The Comintern is taboo to him. Should he be expelled now, which will shortly be the case, his movement may under certain circumstances do the French working class more harm than good. It will in all likelihood attract substantial masses. But, should he remain standing on his present "platform", he will lead these masses into an opportunistic united front morass instead of toward a united front of action. If, however, Doriot will perceive at the last minute that, in France, it is above all a Marxian-Leninist party that must be built up—then and then only will it be possible to greet his opposition wholeheartedly.

S.

PARIS, June 1, 1934.

Technical difficulties have prevented us from printing in this issue the article by Maurice Spector on Sidney Hook and Marxism. It will appear in the August number of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL.

# Archives of the Revolution

DOCUMENTS OF THE HISTORY AND THEORY OF THE WORKING CLASS MOVEMENT

## The "Clémenceau Thesis" and the Party Regime

THE campaign around the so-called "Clémenceau Thesis" was carried on under great pressure. But in its final results, this campaign succeeded in proving something altogether different from what it had been intended to prove. It is time that some preliminary summaries be drawn from it.

To begin, let us see how the "Clémenceau question" is formulated by the Agitprop of the Central Committee and of the Moscow Committee of the party in its *Materials for the Report on the Summaries of the Joint Plenum of the C.C. and C.C.C., C.P.S.U. (b)—July 29—August 9, 1927*. True, the Agitprop of the M. C. has a rotten reputation. Its theses have been called—both in the Plenum and in the press—unsuccessful, bad, and even foolish by the representatives of the majority. But in this instance the Agitprop of the C.C. came to the aid of the Agitprop of the M. C. Consequently, we have before us a more authoritative propaganda document. But what do we find in it upon the Clémenceau question?

"In its attacks on the party and the Comintern, the Opposition has advanced the following assertions: (a) At the present time the leadership of the C.P.S.U. is passing through the period of Thermidorian degeneration. (b) The replacement of this leadership is inevitable, *after the manner of Clémenceau's overturn in France in 1914.*" (Our italics.)

The key place in this quotation is occupied by the words: "after the manner of Clémenceau's overturn in France in 1914". However, the only thing that is correct in this statement is the fact that Clémenceau operated in France. No overturn whatever was achieved by Clémenceau. But if by the "overturn" is implied the coming to power of the Clémenceau group, then this occurred not in 1914 but in 1917. But there was no overturn in 1917 either. The bourgeois parliament entrusted the power to the Clémenceau group, considering it to be more capable of solving the war tasks of the imperialist bourgeoisie. The parliament is the mechanism by means of which the bourgeoisie under normal conditions solves its state affairs. Why then does the joint Agitprop of the C.C. and M.C. speak about Clémenceau's overturn? Because without speaking about an overturn, it would be impossible to ascribe to the Opposition the intentions of following in Clémenceau's footsteps on this road. The formulation is strictly purposeful. But why was Clémenceau's overturn assigned to 1914? What difference does it make—let us reply—to what year one assigns an event which is non-existent in history? Only wily Oppositionists would make a point of such trifles.

The pupil cannot surpass his master. The most official theoretician of our party is comrade Bukharin. In his report to the general membership of Leningrad, Bukharin said that the Opposition set as its task "the perpetration on its own hook of a Clémenceaunian overturn in our country even in the event that the enemy were a distance of 80 kilometers away from the centers of our revolution". In another place during the same speech reference is made

*At the height of the discussion in the Russian Communist party, Trotsky put forward a broad historical analogy between the situation in the Soviet Union and France of 1917. The vacillating, weak, incompetent cabinet of that time threatened France with defeat. The imperialist bourgeoisie thereupon put at the helm its most class conscious, resolute, extreme representative, Clémenceau, as best fitted by his capacities and policies to defend its class interests. The Soviet proletariat, said Trotsky, to defend its class interests best, especially at a crucial moment, would, in place of the vacillating, unstable, unqualified Stalin régime, put forward its most conscious, consistent and determined wing, the Bolshevik-Leninists. The "Clémenceau thesis", as it came to be known, unassailable from a revolutionary standpoint, was violently distorted and denounced by the bureaucracy in the subsequent discussion, which Trotsky, in a hitherto unpublished document, deals with below. The document not only rectifies a Stalinist falsification of Trotsky's views, but retains a high degree of current importance regarding the question of a revolutionary defense of the Soviet Union.—ED.*

to "the Clémenceaunian teeny-weeny overturn", and at the same time these words are set in quotation marks as if they are a quotation—from the materials of the Agitprop of the C.C. perhaps? Only instead of the overturn, mention was made of "a teeny-weeny overturn". This is altogether in the Bukharin manner: if one must serve up a fib, let it be in a diminutive form. Rykov would have said upon the occasion, "The Clémenceaunian terrific overturn", thus demonstrating an indomitable state of mind. Bukharin speaks of a "teeny-weeny overturn". The objective Agitprop confines itself to overturn. In nature however—due to utter misunderstanding—there was neither the one nor the other, nor any third. But that is precisely the reason for the existence of a secret crib against the Opposition: in order to correct the nature of things.

In such a case what could one demand from Yaroslavsky? His fundamental peculiarity as orator and writer lies in his incapacity to render without distortion a single complex idea of any sort—even if he has no immediate interest in distorting it. This capacity of his (or his incapacity) has been developing terrifically, fostered by impunity. Out of the "Clémenceau thesis" Yaroslavsky makes the following indignant deduction, "The Opposition is not loath to draw exemplars for its tactic from the alien class." The accusation immediately acquires the form of a colossal historic generalization. It would be a waste of time to follow in Yaroslavsky's footsteps along this line. This Saul, anointed as a prophet, does not even suspect what rôle the examples of "alien classes" played in the formulation of the entire theory and policies of Marxism. Upon more than one occasion the revolutionists had to teach by taking even reaction as an example, in order to explain that the

reactionaries, in contradistinction to liberals and conciliators were "not eloquent babblers but men of action". And on the other hand, the overthrow of feudalism by the French bourgeoisie played, as is well known, no unimportant rôle as an "exemplar" for the teachings about the dictatorship of the proletariat. In general it would be impossible to take a single step without the exemplars of the tactics of the alien classes. But one must utilize these exemplars correctly. And this precludes, first of all, the falsification of history.

The notorious N. Kuzmin\*, utilizing the same "Clémenceau thesis" as the inexhaustible source of knowledge, develops the following idea in the *Komsomolskaia Pravda*: Clémenceau, if you please, strove for power in order to force the French army to carry the war to the end by applying ruthless measures against the workers and peasants; the Opposition, lacking faith in the peasantry, wants to obtain power in order to make shrift of the peasantry "after the Clémenceau manner". Of course, nothing can be gotten from Kuzmin for nothing—he is just as capable of this as of the opposite. But it is no accident, it is not on his own initiative—and precisely in the *Komsomolskaia Pravda* besides!—that Kuzmin spins these abominations of his which reek of Thermidorianism a kilometer away.

Still, a Marxist would not refuse to utilize the "example of Clémenceau" in this question as well—only in correlation with the class line of the proletariat. Clémenceau led the imperialist war, and he really led it. The imperialist war was in fundamental contradiction with the interests of the proletariat, and the lower strata of the peasantry. It was impossible to lead such a war successfully, especially in its fourth year, otherwise than by means of ruthless measures against advanced workers and revolutionary peasants. Our war will be a socialist war. It can be led only by leaning for support upon the idealism of the proletariat and the lower strata of the peasantry, only by holding in a vise the bourgeois-kulak, and the Thermidorian elements of the country. Clémenceau leaned for support on the chauvinist "idealism" of the bourgeois and the petty-bourgeois-kulak youth, defuddling and poisoning the workers and peasants, and crushing every sign of a critical attitude toward the war. We will lean for support upon the heroism and resoluteness of the proletariat and the peasant poor, sweeping behind them the mass of the middle peasantry. We will be able to sustain and strengthen their revolutionary idealism only by telling the toilers the whole truth and only the truth about the real situation, the real friends and the real enemies.

\*Among other things, Kuzmin is notorious because of his ability to write one way or another—all depending upon the conjuncture. In his own time Kuzmin wrote almost inspired dithyrambs on the score of my books, *How the Revolution Armed Itself* (cf., for example, *Izvestia* No. 115, May 22, 1924). Now he writes just the opposite. My attitude—and I think that in this I am by no means alone—to Kuzmin's writings and to the author himself remains as it was despite all the "dialectic", not to say chameleonlike, transformations of Kuzmin.

That is why, in particular, the Thermidorian lying in the spirit of Kuzmin deals the greatest injury to the cause of defense because it instills in the workers and peasants false conceptions as to where the friends and enemies are.

We pass by the writings of the Vareikises, from Saratov and elsewhere. Let us turn to the organ of the Ivanov-Voznesiensk district committee, *Rabochy Kray*, a newspaper circulating among the proletarian masses of one of the most important of our industrial centers. Still elucidating the same fatal Clémenceau thesis, *Rabochy Kray* writes in its August 12 issue:

"In his Clémenceau thesis, comrade Trotsky advances the idea analogous to the idea of Clémenceau who, in 1871 when the German army was advancing on Paris, proclaimed that before giving battle to the external enemy—to the German army—it was necessary to put an end to the enemy within."

Is this news to you? Now you are informed! These remarkable words represent the most finished, and, so to speak, the most "principled" and, in any case, the most expedient interpretation of the Clémenceau thesis. The only trouble is that nothing ever existed resembling the historical reference of *Rabochy Kray*. But is that really so troublesome? If the Agitprop of the C.C. could mix up 1917 with 1914, why shouldn't *Rabochy Kray* confound 1917 with 1871? True, the so-called Trotsky thesis on Clémenceau speaks with absolute clarity about the imperialist war of 1914-1918, naming the ministries of Painlevé, Briand and so forth; true, there was no Clémenceau overturn either in 1914, or in 1871; true, Clémenceau did not speak in any of these years about the necessity of overthrowing the internal enemy prior to defending Paris; true, there was nothing generally resembling these fictions and there couldn't have been—but if one must perforce twist history in accordance with the requirements of the secret crib, then one must decidedly give preference to the Ivanov-Voznesiensk variant, as the one meets best its purpose, slandering the Opposition, that is.

One could multiply almost indefinitely the number of such and other samples pertaining to the job of polishing off the Opposition to fit Clémenceau, with the initial polishing off of Clémenceau himself to fit the secret crib, and this without having to pass beyond the limits of speeches and articles in the *leading* organs and of the functionaries locally and in the center. Everyone can gather for himself without much difficulty in what form these revelations are served in the districts, in the village districts, in the Ivanov-Voznesiensk factory or to the Saratov peasants. Generally speaking it is difficult to imagine a more systematic poisoning of consciousness. All this does not pass by without leaving a trace, all this continues to collect, all this is getting ready to "backfire"—the force of which may strike not only the secret cribbers, the pupils, apprentices and past masters of persecution, but the party as a whole.

Following the example of Stalin and of others, Yaroslavsky in the article, "The Party and the Opposition" which we have cited, speaks about the unsuccessful pamphlet of the M.C. Agitprop, *On War and the War Danger*. Others have called his unsuccessful pamphlet idiotic. It is filled with illiterate assertions of a Black Hun-

dred tinge. How did it happen that the Agitprop of the proletarian capital, Moscow, could issue such a pamphlet—and not merely a pamphlet, but a guide to political education—upon so fundamental a problem as war and the war danger? Yes, how could such a thing have happened? Unfortunately one cannot even hoodwink oneself by passing it off as an "accident". The secret crib of the same M. C. Agitprop upon the question of the Anglo-Russian Committee has an even more scandalous character, if that is possible. In it there is an assertion that the A.-R.C. will become the center of the struggle against the war danger, the chief weapon of the international mobilization of revolutionary forces and so forth and so on. When in July 1926 the Opposition called attention to this document which disgraces the party, the Opposition was condemned and not the Agitprop of the M.C. This same M.C. Agitprop issued an instructive pamphlet on the question of the Chinese revolution, simultaneously with its pamphlet on war and the war danger, of precisely the same quality and standard. Finally, after all these experiments, and after their exposure, there was issued the pamphlet of the Agitprop of the C.C. and M.C. in which the world is informed of the intentions of the Opposition to follow the "example of the Clémenceau overturn in France in 1914".

What has made this possible? The answer is incontrovertible: *It has been made possible by the general régime in the party, and with the selection of the personnel bound up with the régime.* People write not what they know, not what they have mulled over, not what they want to say, but what is demanded of them at any given moment. Every writer knows beforehand that he bears no responsibility whatever, provided only he directs his ignorance and his citified doltishness against the Opposition. Everyone who writes knows that it is bootless to burden himself with research or the study of a question because the Opposition won't be able to refute the lie anyway, and also because everyone who might wish to refute or to reestablish the facts would be immediately enrolled into the Opposition. The régime of strangulation of the inner-party criticism, the régime of the mutual oath within the closed apparatus, the hegemony of the secret crib and of irresponsibility tend fatally to lower the official theoretical level of the party rung by rung.

Concurrently, the entire campaign around the so-called "Clémenceau thesis" was inaugurated *not because* the enemy was camped 80 kilometers away from Moscow, and not because the Opposition was preparing to accomplish an overturn after the manner of Clémenceau, who accomplished no overturn, but in order to stifle inner-party thinking still further, and by this very thing to unbridle still further the irresponsibility of the apparatus.

The Clémenceau example, the example from the political experience of a class inimical to us, was used by me to illustrate a solitary and a very simple idea: the ruling class, in the guise of its leading vanguard, must preserve its capacity to reform its ranks under the most difficult conditions—without internal convulsions, without the catastrophic splitting of forces. The dictatorship of the proletariat in a country which is surrounded by capitalist states does not allow either the existence of two parties or the factional splitting of a unified party.

But this same dictatorship demands such a régime of the unified and only party of the proletariat as would afford it the possibility—by those methods which are peculiar to it as the revolutionary party, by the methods of democratic centralism—to control even under the most difficult conditions all its organs, that is, to direct their policies, check them in action, appoint them, and replace them.

The dictatorship is a very sharp instrument. One must manipulate this instrument correctly in order not to dull, or chip it. Stalin is of the opinion that the stifling of all criticism, the substitution of an almighty secret crib for collective ideological life and the interminable repressions are only *temporary* evils, necessary to maintain the equilibrium of the party. In reality, however, these measures disrupt more and more the necessary correlation between democracy and centralism and foster the all too real historical danger of the bureaucratic degeneration of the dictatorship.

It is self-evident that the roots of these processes are imbedded not in inner-party relationships, isolated by themselves, but in the inter-relations of classes, in the relations between the classes and the state, in the relations between the party and the classes, *and in the line of the party policies taken as a whole.* Only an honest bureaucratic numbskull, or an unconscionable adventurer who does not give a hoot for tomorrow could deny the progressive deterioration of the inner-party régime from the day after Lenin's death until the present time. We have seen above the eloquent consequences of this deterioration in the sphere of the *ideological* life of the party: the foremost organization in the country, the one in Moscow, issues upon the most important questions of party policies—the Anglo-Russian Committee, the Chinese revolution, the war danger, and inner-party relations—pamphlets with directives of a most debased character. And this fact, so terrible by its very nature, not only passes unpunished but it is shielded by repressions addressed against those who point out the radically false policies of the leadership of the Moscow Committee.

Stalin and Molotov and Uglanov and Kaganovich and other more outstanding representatives of the bureaucratic degeneration of the party leadership are, of course, not striving for bureaucratism; on the contrary they would like to put their policies through with methods of party democracy, that is, they would like the party to approve their policies and to reelect those who are ready to put them through. But they run up against some sort of dull resistance in the party and they are forced more and more to impose their policies from above. The party congress is only an inevitable evil for them. In direct contradiction to the party statutes they postpone this evil for an additional year. Discussion they decree to be an absolute evil, a hindrance to practical work, but at the same time they do nothing else except convulse the party with interminable discussions, a small sample of which we viewed above, on the matter of the Clémenceau thesis. They correlate this one-sided discussion with interminable cleansings of organs, which affect practical work cruelly. Expulsions from the party fall like hail. For what? For spreading "secret" documents. In the meantime, the actual crime consists in the fact that articles and speeches which should be the property of the entire party have been

# ~ BOOKS ~

## Marxism and Art

ARTISTS IN UNIFORM. A Study of Literature and Bureaucratism. By MAX EASTMAN. viii+257 pp. New York. Alfred A. Knopf. \$2.50.

decreed—yes, even two months before the congress—to be secret documents. Instead of realizing the inner-party democracy which had been proclaimed during all the recent congresses, it is necessary to resort to ever more forceful methods of inner-party repression.

The preparation for the fifteenth party congress was long ago put under the sign of the war danger. The discussion was declared to be doubly impermissible because we were surrounded by enemies. In order to befuddle the party, the malignant myth was created to the effect that the Opposition threatened an overturn "after the Clémenceau manner". By the very nature of things, all this is aimed to finish off the remnants of inner-party democracy, completely supplanting it by the autocracy of the apparatus. And this amounts to the prerequisite for the Thermidorian danger, under the corresponding class shifts in the country and under corresponding shifts of the policies of the party leadership.

The danger of war is not some accidental, episodic or temporary phenomenon. World contradictions are becoming more concentrated. The possible mitigation of the relations between us and the capitalist states will be of a rather temporary character. The fundamental line runs toward the sharpening of antagonisms, the deepening of the war danger. According to the logic of the present régime this means that *it is necessary to bid goodbye forever to ideas of inner-party democracy*. The campaign on the score of the "Clémenceauian overturn", plus a number of other similar campaigns, as well as the entire present interminable discussion convulsing the party from above, must *drive out completely any thoughts of the possibility of switching party life back onto the rails of democracy*.

Precisely in this sense it is incontestable that of all the dangers the most terrible one is the inner-party régime. These words have also served as the cause of an unbridled and thoughtless campaign—in the press and at meetings. And yet they are absolutely incontestable. If I were threatened by an enemy and my eyes were blindfolded or my hand tied to my shoulder, I would say that the chief danger was—not the enemy, but the handicaps restricting my movements. It is a lie that the danger or even war itself excludes the self-action of the party, which discusses and decides all questions and which directs and checks all its organs from top to bottom. If as a result of our mistakes the enemy did appear within 80 kilometers of Moscow, then the self-action of the party would have to be ten times greater than under any other conditions. But the task right now is not to permit such a situation, to prevent it. This can be realized only by a living party, self-acting and completely alive. The first thing that follows from this is that there must be a change in the party régime.

Moscow, September 24, 1927

Leon TROTSKY

## Received:

PORTRAIT OF AMERICA. By DIEGO RIVERA. With an explanatory text by Bertram D. Wolfe. Illustrated. 232 pp. New York. Covici Friede. \$3.50.

THE LAST STAND OF DIALECTIC MATERIALISM. A Study of Sidney Hook's Marxism. By MAX EASTMAN. 47 pp. New York. Polemic Publishers. 25c.

To the greatly needed clarification of the highly controversial problem of the relation of art to the revolution, *Artists in Uniform* makes a very ambiguous contribution. For the American reader, the book makes available for the first time a reliable account of the theory and practise of the official Communist party, in Russia and elsewhere, with reference to writers and literature; together with valuable statements about the relation of culture to the proletarian revolution by such Marxists as Marx, Lenin, Trotsky, Polonsky, and others, and by Soviet Russia's chief creative literary artists. But Eastman's interpretations of this rich material, and his conclusions, are so personal, confused, and un-Marxian as to bedevil the cause he claims to espouse—the freeing of the creative process from factional-bureaucratic chains.

Part II (A Literary Inquisition)—to a much less extent Part I—contains the meat of the book. There will be found the ghastly history of the depredations of Stalinism on the body of art. The ignorance and quackery, with reference to artistic processes and products, of Moscow cultural officialdom; its mechanical regimentation and shameless terrorization of intellectuals; its pretentious, grandiose projects to build proletarian literature overnight by bureaucratic fiat; its vicious inner factional manoeuvres and intrigues; its amazing unprincipled zig-zags between, on the one hand, sectarian excommunication, "pogromny" (complete economic, social, and literary ruin) of artists sincerely aiding or approaching the revolution as punishment for alleged heretical misdemeanors to, on the other hand, opportunistic alliances with the crudest bourgeois mystical adventurers, in which the most extravagant press-agent campaigns, flooding all Russia with acclaim for new-born Proletarian Geniuses, are swapped for temporary, often undelivered, services on the factional front—the whole foul, devastating havoc of talent, revolutionary creativeness and even lives that the blundering, irresponsible un-Communist programs and policies of present Soviet rule has wreaked during the past decade, all is here in vivid and suggestive outline.

The cultural catastrophe is, of course, but one phase of the degeneration of C. P. economic, political, and social institutions and activities, in the Soviet Union and elsewhere, arising from the usurpation by the Stalinist faction of the party apparatus, its bureaucratization, and its jettisoning of Marxism under the slogan of the "fight against counter-revolutionary Trotskyism". The whole weight of the first two sections of Eastman's book implies no other conclusion; many passages state it overtly; the book's sub-title is "A Study of Literature and Bureaucratism". Yet, amazingly, Eastman's final diagnosis designates as the root cause of the C. P. disease, not the "brutality of Stalinist bureaucracy", but the "bigotry of Marxist metaphysics". It is Marx, if you please, not Stalin, who crucifies revolutionary culture!

This dizzy acrobatic feat Eastman attempts in his Part III—"Art and the Marxian Philosophy"—and a more wildly conceived stunt has seldom been attempted in the anti-Marxian polemical circus, unparalleled for truth-fact-logic-reality-defying somersaults, flip-flops, slack-wire pirouettes and trapeze leaps through thin air. The unimpressed spectator is left wondering what to call the business—an unclassifiable curiosity or simply clowning?

Perhaps even this speculation would be unwarranted, were it not that Eastman's present fire-cracker, boyishly placed under the great-chair of Papa Marx, is but the latest of a whole series of similar adolescent pranks that have won some public notice. Even at that, it is hard to take seriously these utterances, which together constitute the Defiance of the Lone Rebel of Croton, The Last Survivor of the Old *Masses* Gang, to the invading hordes of Marxism which Eastman alone is clever enough to detect and expose, under their proletarian masks and blouses, as a lot of bearded German idealistic metaphysicians who bode no good to the free scientific lives of free-born writers of free verse.

This may seem burlesque. Nevertheless, Eastman's argument always boils down to a reiteration of this curious thesis, and little else.

Only with difficulty may one crystallize out of this prattle three—we cannot call them principles, even contentions—foci of emotional prejudices. (a) A romantic idealization of science. Science to Eastman is an intellectual abstraction, kept pure of the touch of all human, much less class hands, by poetic cellophane. No matter that nothing like it has ever been seen on sea or land, nor will be—at least not until we have had some generations of the classless society. Even liberals like Professor Carl Becker (in the *Nation*) look on with open-mouthed bewilderment while Eastman dashes horrifiedly away from Science at the Cross-Roads smack into the arms of the Science of the Rockefeller Foundation. (b) A suspicion of the "foreign". When all is said and done, Lenin and Trotsky and Stalin are all Russians, and Marx is, horrors, a German! Eastman, surprisingly, thinks of himself, and of science, as American. (c) Worship of the artist as the Free Soul—and of art as the only untrammelled, and untrammelable, activity of these Free Souls. These are expressions of this naive romantic view in Eastman's works, which considering that the writer has lived, edited, and written in modern industrial America, are simply incredible. Eastman is a citizen of the world, knows eruditely the history of art under different forms of class rule, has lived through decades unparalleled in history for their devastation of romantic illusions. How, through all these years, he has kept his School-girl Conception—here we are confronted by a mystery of individual psychological history.

Unfortunately, Eastman's personal aberrations have consequences. His biases, perverting and vitiating as they do the clear line of the truth about the relation of Marxism and art—which is that while Marxism does not war against the artist, pseudo-Marxism does—succeed in lending considerable aid and comfort to the enemy. Not—as Eastman feared—because he criticized

the Soviet Union (in Communism nothing is exempt from criticism); but because he criticized it unsoundly. The capitalist critic was only too happy to find that Marx is a cultural anti-Christ; and to draw from the astonishing absence in Eastman's book of any real description of the climatic unfriendliness of the capitalist régime to art, the lesson that after all in America art, at least, the human "spirit", was free.

However, we need not be too greatly agitated. Eastman's scientific-aesthetic formulæ have been kicking around for a long time without winning support. They are widely recognized for what they are—the unsuccessful approaches of a third-rate poet and a first-rate journalist to the grand dame Philosophy: not theory, but personal—and unreciprocated—flirtations with theory. Fortunately, moreover, the facts that Eastman presents in *Artists in Uniform* are so clear and so damning as to enable any intelligent reader to draw from them sounder conclusions than the author himself did. If he has besides some knowledge of the respectful attitude of Marx and the Marxian tradition to art (sufficiently indicated, as a matter of fact, by the quotations in Eastman's book from those undeniable Marxists, Lenin and Trotsky); if he has the slightest acquaintance with Stalinist "cultivation of the arts" in the United States, under the cultural consulships of Joseph Freeman, Oakley Johnson and Earl Browder, with its violent alternation of terrorization and beslobbering of artists—so much the better. Happily, an increasing number of American readers have both. . . .

Of course, this is not enough. No Marxist-Leninist can rest content while the best available attack on the pseudo-Marxist regimentation of the artist (squeezing art into army-cap and high-boot uniform) remains one written from the viewpoint of a Left wing nudist. Uniforms are bad, but equally bad is wholesale anarchist repudiation of the plain facts of the common unhappy lot and fate of the artist under declining capitalism, and of the necessity, on the part of the artist, of some common consciousness of the revolutionary way out through common effort, with fellow-craftsmen and the proletariat (even in the field of art!) toward a common socialist goal.

That this is a difficult, complicated problem—bedevilled by bad aesthetics and worse politics—no one will deny. How does the class position of the artist resemble, how differ from, that of the proletariat? Art must be given more latitude in line by the revolutionary party than can political action; how much? What is the distinction between propaganda-agitation and "creative art"? What individual factors, what collective factors enter into the creative process? From a revolutionary standpoint, what are the differing characters, uses, of various literary forms—poetry, novel, epic, history, etc.; how in turn do these differ from art products in other fields, painting, sculpture, movies, etc.? In what sense can we speak of proletarian art, bourgeois art? These are only a few of the host of thorny questions that beset the critic who would help his way to a sound approach to the rôle of the artist in the revolution.

At the moment, we Marxists have little more to offer than some rough notes by Marx, Engels, Lenin, Trotsky, and a few others. Invaluable as these are, they are only a small beginning of what we must have before we can speak of a Marxian view of Art.

It is to be hoped that the pages of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL will be able to make significant contributions to that broad, healthy international discussion on this important cultural problem which alone will clear the air of the assorted capitalist and Stalinist vapors that now obscure and poison the creative landscape.

David ERNEST

## Fatal Admissions

THE UPRISING OF THE AUSTRIAN WORKERS. Its Causes and Its Effects. By OTTO BAUER. 32 pp. Prague. Publishing House of the German Social Democratic Workers Party in the Czechoslovakian Republic. 25c. [In German.] THE CIVIL WAR IN AUSTRIA. A Description by Combatants and Eyewitnesses. By JULIUS DEUTSCH. 100 pp. Karlsbad. Graphia Publishing House. \$1. [In German.]

The unforgettable February events in Austria are in many respects of greater significance than those which preceded them by a year in Germany. There both social democrats and Stalinists excused their impotent capitulation by accusing each other: Ah, if only there had been no Communists! Ah, if only the workers hadn't supported the Socialists! we would have given a better account of ourselves. As it was, we . . .

In Austria, however, writes Bauer, "the social democracy represented, after the results of the last election, 90% of the workers, two-thirds of the people of Vienna, the overwhelming majority of the urban and industrial population of Austria as a whole, 41 percent of the entire Austrian people. And this mighty party, with its 600,000 members and a million and a half voters, became completely impotent at a single blow after March 7, 1933, after the establishment of the governmental dictatorship". In other words, a united working class, and no Communists to blame for the calamity.

The second leader of the party and head of the workers' *Schutzbund*, Deutsch, reveals that the relationship of military forces was not at all unfavorable. The federal army had a maximum of 25,000 men and the federal gendarmes another 10,000. The *Heimwehr* ("it was always a more politically than militarily effective force"), plus the Eastern Marches Storm Troops, plus the Freedom League, plus the Christian-German Turners' League, could muster a maximum of 17,000 men of varied quality and equipment. Even if the 10,000 police of the Vienna Socialist municipality are added, and all of them counted as unqualifiedly disposed in favor of the reaction, the total of 60,000 would still not measure up to the 80,000 well-organized men of the Republican *Schutzbund*.

How then account for the stupefying outcome of the civil war? The two chiefs of the Austrian working class have an answer: They were caught by surprise, they were deceived by assurances of perfidious friends in the government, unfair advantage was taken of their pacific protestations, they were betrayed.

Dollfuss charges the "Bolshevik elements" (Oof!) with having undertaken an insurrection, which had to be suppressed. Bauer and Deutsch are not one whit less outraged at this accusation that a pious Hindu would be if he were charged with doing violence to a sacred cow. "Did the workers ever

make use of these weapons before February 12, 1934? Didn't these weapons remain in their hiding places for fifteen years, even in times of greatest excitement—even at the time of the 1918-1919 overturn, even after the bloody massacre of July 15, 1927?" cries Bauer. "Nothing is more ridiculous", adds Deutsch indignantly, "than the assertion that the Austrian social democrats were 'Bolsheviks', who aspired to a dictatorship of the proletariat".

No, not the Socialist leaders are responsible for the struggle of the Austrian working class. Both Bauer and Deutsch devote page after page to prove (and they succeed, too!) that a struggle was literally the last thing they ever thought of or prepared for. They depended, not on the masses, but on Dollfuss and Miklas. "Our comrades outside of Vienna who sat together with Christian-Socialists and Land Leaguers in the provincial governments, used their personal connections with the Christian-Socialist provincial chiefs. . . . The League of Religious Socialists and several Catholic democrats not belonging to the party, invoked the mediation of the Church"—in vain. They were, do you understand? betrayed. "The most wretched rôle in this whole era of breaches of the constitution," continues Bauer's plaint, "was played by the federal president, Miklas. After his election as president of the republic he had taken a solemn religious oath on the constitution before the federal assembly." Deutsch thunders still louder against this amazing bourgeois who broke an oath: "Were Miklas the man of justice and constitutional fidelity he would like to seem to be, the Dollfuss dictatorship would not have been possible." As for Dollfuss, "he is of a mendacious nature. He lies in everyone's face, friend and foe alike." Is it *their* fault that Dollfuss and Miklas turned out to be liars and betrayed them?

If they had followed Marx instead of only naming cooperative houses after him, they would recall his sardonic observation: "It is not enough to say, as the Frenchmen do, that their nation was taken by surprise. A nation, no more than a woman, is excused for the unguarded hour when the first adventurer who comes along can do violence to her. The riddle is not solved by such shifts, it is only formulated in other words. There remains to be explained how a nation of thirty-six millions can be surprised by three swindlers, and taken to prison without resistance."

Neither Bauer nor Deutsch offers the explanation. Deutsch does not even hint that there was anything particularly wrong with the social democracy, or that any revaluation of values is necessary after the event. "We have been beaten, but not vanquished!" Let that suffice. As for the rest, his brochure is one long, strained effort to prove that Dollfuss started the civil war, that it was forced upon reluctant socialists, that Dollfuss is no democrat, but the Socialists are and always will be. Through this revolting lawyer's plea against the truly outrageously unfounded accusation of the Fascists that he is a revolutionist, there pierces from time to time a narrative of rank and file heroism and combativity which is epic in grandeur. If only the superb valor and revolutionary spirit of the barricade fighters had been fostered and organized instead of being dampened to the point of suffocation—not Stanek, Wallisch, Weissel and Münichreiter would have dangled from the gallows, but the Fascist murderers of the proletariat!

Bauer feints an analysis, but nothing

more. In the course of it, however, he unwittingly writes such an eternally damning indictment of social democracy, Austro-Marxism included, that any Communist would be hard put to improve upon it. If only we could circulate it by the tens of thousands of copies, especially among socialist workers! We really owe a great debt to those English socialists who have already translated it; Deutsch should be next on their publishing agenda.

"Fascism or democracy—that was the question!" This is the refrain of Deutsch's work, and Bauer only sings it a little off key. Not capitalist dictatorship or proletarian dictatorship; not bourgeois exploitation or socialist freedom; but the Fascist rule of capitalism or the "democratic" rule of capitalism! On that alternative social democracy has broken its neck, and alas! the neck of the proletariat. Only once does Bauer involuntarily answer the cowards and rascally defeatists who continue to preach the poisonous doctrine that the Austrian workers couldn't have won a fight anyhow. When the parliament was dispersed in March 1933, "we could have answered that on March 15 with the general strike. Never were the conditions for a successful strike so favorable as on that day. The German counter-revolution, which was just then stormily taking place, had aroused the masses in Austria. *The working masses awaited the signal to fight.* The railroad men were at that time not yet so cowed as eleven months later. The military organization of the government was then far weaker than in February 1934. *At that time we might have triumphed.*"

But the signal was not given. Bauer—to say nothing of Renner and the extreme Right wing of the party—was too concerned with saving democracy. All the party leaders looked on, knees to the floor, hats in hand, tears in their eyes, appealing to nature's noblemen among a bourgeoisie too occupied with shearing the proletarian Samson of his locks to pay much attention to eloquent and scholarly dissertations on the superiority of democracy over Fascism.

What now? Bauer doesn't exactly know. The proletariat has tried one policy in Hungary in 1919; another in Italy in 1922; a third in Germany in 1933. "In Austria, we attempted to take a middle path between the Italian-Hungarian and the German extremes—we were beaten just the same." Bauer led the proletariat to a horrible defeat and he does not know the way out! Or if there is another way, Marx's and Lenin's way, it is entirely out of the question. That would be Bolshevism, which, as Bauer or Kautsky could prove, it not "democratic". What business have such people calling themselves leaders? What business have they in the labor movement?

We feel free to recommend these two social democratic books to every worker—wholeheartedly. They prove to the hilt that there is but one name for such leaders, not a name of arbitrary abuse unjustly hurled in polemical heat, but a name richly deserved: *Traitors!* M. S.

## Celine's Journey

JOURNEY TO THE END OF THE NIGHT. By LOUIS-FERDINAND CÉLINE. 509 pp. Boston. Little, Brown and Co. \$2.50.

Once again the moribund body of the existing order has been slashed wide open and all the abscessed interior displayed. The surgeon this time happens to be an

actual Paris medico; but in art as, apparently in life, he is no great healer. Because no Frenchman has been so frank since Rabalais, because Dr. Destouches or "Louis-Ferdinand Céline" was hitherto unknown, and because his *Journey to the End of the Night* was gypped out of last year's Prix Goncourt, the book has been a carefully fostered sensation.

The sales mount and the Samuel Putnams and the other doom-haunted middle-class intellectuals ponder whether the book is "a prelude to revolution or better a mournful overture to that suicidally irrational era . . . upon which the human race appears to be entering".

To one more aware of the inexorable forces assembling for revolution this novel seems less an overture and more a cacophonous *finale* to the mad symphony of individualism. For it is difficult to conceive of another book which will spread out with more terrible comprehensiveness and yet with such stubborn fatalistic acceptance, the cringing hypocrisies, the pullulating diseases, the tortures taken and given, and the endless savage murders of a world where only a few "lucky" rich escape the horrors they themselves create.

Bardamu, the autobiographic protagonist, is plunged at twenty into the war. At times with the sardonic casualness of Robert Graves, but more often with a realism which equals anything in the now traditional war-debunking novels, the author presents that bloody chaos where men are forced into murder or suicide by utterly stupid, remote officers whom Bardamu, for one, would rather kill than any German. But here, as throughout the book, he is always revolted but never really in revolt. The war, he says, makes him "sensible enough to be definitely a coward forever". He tries to be taken prisoner but stumbles instead upon a wound, a medal, and the rôle of a minor hero invalidated to Paris.

He escapes the rest of the war only by flight to the French Congo, where he works for a rubber company. But here humanity is even more horrible. "In the cold of Europe, under prudish northern fogs, except when slaughter is afoot, you only glimpse the crawling cruelty of your fellowmen. But their rottenness rises to the surface as soon as they are tickled by the hideous fevers of the tropics. . . . You catch sight in the white race of what you see on a pretty beach when the tide goes out; reality, heavy-smelling pools of slime, the crabs, carcasses, and scum."

Here and throughout the book the tumerous depths of an utterly rapacious civilization are scooped out with almost masochistic eagerness. Like Robinson Jeffers, Céline is so bemused with the Gorgon's snaky head he never for a moment thinks of the possibility of cutting it off. Like the American poet, too, this pathologically morbid son of a demoted professor cannot be content even with a meticulous pyramiding of genuine corpses, but must add carrion of his own creation. With hysteric single-mindedness he eliminates almost completely from his five-hundred pages any aspects of life which might contain a hint of human courage, fidelity, creativeness, unselfishness or even of intelligent selfishness, with the result that his narrative writhes into a macabre fantasy where characters lose reality in a world that is always night. Nevertheless, perhaps no artist before has so irrefutably damned the colonial system of exploitation. Here are the robbed and

diseased and tortured Negroes, the brutalized and blank-minded whites, themselves preyed upon by the climate, hating the natives, each other, and the bigger thieves at home whom they try unsuccessfully to beat in a world-wide muddle of thievery.

Escaping from a jungle outpost so girt round with horrors as to be unconvincing even if true, our Ulysses reaches America by even less credible adventures.

In this America there is more than Joycean bizarreness, more than the projection of madness in a war-demented, fever-ridden misanthrope. There is a despairing cynicism so complete it refuses honesty even to the reader. "You must choose", he says, "between dying and lying. Personally, I have never been able to kill myself".

Refusing the first genuine love he has met, that of a Detroit prostitute, because "I was fonder still of my own obsession, of my longing to run away from everywhere in search of something, God knows what", he returns to his starting point, Paris. He assumes the life of a penurious doctor in a slum, chiefly because, as he later realizes, the sick are less dangerous to his reckoning, than the well. The remainder of the book—more than half—is a rambling and wearisome repetition of disease, poverty, treachery, insanity, and murder, in which Bardamu is increasingly involved.

The gross richness of its style, the sustained passion of its hatreds, the furious documentation of its negations, lend this book an epical magnificence. But really the most amazing thing about it is its naïveté. Not once does this doctor come near to discovering the quite remediable causes of the boils and chancres he so savagely probes. He curses himself for being forced by hunger to take fees from the half-starving sick, yet never once reflects that such evils can be forever removed by overthrowing the rule of parasitic minorities. He pours his hate on the *superficies* of capitalism, the skyscrapers in which he sees only "architectural agony", the machines which sweat men into robots—without once thinking what may happen when the workers control their work. He lusts vainly for the beautified women of the rich—whose charms he ingenuously assumes are now hereditary—and is so convinced "the poor already smell of death inside" that he never once sees the growing life within them, the dawning revolutionary consciousness, the promise of a society which will eliminate the horrors at which he screams.

For, with all his Zolaesque realism, Céline is blind, blind to the central horror which is not the incredible ills mankind endures today but the fact that those ills continue while they are curable by the very beings who suffer most. This man is so caught in the toils of individualistic anarchy that his very book is a supreme selfishness; for it is written not really to taunt the bourgeoisie with their filth, to feed the discontent of the middle-classes (though it will do both), not at all to awaken the masses to revolution, but only as another attempt at a personal escape—by an emetic. He spews out, as he admits, only that he himself may forget.

The Marxian revolutionist is not often as eloquent as Dr. Destouches but he is, in the last analysis, not only a more effective but a more sincere hater of our contemporary society.

Earl R. BIRNEY

## A New Technics

TECHNICS AND CIVILIZATION. By LEWIS MUMFORD. Illustrated. 495 pp. New York. Harcourt, Brace and Co. \$4.50.

The book is nicely written, well bound, printed on fine paper and illustrated with excellent photographs. But the material it surveys is ossified with age.

The process for turning out a stale interpretation of history is as follows: to each ten pounds of Sombart add ten ounces of Veblen. Obtain all the available volumes on the history of inventions and development of technology. Rip off the covers and draw out the contents. Next obtain an anthropologist (dead or alive) and extract from his gullet the terms eo, paleo, and neo. Add technics. Mash to a pulp using meat chopper or axe and feed into a barrel. Gently sprinkle with holy water to exorcise Marx. By now the barrel with its contents is ready to be set into violent motion. Do so by invoking the spirits to serve as prime movers. Revolve at the rate of 1001 revolutions per minute, and serve in a bound volume.

Those who have never heard tell of spirits spinning a barrel should refer to Mumford according to whom the spirits are the prime movers not only of society but of life itself. Mumford believes in "internal teleology". In his own words, "even the most rigorous scientific description of the physical basis of life indicates it to be internally teleological". If the spirits are able to move so much, why shouldn't internal teleology be capable of spinning a mere barrel?

Mumford extracts the major precepts of Sombart and Veblen so haphazardly that he may very well have used an axe. Sombart attempted to amplify Marx by proclaiming that "all history of society revolves around two sorts of contradictions, like around two poles: I call them the social and national contradictions". Mumford emerges from Sombart with right angle instead of two poles: "the national struggle cut at right angles to the class struggle". After cutting the class struggle at right angles, Mumford proceeds to cleave it to pieces. "After 1850 nationalism became the drill master of the restless proletariat, and the latter worked out its sense of inferiority and defeat by identification with the all-powerful State." One could not have done worse using a meat chopper.

Mumford's acceptance and admiration of Veblen is incompatible with his own emphatic rejection of the "Victorian myth of a struggle of existence in a blind and meaningless universe". If anyone ever subscribed to this myth, it was Veblen. He viewed social evolution from what he termed "the standpoint of modern science, essentially Darwinist". He defined Darwinism as follows: "A scheme of thought, a scheme of blindly cumulative causation in which there is no trend, no final term, no consummation." What is this if not Mumford's "Victorian myth of a struggle of existence in a blind and meaningless universe"? Mumford muddles by rejecting the myth and accepting Veblen.

To add to the muddle, Mumford's Victorian Myth is itself a myth. The Victorians did not at all subscribe to the viewpoint Mumford ascribes to them. If anyone is entitled to serve as a representative of Victorian thought it is Herbert Spencer, and he did not at all view the universe as being

blind and meaningless. To him evolution was chockful of meaning and progress, and capitalism was an ideal of nature.

One more instance will suffice of the jumble that Mumford concocts out of his ingredients. Following Sombart and Veblen, Mumford announces that Marx's description of "price and value remains as pre-scientific as Ricardo's". Marx was just another victim of the misleading verbalisms of paleotechnic ideology. Mumford does not venture to expose Marx's fallacies, but he does clarify the paleotechnic notions on the subject: "This was the notion that economic value had a relation to the quantity of brute work done and the scarcity of the product." Mumford is unaware that this notion has nothing in common with the Marxian theory of value. Instead he provides his own scientific description of value, his own neotechnic verbalisms: "Real values do not derive from either rarity or crude manpower. . . . Genuine value lies in the power to sustain or enrich life. . . . The value lies directly in life-function: not in its origin, its rarity, or in the work done by human agents." To sustain these contentions, Mumford makes the following scientific discoveries: "a glass bead may be more valuable than a diamond, a deal table more valuable aesthetically [!] than the most tortuously carved one, and the juice of a lemon may be more valuable on a long ocean voyage than a hundred

pounds of meat without it". With one squirt of lemon juice Mumford overthrows the whole science of economics and the entire structure of Marxism. Small wonder that he is a *basic Communist*, which Communism he emphasizes (in italics) is necessarily post-Marxian. Mumfordian Communism is neotechnic. Its slogans: Increase Conversion! Economize Production! Normalize Consumption! Socialize Creation! Small wonder that Mumford's work has been acclaimed so widely. Mumford's ideas are basically those of the apologists for capitalism. To Mumford the life-giving "values" of lemon juice are the same thing as the exchange value of lemon juice. He makes mish-mash of both. He exclaims, "it is not rarity that gives air its power to sustain life". How profoundly true! Air is not rare. Air sustains life. Therefore Marx was a victim of paleotechnic verbalisms; he knew that values in use did not underlie values in exchange. According to Mumford a whiff of air would be more valuable than a ton of lemons to a man coming up for the third time in mid-ocean.

Years ago Karl Marx pointed out that no comprehensive history of the development of technology had been compiled as yet. A book with real, genuine and so forth value on technology and civilization still remains to be written.

J. G. W.

## New Warnings: Bulgaria and Latvia

ONCE more we are compelled to register the defeat of the working class in two countries. In swift succession, a military *coup d'état* in Latvia was followed by another in Bulgaria. The situation in the Baltic country is not yet sufficiently clear to permit of an adequate analysis. The overthrow of the Muschanov cabinet by Kimon Gueorgiev, however, offers fewer unknown factors to the observer. The new régime, in character and origin, bears more the mark of a purely militarist than a Fascist dictatorship, for, in the last ten years at least, there has been precious little of bourgeois "democracy" to be extirpated in Bulgaria. Like all reactionary militarist dictatorships, its measures and outlook have of course a distinctly Fascist flavor. But far more important is the fact that the Gueorgiev *coup d'état* definitely brings Bulgaria within the sphere of influence of French imperialism, much to the discomfiture of Herren Hitler and Göring who have been busily engaged in finding points of support throughout Europe. The imperialist power of the French Republic, which Daladier acclaimed not so long ago as "*la dernière tranchée de la liberté*", rests upon the openly militarist despotisms of Yugoslavia, Poland and Bulgaria. As a generation ago, the witches' cauldron of the Balkans is seething with the intrigue, chicane and conflict which augurs the imminence of a new world war.

Two reactionary *coups d'état* within a single week! And the masses? And their parties? The two countries are not located in Central Africa. Both of them have a rich proletarian tradition. Latvia was to the Baltic what Bulgaria was to the Balkans: the terrain of the most advanced and most militant revolutionary elements. In recent years, the former has had a large and influential social democracy, the latter a large and influential Communist party. With the experiences of the last year in

Germany and Austria before them—to say nothing of the experiences of the last twenty years—what rôle did these parties play in the recent overturns?

The Basle press correspondence of the Third International triumphantly reproduces the following Warsaw dispatch: "The organ of the Polish social democracy, *Robotnik*, reports that the Lettish social democracy was informed in time of the planned Fascist overturn. As *Robotnik* writes, a few days before the *coup d'état* in Riga a banquet of the commanders of the district organizations of the *Aisargi* (Fascists) took place. At this banquet, the leader of the *Aisargi* and confidante of Ulmanis, Anilit, delivered a speech in which he declared that the *Aisargi* must be prepared for the march on Riga. The social democratic deputies learned of what happened and what was said at the banquet. They confined themselves, however, only to an interpellation in the parliament. No measures at all were undertaken for the mobilization of the working class and the toilers for the struggle against the Fascist overturn by the leaders of the social democracy." (*Rundschau*, Nr. 31, p. 1197.)

We have no reason to doubt the report. The international social democracy has learned nothing, absolutely nothing, from the German and Austrian events. They only seek to prevent the workers from learning. The "big" Lettish social democracy might just as well have been non-existent for all the effect it had on the events of the day. Dollfuss, when warned against attacking the Austrian social democracy, retorted with a contemptuous sneer: "There is no danger! The workers will no longer fight for these leaders!" Properly rephrased, it should read: "These leaders will not organize the workers for anything but ignominious defeat."

If the insignificance of the Communist party in Latvia (despite the famous

## Brandler on the Road to Canossa

"stormy revolutionary upsurge") permits the Stalinists to wax virtuously indignant about the contemptible impotence of the social democracy, what should be said about equally contemptible impotence of Stalinism in Bulgaria, where the proportions are more than reversed? Once before, during the reactionary *coup d'état* against the Stambulski "peasant" régime in September 1923, the Communist party remained quiescent and totally indifferent to the "quarrel in the ranks of the bourgeoisie". The masses of workers and peasants actively supported the Communists, but the party's time-marking brought them and itself under the bloody axe of the reaction. It never recovered from this blow.

The Sofia wireless report to the New York Times emphasizes the complete absence of any resistance by Communists and socialists, either in the capital, where the last elections gave the Communist party a majority in the city council, or in the provinces.

When Hitler took power, the Stalinists carefully explained away their miserable retreat by pointing out that they could not have organized a fight against Fascism, and should not have organized one, because the Communist party did not have a majority of the workers behind it (exactly how many percent did the census show to be lacking, and was it certified by a notary public?—Ah, Austro-Marxism, thou hast not lived in vain!) and without 51 percent of the proletariat, resistance would have been a putsch, an adventure, which, as everyone surely knows, is anathema to the pious Stalinists. But Bulgaria?

"In this preponderantly agrarian country," declare the Stalinists, who promptly add that "Lettish and Bulgarian Fascism have no mass base"—which should be very consoling to its murdered and imprisoned victims—"the Communist party had behind it a majority of the working class, though certain sections, particularly the railroad workers, had not yet been won for the revolutionary cause. The Communist party since 1930 had grown four-fold in membership. It had led tremendous demonstrations and was carrying on brilliant struggles from day to day [?!]. The party of comrade Dimitroff had lived up to the glorious tradition he demonstrated at the Leipzig trial. It is for this reason that the Bulgarian bourgeoisie, endeavoring to preserve itself from doom, decided to play its bloodiest card—Fascism." (H. Gannes, *Daily Worker*, May 23, 1934.)

The social reformists could ask for no better argument for their theory that the more support the workers give the Communists the surer is the victory of Fascism! Fortunately, the reverse is true, as Russia and Austria show in opposite ways. And unfortunately, it was not the growing strength of the Communist party that enabled the bourgeoisie to play its reactionary hand so unperturbedly, but the growing impotence of Stalinism. The masses supported the Communist party in Bulgaria as the only way of expressing their solidarity with the social revolution in Bulgaria and the Soviet Union. If they chose a broken-down vehicle for their sentiments, it is only because no other yet exists in that country. Strictly in the tradition of the social democracy, Stalinism again proves its ability to gather votes, and its powerlessness to organize and lead a fighting action. The sterile sponge absorbs votes like water (and

THE main achievement of the recent national conference of the Communist Party of Germany-Opposition (the Brandler group) was the resolution to petition the Comintern for permission to attend the seventh world congress (the Strassburg *Neue Welt*, No. 99). In this connection the Brandlerites point out that a collaboration at the base is already taking place "in spite of still existing tactical differences in various questions". They point to "a) Agreement with the principles and aims of Communism [the principles of "national and social liberation"? B.]; b) joint struggle against the Fascist dictatorship, reformism, centrism and Trotskyism". They declare that they never had any other conception than the defense of their views within the framework of the discipline of the Communist International and the Communist party. They also declare themselves finally prepared "to establish whether and to what extent the tactical differences existing up to now can be overcome".

This offer of capitulation—for it cannot be and was not meant to be anything but that—does not come as a surprise. The C.P.G.-O. was never anything but a kind of sulky bureaucratic lackey of Stalinism. By preserving silence on the Russian question and the real roots of the "ultra-Leftist" aberrations of the Communist Party of Germany, they continually misled the workers no less than did the Stalinist priesthood. Inasmuch as they confined everything to tactical questions even after the German defeat and, veiling the bankruptcy of the Stalinists, continued to stand for the reform of the Third International, they covered up with their feeble forces this crime against the German and the international working class.

This policy, which led to a complete collapse of their international organization (loss of the Swedes, the Norwegians, the Swiss, the Czechoslovaks, etc., the split in Germany—left are only Lovestone and the Oh! so Communist mayor of Strassburg, Hueber, who holds office by grace of the clericals and the German Fascists), had to end in capitulation. The best preparation for finding favor in the eyes of Stalin has always been the baiting of "Trotskyism". And in this domain the Brandlerites have done all that was humanly possible. Not only the infamous passage of the declaration of capitulation where Fascism and Trotskyism are put side by side, but elsewhere too, no lie has been too stupid, too provocative, too filthy not to be used by them. And ever and always in the primordial-Communist sheet of Mr. Hueber. The

even then it leaks through its lacerated pores), but it has no hydraulic force.

Germany, Austria, Latvia, Bulgaria—all within eighteen months! Here is an ominous succession of defeats which speak with tragic eloquence of how little time there is to lose, of how thoroughly and hopelessly bankrupt are the old Internationals. We have dedicated ourselves not merely to

"Find out the cause of this effect,

"Or rather the cause of this defect,

"For this effect, defective comes by cause"

but also to rally into action all those who draw the inescapable conclusions imposed upon the revolutionary movement by these significant events. X.

conference resolution also fantastically imputes to us again—as well as to the leadership of the Socialist Workers Party, which is after all flesh of the flesh of Brandler—a theory of the "counter-revolutionary epoch", which, as those who follow our press know, we have never even dreamed of. These are the "renovators" of the Communist movement!

The capitulation is not only being prepared by the reprinting of the products of Radek and Stalin, but above all the Brandlerites are now also striving to exterminate radically all the political differences with the Stalinists which they still retained with their last remnant of reason. The general slogan of the national conference reads: "Transition to action." Even the Stalinists could not be more stupid. From this to the theory of the revolutionary upsurge is no longer a great distance.

But even if the political nuances between the centrist brethren should be entirely straightened out, it will be hard to find grace, and they will not get off so cheaply. For capitulation, complete political suicide is required. Without capitulation, and on the basis of their line for the "reform of the C. I.", they can only vegetate and be ruined with their new wisdom. These are the "perspectives" of the Brandlerites, despite certain organizational reserves which they still have in Germany. Their latest step, however, will contribute signally to the enlightenment of those good working class elements who landed in their ranks at one time with the erroneous opinion that they were dealing with a genuine opposition. Not by self-debasement before miserable bankrupts, but only in the struggle against all the enemies and perversions of Communism, for a new Communist party and International, can the proletariat be served, the defeated movement be advanced, and the given possibilities in the non-Fascist countries be utilized.

B.

PARIS, May 1934

We are not pacifists. We consider a revolutionary war just as much a means of proletarian policy as an uprising. Our attitude to war is determined not by the legalistic formula of "aggression" but by the question of which class carries on the war and for what aims. In the conflict of states just as in the class struggle "defense" and "aggression" are only questions of practical expediency and not of juridical or ethical norm. The bare criterion of aggression creates a base of support for the social-patriotic policy of Messrs. Leon Blum, Vandervelde and others, who thanks to Versailles, are given the possibility of defending imperialist booty under the guise of defending peace.

Stalin's famous formula "We do not want an inch of foreign soil but will not give up an inch of ours" represents a conservative program for the preservation of the status quo in radical contradiction to the aggressive nature of proletarian revolution. *The ideology of socialism in one country* leads inevitably to the blurring of the reactionary rôle of the national state, to conciliation with it, to its idealization, to reducing the importance of revolutionary internationalism. — From *War and the Fourth International*.

# Review of Reviews

*American Socialist Quarterly* — Summer 1934. Vol. 3. No. 2. 25c.

THE theoretical organ of the Socialist party graphically depicts the anti-Marxian Centrist muddleheadedness of the "Militants". Maynard C. Krueger, who at the Paris congress of the Labor and Socialist International last August, supported Ehrlich and the Polish Bund in the formula, "dictatorship of the revolutionary party" came home only to be told by Kantorovitch that he voted for a mistranslation! The formula should properly read "dictatorship of the proletariat".

Now Krueger, in "Problems Facing the Party", finds that the term "workers' democracy" best describes the political transition from capitalism to socialism. As proof that his position is not new, he correctly invokes the inveterate opportunist Morris Hillquit as his authority.

Hillquit's formula, "workers' democracy", is also favored in an article "Fascism's Challenge and Socialism's Answer", by the pacifist-turned-radical, Devere Allen, a Thomasite. It is quite clear that the phrase is an excellent cover for reformists and Centrists.

Allen contends that in a modern industrialized nation it is rarely that the workers can successfully resist or revolt by arms against the capitalists. (The same view can be found in Kantorovitch's *Toward Socialist Reorientation*.) Then what will be the answer to capitalist resistance to expropriation? A general strike or "semi-general strike"! This magic formula is a substitute for armed insurrection—as though a general strike in a revolutionary situation can lead to anything but armed conflict or capitulation! If the violent overthrow of capitalism is impossible, socialism is doomed!

Another whiff of Centrist pollution is Haim Kantorovitch's review of *Socialism's New Start* (or *Socialism's New Beginning*, as the American translation is called). This exponent of castrated Marxism does not as much as mention the avowed revision of the fundamentals of Marx and Engels by the new German Centrist group. Nor does he take issue with their view of a "party dictatorship"—a conception which he disputed on previous occasions—but which rather implies that they favor the Marxian view of the proletarian dictatorship.

Kantorovitch criticizes the statement of the "New Beginning" group that the German social democracy was never a Marxian party. "... the theoretical literature of pre-war social democracy" contained such concepts "as the class struggle, social revolution, and even the dictatorship of the proletariat," writes Kantorovitch. The *theoretical literature* spoke of the dictatorship of the proletariat! True enough, it can be found in the writings of Kautsky, Luxemburg, and Parvus—but how about the official program and position of the social democracy? Surely Kantorovitch knows that even the elder Liebknecht, in reply to Bernstein, agreed with this revisionist in repudiating the dictatorship of the proletariat. (See Wilhelm Liebknecht's *No Compromise, No Political Trading*.)

The review of Thomas' *The Choice Before Us* by a "Militant" leader, Murray Baron, concludes that Thomas "subscribed,

in part, to the same gradualism and constitutionalism which characterized the European movements" and that the author is not committed "to any definite program for the period of revolutionary transition". Yet both Thomas and Baron subsequently supported the formula "workers' democracy" as the Detroit convention.

Among the other items is included an informative article on the history of the American Yipsel movement by its present national chairman, Arthur G. McDowell.

Joseph CARTER.

*Modern Monthly*—June 1934. Vol. VIII, No. 5. 25c.

THE *Modern Monthly* still continues to give the impression of being over-much literary and the personal organ of V. F. Calverton. The departments—"The Modern Student", "The Theatre", the "Literary Caravan"—reveal no firm editorial policy. What is worth while in the periodical still appear to be articles contributed and written without benefit of editorial consultation.

The most interesting item is a translation of "An Open Letter to André Gide" by Ramon Fernandez, the French literary critic, author of *Messages*, who declares himself for the revolutionary proletariat. The reactionary riots of February in Paris have convinced Fernandez that "Today... absence from the camp of the proletariat means being present in the camp of its enemies". Fernandez reviews the three issues on which he had earlier differed with Gide and the Communists; and in each case unknowingly reveals that his differences were not with Marxism but with Stalinism. (1) "Judging that Marxism did not encompass reality, nor all the possibilities of the mind, I wished to illumine that margin ignored by the revolutionists in their zeal for action." The "reality" which Marxism did not "encompass", it is clear from Fernandez, is the internal structure of literature and art which, of course, as real Marxists know, have their own laws. Nevertheless, for refusing to follow the reductive vulgarisms of the Stalinist "literary" critics, of which the *New Masses* is typical, Fernandez had been viciously denounced as an anti-Marxist. It was unfortunate for Fernandez' development that he took the Stalinist vulgarisms as the contemporary representation of Marxism, instead of realizing that Marxism's analysis of literature does not ignore the relative autonomy of art in its own realm. One wonders whether Fernandez has read Trotsky's *Literature and Revolution*, which represented the Bolshevik view when it appeared. Now, Fernandez declares, "it appears to me infinitely more important to defend the hungry than to be right against Marx". But it is not Marx that he was right against, but the Stalinist epigones!

Fernandez' second difference with the "Communists" is equally creditable to him. He would have none of the easy transformation into a Communist of the literary camp-followers of Stalinism. Merely to say he was a Communist was not enough. Application was necessary. He has come to see that only by identifying himself with the proletariat can he realize himself as an intellectual, and that the interests of proletariat and intellectual coincide.

To Fernandez' further credit, his third

difference with the "Communists" remains unsolved: the choice of a party. He has no hope for the socialists, but is repelled by the "dogmatism" of the Stalinists. The basic degeneration of the Stalinists still seems to him merely a matter of tactics, mistakes of execution of the theory which he does agree with. He pledges himself: "None of the reservations I have admitted to you will keep me from joining a revolutionary action on the day that pits the proletariat against its enemies. On such a day to hesitate would be to betray. One must swear faithfulness to this future action, even if it brings into play a contestable tactic, and profit by the respite still left us to try to give it a more just and efficacious orientation" (My italics). That last point, we may be sure, will bring the Stalinist hatchet-men down on Fernandez, who will permit intellectuals to come to their party only in the frame of mind of Baptists ready to jump into the baptismal font. This insistence on thinking about the "contestable tactic" of the Stalinists will, let us hope, lead Fernandez in a genuinely revolutionary direction.

W. H. R.

*The Communist*—June 1934. Vol. XIII, No. 6. 20c.

THE reviewer cannot conscientiously recommend this issue—or any other—for light summer reading. The reading is light enough. But it is dangerous to read on these hot summer days, for it makes the blood boil.

The editorial for the month is on the "Lessons of May Day". Its attempt to indict the Communist League for its participation in the united front with the S.P., I.W.W., trade unions, etc., is sufficiently exploded by what this united front is contrasted with: "the united front organized and led by the Communist party". Needless to say, the editorial does not breathe a word of the efforts of the Communist League to organize a real organizational front of all working class organizations, which the Stalinists repudiated in the name of the "united front from below". According to the usual Stalinist formula, the trade union workers did not march with the C.P. because the workers were "forced" to go in the other demonstration "either by fooling these masses with 'Left' slogans or by forcing the workers in the unions under their control to come to the Socialist demonstration or else pay a fine", etc., etc. Formula No. 2 of Stalinism is also invoked: i.e., the first half of the editorial says they got the trade union workers, the second half ("self-criticism") says they didn't. Thus, the first half says: "In New York City, despite the efforts of the bureaucrats in some trades organized in the A. F. of L., more workers participated in the demonstration at Union Square than at the socialist demonstrations." Notice, it is organized workers that the Stalinists are claiming, not the parade of Stalinist fraternal organizations. But the second half of the editorial reveals that their May Day conference "had delegates from only three locals of the A. F. of L., while on other occasions we have already had tens of A. F. of L. locals participating". And the editorial sadly "must record that the demonstrations were weakest in the main industrial towns and cities, such as Gary, Youngstown, and in the steel, mining, auto and other industrial centers throughout the country".

If there is anybody who still doesn't know why the Stalinists had no organized

workers to speak of, Jack Stachel supplies the answer in the chief article, "Some Problems in Our Trade Union Work." Not a word is said in this article about the fact that throughout this period of mass strikes, the Stalinists have been completely isolated from practically all of the stirring struggles. Why they have been is clear enough, however, from the mystical formulations of Stachel. The central task is declared to be the A. F. of L. But "does this mean that we are giving up building the T.U.U.L. unions? On the contrary", etc. However, there is a new wrinkle in the Stalinist trade union "policy". Up until now all doubters were answered by the oracle: "The way to build the T.U.U.L. unions is to work in the A. F. of L." Now Stachel cautiously suggests that maybe the two

tasks aren't identical, by saying, "In each case we must weigh . . . where we must throw the main weight: in the A. F. of L., or in building the T.U.U.L. unions." But this verbal change merely leads up to a typical Stalinist slogan: setting up an independent federation of labor: "How shall we achieve that? Some may think, by calling a T.U.U.L. convention, where, by changing our name and our constitution, we shall get them all to flock in." Oh, no, says Stachel, that's too crude. But what he proposes is: "What we have in mind is that one or two of the important independent unions, together with the 'New York Central Labor Union' which we can build, and a number of outstanding T.U.U.L. unions, would come together", etc., etc.

V. T.

## The Convention of the Socialist Party

(Continued from page 13) their heads completely. They appeared inexperienced, weak and unsure of themselves and they made a pitiful showing.

The horse-trade engineered by Matthews—to sacrifice their independent position for a place on the N.E.C.—precipitated a crisis and split in the R.P.C. caucus on the first day of the convention. So great was the demoralization and resentment of the Left wing delegates that the affair became common knowledge. A conciliation later, with the understanding that the position of the R.P.C. would be presented independently after all, turned out to be deceptive. Nothing happened. The R.P.C. didn't even speak. Naturally such procedure fearfully undermined the prestige of the R.P.C. The Left wing elements in the party had begun to rally around it for want of another centre and, for the same reason, a formal unity of the faction was maintained even after the disgraceful performance at the convention. From all appearances the R.P.C. still has a chance to make good, but it is under a real test now. The leaders, whose not too great authority was seriously weakened at Detroit, will be obliged to lead a principled fight in the near future or make way for others who are more steadfast in their convictions and more able to fight for them.

Since the convention the Right wing, led by the New York Old Guard, has taken the offensive and set up an apparatus to conduct a campaign for the defeat of the "Declaration of Principles" in the party referendum. Their fight is waged with great aggressiveness. Threats of split fly right and left. In this, however, there is a great deal of bluff. The split, in our opinion, will not come immediately. The Old Guard know the weakness and flabbiness of their opponents and count on clubbing them into submission. Thomas has already come forward with an "explanation" of the Declaration which opens the door to a complete retreat. On top of that the "Declaration" has been submitted to a committee of Socialist lawyers for an opinion as to its legality. The whole issue is thus switched from the political to the juridical field. This, as they say in Missouri, is duck soup for the Old Guard which is a miniature bar association all by itself.

Agreements or compromises at the top will not be able to stop this development. That is because the real pressure behind the conflict of the groupings at the top comes from below, from the proletarian sections of the party and from the youth. They will continue to push with increasing insistence and clearer aim for a revolutionary

policy. The convention appears to us not as the end, but rather as the real beginning of the internal conflict in the party.

In the present situation the R.P.C. is again presented with a great opportunity. As has been shown, it gave little promise at Detroit, but the group still has a chance. The next months will decide its fate. It will either show itself as a miserable wind-break for reformism and pass from the scene, or become a rallying center of those elements who are moving for a revolutionary party. In order to play the latter rôle it will be necessary for the leaders of the R.P.C. to clarify their aims and answer the question: "Where are we going?" They must understand clearly that a break with the Second International, politically and organizationally—and that means also its American prototypes—is the indispensable condition to the constitution of a revolutionary party. And this necessary break leads with iron logic to the issue of fusion with the revolutionary elements outside the S. P.

There also a fight is raging that is no less intransigent and irreconcilable than the fight in the Socialist party. Will the Left socialists go over to the Stalinists—that is, from one bankrupt International into another? To the Lovestoneites? This is the most miserable prospect of all—to break with one bankrupt organization in order to "reform" another from the outside. To escape such a fate the militants of the R.P.C. might well appeal to Norman Thomas' God for aid. Will the R. P. C. eventually go with the revolutionary Marxists who are coming together from various sources to create a new party of the Fourth International?

These are the life and death questions facing the R.P.C. and all the revolutionary elements in the Socialist party. Only that faction which knows where it is going will be able to lead the revolutionary socialist workers and the youth behind it. We, on our part, watch the Left movement in the S. P. with the greatest interest and sympathy and aspire to aid it. The best way to do that is to tell the truth and combine loyal coöperation with frank criticism.

In any case, whatever path the different existing factions in the S. P. take, we can be reasonably sure that a large detachment of the new Communist party, perhaps its most important detachment numerically, will come out of the ranks of the S. P. For the truly revolutionary elements in the S. P., and the youth in the first place, there is only one program, one banner: the program and banner of the Fourth International.

James P. CANNON

## Figures Factory

ONE of the most detestable features of the Stalinist régime is deception—deception of the working class, and of its own ranks. The manufacture of falsehoods has attained levels that any industry might envy. The last convention of the Stalinist party at Cleveland was merely another occasion for big-scale lying.

"Since 1930," reported Browder, "starting with a membership of 7,545, we had recruited up until February 1934, 49,050 members. If we had retained all the old and new members, we would have had in February, 56,595 members. Instead of this, we have dues-payments of only about 25,000. Two out of every three recruited members have not been retained in the party." (*Report to the 8th Convention, Communist Party*, p. 91.)

"In 1930," he says elsewhere, "at the 7th Convention, our Party . . . had only 7,545 dues-paying members." (*Ibid.*, pp. 80-81.)

Compare these assertions with the following, which have been conveniently forgotten: "The recent recruiting drive, during which over 6,000 new members, 85% of whom are industrial workers and 15% Negroes, almost exclusively from industry, was a real achievement for our Party." (*Thesis and Resolutions for the 7th National Convention of the Communist Party of U.S.A.*, March 31-April 4, 1930, p. 88.) "Of the present membership of approximately 15,000 only 1,189 members are in factory nuclei" (*Ibid.*, p. 64).

Ergo, 9,000 (not 7,545!) at the beginning of 1930, and 15,000 at the end of the first quarter. But—

"The Party itself has been cleansed of opportunists and liquidators (Lovestoneites and Trotskyites) and unified and consolidated on the line of the Communist International. As a result of this it grew from 7,000 members in 1930, to 23,000 weekly dues-paying members in 1934." (*Daily Worker*, February 23, 1934, p. 5.)

And in San Francisco, the Stalinists have still another figure for 1930, as they will have others for 1934 in a few months: "The number of Communists now active in the Party exceeded 24,500 while it was but 8,000 in 1930." (*Western Worker*, April 9, 1934, p. 1.)

What accounts for this plain and fancy mathematics, so bewildering to one who learned his arithmetic in a bourgeois public school? A good hint is to be found elsewhere.

"The work of the Party fundamentally remains in the same groove. This is to be seen in the backwardness of factory work [etc., etc., etc., etc.] . . . and in the 100% fluctuation of Party membership." (*Toward Revolutionary Mass Work*, issued by Central Committee, C.P.U.S.A., p. 10.)

And finally, the organizational secretary of the Third International himself: "After this, it is not surprising that for the last five years we have had a total of 9,000 members in the [American] Party no matter how many new members—whether 10,000 or 15,000—were admitted per year, the membership remained stationary just the same." (O. Piatnitsky, *Speech at the 12th Plenum of the E.C.C.I.*, p. 72.)

It is plain as a pikestaff: the workers are moving to Communism, but they will not stay in the party of corruption, bureaucratism, opportunism, degeneration, the party of Stalinism. Year in, year out—they vote against Stalinism with their feet! Nobody stays long with a corpse.

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