

# THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

A MONTHLY ORGAN OF REVOLUTIONARY MARXISM

---

## The Betrayal in Spain

*An Anarchist Reveals How the People's Front Organizes the Defeat*

*Leon Trotsky*

### Learn to Think

*Max Shachtman*

## The Stalinist Convention

### Discussion & Reviews

*A New Monthly Feature*

### They, The People . . . By Dwight Macdonald

TWENTY CENTS

JULY 1938

# At Home

THE June issue of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL, as anticipated, was in greater demand than any previous issue and brought numerous increases in bundle orders from literature agents and also requests for single copies from all parts of the country. Chicago and the Twin Cities (Minneapolis-St. Paul) pushed their subscription drives. The Minneapolis subscription campaign is meeting with success, a batch of subscriptions having already been sent in. Chicago reports the June issue selling unusually well, and also sends in subscriptions.

St. Louis, New York, Chicago and Minneapolis issued special literature—leaflet, cards or folders—on the magazine. New York's was the most imposing and attractive—a four-page folder for general distribution—advertising contents and writers of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL. 10,000 such folders have been printed. Dave B. sent in a bundle order increase to 50 copies for St. Louis and comrade Frank McC. followed this up with a batch of subscriptions from the St. Louis area. Fine work, St. Louis.

In addition to those mentioned in the previous issue, Vancouver, Toronto, Louisville, Baltimore, Winnipeg, Johannesburg, also sent in increased orders for the June number. Louisville, Bill B., agent, increased its regular order to 10; Johannesburg, South Africa, to 50. New orders were placed by Portland, Oregon, and Evansville, Indiana. In Canada, the magazine must circulate under difficult conditions or more could be said about the various comrades in Toronto, Vancouver, Winnipeg and Montreal who work hard and well for THE NEW INTERNATIONAL.

On the Pacific Coast, Los Angeles and San Francisco are now beginning to give real attention and organized effort to the magazine, and this is beginning to show results. John Murphy, new Los Angeles agent, writes: "We have arranged a literature drive. . . . Have been busy getting committees organized and contact lists compiled. We do not promise miracles, but I confidently predict that you will see a decided change in the Los Angeles literature division." E. Everett, also of Los Angeles, confirms this development.

And in San Francisco, where Eloise Booth, the new literature agent, has taken vigorous and successful hold of the literature department, we can now expect marked improvement. Comrade Booth says, "The local comrades are becoming interested in sub-gathering. The May issue sold very well to the sailors," and adds that the magazine contains articles which lay a basis for understanding our daily propaganda and hence are invaluable in San Francisco's work.

In Oakland, Calif., Karolyn Kerry has taken hold of the magazine and her experience and ability are sure to give added impetus to THE NEW

# THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

A MONTHLY ORGAN OF REVOLUTIONARY MARXISM

VOLUME IV JULY, 1938 NUMBER 7 (Whole No. 22)

Published monthly by the New International Publishing Company, 116 University Place, New York, N. Y. Telephone: ALgonquin 4-8547. Subscription rates: \$2.00 per year; bundles: 14c for 5 copies and up. Canada and Foreign: \$2.50 per year; bundles 16c for 5 copies and up. Single copy: 20c. Entered as second-class matter December 9, 1937, at the post office at New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879.

Editorial Board: JAMES BURNHAM, MAX SHAGHTMAN, MAURICE SPECTOR.  
Business Manager: MARTIN ABERN

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Editor's Comments . . . . .	195
The Betrayal in Spain, by <i>Styr-Nhair</i> . . . . .	198
The Stalinist Convention, by <i>Max Shachtman</i> . . . . .	202
Learn to Think, by <i>Leon Trotsky</i> . . . . .	206
Fascism's Dress Clothes, by <i>James Burnham</i> . . . . .	207
They, the People, by <i>Dwight Macdonald</i> . . . . .	209
DISCUSSION:	
Once More: Kronstadt, by <i>Victor Serge, Dwight Macdonald, the Editors</i> . . . . .	211
What Is Happening in Brazil? by <i>Bernard Ross</i> . . . . .	214
ARCHIVES OF THE REVOLUTION:	
The Question of the United Front, by <i>Leon Trotsky</i> . . . . .	216
BOOKS:	
A New Lenin Book, by <i>Joseph Carter</i> . . . . .	219
America, I Love You, by <i>J.B.</i> . . . . .	220
Premature Patriotism, by <i>Bernard Wolfe</i> . . . . .	221
John Bull's Other Hell, by <i>E. Robertson</i> . . . . .	222
Inside Front Cover: At Home. Notes.	
Inside Back Cover: Clippings.	

INTERNATIONAL there. From San Diego, Dave H. writes, "The last two numbers have had a fine effect here. Have now placed copies on one of the largest down-town newsstands."

In general, THE NEW INTERNATIONAL agents, both of the S.W.P. and Y.P.S.L., everywhere work hard on behalf of the magazine. In fact, the magazine sells remarkably well, all factors considered, in such cities as St. Louis, Akron, Philadelphia, Boston, Chicago, Newark, and elsewhere, and attests to the spirit and organization the comrades in charge put behind the magazine. It is pleasing to mention the fine work carried through by comrades. In Minneapolis, by Chester Johnson, Mike Freed, Tom Gaddis, Art Hopkins; E. Lund and others in St. Paul. The Minneapolis-St. Paul subscription drive will, we feel sure, go over the top, as a result of their planning and work. In Chicago by Marjorie Graham, Y.P.S.L., for her fine work on the Chicago University Campus; by Sam Richter, N.W. Side Branch; and by Herbert Martin, Indiana Harbor, Ind., where THE NEW INTERNATIONAL circulates very well among young steel workers, and of course that ace literature agent, Karl Shier. In New York, Abe Miller, Literature Director, has given organization and improved spirit to the work. Among the youth Chester Manes and Connie Hammett endeavor spiritedly to increase sales, and latterly have been meeting with greater success. Jimmy Judd, Freddie Drake, Selma Stephens, and live wires in other branches and circles sell or promote THE NEW INTERNATIONAL at meetings, schools, etc. Ben Levine, Upper West Bronx, sold 15 copies of the June issue in his union. Bertha Gruener, Upper West Side, Manhattan, has proved an excellent sub-getter. Lower East Side, Manhattan, under Miriam Ger-

son's active direction, has continuously disposed of an excellent quota. Morris Miller systematically covers a large number of newsstands and bookshops. New York City will show a good increase in June sales as a result of added efforts by the city organization and the comrades.

The May issue, writes Chas. Martell, Akron, Ohio, went like hot cakes, "but the June issue! We have only 14 copies left and we received our bundle order of 50 only yesterday. Give us more of the same and we'll soon boost our order. I liked the type, too, on the front cover." P.O. News Co., Chicago sold 28 copies the first three days, and the Chicago sales of the June issue will reach 350. Ed. Fitzroy, Battersea, England, writes: "Please find payment for April issue. It sold very well indeed. . . . I am now sending copies to Ireland."

Dave B., St. Louis declares, "THE NEW INTERNATIONAL is certainly building up a fine reputation, and improving on its former reputation even." A subscriber from Edmonton, Alberta, Canada is "very glad to discover that you have started publishing THE NEW INTERNATIONAL again." "There is no praise rich enough," comments J.H., a University teacher in New Jersey, "for the editors and the contributors of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL. The magazine has more than surpassed my expectations and I had read very carefully every issue of the 'old' NEW INTERNATIONAL."

Margaret Johns, London, England, maintains that "THE NEW INTERNATIONAL is certainly very useful to us; it is extremely valuable both as a source of information and for Marxist education". From a reader in the Republic of Panama: "I read the magazine with great pleasure. It is undoubtedly the outstanding organ

# Notes

WE'LL be brief this month, to give more space to the manager's most interesting column, which we just couldn't cut down. So, telegraphically:

We inaugurate this month a feature regularly conducted by Dwight Macdonald, formerly of *Fortune* and now of the *Partisan Review*. The "column about columns" will, we are certain, be of the highest interest.

In line with our policy, we are throwing our pages open to a request for space made by Max Eastman, who wants to reply to the criticism of his views made last month by James Burnham. The latter, it goes without saying, will also be extended the necessary space. See the next issue.

The symposium on the thorny Jewish question, more acute and complicated today than it has been for perhaps a century, is due for early publication. And more and more and more of other things!

THE EDITORS

of revolutionary Marxism in these days of Popular-Frontist confusionism." An unemployed worker from Los Angeles expresses the matter concretely: "Work is still very irregular for me, but here is \$1.00 toward my subscription."

From the prairie and cattle region, Omaha, Neb., Al R. sends "Congratulations on THE NEW INTERNATIONAL. The 'Old Man' is as wonderful as ever. . . . Rain on parched soil." From Olivia, Minn., J.E., a W.P.A. teacher, enthusiastically declares: "We like THE NEW INTERNATIONAL. It is the best written and has the most timely articles of any paper that we have ever had. It is the outstanding magazine in the revolutionary movement. . . ." W.N., Zurich, Switzerland, says, "We read THE NEW INTERNATIONAL with great interest."

But we like best, this time, what comrade Max Sapire, Secretary the Workers Party of South Africa, writing from Johannesburg, has to say:

"It would certainly be a tragedy if THE NEW INTERNATIONAL would, for any reason, particularly financial, have to cease publication, or if you would have to cease sending out orders to foreign agents. This must be prevented at all costs, and you can count on us for all possible assistance to prevent such a catastrophe."

And there we have the problem. A magazine, the peer of all revolutionary publications; well received throughout the world. But a costly publication to get out—large printing and mailing costs. Circulation going up; yes, indeed, but not fast enough to assure maintenance, and not nearly enough to make expansion, enlargement, which is imperative, possible in the very near future. The answer you, all of us, must give? Greater circulation: Sales, Bundle Orders, Subscriptions, CONTRIBUTIONS.

THE MANAGER

# The Editor's Comments

HISTORY IS MALICIOUSLY UNKIND TO THE ADVOCATES OF COLLECTIVE SECURITY—A CHURCHILL FOR A CHAMBERLAIN, AND WHERE *The Nation* PINS ITS FRAYED HOPE—DICTATORSHIP AND DEMOCRACY IN ETHIOPIA, CHINA, AUSTRIA, MEXICO AND BRAZIL—THE STALINISTS AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA, THE BELGIUM AND SERVIA OF 1938, PLUS AN INTERESTING QUOTATION FROM YESTERDAY—LOVESTONE EXPLAINS HIS MORALITY AND HIS POLITICS

IF HISTORY HAD SET OUT deliberately to confound the apostles of collective security, it could not have done so more thoroughly than by its own natural unfolding in the past few months. In the series of events that have had such an annihilating bearing upon this policy, may be included the annexation of Austria, the crisis in Czechoslovakia, the May session of the League of Nations which repulsed the appeals of Spain, China and Ethiopia and, in the New World, the oil expropriations in Mexico, the *Integralista* uprising in Brazil and the Roosevelt foreign policy.

According to the advocates of the collective security doctrine, the world today, like Cæsar's Gaul, is divided into three parts, the two principal ones being respectively the aggressor nations and the defender nations, the former identical with the Fascists, or war-loving nations, the latter with the Democratic, or peace-loving nations; while the third is composed of the irresolute Hamlet nations in an intermediate purgatory from which they may emerge to the lower depths or the upper reaches. The fascist aggressors are the sworn enemies of the Democracies which they intend to convert to their political system by fire and sword; they are, further, violators of the independence and territorial integrity of the small countries, whose natural protectors are the Democracies. The existence of the Democracies is incompatible with the existence of the Fascisms. Hence, the Democracies must band together—England, France, the United States and the Soviet Union, as Ambassador Troyanovsky recently put it in his Chapel Hill address—and by their collective action bring security to the world, security from war and fascism. Moreover, and this is no small consideration, the defense of the Soviet Union from hostile assault will be guaranteed.

From the standpoint of the Stalinists who, as recent converts to the doctrine first formulated for French imperialism by the late Aristide Briand, have become its most ardent and persistent espousers, the position is especially significant. Their claim that socialism has already been established in the Soviet Union goes hand in hand with the assertion that it is possible for a socialist society to cohabit peacefully with capitalism and with the nations in which it prevails. At the same time, they argue, the democratic capitalist nations cannot live peacefully side by side with the fascist capitalist nations; the two are irreconcilable and incompatible. From this it would follow that the capitalist democracies have more in common with the Soviet Union, from which they are separated by the gulf between two *social* systems, than they have with the fascist nations, from which they are separated only by the fissure between two *political* systems whose social orders, however, are identical.

But this conclusion, which flows inescapably from the premises, not only throws no light whatsoever on international events and problems, but is directly contradicted by everything that has happened before our time, in our time and before our very eyes.

In the very first place, if similarity or dissimilarity of political systems (theocracy, autocracy, constitutional monarchy, democratic republic, fascism, Sovietism, etc.) is decisive in determining the relations between countries, and social differences (feudalism, capitalism, socialism) are of secondary or no importance, then the Soviet Union today would necessarily be aligned with Germany and Italy, for all three have the same totalitarian political régime. The fact that Russia was once on excellent terms with these two fascist countries, like the fact that a sharp hostility exists now between them, is determined, as are all diplomatic relations between countries, by forces of a far more profound, realistic and practical nature than are represented by the superficial and, in any case, entirely secondary considerations of conflicting political ideologies.

## “The Nation” Makes a Choice

THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN British foreign policy, as worked out by Mr. Chamberlain, have produced an epidemic of stammering among the proponents of collective-security-against-war-and-fascism. The Rome agreement of April 16, 1938 between England and Italy is, as everyone realizes, tantamount to an official stamp of approval by British “democracy” upon the Italian conquest of Ethiopia and the crushing of Loyalist Spain by Franco and his auxiliaries. What becomes of the myth of the inherent solidarity of the Democracies and the no less inherent antagonism between the Democracies and the fascist countries? It is blown up again. In moving the endorsement of the Rome conversations, the Prime Minister made a most interesting statement in the House of Commons:

For my part I repudiate the idea that it is impossible for democracies to come to terms and to an understanding with States where authoritarian ideas prevail. This agreement proves the contrary. I myself feel encouraged by what has happened to hope that we have only taken the first step towards a healthier and saner state of things in Europe. (*Manchester Guardian*, May 6, 1938.)

One would imagine that what has been so obvious for a long time needed no new agreement as proof. But the collective security war-mongers, like the Stalinists and their echo, *The Nation*, remain stutteringly adamant. It appears that when they spoke in the past about British Democracy and its sacred mission of preserving the world from fascism and war, they did not mean Mr. Chamberlain at all, but someone else.

Our hope, frayed though it is [says *The Nation* now], is pinned not to the stuffed shirt-front of the British Prime Minister but to the anti-government forces, the collective-security forces, that may yet throw him out of office or drive his government, at the point of a ballot, to change its foreign policy. (May 28, 1938.)

In the first place, it must be said in defense of Chamberlain's quoted statement that it is only a repetition of yesterday's position

of the most vociferous champions of collective security, the Kremlin, a position which different circumstances may yet find them re-adopting. After Hitler came to power, it was the official Soviet organ, *Izvestia*, which wrote on March 15, 1933 that "the U.S.S.R. is the only state which is not nourished on hostile sentiments towards Germany and that, independent of the form and the composition of the government of the Reich". In the second place, *The Nation* does not improve its position when it pins its frayed hope to the "anti-government forces". Among the most leading anti-government advocates of collective security in England today is the eminent paladin of peace and freedom, Winston Churchill. In his Manchester speech against Chamberlain's policy last month, he offered the following program of action:

...some of the countries who should be asked whether they will join Great Britain and France in the special duty to the League ["to resist an aggression" ... "by Nazi tyranny"] are Yugoslavia, Rumania, Hungary and Czechoslovakia. These countries can be mopped up one by one, but together they are of enormous strength. In the next place there are Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey, all States who wish to preserve their individuality and national independence. If this powerful group of Danubian and Balkan countries were firmly united with the two great Western democracies an immense—probably a decisive—step towards the stability would be achieved. (*Manchester Guardian*, May 13, 1938.)

If democracy, justice, equity, peace, security and other fine things are to be preserved by this combination, then Mussolini is right in saying that Italy has the only true democracy in the world! If Chamberlain is wrong in denying the impossibility "for democracies to come to terms and to an understanding with States where authoritarian ideas prevail", why is Churchill, representing *The Nation's* "anti-government forces", right in proposing an alliance with the bloodstained dictatorships, many of them indistinguishable from Nazi Germany or fascist Italy, which rule over Greece, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Rumania, Turkey and Bulgaria? If King Carol and General Metaxas are friends of democracy, then Hitler is certainly not its enemy; if the Czar of Bulgaria and Kamal Ataturk are to lead the struggle for freedom, then Mussolini should at least be allowed to direct it from the editorial columns of *The Nation*.

The difference between Chamberlain and Churchill reveals the choice that must be made so long as one does not go beyond the confines of capitalist politics. The choice is not between the abstractions of "democracy" and "fascism", any more than it is between the two deceptive shibboleths of "collective security" and "isolationism". Whatever they may say, none of the capitalist statesmen really can or does follow a policy of "isolation", which is as completely nonsensical as the Nazi blabber about "autarchy" or Stalin's about "socialism in one country".

Every capitalist statesman is concerned first and foremost with getting the maximum possible support from other countries (i.e., "collective security") for the imperialist position and ambitions of his own land. None of them is an "isolationist", save in one single sense. The United States wants to "isolate" England, Germany and Japan from contact with her own empire in Latin America; towards this end, Roosevelt seeks to "secure collectively" America's position in the Western hemisphere with the aid of all the Latin-American countries that can be brought under Washington's domination. Chamberlain wants to "isolate" Japan from England's sphere of influence and power in Asia; if this power can be "secured collectively" with the aid of Italy and Germany, so much the better; otherwise, throwing Ethiopia to Mussolini in order to cut the Rome-Berlin axis, is considered a good bargain. Churchill wants to "isolate" Germany from dominant contact with Southern and Southeastern Europe; if it can be done by an alliance with other totalitarian states and under the high-sounding slogan of "collective security", what can he lose? Especially if that policy gets him such powerful allies as the Soviet Union, the communist party and ... the editorial board of *The Nation*.

## Allies and Victims of Fascism

THE FASCIST POWERS CHOOSE their allies and their victims with the same realistic disregard for political abstractions as is shown by Chamberlain, Churchill and all the other bourgeois democrats. This is an extremely important fact which is deliberately concealed by the collective security-mongers, for it exposes the fraudulence of their ideological preparations for the next war to make the world safe for democracy, their cloaking of the grossly material, imperialistic interests which motivate all the capitalist lands—democratic as well as fascist—with idealistic trappings calculated to facilitate mass conscription and mass enthusiasm for the slaughter.

When Secretary of War Woodring said at the Washington meeting of the Chamber of Commerce: "I warn Germany, Japan and Italy that if dictatorships push the democratic nations too far the result will be war"—this illuminating statement must have been very disconcerting in some quarters. For have we not been taught by the Stalinists—to say nothing of the editors of *The Nation*—that the unity of the democratic nations would perpetuate the peace and put off the war? That their collective action would so terrify the dictatorships as to obviate the necessity of war and end fascist aggressions?

In a way, however, this is beside the point. What is important is the monstrous lie implicit in his statement that the struggle is between Dictatorship and Democracy, both with a capital D.

The fact is that in the majority of cases of armed conflict or aggressions between nations in the past few years, the question of the democratic or dictatorial political regimes of the countries or forces involved has not even played a formal rôle. For example:

The war of Italy upon Ethiopia was not a conflict between a dictatorship and a democracy and could not possibly be explained on that basis. If anything, the political régime of Hailé Selassié was more backward and reactionary than that of Mussolini; certainly, also, the chattel slavery maintained by the tribal chieftains of the King of Kings was scarcely an improvement over the social order of the Blackshirts. Nevertheless, every revolutionist could consistently and honestly support Ethiopia against Italy on the same grounds upon which he supports any and every colonial or semi-colonial country fighting against annexation or for independence. By the same token, however, he would support Tunis against the imperialist democracy of France; India against the England of Chamberlain, Churchill, MacDonald or Atlee; or Morocco against Franco or the People's Front government. He does not fear saying that Mussolini was one hundred percent correct in stating that he did to Ethiopia nothing more and nothing less than "democratic" England once did to India. The only element of democracy involved in the case of Ethiopia was the democratic right of a people to self-determination, i.e., to oppose violent subjection to another nation. But it is precisely this element that England, with her India and Egypt, and France, with her Algiers and Indo-China, were and are not at all concerned with!

The war of Japan upon China is also not a war between a dictatorship and a democracy. If any difference existed between the régime of the Mikado and that of Chiang Kai-shek it was, perhaps, only in the greater scope and ruthlessness of the latter's activities in mowing down the masses of workers and peasants striving for democratic rights. Furthermore, if the struggle on China's soil today is between "democracy" and "fascism", how explain the fact that up to yesterday, Germany gave direct and indirect material aid to China, whose armies were trained and commanded in part by von Falkenhayn's mission, that Russian and German aviators flew from the same airports to drop bombs upon the same Japanese troops, that only at the last moment did Hitler reluctantly make the gesture of ordering the withdrawal of his Germans from the Chinese forces?

There is a basis—specious, but a basis—for explaining the Italo-German invasion of Spain on grounds of pure ideology. But

how explain, on those grounds, the invasion and annexation of Austria? Here is a clear case of two fascist dictatorships coming to grips, with a third, across the Brenner Pass, itching to teach its axis-ally a military lesson. Is it perhaps because the régimes of Dollfuss and Schuschnigg, the heroes of the February 1934 massacre and serfs of Mussolini, were democracies that Hitler decided to demolish them? And is it because of their affinity for democratic institutions that France and England mumbled something about protecting Austria's "independence"?

Let us take an opposite case on our own continent. Mexico and England, according to the "democracy vs. dictatorship" dogmatists, are both supposed to fall into the former category. Yet, when Mexico exercises her democratic right to apply her own laws and take over the products of her own soil, it is democratic England who threatens her with such economic and political reprisals as are, after all, only an attenuated form of military attack; for—we take the risk of being called "fascists" for quoting Clausewitz—is not war only a continuation of politics, by other means? Furthermore, should not the Mexican government be damned everlastingly into Chamberlain's category, by *The Nation's* criteria, for seeking to dispose of her oil to Germany and Japan when neither democratic England or democratic United States will buy any?

The Greenshirt uprising in Brazil was clearly inspired, or at the very least, supported by Germany. She did not seek to overthrow Getulio Vargas because he heads a democratic state, but because of purely material imperialistic interests, the same interests that animated the United States in supporting the Vargas dictatorship. For when Mr. Woodring declares that "if the dictatorships push the democratic nations too far the result will be war"—he does not for a minute have in mind an idealistic crusade of American armed forces for the purpose, let us say, of overturning the Batista dictatorship and establishing democracy in Cuba; or of warring upon Vargas' totalitarian régime and replacing it with a Brazilian democracy. Not for a minute! He means by a war for democracy what Woodrow Wilson meant, except that he hopes the next war will bring American imperialism even more than it obtained from the last.

## The 1938 Belgium and the Stalinists

CZECHOSLOVAKIA NOW PLAYS the same part on the imperialist chessboard as did Belgium and Serbia in the last war. This synthetic product of an abominable peace treaty, which has been nothing but a pawn of French imperialism since its creation, is now being advertized in the same hypocritically pathetic tones that were employed in 1914 to describe Heroic Little Belgium and Brave Little Serbia. The raucous clamor about Hitler's threats to violate the independence and freedom of Czechoslovakia effectively drowns out the protests of the millions of Germans, Slovaks, Poles, Hungarians and Ruthenians who have never enjoyed independence and freedom in the almost twenty years of rule by the Bonapartist Czech bourgeoisie.

The latter has skilfully exploited the situation in order to consolidate its sovereignty and to eliminate all opposition. It has become undisputed master of the country, for with the connivance of the social-democratic and Stalinist parties, it has completely subjugated the working class, dissolving the independent proletarian movement and its separate aims and interests into a Sacred National Union. The social-patriotic labor leaders in both camps have collaborated zealously—the one for the sake of its own bourgeoisie, the other for the sake of the Kremlin bureaucracy—to mobilize the masses for the coming war, a war not for the independence of Czechoslovakia but for the domination of Europe by Anglo-French imperialism.

The Stalinist party is of course in the very forefront of the chauvinistic camp. Its subservience to the Czech bourgeoisie was guaranteed long ago, when the Czecho-Soviet pact was signed, and it has since given unstinting support to the government, including

the voting for war credits which the still undisavowed program of its own International prohibits and denounces as a crime. On May 21, 1938, the party issued an appeal which merits reproduction:

We approve and support fully and entirely all the measures taken for the security, integrity and independence of the Republic. We appeal to the entire people to preserve calmness, order, coolness and discipline. We address ourselves to the working class and to all the toiling people of town and country, inviting them to make a bloc, without political or national distinction, in order to form an indestructible unity.

We invite all the parties and political personalities to subordinate the interests of party to the common interest: the safeguarding of peace, security, integrity and independence of the Republic.

We proclaim our unshakable wish to unite in action with all those who are determined to defend the Republic. We invite all the communists and all the organizations to act at their posts in this sense. Communists of Czechoslovakia, all of you, be in the first ranks in the defense of the Republic.

In all the base literature of the social-democratic war-supporters of 1914-1918, it will be difficult to find a single document which is so unreservedly an abandonment of revolutionary principles, so thoroughly oblivious to the existence of a working class with its own interests and aims, as this one. A revolutionary party might at least have said:

"It is of interest to note how the Czech bourgeoisie, in making its threats of war, hypocritically attempts to assume the rôle of a great democrat. It represents the defense of the predatory imperialist peace treaty of Versailles to be a defense of democracy against fascist dictatorship (in Germany, Italy, Hungary). Of course, it breathes not a word about the bloody dictatorships in the lands of its accomplices (Poland, Rumania, Yugoslavia) or its own dictatorship at home. This demagogy, which claims to 'defend democracy against fascist dictatorship', serves, primarily, as a welcome argument in the mouths of the social-fascists speaking German and Czechish, who defend the imperialist policy of their own bourgeoisie unconditionally and without hesitation. With such phrases as 'Strengthen Democracy' or 'the advance of fascist reaction forces us virtually to subscribe to the memorandum of the Minister of Foreign Affairs' (*i.e.*, to the imperialist war policy), the social-fascist leaders attempt today to deceive the toiling masses, to encourage them and ensnare them into supporting the imperialist policy of the Czech bourgeoisie."

Lest the *Daily Worker* editors rush into print with a denunciation of this paragraph as a fascist agent's product, we hasten to record the fact that it is taken word for word from an article by one, Koehler, in the official organ of the Communist International (of the same name) for May 15, 1933, that is, after Hitler's advent to power.

## Lovestone on Morality

OUT OF THE WHOLE ARTICLE by Leon Trotsky in our last issue, "Their Morals and Ours", *The Workers Age* (June 11, 1938) finds worthy of comment only the sentence dealing with Lovestone's endorsement of the first Moscow Trial. His answer? Trotsky made just the same "mistake" in believing that the Menshevik trial, framed in 1931, "was more or less correct".

Lovestone's comparison is interesting as a commentary on . . . Lovestone. So that even the most simple persons may understand it, let us make an analogy.

Several militants found a union and lead it with exemplary loyalty through its stormiest years. Outside the union is a group which opposed its formation from the very outset, championed a company union instead, and then allied itself with capitalist gangsters to destroy the real union and its leaders with every means at its disposal. Years later, a minor official, becoming increasingly corrupt and conservative, drives out the union's founders. In the course of his rise to power, this official charges the old union wreckers with anti-union activities in alliance with the employers. The evidence he adduces is false, but because of the activities of

this group in the past, the ousted union founders believe the charges true. Years later, these ousted militants are also framed, on the same and far more preposterous charges. A discontented and dismissed henchman of the new union dictator, who helped remove and defame the original leaders, supports the frame-up warmly. That position soon becomes untenable; so he makes a shamefaced half turn-about. When he is taxed with his endorsement of the frame-up, he retorts: But didn't you also fall for a frame-up?

There are mistakes and mistakes. When Lovestone puts the charges against the Mensheviks on the same plane as the charges against Trotsky and the old Bolsheviks, he at once reveals his demagogy and his abandonment of the revolutionary principles which the name of his organization is supposed to attest. We do not seek to attenuate the mistake made by Trotsky and ourselves in placing any credence in the 1931 trial, where the Mensheviks were accused of working with foreign imperialists to overthrow the Soviet government. The *revolutionist* who has not forgotten that in the name of bourgeois democracy the Mensheviks opposed the formation of the Soviet government and that for years they actually fought it with arms in hand and in alliance with foreign

imperialism, will understand the origin and nature of our mistake. No revolutionist, however, especially if he went through the early days of the revolution and knew the men involved and their records, could possibly make the "mistake" of Lovestone and Brandler during the Moscow Trial. For their judgment was part and parcel of their *political support* of the Stalin régime as historically justified, as the only possible political régime in Russia. They simply put the *traditional enemies* of the Russian revolution in the same bag with the *founders and defenders* of the revolution, in the interests of the Stalinist *traducers* of the revolution.

Lovestone cannot write ten lines without a falsehood, *i.e.*, without proving Trotsky's comment on his morals. He writes:

We acknowledged our mistake, avowed it publicly and explained it politically [?]. And Trotsky? He had it dragged out of him by the keen-witted Stolberg. . . .

As Lovestone knows, Trotsky revised his estimate of the Menshevik trial long before "he had it dragged out of him" at the hearings in Mexico and even before the "Trotsky-Zinoviev trial", in the Russian Bulletin of the Opposition, No. 51, dated July-August 1936, where interested readers will find the Editorial statement.

# The Betrayal in Spain

**T**HE SUDDEN WORSENING of the military situation for anti-fascist Spain is not something unexpected: the débâcle is no surprise for anybody in the governmental circles, either in Barcelona or in London and Paris. I could quote passages from extreme left wing Spanish journals which, a month in advance, announced "hours of terrible tests". The Barcelona government, playing its rôle of scapegoat, takes the responsibility for the defeats desired by London and tolerated by Paris, which does not dare to lift its little finger against The City.

Has the "Priest" government of Barcelona, in England's service, ditched by France and the U.S.S.R., accepted the shameful mission of buying peace in Spain by its own defeat? Numerous indications tend to affirm this. The first indication is the ministerial shake-up to permit the eviction of Prieto.

One major reason, it is known, deprives bourgeois governments of the Prieto type of the desire to win the war in a revolutionary way: the fear—well-founded, moreover—of being unable to dam the revolutionary drive that would follow. The wearing down of the revolutionary cadres in the war has been in vain, the social aspirations remain. The fear of their weakness which makes the rulers prefer organized and conditional defeat to victory, is precisely the reason that impelled the C.N.T. and the F.A.I. to pursue a policy of governmental collaboration. Mussolini and Hitler also dread the consequences of this weakness, from the ideological viewpoint; English imperialism, which possesses the greatest part of Spain's riches, dreads it from the standpoint of its own interests. Hence, the Spanish Republican government does not desire victory and international imperialism demands defeat of it.

How have the Republicans organized the defeat?

First of all there is the story of the provision of armaments. Nobody can be made to believe that, with money and gold, the necessary materials could not be procured. The impossibility, which was real for a Caballero cabinet, no longer existed for a Negrin-Prieto cabinet. But can one really speak of a Negrin-Prieto government as a Spanish government? Can a Negrin-Prieto government want anything different than The City wants?

Added to the lack of material are certain things unforeseen in the conduct of the war: the Aragon front had but one line of defense in March 1938, just as at the end of the autumn of 1936. At the same time that they are powerless to stem the Italo-German advance in Aragon, they divert forces into useless attacks in the

We are glad to present the following picture of the situation in Spain to our readers because of the frank and dramatic manner in which it gives eye-witness details about the treacherous rôle of the Popular Front in the struggle against the fascists. The article is written by a syndicalist militant who has participated in the Spanish civil war and whose integrity is vouched for by the editors of *La Révolution Proletarienne*, the organ of the French syndicalists in which it first appeared (May 10 and 25, 1938). Although the editors of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL do not agree entirely with the point of view of the author or with all his conclusions, the more than ordinary importance of the article warrants its translation for our readers. With the exception of a few minor passages, whose deletion is indicated by asterisks, the article is given here in full.—ED.

province of Jaen in Andalusia and in Guadalajara. Teruel is taken, *the possession of which can have no value except to exterminate the International and the C.N.T. brigades*—the latter constituting 70 percent of the troops engaged—which will thus no longer threaten to return from the front in case of disturbances at the rear, as in May 1937. On the sea, the *Baleares* is sunk and the *Canarias* is damaged. On the day of the engagement, to hear the technicians who took part in it, the *Canarias* could also have been sunk. But the firing was stopped. As if by chance, units of the English fleet were on the scene and gave aid and comfort to the rebels, impeding the action of the government fleet and aircraft. \* \* \* \*

The army is rotten with spies. In February, young trained recruits are concentrated, one afternoon, in a barrack—Park of the Citadel—in order to leave for the front in the evening. A few hours after the concentration, enemy airplanes arrive and bombard the barrack in shifts, with fury and precision. There are thousands of victims. The communist party demands the arrest and execution of those responsible for this criminal "negligence".

The police seems to be no more dependable than the army: early in March, the trade union and political organizations, expecting an attack by the "Fifth Column", mounted guard in their headquarters, ready for all eventualities.

## Strange Bombardments

The bombardments have revealed strange things. The bombers have always attacked almost exclusively the popular quarters.

After having pounded away at the immediate suburbs of Barcelona, where an humble population of 70,000 souls was concentrated, the massacrers attacked the old workers' quarters of Barcelona, when there was nobody left to kill in the above-mentioned suburb, now in ruins and completely evacuated. There are, however, the ministries which are almost all centralized in two great arteries, the Paseo de Gracia and the Diagonal. The foot of the Paseo de Gracia was bombed on March 16 and 18, but only up to the line where the first ministries are located. The only time that the Italo-German pilots aimed at the official buildings was on January 30, in reply to a raid of reprisal on Salamanca, where official German centers were hit; they aimed at the palace of the Generality without succeeding in hitting it. But the Republican government immediately declared its renunciation of all reprisals, leaving it to the judgment of the civilized world and to the action of the chancelleries. . . .

On the morrow of the collapse of the front which, towards the middle of March, brought the Italo-Germans at a single leap to 50 kilometers from the sea, along an 80 kilometer front, Prieto is supposed to have threatened to surrender if he continued to receive no foreign aid. There is no smoke without fire; for that, the government endeavored to drive the communists out of its midst.

This threat was not new. Feeling the ground slipping from under them—the incarceration of the communist head of the international brigades of the army of Madrid, on the order of Crecencio Bilbao, republican and supreme commissar of the armies; the ditching of Brueno Alonso, commissar of the fleet; the serious threat of being chased out of the censorship services; their brutal eviction from certain positions in the Public Order and in the police, *etc.*—the communists are holding on with their teeth and do not want to lose their last two positions. For weeks, communist delegations have been coming to the National Committee of the C.N.T., urging—rather, beseeching—the Confederation to make a pact with the C.P. These delegations are invariably shown the door. No matter: the communist organs, having changed their tone in time, continue to shower us with kind attentions. The fish doesn't bite, but the threat that hangs over them of being kicked out of the government, is becoming plainer; the whole party apparatus is set in motion and it decides to undertake a public agitation.

The evening of March 15 a popular demonstration takes place beneath the ministries, demanding the conduct of the war to the bitter end. Their propagandists, unlimited means behind them, muster up crowds from the queer quarters; publicity autos at their disposal bawl through their loud-speakers and toss out manifestoes. Knowing all about agitation, the communists create a dreary atmosphere of a state of alarm. The government does not dare to prohibit the tempestuous demonstration which, seemingly, supports its position of a will to fight. But it is on its guard and it bars the demonstrators from the approaches to certain ministries. Starting about 8 o'clock, the crowd reaches its height at 10, when the terrible bombardment begins which is to last three days. Threat of surrender, communist demonstration, bombardment: pure coincidences?

If the rumors about surrender are founded, and there are numerous indications to prove them, the timely launching of a long and horrible bombardment could only accentuate the popular discouragement and ruin the communist agitation. For the first time people are expressing themselves openly and publicly against the war. For three days running, Barcelona was visited by bombers *without a single pursuit plane taking the air for its defense.*

Pursuit planes began to fly in the night of Friday-Saturday. The bombardment was finished Friday afternoon at 3. To show the public that the government had a hand in the cessation of the bombardment, it told the story that the defense had brought down airplanes, on Sunday, which were presumably heading for Barcelona. But as usual in such cases, they had fallen into the sea . . . which must now have swallowed up more lies than pirates! And yet, two pursuit planes always in the air would have been enough

for effective protection, because the rebels, coming from Palma, can leave only in planes having a large cruising radius, that is, without protecting pursuit planes. The anti-aircraft defense is disorganized; you would believe, at night, that the guns and projectors are amusing themselves with disturbing or washing the sky. The public takes all this into account: it murmurs and it flees. \* \* \* \*

## Demoralization by the Press

The demoralization by grapeshot is followed by the demoralization by writing, which dispenses with the former. Is it a manoeuvre, a compact agreed upon? It would be impossible to say. At all events, there is something disquieting about it.

Up to the time of the terrible three-day bombardment—which, in spite of everything, remains a simple bombardment to "frighten" people, when you think of the means that might have been employed: a larger number of airplanes, asphyxiating gases, bacteria bombs, *etc.*—the official war communiqués minimized the defeats or shaded them off with reports of small local successes a hundred leagues away from the nerve-centers of operation, successes which are, moreover, won by surprise and annulled the day afterward. After the three tragic days, the government decides to sacrifice itself on the altar of Truth. One would think that the cessation of the bombardments is conditioned by the obligation for it to tell the truth about the war—a truth which it has never avowed. No further need of bombs—the official communiqués replace them in the work of demoralization. The government organs show the routs and retreats in headlines, crudely disclose the losses and the disasters, while the non-government papers continue to shade off the setbacks by the usual and insignificant and useless local successes. This peculiarity cannot escape even the mildly attentive observer.

All these factors: deficiency in the military organization on the fronts, in the defense of the cities in the rear, certain zones of which are doomed to extermination, the demoralization by writing replacing that of the bombs—have made the government prudent. It camps at Montserrat, in a convent, a veritable eagle's eerie, 60 kilometers from Barcelona. At the same time, arms depots are distributed throughout Barcelona. For what eventuality? \* \* \* \*

To win the victory, all sorts of restrictions were preached. Today there is nothing more to restrict because there is nothing more to be bought. War prices, astronomical prices. For a modest meal—the equivalent of a 10 francs repast in Paris [40-50 cents in New York]—you spend more than you earn in a day. Here are a few samples: plain wine, 2½ pesetas a pint; better-grade wine, plain Bordeaux, 4 to 7 pesetas a pint; a plate of Valencian rice, 5 to 7 pesetas; a beefsteak, 8 to 14; dessert, 2½ pesetas; soup, 1½ to 3 pesetas. These prices are for normal and edible portions. The pot-houses are cheaper; but they are lousy and the portions are reduced; so that quantity and price taken into account, you eat worse there. To sum up, by taking soup at 1½, rice at 5, a beefsteak at 8, a dessert at 2½; a quarter of a bottle of wine at 1½; bread at .30, you dine for 21.40 pesetas, including the 15% for service and taxes. Now the average daily wage is 20 pesetas. It is impossible, at these rates, to dine every day, to have more than one meal a day, sleep in a bed and have some amusement. And I have given reasonable prices: I do not speak of the finer dishes at 18 pesetas, like leg of chicken from 18 to 25, and lobster at 30 pesetas.

What a problem it is to eat when there is neither sugar, milk, chocolate, coffee, beans, lentils, potatoes, bread nor butter! These foods exist but they are rationed and only the insiders, the speculators or the privileged get them. In the open market, they are unknown. The humble population, as usual, is, for the most part, deprived of them.

For every food you must stand in line for hours, regardless of

the weather, getting into scraps and elbowing your way along. Getting provisions is one thing and getting them cooked is another. There is no coal; the gas functions only weakly and at certain hours; and most of the workers' houses haven't any because the gas rates were high even before the war. It was replaced by charcoal; but there is no more wood or else it costs more than 2 pesetas a pound, dearer than gas! As for gasoline, alcohol or oil heaters, they are out of the question: all these fuels are lacking. Electricity remains: stoves come to 60 to 150 pesetas, consuming from .35-.60 to 1-2 pesetas per hour. The purchase of the apparatus is thus prohibitive and its use a burden.

Yet there must be cooking. Hence the wiping out of trees and of nature. Parks and woods have been entirely denuded. The natural park of Barcelona was one of the first victims. This magnificent property, where the lovers of nature came every Sunday for a whiff of air, is now a denuded plain, desolated, where you hear only the axe-strokes of the spoilers biting into the last stumps. Numerous trees along the roads approaching Barcelona, for the police is on guard in the interior of the city, have had their bark torn off. Those who cannot buy wood, nor get an axe to hunt it with, burn everything that will burn: they begin with the old furniture and end with the window-blinds and shutters, the proprietor being no longer there to protest! Anything of wood is used for fire. But what fires! For numerous houses have no chimneys: the house gets all smoked up and the doors and windows are opened up for ventilation! This only brings the desolation to its worst. After the bombardments, the people try to trick the police guard. They do not come to see or to pillage, but just to gather up any wood in the débris.

The heating systems have been asleep for two winters, even in the ministries. The temperature is mild. But there are also cold days which paralyze everything.

Over-population aggravates the problem: every setback on the fronts brings with it an overflow. Added to the difficulties of provisioning, is that of lodgings. In the cities more spared by the bombardments, like Gerona, it is difficult if not impossible for a traveler to find food or quarters. Barcelona is suffocating from over-population, but speculation is well organized and it is possible, by payment of good prices, to find almost anything you desire. There the refugees are unfortunate: the inhabitant who is trafficking in his house, doesn't want them; they have no money. By municipalizing property, the government reduced rentals by half: which does not prevent the main tenant from renting one or two rooms which pay him two or three times his own rental! People who pay 50 pesetas for a whole house now demand 100 to 200 pesetas for a single room. The vulture is no longer the proprietor but the tenant who, only yesterday, spared no curses for his vulture. Over-population is the great cause, but in Barcelona, speculation arises above all from the fact that the crew of functionaries and the armed forces who followed the government, receive good salaries, and thus have a higher purchasing power than the Catalans. Moreover, they get food, a very important thing in times of dearth. You see advertisements by people asking for tenants who are functionaries and can bring food, or functionaries asking for housing with promises of good prices and contributions of food. In these conditions, the Catalans are being displaced at home. It is a supplementary cause for contempt and rancor against the Castilians and the central government.

A fatal, insurmountable dearth? Not at all.

In his speech at the last session of the Cortes, Negrin stated explicitly that the problem of provisioning Spain was of a purely commercial nature. But Spain, capitalist Spain, cannot—he said literally—“compromise its future in order to assuage certain passing sufferings” (*sic*). It is clear: the missing products could be imported but they prefer to preserve the gold. To hell with the health of the citizens! provided the financial situation remains healthy. In reality, they do better: not only do they refuse to import necessities, loading down even humble private packages

with exorbitant taxes, but certain products are still exported in order to discredit the collectivizations and to procure foreign exchange, like Göring: cannon is worth more than butter! There are thus no oranges, no olives, or else those left behind are unsalable; rotten oranges, bitter and blighted olives. And in cases where constraint does not suffice in this deliberate and organized dearth, there are sermons on the grandeur and necessity of voluntary restrictions. A sinister irony, for the government requisitions the provisions for its own coöperatives, destined for the feeding of a goodly number of its watchdogs: functionaries and policemen who benefit, moreover, from special prices in the restaurants. They are the vermin who will be set against tomorrow's starving throngs in revolt.

This dark picture could be added to further.

First on the causes of the large number of victims, compared with the number of bombs that “hit the bull's eye”.

The government was lacking in initiative in the construction of refuges. The Generality voted belated credits. But the real refuge constructors were the ward committees appealing for volunteers: the Pueblo Seco quarter, greatly experienced with bombardments, unfolded the greatest activity in this field. These refuges are marvels, when you think of the meager means employed. In the center of Barcelona, there are no refuges. Those being built were started months ago. The one in the Plaza de Tetuan was begun a year ago! The subway is not safe. Only two or three stations can be considered as refuges: Ferrer-Guardia (formerly Urquinaona), Leseps, and Gracia. The others are wasp's nests, coffins. The townspeople know this and they resign themselves to staying at home, trusting to fate. All the houses are from 6 to 9 storeys high, built of brick, and they crumple under the bombs like houses of cards. Every house that falls is full of these fatalistic tenants; hence the great number of victims. The trade unions raise a row for speeding up the work on the refuges. But they have no credits: unemployed and loungers continue to promenade and get themselves killed. Add to the fatalistic immobility of the population the fact that the bombs are always heard before the sirens. Barcelona is difficult to protect against aerial attack because of the sea: the apparatus for sounding warnings records all airplane movements from Palma, but it cannot follow them. Hence the irremediable surprise.

The lack of refuges, due to the lack of initiative, is only a manifestation of the general lack of foresight. Others are also tragic. Thus, automobile convoys of munitions cross the city instead of avoiding it. During the last bombardments, this negligence produced a horrible catastrophe: in the Gran Via, almost opposite the Coliseum, bombs struck the trucks transporting trilitite which, when it exploded, pulverized everything in the neighborhood.

The city, in certain localities, is plunged into complete darkness. But elsewhere, powerful white lamps illuminate the road and the automobiles drive around all night with full lights on! At Pueblo Nuevo there are enormous gasometers. Opposite them is a foundry which, when it is tapped, lights up the gasometers as few projectors could! You ask yourself why the bombers have left them standing. \* \* \* \*

## International Politics

The wide public, and in it may be included certain political leaders, lives in Spain in complete ignorance and incomprehension of international politics.

As much in order not to discourage the public as to win—in vain, moreover—the sympathy of the democracies, the anti-fascist organs, including those of the C.N.T., have always presented the war in Spain as a struggle between democracy and fascism. The public has been seriously entertained with the opposition between these two systems. Content with appearances, they have spoken of the Italo-German invasion and of poor France and England as the future victims. I have heard Confederal propagandists tell me

seriously that the choice must be made between Italian and French imperialism, in conflict in Spain! I thought, at first, that these interpretations of the struggle were deliberate opportunism and duplicity. I observed subsequently that such theses were, or else finished by being, taken for the reality. The public does not understand the real sense of the struggle, but those who educate it penetrate no deeper into its meaning.

Domesticated by England, the Negrin government could not permit a thoroughgoing explanation. It could not permit a public denunciation of England for having organized the uprising and subsidized Franco, Hitler, Mussolini and Salazar to crush the nascent revolution. It could not permit the statement that it is London that invented the non-intervention in order to neutralize France and the Nyon agreements in order to block the republican fleet and the Soviet fleet in Odessa. It could not permit the denunciation of the sinking ordered by London of some old English ships in order to discourage certain companies which, tempted by the premiums offered by the republican government, were ready to risk providing anti-fascist Spain with provisions. They continue to speak of the Anglo-Italian antagonism in the Mediterranean. They do not say that Mussolini is "working" not only for the recognition of his East African empire—which he does not need or which has been granted long ago—but above all for the granting of capital without which his colonial conquest is of no use to him. The English blackmail Mussolini with Ethiopia and Mussolini blackmails them in turn with Palestine and Egypt. The dickerings of brigands. Between them, Spain is nothing but a simple stake. The censorship prevents an explanation of why the English have sent no troops in place of the false Italo-German invaders as well as the exact reason why they sent their fleet into the Mediterranean; it prevents a denunciation of the real authors of the blackmail in the war, the real inspirers of the words and deeds of Hitler and Mussolini. It has never been possible to denounce those who made the Italian "volunteers" come to Spain, nor to explain why the Germans sent technicians rather than soldiers. It has never been possible to explain what Salazar and Portugal were, and that the English would have invented them if they had not existed. \* \* \* \*

Opinion is lulled in Republican Spain when it is told that there are two Englands: the Conservatives who are strangling the republic and the left wing . . . which watches them strangle it with an affectation of protest. England paralyzes France in Spain, as she paralyzes her—with reason, this time—in Central Europe. To keep the colonies torn from the Germans and to embroil Hitler and Mussolini between themselves, to break the Franco-Soviet pact, the English want to reconstitute the Germanic empire and bring the Germans to Trieste. The English, in practise, govern the world.

It is not by chance that the government seat is 60 kilometers from Barcelona and that Catalonia is destined to be crushed. There is a conflict between the Generality, whose eyes are turned to France, and the central government which is under orders from England, who hates the Catalans and their government. The central government, aided by the U.S.S.R. and by Mexico, watched, in 1936-1937, over the defense of Madrid but it remains disinterested in that of Catalonia. In men and material, the Catalans have done most for the war. But the central government, disposing of the credits, has made Catalonia work for it and not for herself. Materially, the Catalans are the providers of all of loyal Spain. But they dream of independence and possess the most powerful organizations of the extreme left: a victorious, independent Catalonia would continue the revolution and would soon be a century ahead of the present world. The Catalan conservatives fear this independence: they applauded the intervention of the central power on the morrow of the May days of 1937. But the Madrid politicians, right as well as left—communists included—dread this independence still more, for it would be a firebrand placed at the door of old Spain which each of them dreams of domesticating according to his views. Secretly, therefore, the politicians of the

central government must be satisfied with the reverses of the Catalans, reverses which may put the latter into different moods, that is, either crush them completely or oblige them to renounce their fancy for independence, which means here renouncing the social revolution.

## Not to Speak Out What Is

When the C.N.T. and the F.A.I. carry on "Catalanism", when they pursue a republicanism on the national scale, these are only spring-boards: they are betting on the impotence of both governments to stem a revolutionary drive. It is because they are conscious of this impotence that the republican politicians do not want a victory and that the English demand defeat. The anarchist critics abroad are wrong when they imagine that we did not foresee this: *the big problem was not to see it but to be able to say it, not abroad, but in Spain itself.*

The general obligation to remain silent about all these fundamental questions has disoriented the minds and now turns them to the worst blunders. The various anti-fascist sectors throw the responsibility for the defeats and the general aggravation of the situation upon each other, for they continue to speak of the fascism-democracy antagonism, of the big bad Italian wolf, and of those "Boche barbarians" who destroyed Guernica. The Young Communists, branches of the U.S.S.R., smear the walls with inscriptions urging resistance to the bitter end, "dying to the last man". But what is Moscow doing, which inspires these slogans?

Nothing. Yielding to the injunctions of England, whose fleet, in concert with the Italians, has halted its vessels, Moscow has renounced the provisioning of arms to governmental Spain. Moscow does not dare to convoy its ships with its war fleet; Moscow does not want to risk a war, but it exhorts its disarmed admirers and partisans to succumb for her to the last man; a useless sacrifice in a struggle which is also unequal. The Spanish communists, whose masters do not dare to brave England, accuse of cowardice and treason the France of Blum, who only imitates, apparently—because in reality France furnishes arms—the Russia of Stalin.

The Catalans have been left in the lurch by everybody, and they nurse themselves on illusions when they hope in France, which cannot move openly in opposition to England. The Catalans have always nourished the secret hope that France would guard their independence: the 17,000 Catalan volunteers who fell in the war of 1914-1918 for "Justice and Civilization", imply, in their eyes, a certain recognition. . . . The unfortunates! \* \* \* \*

The confusion in internal social policy and in international policy creates an unbelievable atmosphere of distrust. If the military situation worsens—as is unfortunately probable—the anti-fascists will decimate each other before being crushed by the fascists. The government wants nothing better: it will thus be able to shift the responsibility for the defeat to the divisions among the brother-enemies.

Already, it has turned over to the organizations not the share of power they are entitled to, but a share of the governmental responsibilities; the reactionaries of Spain have further made the workers' organizations take bonds in the future bankruptcy. . . . The support of the C.N.T. had to be obtained at the price of liberating thousands of *gubernativos*, languishing in the prisons, some of them for more than 10 months. It appears that prisoners were to be liberated on the condition of going to the front or of leaving the country. It is brutal. But when you know what sort of element is mixed with the mass of the prisoners, this measure in itself is rational and prohibits all facile demagoguery in connection with it. . . .

The Spanish revolution has drawn to it a band of adventurers and served as a field of experience for certain light-fingered gentry who, covering themselves naturally with revolutionary principles, engaged in the worst excesses, compromising without their knowledge comrades who were upright, but too impulsive and itching

for action. . . . I have seen those things. . . . I have approached the prisoners at close range, as have the comrades occupied with their defense, extremely delicate and complicated, by virtue of the involuntary discredit mentioned. . . . Finally, among the comrades with integrity, a great number are opposed to the line adopted by the C.N.T. And these "ultras" have created grave incidents, putting the C.N.T. and the F.A.I. in an impossible situation. They bear a large part of the *formal* responsibility in the unleashing of the bloody May days. The hangers-on interest nobody; the "ultras" are annoying and the only way of distinguishing the two is to offer them the chance of deserting or making them fight.

When all this is known, there is no doubt that the C.N.T. subscribed without hesitation to the conditions concerning the liberation of the prisoners.

## Anarchist Impotence

The puritans abroad, who do not know the bloody behind-the-scenes facts of the Spanish drama, will say that it would have been better to free these prisoners by force. But where is force at the moment when, under cover of the mobilization, all the comrades are progressively expedited to the fronts? At the moment when the Confederal brigades are dissolved or annihilated? At the moment when the public is tired and attributes the cause of its misery to the new economy—and this is unfortunately true to a certain extent: the trade union economy is full of initiative but devoid of discipline and system, and the struggle among collectives (especially in food and the gastronomic industry) has replaced the traditional competitions. To speak of force when the police constitutes an imposing percentage of the population in Barcelona, when the personnel of the prisons is fiercely hostile to us and perfectly capable, as experience has shown, of massacring the imprisoned at the first sign of revolt? Resort to the insurrection when the common enemy is at the gate? It is practically impossible. Only the amicable solution remains, the blind alley of concessions. At the point things have reached and as they stand, you can only gain time, organize the rescue and the retreat as best as possible. \* \* \*

The Spain of tomorrow will not be of military use to anybody. The Carlists will continue to detest France and the Catalans to love her; the U.S.S.R. will retain its sympathies and its hates; England will remain hated by the Catalans and suspect to all the others, even the nationalists. As to the Italians, supremely detested in the rebel zone where they behave like blackguards—like every *soldatesque*—their very name will continue to arouse only hatred in republican Spain. The Germans alone, more discreet even if just as unadapted, will pass away least perceived. The future Spain is unknown, but she will not belong to those who invade her militarily today: the tutors of Spain will remain the obscure financiers of The City.

That is why England is not disturbed by the presence of the Italo-German gendarmes in Spain—and France asks only to believe their assurances, even though she takes certain precautions. . . . Most disturbing is not so much the nature of the future Spain. It is whether the invaders will first let it be born. They would indeed like to leave, but on the condition that the map of Europe be recast: that's the price of their service as gendarmes. Is it too dear? That's what France and England will soon be saying. Before the settlement of the bill—England and Italy have already started discussions on the amount of the bill which was settled in part with Germany by the annexation of Austria yesterday and of Czechoslovakia tomorrow—it cannot be said that Spain fatally includes the risks of the international war. Germans and Italians introduced arms into Spain, but it is really for themselves and at their expense? It does not seem so. That is why the Spanish problem stands differently at bottom from the way in which it is put publicly in order to curb the agitation of the left in France and in England, an agitation which might oblige the rulers to bet on the red horse, whereas they have put their fortune on the white. . . .

All pessimism is warranted in connection with Spain, but it is in the revolutionary and not purely pacifist sense: there are more risks of social extermination than of international extermination; Europe still has before it several years of peace—if Spain is the only cause of war.

PARIS, May 1938

STYR-NHAIR

# The Stalinist Convention

THE PASSIONATE AVOWALS OF love for the flag, the Constitution and the traditions of the United States, delivered in rolling Jeffersonian accents by Earl Browder at the tenth convention of the communist party, have met with distressingly poor response on the outside. Not even Israel Amter trying his utmost to look like Daniel Boone and Ella Reeve Bloor like Barbara Fritchie, were of much help. The big bourgeois papers did not even try to suppress a horse-laugh; the liberal dailies declared the deception—that the protestations were anything *but* a deception properly occurred to nobody—too thin; even the anxiously friendly *Nation* tittered politely in one part of its comment and made a wry face in the other. The hurt expression of the party's spokesmen at not having their declamations taken seriously, and their pathetic insistence on their innate honesty and sincerity, have only added a superfluous touch to an already overdone burlesque.

There is very good ground for the unrelieved skepticism with which the C.P. convention was greeted. Every half-informed person is perfectly well aware that the policies and public declarations of the Stalinist parties are decided in every important particular by the Kremlin bureaucracy in accordance with the prevailing requirements of Soviet Foreign Office. The only reason why the official communist parties have not long since been dissolved (their original aim—the revolutionary struggle for power

—having been proscribed years ago) is that they still have two functions to perform for their patrons: 1) as a means of pressure upon the so-called "democracies" for an alliance with the Soviet Union in the coming world war, or in a preventive war against Russia's present direct enemies; and 2) once the alliance is consummated, or as a demonstration of its desirability to the bourgeoisie, as a gendarme in the ranks of the working class, impeding its political and revolutionary development. The Communist International, as the perspicacious *New York Times* pointed out some time ago, is the world's stoutest pillar of the *status quo*; as such it is, basically, quite reconciled to the existing social order and the bourgeoisie and comes into conflict with it only when, and to the extent that, the latter seeks to alter the *status quo* in a more reactionary direction. Wherever the bourgeoisie seeks to maintain the system of private property in its *present* form, it finds in the Stalinists a trustworthy and ferocious—witness Spain!—body-guard.

The important and often decisive point is, nevertheless, this: the bourgeoisie understands perfectly well that the Stalinists are ready to defend its "democratic" rule only as a function of their subservience to the Moscow bureaucracy; that, for example, if it served Stalin's policy to make the alliance with Hitler which he tried to achieve in 1933, the communist parties everywhere would

once more discover that the Versailles Peace Treaty and the *status quo* are viciously reactionary and bourgeois democracy a hoax and a snare. The British had no illusions whatsoever about the loyalty to Crown and Country of the Hessians who served them against the American colonists. If the captains and lieutenants hired out to the British by the Prince of Hesse had met in convention to declare their undivided fealty to King George, their love of the House of Hanover and their pride in the glorious traditions of the Plantagenets, Tudors and Stuarts, they would scarcely have met with greater incredulity—and revulsion!—than was encountered by Browder's convention.

\* \* \*

Yet, it seems that no party that once stood for the socialist revolution and was the sworn foe of capitalism and its institutions, could have made more prodigious efforts to convince itself as well as outsiders of its respectability. No former disturber of the peace of mind of exploiters and oppressors could have gone through more contortions to prove that he was housebroken. But like every over-zealous parvenu, the Stalinist convention did not confine itself to donning the sober garments of the more dignified and restrained bourgeois, but decked itself out in the trappings of the most blatant, that is, the most reactionary representatives of the ruling class.

The first example of this is the new preamble to the party constitution, which is more than the hypocritical fraud for which it was properly and universally derided; it is a gross scandal, without precedent in the militant labor movement. The formula is in the nature of a public pledge of all members:

The Communist Party of the United States of America is a working class political party carrying forward today the traditions of Jefferson, Paine, Jackson and Lincoln, and of the Declaration of Independence; it upholds the achievements of democracy, the rights of 'life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness' and defends the United States Constitution against its reactionary enemies who would destroy democracy and all popular liberties. . . .

We will not dwell here on the historically reactionary concept that a revolutionary workers', *i.e.*, socialist party should base itself upon the traditions of *bourgeois* revolutionists, however great and progressive in their time, whose watchwords could be nothing more than ideological expressions for their social aim, namely, the establishment and consolidation of capitalist property relations and rule. We wish instead to indicate another point, which is that the new C.P. preamble, by declaring its attachment to the constitutional, or legal, basis of American capitalism not only abandons the struggle for socialism but binds its members with a loyalty oath to the existing order. For the heart of the preamble is taken, in part word for word and in the spirit wholly, from the Loyalty Oaths which impertinent reaction has imposed on school teachers in numerous states. This may be seen from its striking similarity to the official oath which the teachers of Georgia are forced to take, swearing that they will

Uphold, support and defend the Constitution and laws of this State and of the United States, and will refrain from directly and indirectly subscribing to or teaching any theory of government of economic or of social relations which is inconsistent with the fundamental principles of patriotism and high ideals of Americanism.

What C.P. member could now consistently refuse to take this oath, or to continue the fight against its adoption in those states where it has not yet been put on the statute books by the red-baiters?

An even more striking plagiarism from the arsenal of American reaction is contained in Article VI of the new constitution of the C.P. on the "Rights and Duties of Members".

The Communist Party of the United States of America upholds the democratic achievements of the American people. It opposes with all its power any clique, group, circle, faction or party, which conspires or acts to subvert, undermine, weaken or overthrow any or all institutions of American democracy whereby the majority of the American people have obtained power to determine their own destiny to any degree.

This utterly appalling paragraph can be found in any of dozens of indictments and prosecutors' pleas for the conviction of revolutionists in the courts of the United States! The Stalinists scarcely altered by a syllable the professional jargon of capitalism's cops and turnkeys: "conspires or acts to subvert, undermine, weaken or overthrow any [!] or all institutions of American democracy"! Why, both the chairman and secretary of the C.P. were indicted and the state prosecutor demanded their imprisonment in the famous Michigan cases of 1922 in virtually those very words. Flesh and bone and blood, spirit and text, they are lifted from American "democracy's" infamous Criminal Syndicalism Laws, which, in Michigan, for example, provide against the crime of "conspiracy" by

Any person who by word of mouth or writing, advocates or teaches the duty, necessity or propriety of crime, sabotage, violence or other unlawful methods of terrorism as a means of accomplishing industrial or political reform.

However derisive the bourgeoisie of the United States may be about the democratic pretensions of the American agents of the Stalin totalitarian régime, its more astute sections realize that in an "emergency", such as is created by a war, they will be able to rely to a large extent upon these police-spirited gentlemen to ferret out and hound genuine revolutionists with the same brutality and system that their similars have employed against the anarchists, the P.O.U.M. and the left-wing socialists in the Spanish civil war. It was to emphasize their readiness to play this rôle that the Stalinists went out of their way so demonstratively to insert the quoted passages in their party constitution.

The same purpose is behind the new provision in the constitution—a piece of xenophobia and of truly 100 percent American chauvinism, which no self-respecting trade union has in its statutes—limiting membership in the party only to those patriots who are citizens of our Great and Indivisible Republic or who have declared their intenting of becoming citizens. Even more sickening is the section on discipline which declares that

Party members found to be strikebreakers, degenerates, habitual drunkards, betrayers of party confidence, *provocateurs*, advocates of terrorism and violence as a method of party procedure, or members whose actions are detrimental to the party and the working class, shall be summarily dismissed from positions of responsibility, expelled and exposed before the general public. (N. Y. Times, May 29, 1938.)

There have, it is true, been "workers'" parties before this who excluded from membership "advocates of violence", but they never had a very high standing in the revolutionary movement, and not one of them ever reached the depths of reactionary 'shamelessness' represented by the new Browder clause. Never has anyone dared to insult the revolutionary movement by bracketing degenerates, drunkards and scabs with advocates of terrorism, stool-pigeons with advocates of violence. To put the strike-breaker and pervert in the same bag with the William Tells, the Haymarket martyrs, Hirsch Leckerts, Vera Zasulich and scores of other great spirits of revolutionary protest, is worthy only of those who in the same breath associate the spy and informer with Marx, Engels, Lenin and even Stalin, the greatest advocates of revolutionary violence in their time, yes, and even the Browders, Fosters and Olgins of yesterday.

In 1912, in attempting to oust and crush the syndicalist and "red socialist" left wing, the Hillquit gang forced through the Indianapolis convention of the socialist party the infamous Article II, Section 6 of the constitution, which while it was not *one-tenth* as depraved as the new Stalinist clause, nevertheless provided for the automatic expulsion of "any member of the party who opposes political action or advocates crime, sabotage or other methods of violence as a weapon of the working class to aid in its emancipation". Every historian of the American movement for the past quarter of a century has understood that the notorious Section 6 was an expression of the opportunistic degeneration of the Hillquit party, so redolent of toadyism to bourgeois respectability

that its very authors shamefacedly proposed its concellation a few years later. Only two years ago, William Z. Foster, one of the fathers of the Stalinist Section 6, commented on the S.P.'s 1912 constitutional change as follows:

The basic meaning of all this ran far beyond the suppression of the advocacy of sabotage; it meant that the party leadership had rejected the policy of class struggle and had turned still deeper into the reformism that was killing the party. Its lawyer-doctor-preacher heads were determined to wipe out the revolutionary tendency in the party and they followed up this convention victory by having Haywood recalled by referendum from the National Executive Council. Thus, Bill Haywood, the revolutionary fighter who was worth several carloads of the opportunist intellectuals who were running and ruining the Socialist party, was not deemed worthy of sitting upon the party's executive. . . . The outcome of the 1912 convention was a real disaster to the socialist party, one from which it never fully recovered. (*The Crisis in the Socialist Party*, p. 34.)

This entirely accurate characterization now applies, but with a hundred times as much force, to Foster's own party, for, among other things, a Bill Haywood today would find it a thousand times more difficult to be a member of the communist party, much less to "sit upon the party's executive"!

What little kindness we feel towards the Stalinist party dictates that we pass over lightly the last innovation in the constitution: the provision, compounded of perfidy, downright *fear* and total lack of self-confidence, prohibiting all party members from any political or personal (!) relations with "confirmed Lovestoneites and Trotskyites"—not with fascists or scabs; no, only with Trotskyists and Lovestoneites.

\* \* \*

These constitutional alterations constituted an appropriate background for the political line set forth by the convention, or, more accurately, for the undebated, unanimous endorsement of the divine revelations handed down to the convention like Mosaic tablets by the party Führer.

The People's Front of yesterday has been relegated to the background; it was scarcely mentioned throughout the proceedings of the convention. Place of honor goes now to the "Democratic Front", which awaits only the passage of a little time to be amended into the "American Front"—an absolutely certain slogan of tomorrow.

It is not necessary to enter in great detail into the analysis which Browder made of the crisis in the United States. Suffice it to say that the ridiculous, outworn, exploded thesis of Marx and Engels to the effect that periodic economic crises are inherent and inevitable in capitalist society, regardless of the wishes or politics of the ruling class, was replaced by the brand-new discovery that it is not *capitalism* that engenders crises but rather that "Every economic crisis is the result of the policies of the capitalist class" (*The Democratic Front*, p. 23). The economic Columbus of the tenth convention sucked this thesis out of his thumb in order to bolster the political line which aims to make the party, if not the saviors of the bad-policied bad-capitalists, then at least the personal physician of the capitalist system.

The Democratic Front marks a new low in the evolution of American Stalinism. Put in the most objective manner, the formal adoption of the new policy underlines the fact that the American communist party plays not a progressive but an outstandingly reactionary rôle in the labor movement of this country. It seeks to drag it back to where the German working class, for example, stood or rather lay almost a century ago.

With all its opportunism, its increasing corruption, its parliamentary cretinism, its bureaucratism and suppression of the left wing, the Second International played an historically progressive rôle in the great period before the World War. Why? Because it presided over the birth of an independent working class movement. Defective in a thousand ways, the parties of the Second International in such countries as Germany, Austro-Hungary, France, Belgium, Holland, Italy, England and the Scandinavian countries led the working class in the first giant's step towards

socialism. Not even the most backward and opportunistic of the little socialist groups that made the start, took as its point of departure the present Stalinist conception that, since the workers "are not ready for socialism", and since they support the liberal bourgeoisie and its party, we too must support that party. Quite the contrary.

Ferdinand Lassalle, founder of the German labor movement, gained immortality in the annals of the revolutionary movement not so much because of his rigid adherence to Marxism or the flawlessness of his tactics, but because he succeeded like no one else, in separating the German workers from the party of the liberal bourgeoisie, of the *Fortschrittsmänner*, and organizing them into an independent, integral party of their own class. Lassalle was subjected to the most furious slander campaign by the bourgeois philistines and their prototypes in the labor movement, who charged him and his movement with being agents of the Prussian reaction because he was "dividing the progressive front". In the same way, the pioneers of the British Labour party, in attempting to establish labor's independent political organization, had to breast the tidal waves of calumny from the Liberals and their trade union lieutenants who, when the Labourites put up an independent candidate, charged them with splitting the "liberal front" because they were in the pay of the Tories.

Three quarters of a century ago, the scintillating tribune of the German proletariat was compelled to devote a good deal of his time to answering, in his own admirably masterful way, the "progressive" bourgeois traducers of the working class whose only interest in the latter was as electoral cattle. *All* the reactionary arguments of the Browders and Fosters of today were crushingly answered seventy and eighty years ago by Lassalle, to say nothing of Marx and Engels.

From its "third period" to the present day, the Stalinist party has steadily developed to the point where it is the main obstacle in the working class to the latter's inevitable development as an *independent* political force, having its own class party, with its own class leadership and objectives. The frenzied efforts the C.P. is now making to keep the American working class under the tutelage of one or another of the old bourgeois parties, or an admixture of both of them in a new form, is what brands the Stalinist party as an essentially reactionary force in the labor movement. For a political party cannot be characterized otherwise unless, especially in the United States, it sets forth as its *immediate and primary* task the *separation* of the working class from the capitalist class, the political establishment of the proletariat as a *class for itself*, the proclamation of its Declaration of Independence.

For reasons of Soviet foreign policy alone, *i.e.*, in the interests of convincing the democratic bourgeoisie of the desirability of an alliance with Moscow, the political line and activities of the communist party are calculated to prevent such a Declaration of Independence. That and nothing else is the meaning and purpose of the Democratic Front, which has now superseded not only the entirely suppressed labor party slogan of the C.P., but even its slogan of the People's Front. And by Democratic Front, bear in mind, the Stalinists want to emphasize not only their attachment to "democracy" but above all their attachment to the Democratic party, specifically to that New Deal section of the party which only a few years ago they denounced as fascist.

Already in 1936 [reads Browder's convention report], the main body of the democratic mass movement had shifted to support of the Democratic Party in most places, and nationally; while the main camp of the reactionary forces formed around the Republican Party. There are still, however, some progressive groupings under the Republican flag, here and there; while under the Democratic flag is a whole organized wing in alliance with reaction, and fighting for official control of the Democratic Party. . . . If the camp of reaction is to be defeated, if victory is to be won by the people, the democratic camp must be equally united and mobilized. (P. 38.)

In the sense that the working class and its organizations were and still largely are under the domination of the Democratic party, this analysis is correct. But precisely because the working

class is tied to the bourgeois parties does it become mandatory upon revolutionists to work out those tactics which will most speedily and effectively assist the working class in their groping efforts to break from *any and all* the bourgeois parties. The crime of the Stalinists consists in the fact that they take the present situation as the answer to the very problems which that situation presents for solution. They seek to perpetuate substantially the *status quo* in the American proletariat's relations to capitalist class politics.

The Democratic Front means the continued imprisonment of the working class within the framework of the present or a reconstructed version of the Democratic party and "some progressive groupings under the Republican flag". That is why there is no mention at all in the tenth convention documents of the class struggle, of independent working class political action, of the need of helping the American workers break away from the bourgeois parties. Just the contrary. The break from the bourgeois parties—in the Year of Our Lord one thousand, nine hundred and thirty-eight!—is condemned as premature, and therefore false. Thus, even the LaFollette movement is attacked not primarily and not so much because of its reactionary program, but because it is a rupture of the traditional method of the late LaFollette, which is extolled by Browder as exemplary because "Fighting Bob's"

... method was to emerge from the old parties into independent existence at such a moment and upon such issues, as would ensure *the unity of the progressive majority behind it* from the moment of its birth, thus avoiding the danger of splitting the progressives and handing a cheap victory to the reactionaries. (P. 18.)

Phil LaFollette's method, on the other hand, "disturbs the unity of the democratic front". In other words, the unity of the Democratic Front means condemnation of any division not only in the Democratic but also in the Republican party! It not only proscribes the formation of a genuinely independent working class party, but even of an independent third, petty bourgeois party!

That is why the Stalinists did not even call for an independent labor ticket after the Pennsylvania primary defeat of Kennedy, but instead urged upon the A.F. of L. and the C.I.O. to make every effort to "forget" the deplorable division in the primaries and to unite the Kennedy-Guffey and Earle-Jones factions into a reconsolidated Democratic party. That is why the Stalinists were deliriously happy in the columns of their paper when they learned that the rumored report that the American Labor Party in New York would break away from the domination of its Republican party allies and henceforth pursue an independent path, was false.

We repeat: the Stalinist party is the most perfidious and reactionary enemy in the ranks of the American workers to their independent political progress.

\* \* \*

Yet, how does it happen that all this is so docilely and unanimously swallowed by the convention delegates and party members, even though it represents a complete and irrevocable break with everything the communist movement once stood for? With totalitarian pride worthy of an Achille Starace or a Rudolph Hess, Browder and Foster boasted of the absolute unanimity with which the 35 district conventions endorsed the resolutions of the Central Committee. There is an explanation for this complete monolithism of mind which has a parallel only in the fascist parties.

In the first place, the overwhelming majority of the party membership is composed of people who have come into the party only in the last two or three years. They know nothing and are taught less about the revolutionary past, or the foundation policies of the Communist International. And since the Leader principle is today paramount in the Stalinist movement, it suffices for Browder to tell them that his policy is good communist doctrine to have it adopted without much if any debate.

In the second place, the ideological terrorism inside the party and the police surveillance over every word and action of the party member, is so great that it has been virtually impossible up

to now for protesting or questioning members to come together to discuss their own opinions or doubts, must less to put them forward inside the party in an organized way. The result is the still substantial turnover in membership: thousands vote against the party policy and the party régime with their feet.

In the third place, the greatest number of recruits to the party have come not from the industrial proletariat, who are least receptive to opportunism and class collaboration, but from the middle classes, the intellectuals, the professionals and the white collar workers, who are most receptive to them. Whoever knows the origin and history of the degeneration of the pre-war and post-war Second International will understand the great significance of this phenomenon. The party leaders lament the fewness of the industrial workers in the party, and admit that only "26.2 percent of the communist party's membership are employed in heavy industry; 73.8 percent are middle class, farmers, professionals, white collar, agricultural workers and unclassified occupations" (*Daily Worker*, May 28, 1938).

In the fourth place, the delegates are not only hand-picked by the party leadership, but the overwhelming majority of them—647 out of the 776, or more than 83 percent, according to the credentials committee report (*Daily Worker*, June 1, 1938)—are party functionaries, who, particularly in the C.P., are completely dependent for their jobs on the benevolence of the central party bureaucracy.

In the fifth place, those who are more or less aware of the difference between a revolutionary and a reformist policy, and who might be expected to object to the prevailing party policies—they include some of the young elements as well as "old-timers"—have been corrupted by the very double-dealing and double-bookkeeping which they condemn with tongue in cheek. In the privacy of their bedrooms, with shades drawn and keyholes chinked, they will cynically explain that the "respectable" policy is an ingenious trick with which to put the bourgeoisie off the track and win those workers "not yet ready for socialism"; and when The Hour strikes, the party will throw off its mask and reveal itself in pristine revolutionary purity! Alas, they are duping only themselves, as would an atheist if he planned to destroy religious prejudices with a popular mass movement recruited by arguments to support the infallibility of the Pope and the scientific basis for Genesis.

Finally, the political level of the average party member is incredibly low. The official membership figures lay claim to 75,000 members, to which are added 20,000 members of the youth organization. In contrast to this group of 95,000 organized communists, is the *official* (i.e., the exaggerated) figure for the circulation of the *Daily Worker*, stated earlier this year in the formal declaration to the United States Post Office: about 30,000 copies. This was before the establishment of two more daily organs. Even if not a single copy of the party's central daily organ was sold to non-party members—which is obviously not the case—it would mean that there is not one member out of three who reads his own party press—a percentage which is at once amazing and revealing! (Remember that the vast majority of the party and youth membership today is English-speaking and English-reading.) As for the "theoretical" monthly, *The Communist*, not one member in ten (more likely: not one in twenty) reads it, a fact which might, it is true, be put down as a plus.

While these factors explain the present unanimity with which the Browder policies are swallowed, they are anything but a guarantee of the same unanimity for always. The impact of the class struggle, which all signs indicate is becoming more powerful in this country, is certain to drive mighty wedges into the ranks of the Stalinist movement, especially as they become more numerous. Social crises after the war broke in two the apparently no less powerful and unanimous social democracies. When the crash takes place here it will not even leave remnants of the wretched bureaucratic clique that has brought nothing but shame and catastrophe to the revolutionary movement.

Max SHACHTMAN

# Learn To Think

## A Friendly Suggestion to Certain Ultra-Leftists

CERTAIN PROFESSIONAL ultra-left phrase-mongers are attempting at all cost to "correct" the thesis of the Secretariat of the Fourth International on war in accordance with their own ossified prejudices. They especially attack that part of the thesis which states that in all imperialist countries the revolutionary party, while remaining in irreconcilable opposition to its own government in time of war, should, nevertheless, mold its practical politics in each country to the internal situation and to the international groupings, sharply differentiating a workers' state from a bourgeois state, a colonial country from an imperialist country.

The proletariat of a capitalist country which finds itself in an alliance with the U.S.S.R.<sup>1</sup> [states the thesis] must retain fully and completely its irreconcilable *hostility to the imperialist government of its own country*. In this sense its policy will not differ from that of the proletariat in a country fighting against the U.S.S.R. But in the nature of practical actions considerable differences may arise depending on the concrete war situation. (*War and the Fourth International*, p. 21, § 44.)

The ultra-leftists consider this postulate, the correctness of which has been confirmed by the entire course of development, as the starting point of . . . social-patriotism.<sup>2</sup> Since the attitude toward imperialist governments should be "the same" in all countries, these strategists ban any distinctions beyond the boundaries of their own imperialist country. Theoretically their mistake arises from an attempt to construct fundamentally different bases for war-time and peace-time policies.

Let us assume that rebellion breaks out tomorrow in the French colony of Algeria under the banner of national independence and that the Italian government, motivated by its own imperialist interests, prepares to send weapons to the rebels. What should the attitude of the Italian workers be in this case? I have purposely taken an example of rebellion against a *democratic* imperialism with intervention on the side of the rebels from a *fascist* imperialism. Should the Italian workers prevent the shipping of arms to the Algerians? Let any ultra-leftists dare answer this question in the affirmative. Every revolutionist, together with the Italian workers and the rebellious Algerians, would spurn such an answer with indignation. Even if a general maritime strike broke out in fascist Italy at the same time, even in this case the strikers should make an exception in favor of those ships carrying aid to the colonial slaves in revolt; otherwise they would be no more than wretched trade unionists—not proletarian revolutionists.

At the same time, the French maritime workers, even though not faced with any strike whatsoever, would be compelled to exert every effort to block the shipment of ammunition intended for use against the rebels. Only such a policy on the part of the Italian and French workers constitutes the policy of revolutionary internationalism.

Does this not signify, however, that the Italian workers moderate their struggle in this case against the fascist régime? Not in the slightest. Fascism renders "aid" to the Algerians only in order to weaken its enemy, France, and to lay its rapacious hand on her colonies. The revolutionary Italian workers do not forget this for a single moment. They call upon the Algerians not to trust their treacherous "ally" and at the same time continue their own irreconcilable struggle against fascism, "the main enemy in their own

country". Only in this way can they gain the confidence of the rebels, help the rebellion and strengthen their own revolutionary position.

If the above is correct in peace-time, why does it become false in war-time? Everyone knows the postulate of the famous German military theoretician, Clausewitz, that war is the continuation of politics by other means. This profound thought leads naturally to the conclusion that the struggle against war is but the continuation of the general proletarian struggle during peace-time. Does the proletariat in peace-time reject and sabotage *all* the acts and measures of the bourgeois government? Even during a strike which embraces an entire city, the workers take measures to insure the delivery of food to their own districts, make sure that they have water, that the hospitals do not suffer, *etc.* Such measures are dictated not by opportunism in relation to the bourgeoisie but by concern for the interests of the strike itself, by concern for the sympathy of the submerged city masses, *etc.* These elementary rules of proletarian strategy in peace-time retain full force in time of war as well.

An irreconcilable attitude against bourgeois militarism does not signify at all that the proletariat *in all cases* enters into a struggle against its own "national" army. At least the workers would not interfere with soldiers who are extinguishing a fire or rescuing drowning people during a flood; on the contrary, they would help side by side with the soldiers and fraternize with them. And the question is not exhausted merely by cases of elemental calamities. If the French fascists should make an attempt today at a *coup d'état* and the Daladier government found itself forced to move troops against the fascists, the revolutionary workers, while maintaining their complete political independence, would fight against the fascists alongside of these troops. Thus in a number of cases the workers are forced not only to permit and tolerate, but actively to support the practical measures of the bourgeois government.

In ninety cases out of a hundred the workers actually place a minus sign where the bourgeoisie places a plus sign. In ten cases however they are forced to fix the same sign as the bourgeoisie but with their own seal, in which is expressed their mistrust of the bourgeoisie. The policy of the proletariat is not at all automatically derived from the policy of the bourgeoisie, bearing only the opposite sign—this would make every sectarian a master strategist; no, the revolutionary party must each time orient itself *independently* in the internal as well as the external situation, arriving at those decisions which correspond best to the interests of the proletariat. This rule applies just as much to the war period as to the period of peace.

Let us imagine that in the next European war the Belgian proletariat conquers power sooner than the proletariat of France. Undoubtedly Hitler will try to crush proletarian Belgium. In order to cover up its own flank, the French bourgeois government might find itself compelled to help the Belgian workers' government with arms. The Belgian soviets of course reach for these arms with both hands. But actuated by the principle of defeatism, perhaps the French workers ought to block their bourgeoisie from shipping arms to proletarian Belgium? Only direct traitors or out-and-out idiots can reason thus.

The French bourgeoisie could send arms to proletarian Belgium only out of fear of the greatest military danger and only in expectation of later crushing the proletarian revolution with their own weapons. To the French workers, on the contrary, proletarian Belgium is the greatest support in the struggle against their own bourgeoisie. The outcome of the struggle would be decided, in the

<sup>1</sup>We can leave aside here the question of the class character of the U.S.S.R. We are interested in the question of policy in relation to a workers' state *in general* or to a colonial country fighting for its independence. So far as the class nature of the U.S.S.R. is concerned we can incidentally recommend to the ultra-leftists that they gaze upon themselves in the mirror of A. Ciliga's book, *In the Country of the Big Lie*. This ultra-left author, completely lacking any Marxist schooling, pursues his idea to the very end, that is, to liberal-anarchic abstraction.

<sup>2</sup>Mrs. Simone Weil even writes that our position is the same as Plekhanov's in 1914-1918. Simone Weil, of course, has a right to understand nothing. Yet it is not necessary to abuse this right.

final analysis, by the relationship of forces, into which correct policies enter as a very important factor. The revolutionary party's first task is to utilize the contradiction between two imperialist countries, France and Germany, in order to save proletarian Belgium.

Ultra-left scholastics think not in concrete terms but in empty abstractions. They have transformed the idea of defeatism into such a vacuum. They can see vividly neither the process of war nor the process of revolution. They seek a hermetically sealed formula which excludes fresh air. But a formula of this kind can offer no orientation for the proletarian vanguard.

To carry the class struggle to its highest form—civil war—this is the task of defeatism. But this task can be solved only through the revolutionary mobilization of the masses, that is, by widening, deepening, and sharpening those revolutionary methods which constitute the content of class struggle in "peace"-time. The proletarian party does not resort to artificial methods, such as burning warehouses, setting off bombs, wrecking trains, *etc.*, in order to bring about the defeat of its own government. Even if it were successful on this road, the military defeat would not at all lead to revolutionary success, a success which can be assured only by the independent movement of the proletariat. Revolutionary defeatism signifies only that in its class struggle the proletarian party does not stop at any "patriotic" considerations, since defeat of its own imperialist government, brought about, or hastened by the revolutionary movement of the masses is an incomparably *lesser evil* than victory gained at the price of national unity, that is, the political prostration of the proletariat. Therein lies the complete meaning of defeatism and this meaning is entirely sufficient.

The methods of struggle change, of course, when the struggle enters the openly revolutionary phase. Civil war is a war, and in this aspect has its particular laws. In civil war, bombing of warehouses, wrecking of trains and all other forms of military "sabotage" are inevitable. Their appropriateness is decided by purely military considerations—civil war continues revolutionary politics but by other, precisely, military means.

However during an imperialist war there may be cases where

a revolutionary party will be forced to resort to military-technical means, though they do not as yet follow directly from the revolutionary movement in their *own* country. Thus, if it is a question of sending arms or troops against a workers' government or a rebellious colony, not only such methods as boycott and strike, but direct military sabotage may become entirely practical and obligatory. Resorting or not resorting to such measures will be a matter of practical possibilities. If the Belgian workers, conquering power in war-time, have their own military agents on German soil, it would be the duty of these agents not to hesitate at any technical means in order to stop Hitler's troops. It is absolutely clear that the revolutionary German workers also are duty-bound (if they are able) to perform this task in the interests of the Belgian revolution, irrespective of the general course of the revolutionary movement in Germany itself.

Defeatist policy, that is, the policy of irreconcilable class struggle in war-time cannot consequently be "the same" in all countries, just as the policy of the proletariat cannot be the same in peacetime. Only the Comintern of the epigones has established a régime in which the parties of all countries break into march simultaneously with the left foot. In struggle against this bureaucratic cretinism we have attempted more than once to prove that the general principles and tasks must be realized in each country in accordance with its internal and external conditions. This principle retains its complete force for war-time as well.

Those ultra-leftists who do not want to think as Marxists, that is, concretely, will be caught unawares by war. Their policy in time of war will be a fatal crowning of their policy in peacetime. The first artillery shots will either blow the ultra-leftists into political non-existence, or else drive them into the camp of social-patriotism, exactly like the Spanish anarchists, who, absolute "deniers" of the state, found themselves from the same causes bourgeois ministers when war came. In order to carry on a correct policy in war-time one must learn to think correctly in time of peace.

COYOACAN, D.F., May 22, 1938.

Leon TROTSKY

## Fascism's Dress Clothes

**N**O SOCIAL MOVEMENT, not even excepting the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat, has been so thoroughly and persistently misunderstood as fascism. Its historical roots, the social forces operative within it, its ideology and methods remain still, for all except a handful, the most obscure of mysteries. And this means, most important of all, that the way in which to fight it is still, to most men, unknown.

The "peculiarly Italian phenomenon" had no significance in Germany; and, in turn, what was "natural and inevitable" for Italy and Germany could have no relevance to France—repeated yet, as France hovers on the thin verge of fascism. And, naturally, these "European isms" can get nowhere in the United States. Similarly, for many years the plebeian mass base of fascism hid from most eyes the steel jaw of monopoly-capital which that mass base covered. But, when it became clearer that fascism was at the service of monopoly capital, it was most faultily deduced that open, blunt reaction was identical with fascism. Landon and Girdler are "fascists". The statements and ideology of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce or the Association of Manufacturers are "fascist". Nothing, of course, could be more misleading or more disorienting: the phrases and ideology of the genuine fascist movement are radical, even revolutionary in appearance, at a far remove from the stupidly reactionary press releases of Girdler or the Chamber of Commerce.

At the same time, concentrating on the "abuses", excesses, brutality and gross demagoguery of fascism, it has been thought by many that fascism could never be accepted willingly by "respectable people", by professors and scientists and doctors and lawyers and intellectuals generally. This impression was bolstered by the exiling of many such respectable people from Nazi Germany. But we seldom remember how few the exiles are compared with the number that remains; and how much fewer, even, are the exiles from Italy. Nor does it in the least follow that all those who have remained are secretly stern anti-fascists and anti-Nazis.

If it were true that these "respectable people" did not and would not accept fascism, this would be a most important fact, and would indeed make incomparably more difficult the task of fascism. The respectable people, though powerless themselves and as a group, have nevertheless a decisive social function to perform. It is they who elaborate ideologies, who supply intellectual material out of which mass leaders fashion their demagoguery, from whom there filters down to the masses suitably fashioned mental and moral attitudes without which no social system exercising a tyranny over the masses could hope to endure.

### 2.

In February of this year there appeared the first open expression by some of the respectable people of this country that they

are getting ready for American fascism. *The Examiner*, a quarterly of more than a hundred pages, was issued by Geoffrey Stone from Rye Beach, New York. The Spring issue has followed in due course.

During the past year or two, the *American Review* and the *American Mercury* have come to be known as more or less fascist magazines. Neither of these, however, would admit the charge. And, though they publish articles sympathetic to fascism on occasion, the bulk of their material is little or not at all fascist in character.

*The Examiner* is altogether another matter. Its policy is frankly and avowedly fascist; it seeks, more particularly, an American form of fascism. In the first issue, the editor quotes approvingly from J. L. Benvenisti: "Fascism is an unpleasant business, but so are most surgical operations. Unfortunately a surgical operation is becoming a matter of steadily increasing urgency." And the editor then adds: "It is far from *The Examiner's* intention to offer the fascist program as wholly suited to America; but, since fascism alone of present movements attempts a radical break with the forces that have produced our dilemma, and does not propose to cure our disease by a killing dose of the virus that has caused it, it is suggested that we may learn much of positive value from an intelligent and disinterested consideration of the fascist revolution." With the exception of two brief articles, the entire second issue of 120 pages is given to a symposium under the title, "An Examination of Fascism". The final contribution to this symposium is called: "Fascism: An American Version."

Let us put out of mind at once associations drawn from a knowledge of fascist mass journals and broadsides. Here is no wild invective, no ultra-violent Jew-baiting (a few carefully introduced anti-Semitic phrases, that is all), no flaming scare-heads, no shattering bombast. That is not at all the job of *The Examiner*. Here all, or almost all, is suave, calm, measured, most "reasonable". This, we must not forget, is the voice of the respectable people. The writers are mostly professors: two from New York University (one of whom, Ross Hoffman, has just been rewarded by the Jesuit Fordham College with a chair of History); one each from Bates College, Boston University, and Bennington College. The several foreign contributors are not, be sure, tainted Italians or Germans, but Englishmen all—one of them (Sir Arnold Wilson) an M.P. no less.

But let no one dismiss *The Examiner* with a sneer at the vagaries of crack-pot professors. Professors, particularly a group of them, tend to be timid creatures; they are not given to sticking their necks out needlessly, merely for the sake of getting them chopped off. *The Examiner* could not have appeared unless the social soil had been ripening for it (Geoffrey Stone has been for years a fascist, but it was not until now that he was able to issue a magazine). Many of the respectable people have sensitive noses. They can smell corruption ahead; and they aim to get going while there are still pickings left.

This is why *The Examiner* is important. *The Examiner* is a barometer, marking the drop in the social atmosphere toward the storm of crisis.

### 3.

The first of the three basic convictions of *The Examiner*, is "that Western civilization is in the midst of a crisis which cannot be resolved except through an essential change in society. This change may be either of two kinds. One will occur inevitably if the most strenuous measures are not taken to prevent it, and it will result in the end of civilization as we have known it. . . ." Put only a trifle more directly: the socialist revolution will destroy capitalist society and will conquer the world, unless we smash it with blood and iron. "The other will depend upon a reinvigoration of the institutions which, while now perverted from their original forms, are still the safeguards of such health as remains

in the community." Again translated: fascism is the only alternative to the socialist revolution. "We must," the editor reminds his readers, "pass beyond easy assumptions and undertake a scrupulous reexamination of our ideas, making sure when we come to apply these ideas to concrete issues, that we extend them into a world which actually exists beyond the pages of *The Nation* and *The New Republic*." Even these brief samples will indicate that the world of *The Examiner's* pages is far closer to actuality than that other which it so scornfully dismisses.

What stands out perhaps most sharply from a reading of these two issues is the utter emptiness of liberal, democratic, reformist ideology—that is, the ideology of democratic capitalism—before the crisis of our time. Politely, facilely, with hardly a sign or need of heavy exertion, these writers tear the democratic ideology, its pretenses and wish-thinking and illusions and hypocrisies, into little shreds, and with an argumentative puff send the shreds scattering to the winds.

Very revealing is the editorial comment on "Austria and the Press" in the second issue. How almost too easy a job it is for Geoffrey Stone to deflate entirely the comfortable liberal-popular story of the rape of Austria! "Dr. Schuschnigg might have been another President Masaryk, a smiling, wordy, Wilsonian Liberal, for all one hears to the contrary. . . . It [the Berchtesgaden agreement] was not a moral question . . . the Austrian Chancellor was secured in power by the divisions of the popular will—his strength, in short, was predicated on his country's weakness. . . . The Press now sings dirges for gay Vienna—whose gaiety seems to have been of the typical febrile post-War variety—ignoring the fact that Vienna's 'downfall' began not at Berchtesgaden but at Versailles, when, with the dismemberment of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Austria as a nation was reduced to the suburbs of a functionless city . . . the same socialists who had been treated to more than a whiff of grapeshot by Dollfuss. . . ."

All of the writers chisel the democratic ideology to bits, with expertness and dispatch. Ross Hoffman traces the rise and decline of the Liberal State. Stebelton H. Nulle ironically makes use of Strachey: "Do those who disagree think that America is a fairyland, 'set apart', as Strachey says, 'from the rest of humanity, wholly and definitely different; in whose favor the laws of science and logic are suspended so that like causes will not produce like effects'? Some Americans seem to think that liberal democracy is the final phase of government; that there is something natural and eternally valid about it. . . ."

And the point is that the democratic ideology has no answer to these writers, and they know it, and are conscious and assured in that knowledge. For they are stronger than the democratic ideologists. False and corrupt and rotted as their own view is, it is nevertheless based upon a mighty half of the truth about our time, upon the realization that now it is either the socialist revolution or fascism, that democratic capitalism is finished on a world-historic scale. And against their view, so based, the democratic ideology is entirely helpless.

There is more to it than this. The intellectual helplessness of the democratic ideology before the attack of the fascist ideology is the expression of the helplessness of the democratic-liberal organization of society before the onslaught of the fascist movement. This lesson too is adequately symbolized by *The Examiner*. Just as the democratic ideas cannot stand up against the fascist ideas; so is the anti-fascist movement founded upon those democratic ideas—the popular or democratic fronts—defenseless against the fascist movement.

### 4.

It is hardly necessary to add that when we turn from their telling critique of the democratic ideology to their own positive conceptions, these writers, at their own lofty level, show fully the immeasurably reactionary and morally and intellectually de-

praved features which are the universal marks of the movement to which they have sold their minds. In their own polite way they demand totalitarian dictatorship, calling it "the principle of monarchy", "rule by a single head, upon whom devolves full responsibility for the welfare of the people as a whole", or "the positive state, something distasteful to Marxist and liberal alike". Calmly they will guarantee in perpetuity class rule: "At the same time, by its [fascism's] recognition of class as inevitable, and good, it negates the Marxian view of society." The family, and since the family "can endure only upon a basis of private property", therefore also private property will be society's eternal foundation. Blandly they describe how the corporative guilds will absorb the class organizations. Naturally religion will play a great part: "Are fascism or National Socialism by their nature incompatible with Christianity?" asks Sir Arnold Wilson, M.P. "My reply in each case is a decisive negative. The principles in each case can be equated with belief in the revelation of Jesus. . . ." And of course reason and science, humanity's dividing mark which alone raises it from the animal, will play second fiddle. "The dark religion of the blood" becomes smoothly translated in these essays. Let us not be surprised to find that the great underlying principle of fascism, as J. K. Heydon discovers for us, is—love. "We must not be afraid of the word 'love' or we shall never understand the truth, so simple and yet so profound, of human life and liberty. . . . It never occurs in communist literature . . . ; but I notice that fascists tend to avoid the word, perhaps fearing to seem lacking in blood and iron. The omission, however, shows that they have not yet got to the heart of their own idea, for at that heart is love." Yes, dear reader, and ponder well the sentence that follows: "Nor need they be afraid, for love can be very stern." So the workers of Italy and Germany have learned, from even more convincing teachers. And so will the workers of France and the United States learn also, on their torn flesh, if their minds will not learn sooner.

James BURNHAM

## They, the People

By Dwight Macdonald

THE CRISIS OF American capitalism has stimulated an extraordinary popular interest in politics. Nothing like it has been known since the decade preceding the Civil War. College undergraduates desert the humanities for economics and sociology. Smoking car discussions veer away from baseball towards the New Deal. But the most striking symptom is the rise of a dozen newspaper columnists to nation-wide influence. There is nothing new about columnists. The "inspirational" column, where Dr. Frank Crane has been succeeded by Dale Carnegie; the gossip column, where O. O. McIntyre yields to Walter Winchell; the political "inside stuff" column, such as Paul Mallon's "News Behind the News" and the Pearson-Allen "Washington Merry-Go-Round"—these are long familiar types. But there is no precedent for the enormous popularity of the political oracle. Incredible as it may seem, not so long ago Dorothy Thompson was celebrated chiefly as the wife of Sinclair Lewis.

A rough gauge of a columnist's influence is the number of newspapers to which his stuff is syndicated. At this moment, the ten leading political oracles are:<sup>1</sup>

Walter Lippmann	160 newspapers	8,000,000 circulation
Dorothy Thompson	140 "	7,500,000 "
Frank R. Kent	112 "	7,000,000 "
Westbrook Pegler	110 "	5,900,000 "

David Lawrence	100 newspapers	3,000,000 circulation
Hugh Johnson	67 "	4,200,000 "
Mark Sullivan	54 "	4,000,000 "
Raymond Clapper	49 "	3,700,000 "
Jay Franklin	47 "	3,500,000 "
Heywood Broun	42 "	2,800,000 "

Reading from left to right, politically: Broun, Franklin and Clapper are friendly to the New Deal; Johnson, Pegler, Lippmann and Thompson are New Deal baiters with more or less liberal vocabularies; while Sullivan, Kent and Lawrence are rabidly anti-Roosevelt. In the past year, the New Dealers have marked time at the bottom of the list, and the reactionaries have suffered heavy losses—in March, 1937, according to *The New Republic*, Lawrence had 150 papers, Kent 125, and Sullivan 70. The "centrists", on the other hand, have flourished amazingly—in March 1937, Thompson appeared in only 75 papers, Pegler in only 86. This month I intend to confine myself to this currently dominant group.

\* \* \*

Why this boom for the centrists? It is true that all four have been drifting rapidly to the right, and that this has by no means lessened their charm for the newspaper publisher. Reading their output today, one finds it hard to believe that in the 1936 presidential campaign, Pegler and Johnson were for Roosevelt, Thompson was neutral, and Lippmann's belated declaration for Landon came as an unexpected bombshell in the liberal camp. But if reactionary comment was all the publishers wanted, Messrs. Sullivan, Kent and Lawrence could supply it far more effectively. There are subtler calculations in play here. After 1936, even the publishers realized that the New Deal can't be beaten with a straight reactionary program. Shrewdly, they began to exploit a tradition of American journalism which had been allowed to lapse since the War: the conception of the "free press" as the Tribune of the People. They took the mantle dropped from the crusading editors and muck-rakers of earlier generations and draped it about the shoulders of Walter Lippmann. The "people" for whom these tribunes have always spoken is not to be confused with the masses. Godkin and Steffens and Tarbell were the mouthpieces of the vast and heterogenous American middle class. They were as oblivious of the workers as their heirs of today are. But there is, just the same, a difference.

The older generations of tribunes really fought for the interests of the petty bourgeoisie they professed to represent. They seriously tried, with varying success, to limit the economic power of the big bourgeoisie and to contest its political supremacy. The function of the contemporary *tribuni plebis* is at once more modest and more complicated. Their job is to give the rank and file of the middle class the illusion that it has powerful spokesmen, without, however, actually endangering the *status quo*. As the crisis sharpens and the balance of class power trembles ever more precariously, this function becomes more essential—and more difficult. Fortunately, most of them have had long experience at greasing the gears of capitalism with democratic ideology. Lippmann's progress from the *New Republic* to the *World* to the *Herald-Tribune* is well known. As a foreign correspondent, Thompson's liberalism was enough to get her expelled from Nazi Germany. Johnson's career was made by his "chief", Bernard Baruch, the good grey liberal of Wall Street and perennial fount of Democratic funds. Only Pegler lacks these advantages: he came straight from the sports page and, politically, is still *virgo intacta*. But he has played shrewdly on the common American superstition that ignorance is a guarantee of impartiality.

\* \* \*

Any one who still has any illusions about the Wages-and-Hours Bill should read General Johnson's column of June 15. Excerpt: "As I read this new bill . . . the only trouble is going to be on the

<sup>1</sup>Table (except for Franklin) from article by Margaret Marshall in *The Nation*, Feb. 26, 1938.

question of North-South differentials. . . . As a matter of fact, the problem under this bill is not nearly so serious as it sounds. Most Southern Negro labor is either in agriculture or in purely local enterprise. Both are exempted from the bill. The starting minimum wage is so low—\$11 a week—that it will cause no serious upset even in the South. . . . The country was clearly committed by overwhelming majorities to Federal wage-hour legislation and, according to recent polls, still heavily favors it. . . . I don't know how it could have been a milder and more flexible measure without being just an empty gesture."

\* \* \*

Indignation is to the columnist as gasoline is to the internal combustion engine. The great majority of the month's columns ran on this potent fuel. The most popular topic was the iniquity of the Administration's attempt to defeat in the primaries certain hostile Democratic senators. To the layman, it might seem that the President has a right to oppose his opponents. "Formerly, in ordinary circumstances," Johnson (June 6) admitted, "there was no moral reason why a President shouldn't express his preference in a Congressional primary." But the current campaigns against right-wing Democrats "are impersonal punishments of legislators for voting for their convictions". In short, it is moral for a President to interfere in primaries to satisfy personal grudges, but immoral to act from political considerations. Various other crimes against humanity also received their meed of protest: the Wagner Act, the surplus profits tax, the anti-monopoly drive. The People's Tribunes also found space to comment on the proposed diversion of the Yellowstone River ("Stop the Vandals!" roared Johnson), the humors of amateur male cookery, and President Roosevelt's vocabulary (which received a D minus). But there was one theme which was passed over in silence.

At the beginning of May, the cities of Ohio ran out of relief funds. In Cleveland alone, the *N. Y. Times* (May 11) reported, 25,000 families "are facing the danger of starvation". A week later, Chicago ran out of funds and shut down her relief stations, forcing 91,000 men, women and children to get along for two weeks on a handout of surplus vegetables with a retail value of 54 cents per person. As a final turn of the screw, the victims were the aged, the infirm, and the very young—the "unemployables". (The employables were all on the iniquitous WPA, which didn't break down.) Now here, the Man from Mars might say, with that naïveté which makes him so useful, was a great opportunity for indignation. Yet none of the Tribunes of the People so much as mentioned the subject. For the benefit of the Man from Mars, there were three excellent reasons for their silence: (1) relief recipients are not people; (2) the breakdown was caused by the failure of state legislatures to appropriate sufficient funds (for the Martian's further enlightenment, it should be explained that the columnists, on the highest moral grounds, think relief should be a local and not a Federal concern); (3) what scanty rations the unemployables did get, came from the Surplus Commodities Corporation, doubly immoral because it is a New Deal agency and because it interferes with "the law of supply and demand".

\* \* \*

The apathy with which the columnists view the sufferings of the unemployed vanishes when they see the skillful use the New Deal is making of this misery. A terrible fear is haunting them at present: that the New Deal, through its control of relief funds, may be able to perpetuate itself forever. This fear became panic when Harry Hopkins made his indiscreet gesture in the Iowa primaries. Johnson (May 18) was cynical: "You can't beat four billion dollars." Lippmann (May 26) was philosophical: "Thus we are being instructed as to how, by control of the Treasury and of the national credit, a political machine perpetuates itself." Thompson (May 27) contrived to be at once hysterical and didactic: "Underlying all good democratic government are certain silent assump-

tions. . . . It is assumed that no party in power will so exploit its position as to make it almost impossible for any other party ever to come to power. For if these assumptions are violated, then it is theoretically possible for any political party to keep itself in office forever. And that condition means the end of democratic government." Pegler (May 31) speaks with unwonted seriousness: "No man ever should have been given such vote-buying power, and the power should never be placed in any man's hands again. That money can never buy the people anything one-half so precious as what they are asked to sell." When Chicago's relief funds gave out, each of its 91,000 unemployables was given the following weekly ration: ½ lb. rice, ½ lb. butter, ¼ lb. dried beans, 4 lbs. oranges, ½ lb. prunes, 1½ lbs. cabbage, and 1 stalk of celery. It would be interesting to see how precious Mr. Pegler would consider his vote after a week on this diet. Would he take a lamb chop for it—or would he hold out for a steak?

\* \* \*

At the end of May, the *N. Y. Herald-Tribune's* two star columnists went away on vacations. Their valedictories were more revealing than was perhaps intended. Lippmann's was mildly playful. It boiled down to: (1) "The great fact of our time" is that "large portions of mankind are under the spell of men who seem to go to bed with their boots on" (*i.e.*, dictators); (2) this collective mania can't be treated; it must be allowed to run its course; (3) "The great issues which now embroil mankind . . . are in the deepest sense insoluble in that they arise out of passionate differences about human values." From this infantile diagnosis of our social ills, Lippmann quite logically concludes that the disease is beyond any of *his* medicines. "It is exhausting," he sighs, "to live perpetually on the grand scale of world history." Dorothy Thompson's leave-taking, in her most elaborately whimsical manner, was cast in the form of a breakfast table conversation with her celebrated husband (archly referred to as "The Grouse"). At great length, The Grouse explains to his wife (and to her 7,500,000 readers) the differences between socialism, communism, fascism and the New Deal in the "Let-us-suppose-you-have-two-cows" vein. ("The New Deal tells you that you should shoot one of the cows and pour the milk down the sink.") After a good deal of such playfulness, The Grouse, perspiring and somewhat blown, arrives at The Point: "That's why I say there isn't any solution." The similarity with Lippmann's conclusion is striking and hardly accidental.

\* \* \*

Pegler's political line is simple: whatever organized society does is intolerable. (He has a corresponding distaste for organized thought—*i.e.*, "theory".) He can stomach savagery and corruption—as his well-known defense of lynching and his elegy on Al Capone as a victim of governmental persecution—but he is quick to protest any taint of legality. So long as Hague confined himself to beating up Reds and union men, Pegler was on his side. He devoted three full columns to arguing that Hague was just an overgrown boy, no worse than any political boss. But on June 8, Pegler announced with a considerable flourish: "This is the day I eat a platter of crow. Frank Hague . . . is as ruthless and dangerous as Huey Long at his worst." It seems that in arranging his "Americanism" parade, Hague had included 700 National Guardsmen in the line of march. This display of armed authority changed Pegler's attitude overnight. The distinction between Hague's police and Hague's Guardsmen may seem academic. But Pegler is allergic to the National Guard—except, of course, in strikes.

\* \* \*

Wishful thinking is an occupational disease of columnists which especially afflicts General Johnson. Thus on May 28 he reported, on the basis of a speech he had just made before the American Iron & Steel Institute, that in the steel industry, and in big busi-

ness in general, "there is very little spirit of resistance to recent trends of government. . . . Gone also is much of the recent hate-Roosevelt fixation". Someone should tell the General that the vice-president of the Steel Institute is named E. T. Weir, that the president is named Tom Girdler, and that at the same session at which the General spoke, President Girdler delivered an impassioned Philippic against the New Deal.

Even more remarkable is Johnson's column of June 13, which abuses the Federal Trade Commission for reporting that the farm implement business is monopolistically controlled. "Although I left the industry twelve years ago," writes Johnson, "I know it. I was a small manufacturer without a 'full line', but we found a way to compete most successfully. . . ." He neglects to mention that his company, the Moline Plow Co., competed so successfully that it went into bankruptcy, and that the Johnson crowd was widely known in Wall Street as "the Moline Wrecking Crew".

\* \* \*

Occasionally a Tribune of the People takes his rôle too seriously, and the publisher must exercise his legal right to kill that day's column. (He buys the right to suppress as well as the right to print.) The *Herald-Tribune* pundits have never been guilty of such a lapse, but the Scripps-Howard oracles, politically and psychologically more unstable, sometimes require disciplining. When, in April, Johnson eulogized John L. Lewis, and when, in May, Pegler blasted Franco and the Catholic hierarchy, many Scripps-Howard papers omitted both columns. Here would seem to be matter for high indignation. Here were Regimentation and Dictatorship at their rankest! The reaction of both victims was, to their less sophisticated readers, incomprehensible. Less than a week after the outrage, Johnson wrote, in a column which was *not* suppressed: "In the freedom of the American press which still prevails, and the liberalism of the Scripps-Howard newspapers, of which I am an exponent, I am permitted to say whatever I please." Pegler, the caustic *enfant terrible* of journalism, was even more abject. He devoted his columns of June 10 and 11 to proving that the American press is "the best in the world". Admitting that perhaps the publishers don't see eye to eye with their readers on the New Deal, Pegler suggests that it is "the task of the . . . free press to criticize the party in power". Every one remembers the great newspaper campaigns against the Coolidge administration.

\* \* \*

The columnists are ever vigilant to defend the interests of their middle-class readers against the politicians and dictators. But a strange lethargy overcomes them when the threat comes from big business. Not one of them last month had anything to say about such developments—directly touching the class interests of their supposed constituents—as (1) the sensational looting of Continental Securities, in which some of the most respectable Wall Street firms were involved; (2) the denunciation by a Federal Judge of Bethlehem Steel's profits on wartime government contracts as "sinful" and "a racket"; (3) the news that fourteen of the twenty-two big oil companies now waiting trial on Sherman Act charges have decided to pay maximum fines and costs rather than contest the suit.

\* \* \*

Of the tribunate under the Roman Republic, the *Encyclopædia Britannica* has this to say: "From being an opposition weapon, it became an important wheel in the regular machine of state." The *Encyclopædia* further notes, of the founder of the Empire: "Augustus showed the highest statesmanship in founding his power upon a metamorphosed tribunate rather than upon a metamorphosed dictatorship, upon traditions which were democratic rather than upon traditions which were patrician. . . ."

●

[Dwight Macdonald's "They, the People" will appear regularly.]

# DISCUSSION

## Once More: Kronstadt

Readers of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL who have followed the lately revived discussion of the Kronstadt uprising in 1921, to which John G. Wright and Leon Trotsky have contributed articles in recent issues, will be interested in the communications which we print below. The first one is from the well-known Franco-Belgian writer who lived in Russia throughout most of the years after the Bolshevik victory and whose writings, especially his recent *Russia: Twenty Years After*, have been widely read,

### Victor Serge:

I receive your review with great pleasure. It is obviously the best revolutionary Marxian organ today. Believe me that all my sympathies are with you and that if it is possible for me to be of service to you, it will be most willingly rendered.

I shall some day reply to the articles of Wright and L. D. Trotsky on Kronstadt. This great subject merits being taken up again thoroughly and the two studies that you have published are far, very far, from exhausting it. In the very first place, I am surprised to see our comrades Wright and L. D. Trotsky employ a reasoning which, it seems to me, we ought to beware of and refrain from. They record that the drama of Kronstadt, 1921, is evoking commentaries at once from the Social Revolutionists, the Mensheviks, the anarchists and others; and from this fact, natural in an epoch of ideological confusion, of the revision of values, of the battles of sects, they deduce a sort of amalgam. Let us be distrustful of amalgams and of such mechanical reasoning. They have been too greatly abused in the Russian revolution and we see where it leads. Bourgeois liberals, Mensheviks, anarchists, revolutionary Marxists consider the drama of Kronstadt from different standpoints and for different reasons, which it is well and necessary to bear in mind, instead of lumping all the critical minds under a single heading and imputing to all of them the same hostility towards Bolshevism.

The problem is, in truth, much vaster than the event of Kronstadt, which was only an episode. Wright and L. D. Trotsky support a highly simple thesis: that the Kronstadt uprising was objectively counter-revolutionary and that the policy of Lenin's and Trotsky's Central Committee at that time was correct before, during and after. Correct this policy was, on an historic and moreover grandiose scale, which permitted it to be tragically and dangerously false, erroneous, in various specific circumstances. That is what it would be useful and courageous to recognize today instead of affirming the infallibility of a general line of 1917-1923. There remains broadly the fact that the uprisings of Kronstadt and other localities signified to the party the absolute impossibility of persevering on the road of War Communism. The country was dying of bitter-end state-ification. Who then was right? The Central Committee which clung to a road without issue or the masses driven to extremities by famine? It seems to me undeniable that Lenin at that time committed the greatest mistake of his life. Need we recall that a few weeks before the establishment of the N.E.P., Bukharin published a work on economics showing that the system in operation was indeed the first phase of socialism? For having advocated, in his letters to Lenin, measures of reconciliation with the peasants, the historian Rozhkov had just been deported to Pskov. Once Kronstadt rebelled, it had to be subdued, no doubt. But what was done to forestall the insurrection? Why was the mediation of the Petrograd anarchists rejected? Can one, finally, justify the insensate and, I repeat, abominable massacre of the vanquished of Kronstadt who were still being shot in batches in the Petrograd prison three months after the end of the uprising?

They were men of the Russian people, backward perhaps, but who belonged to the masses of the revolution itself.

L. D. Trotsky emphasizes that the sailors and soldiers of the Kronstadt of 1921 were no longer the same, with regard to revolutionary consciousness, as those of 1918. That is true. But the party of 1921—was it the same as that of 1918? Was it not already suffering from a bureaucratic befoulment which often detached it from the masses and rendered it inhuman towards them? It would be well to reread in this connection the criticisms against the bureaucratic régime formulated long ago by the Workers' Opposition; and also to remember the evil practises that made their appearance during the discussion on the trade unions in 1920. For my part, I was outraged to see the manoeuvres which the majority employed in Petrograd to stifle the voice of the Trotskyists and the Workers' Opposition (who defended diametrically opposed theses).

The question which dominates today the whole discussion is, in substance, this: When and how did Bolshevism begin to degenerate?

When and how did it begin to employ towards the toiling masses, whose energy and highest consciousness it expressed, non-socialist methods which must be condemned because they ended by assuring the victory of the bureaucracy over the proletariat?

This question posed, it can be seen that the first symptoms of the evil date far back. In 1920, the Menshevik social-democrats were falsely accused, in a communiqué of the Cheka, of intelligence with the enemy, of sabotage, etc. This communiqué, monstrously false, served to outlaw them. In the same year, the anarchists were arrested throughout Russia, after a formal promise to legalize the movement and after the treaty of peace signed with Makhno had been deliberately torn up by the Central Committee which no longer needed the Black Army. The revolutionary correctness of the totality of a policy cannot justify, in my eyes, these baneful practises. And the facts that I cite are unfortunately far from being the only ones.

Let us go back still further. Has not the moment come to declare that the day of the glorious year of 1918 when the Central Committee of the party decided to permit the Extraordinary Commissions to apply the death penalty *on the basis of secret procedure, without hearing the accused who could not defend themselves*, is a black day? That day the Central Committee was in a position to restore or not restore an Inquisitional procedure forgotten by European civilization. In any case, it committed a mistake. It did not necessarily behoove a victorious socialist party to commit that mistake. The revolution could have defended itself better without that.

We would indeed be wrong to conceal from ourselves today that the whole historical acquisition of the Russian revolution is being called into question. Out of the vast experience of Bolshevism, the revolutionary Marxists will save what is essential, durable, only by taking up all the problems again from the bottom, with a genuine freedom of mind, without party vanity, without irreducible hostility (above all in the field of historical investigation) towards the other tendencies of the labor movement. On the contrary, by not recognizing old errors, whose gravity history has not ceased to bring out in relief, the risk is run of compromising the whole acquisition of Bolshevism. The Kronstadt episode simultaneously poses the questions of the relations between the party of the proletariat and the masses, of the internal régime of the party (the Workers' Opposition was smashed), of socialist ethics (all Petrograd was deceived by the announcement of a *White* movement in Kronstadt), of humaneness in the class struggle and above all in the struggle within our classes. Finally it puts us today to the test as to our self-critical capacity.

Unable to reply more thoroughly for the moment to comrades Wright and L. D. Trotsky, I hope you will be good enough to submit this letter to the readers of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL. It will

perhaps contribute towards priming a discussion which we ought to know how to bring to a successful issue in a spirit of healthy revolutionary comradeship.

PARIS, April 28, 1938.

The second communication on the subject comes from one of the editors of the *Partisan Review*,

## Dwight Macdonald:

Trotsky's article on Kronstadt in your April issue was, to me, disappointing and embarrassing. Disappointing because I had hoped for a frank and reasonably objective explanation of the Kronstadt affair. Embarrassing because I admire Trotsky and accept many of his theories. An article like this—essentially a piece of special pleading, however brilliant—makes it harder to defend Trotsky from the often-made accusation that his thinking is sectarian and inflexible.

For those who believe, as I do, that the proletarian revolution is the only road to socialism, the question of the day is: how can we avoid the sort of degeneration that has taken place in the U.S.S.R.? Specifically, to what extent must Bolshevik theory bear the responsibility for the rise of Stalinism? In *The Revolution Betrayed*, Trotsky demonstrates that Stalinism is primarily a reflection of the low level of productivity and economic development of Russia. But even if one accepts this analysis, as I do, an important contributory cause may still be found in certain weaknesses of Bolshevik political theory. Is it not the duty of Marxists today relentlessly to search out these weaknesses, to reconsider the entire Bolshevik line with scientific detachment? My impression is that Trotsky has shown little interest in any such basic reconsideration. He seems to be more interested in defending Leninism than in learning from its mistakes.

The article on Kronstadt is a good example of what I mean. It is impassioned, eloquent, and—unconvincing. Trotsky may be correct in all his contentions. But he approaches the subject in such a way as to make it impossible for the detached observer to form an intelligent opinion. I have neither the time nor the knowledge—and THE NEW INTERNATIONAL certainly hasn't the space—to argue the Kronstadt question here. But I would like to indicate a few misgivings about the *tone* of Trotsky's article. In general, it seems to me that Trotsky takes a polemical approach to a question that should be considered dispassionately, with some respect for the other side. The very title is contemptuous: "Hue and Cry Over Kronstadt". The opposition is characterized in police court terms—"this variegated fraternity", "this truly charlatan campaign". To justify such abuse, Trotsky must bring forward much stronger evidence to offset the statements of Serge, Thomas, Berkman, and Souvarine than he (or Wright) has up to now.

Trotsky begins his article with an amalgam worthy of Vyshinsky: "Participating in the campaign . . . are anarchists, Russian Mensheviks, left social-democrats . . . individual blunderers, Miliukov's paper, and, on occasion, the big capitalist press. A 'People's Front' of its own kind!" (The only category which seems to fit me is "individual blunderer". Trotsky seems unable to imagine anyone criticising Kronstadt unless he has a political axe to grind or is a dupe, while the Stalinists catalogue all critics of the Moscow Trials as Trotskyists, fascists, assassins, and—my own label—Trotskyist stooges.) I can't see as much difference as I would like to see between Trotsky's insistence that, because the enemies of the revolution have used the Kronstadt affair to discredit Bolshevism, therefore all who express doubts about Kronstadt are ("objectively" considered) allies of counter-revolution; and Vyshinsky's insistence that the Fourth International and the *Gestapo* are comrades-in-arms because both oppose the Stalinist régime. This exclusion of subjective motivation as irrelevant, this refusal to consider aims, programs, theories, anything except the objective fact of opposition—this cast of mind seems to me dan-

gerous and unrealistic. I insist it is possible to have doubts about Kronstadt without being either a knave or a fool.

Having created his amalgam, Trotsky defines its lowest common denominator—and very low it is. “How can the Kronstadt uprising cause such heartburn to anarchists, Mensheviks, and ‘liberal’ counter-revolutionists, all at the same time?” he asks. “The answer is simple: all these groupings are interested in compromising the only genuinely revolutionary current which has never repudiated its banner. . . .” The answer is perhaps a bit too simple—another thing that bothers me, by the way, about Trotsky’s answers. So far as I am conscious, I am not interested in “compromising” Bolshevism; on the contrary, I wish I were able to accept it 100 per cent. But I unfortunately have certain doubts, objections, criticisms. Is it impossible to express them without being accused of counter-revolution and herded into an amalgam of anarchists, Mensheviks and capitalist journalists?

Most of Trotsky’s article attempts to show that the social base of the Kronstadt uprising was petty bourgeois. He makes one major point: that the Kronstadt sailors of 1921 were quite a different group from the revolutionary heroes of 1917. But the rest of his lengthy argument boils down to an identification of all the elements which opposed the Bolsheviks as “petty bourgeois”. He advances little evidence to support this labelling, beyond the indisputable fact that they were all anti-Bolshevik. His reasoning seems to be: only the Bolshevik policy could save the revolution; the Makhno bands, the Greens, the Social Revolutionaries, the Kronstadters, *etc.*, were against the Bolsheviks; therefore, objectively, they were counter-revolutionary; therefore, they were, objectively, working for the bourgeoisie. This reasoning begs the whole question. But even if the initial assumption be accepted, it is still a dangerous intellectual process. It rationalizes an unpleasant administrative necessity—the suppression of political opponents who also are acting for what they conceive to be the best interests of the masses—into a struggle between Good and Evil. A police measure becomes a political crusade, by simply refusing to distinguish between the subjective and the objective categories—as if a bank robber should be indicted for trying to overthrow capitalism! Stalin has learned the trick all too well.

Trotsky has very little to say about the way the Bolsheviks handled the Kronstadt affair itself. He presents no defense for the mass executions which, according to Victor Serge, took place for months after the rebels had been crushed. In fact, he doesn’t mention this aspect at all. Nor does he pay much attention to the crucial question: how seriously did the Bolsheviks try to reach a peaceful settlement before they brought up the field guns? He dismisses this: “Or perhaps it would have been sufficient to inform the Kronstadt sailors of the N.E.P. decrees to pacify them? Illusion! The insurgents did not have a conscious program and they could not have one because of the very nature of the petty bourgeoisie.” Here Trotsky admits, by implication, that Souvarine states: that Lenin was putting the finishing touches on the N.E.P. during the Tenth Party Congress, which broke up to allow the delegates to take part in the attack on Kronstadt. It was a serious decision Lenin and Trotsky took: to withhold public announcement of N.E.P. until after the rebellion, which asked for some of the very concessions which the N.E.P. granted, had been drowned in blood. How could they be so sure it would have been impossible to compromise with the Kronstadters on the basis of the N.E.P.? A few sentences earlier, Trotsky admits that “the introduction of the N.E.P. one year earlier would have averted the Kronstadt uprising”. But the Kronstadters, writes Trotsky, being petty bourgeois, didn’t have any “conscious program” and so couldn’t have been appealed to by programmatic concessions. Petty bourgeois or not, the Kronstadters *did* have a program. Souvarine, for one, gives it in his life of Stalin as, “Free elections to the Soviets; free speech and a free press for workers and peasants, left-wing socialists, anarchists and syndicalists; the release

of workers and peasants held as political prisoners; the abolition of the privileges of the Communist party; equal rations for all workers; the right of peasants and self-employing artisans to dispose of the product of their work.” Perhaps Trotsky uses the term “conscious program” in a special sense.

To me the most interesting statement in the article is: “It is true . . . that I had already proposed the transition to N.E.P. in 1920. . . . When I met opposition from the leaders of the party, I did not appeal to the ranks, in order to avoid mobilizing the petty bourgeoisie against the workers.” As Trotsky points out, Lenin admitted that the policy of “War Communism” was adhered to longer than it should have been. Was this simply a mistake in judgment, as Trotsky implies, or was it a mistake which springs from the very nature of Bolshevik political organization, which concentrates power in the hands of a small group of politicians so well insulated (by a hierarchic, bureaucratic party apparatus) against pressure from the masses that they don’t respond to the needs of the masses—until too late? Even when one of the leaders is able correctly to judge the needs of the masses, he can only try to persuade his colleagues of the correctness of his views. If they can’t be persuaded, he is inhibited by his political philosophy from appealing to the rank and file for support. It is true, as Trotsky writes, that the bourgeoisie would have sought to profit by any division in the ranks of the Bolsheviks. But are not the dangers of an air-tight dictatorship, insulated against mass pressure, even greater? Are not episodes like Kronstadt inevitable under such conditions? And would a Stalinist clique be able so easily to usurp control of a party which allowed greater participation to the masses and greater freedom to left-wing opposition, both inside and outside the dominant party?

These are the questions which Kronstadt raises. Trotsky does not answer them when he summarizes: “In essence, the gentlemen critics are opponents of the dictatorship of the proletariat and by that token are opponents of the revolution. In this lies the whole secret.” The secret is more complicated than this formulation. Rosa Luxemburg all her life opposed Lenin’s conception of the dictatorship of the proletariat. But the Guard officers who assassinated her in 1919 knew very well what her attitude was towards the 1917 revolution.

NEW YORK CITY, April 26, 1938.

## The Editors:

*The Main Point.* Our contributors seem to have missed the main point of the articles by J. G. Wright and Leon Trotsky, developed in even greater detail by the latter, namely, that the flood of Kronstadt-criticism lately unleashed by anarchists, Mensheviks, bourgeois politicians and others is aimed by the latter to discredit revolutionary Marxism, represented by the Fourth International, so that their respective political wares may seem all the more attractive, or at least not quite so unattractive. Macdonald’s complaint that all who express doubts about Kronstadt are thrown into a single counter-revolutionary pot, is totally unwarranted. We have yet to see a study of the Kronstadt uprising made from the standpoint of pure historical research or animated by anything but the crassest political aim of demonstrating that Bolshevism is reactionary or bankrupt or that, at the very least, a different political program, party or philosophy should be substituted for it. Whoever wishes, is entitled to do this. The anarchists can show that by their policy there would have been no Kronstadt in Russia, just as there is none in Spain; also, there would have been no proletarian revolution in Russia, just as there is none in Spain. The Menshevik critics are absolutely correct in saying that their policy would have averted Kronstadt and the degeneration of the revolution, because there would have been no revolution to degenerate. Miliukov and Kerensky may boast of the fact that they produced no Stalin in 1923 or Kronstadt two years earlier; but as we recall they almost produced a victorious Kornilov-Cavaignac in 1917.

All critics are entitled to engage in the most thoroughgoing study of Kronstadt, and also to propose a program so different from that of the Bolsheviks—or the essential Bolshevik program with such improvements and safeguards—as would guarantee against or at least lessen the danger of Kronstadt and degeneration. What is more, we are ready to discuss all such proposals. But we are frank to say that while we do not believe in the immaculate conception and evolution of Bolshevism, or in its flawlessness and infallibility, we remain the stoutest partisans of its fundamental principles, proud of its traditions and not very receptive to the substitutes offered by the social democrats, centrists, anarchists or plain bourgeois democrats. We are ready to discuss all revolutionary problems, but from a viewpoint of our own, which we defend until we are shown one that is superior.

*Degeneration of Bolshevism.* It is quite possible that more foresight and skill *might have* reduced the danger of a Kronstadt or in any case minimized the scope of its repercussions. The Russian revolution committed many excesses and had many a blunderer, coward and scoundrel in its leadership; we know of no revolution without them. It is unworthy of a Marxist, however, to confuse the excesses with the main line of activity, or to lose his sense of proportions by identifying the two. There is a difference between the zealous fireman who may needlessly ruin some furniture in putting out a conflagration and the arsonist who sets the house afire or the sheriff who evicts the man who built the house. Macdonald wonders if the degeneration is not inherent in the very nature of Bolshevik party organization and its dictatorship; Victor Serge asks when and where Bolshevism began to degenerate and finds the answer in Kronstadt, 1921, before that in the treatment of the Mensheviks in 1920, before that in the Inquisitional procedure of 1918. Neither facts nor Marxian theory support either of these fundamentally idealistic standpoints.

The consummate expression of degeneration—Stalinism—triumphed in the degree to which it *wiped out* the Bolshevik party and its “dictatorship”. The degeneration marks the victory of the Thermidorian counter-revolution. The social representatives of this counter-revolution were the better-situated peasantry, the petty bourgeois and bourgeois elements in the country, increasingly resentful of proletarian and Bolshevik rule. After the War Communism rigors, came the reaction, to which the peasants set the tone. Stalinism represents the yielding of the workers’ bureaucracy to this reaction. To the Marxist it is clear that fundamentally the social forces behind Kronstadt, the social forces behind the Menshevik companions-in-arms of the Allied imperialists, found a far more finished and triumphant expression in the victory of Stalinism! For what does the latter’s development represent, with its labor aristocracy, its “millionaire kolkhozniki”, its reconciliation with “democratic” imperialism, its Soviets without communists, its abandonment of revolutionary principle: the product

of the *social forces* variously represented by the Mensheviks, the S.R.s, the Makhnos—or the organizational deficiencies or excesses of Lenin’s party?

Even if we grant Macdonald’s argument that while all this is generally true, “certain weaknesses [which exactly?] of Bolshevik political theory” were a contributory cause of the degeneration, we would still have to say about this vague formula that it was only in the period of reaction, coinciding with Stalin’s rise to power, that the unspecified weaknesses acquired any decisive social significance.

And even if we grant Victor Serge’s proposal to “take up all the problems again from the bottom”, we would still have to say that in endorsing the P.O.U.M.’s substitute for Bolshevism in Spain, he did not go very far beyond his point of departure.

*Question of Tone.* Victor Serge, implicitly, and Macdonald, explicitly, complain about our “tone”. We find it difficult to understand them. The anarchist bureaucracy is killing the proletarian revolution in Spain and trying to cover its perfidy by shouting: “Stop thief! There go the assassins of Kronstadt and Trotsky the butcher!” How shall we characterize them and their pleantries? Or those of their social-patriotic and bourgeois counterparts throughout the world? By polite chafings and chidings? We deliberately word our polemics so that the thinking worker will understand how seriously we take service to the proletarian revolution and its opposite, treachery; so that he will not imagine that the conflict between the two is no more than a misunderstanding between two good friends.

Macdonald charges Trotsky with an amalgam. An amalgam is the equivalent in politics of a mechanically forced union of diverse metals: the Opposition and the Wrangel officer, Trotsky and Hitler, Macdonald and Hearst. What has that in common with the assertion, entirely indisputable, that the anarchist politicians, the social-patriots and bourgeois democrats *à la* Miliukov, are all fighting Bolshevism with the cry of “Kronstadt!” in order to enhance the looks of their respective political wares? But does Macdonald, whom we know as a friend of our movement, notice the tone of his own words?

It happens quite often that amiable critics of the “Trotskyists” will say in the most sophisticated and nonchalant manner: “You people are just like the Stalinists, fundamentally.” Or: “Didn’t you people massacre the Kronstadters and the Makhnovists?” Or: “If you were in power, you’d act just like Stalin or Vyshinsky or Yagoda.” Or: “Don’t you think there is just a little truth in the charges of Trotsky’s relations with Hitler?” And when we reply to such irresponsible or monstrous remarks with only half the sharpness they deserve, our critics become inexpressibly shocked, and exclaim: “How can you discuss with these Trotskyists! Their tone is insufferable, their manners deplorable!”

Against such criticism, polemic itself is disarmed.

## What Is Happening in Brazil?

EVENTS OF international importance have taken place in Brazil between November 10, 1937, when President Getulio Vargas perpetuated his tenure in office by means of a well executed *coup d’état* and May 10 of this year when an abortive putsch of *Integralista* extremists came to naught. Indeed, the latter event can only be viewed as a link in the chain of developments consequent to the November 10 political change.

Coöperating with the fascist *Integralistas* in the preparations for and the actual consummation of the *coup*, the Vargas ruling clique is now in overt conflict with them

and a price is placed on the head of Plinio Salgado, Greenshirt chieftain. At the same time the Brazilian government, contrary to its former attitude, decrees vigorous measures against all Nazi organizations and propaganda. A government which since 1935 has complacently allowed German agents to organize 87 Nazi organizations pledging fidelity to Adolf Hitler, and has permitted German primary schools in the state of Rio Grande do Sul not only to conduct classes in German, but to omit completely Portuguese from the class curricula, suddenly becomes “nationalistic” and against the formation of a “state within a

state”. Nazi activities are declared illegal and all German schools must, hereafter, teach Portuguese and Brazilian history.

How explain these evident 180 degree turns upon the part of the national government within a brief period of only six months? What are the dynamic motive forces that have impelled Vargas to alter so radically his former course?

Brazil is a semi-colonial country with its entire economic and social fabric inextricably interwoven with the economy of foreign imperialist nations. British and Yankee imperialism still dominate the basic aspects of that country’s industrial

life, the former in the state of São Paulo and Wall Street in the states of Minas Geraes and Rio Grande do Sul. Those three states are the richest and most developed of the union. Political struggles between the various sectors of the ruling classes, considering Brazil's semi-colonial structure, can only be properly analyzed and interpreted in the light of the shady machinations of imperialist powers striving to attain economic hegemony. Foreign imperialism, working behind the scenes has often played the decisive rôle.

The above does not mean to say that the crucial political and economic issues dividing the ruling classes are determined and motivated by imperialist interests. Such a conception can only give a hollow and abstract, mechanical interpretation to the nation's internal politics. Brazil, where the law of uneven development has reached the highest and sharpest forms in Latin America, has diversified economic classes and, moreover, the dominant classes are far more heterogeneous in their forms and aspirations than is the case in the advanced capitalist countries. And, it is precisely the irreconcilable economic antagonisms existing between those social forces, primarily the various sectors of the ruling classes, that have been and continue to be the main impelling power behind political differences in the country. The perfidious rôle of the foreign imperialists consists in the fact that they have astutely utilized those divergences for their own material ends.

Don Getulio came into power in October 1930 as the result of an interplay of profound international and internal contradictions. Within the national framework, Vargas was the spokesman of a new, rising industrial and agrarian bourgeoisie who found themselves in ever sharpening conflicts with the semi-feudal coffee oligarchy represented by the Washington Luis régime. The industrial bourgeoisie, as the very logic of its situation demanded, was principally interested in developing and expanding the internal market. Since the productive apparatus of the country could not simultaneously satisfy the exigencies of the world as well as national markets, the native industrialists wanted the country's raw materials used for the betterment and expansion of home industry. The Luis government pursued a directly contrary course, preferring to collocate those raw materials in the world market where higher prices were obtained.

American imperialism did not remain aloof during the hectic days preceding Vargas' successful *coup d'état* in October, 1930. Bitterly opposed to the Luis oligarchy because of the latter's pro-British sympathies, Yankee dollar diplomacy connived for a Vargas victory hoping, thereby, to place Wall Street interests in a privileged economic position.

Vargas assumed control of the nation with the outset of a world-wide economic depression. Paradoxical as it may seem, precisely during the years 1930-1934, when the advanced capitalist countries were in

the throes of an unprecedented economic catastrophe, Brazilian national economy took positive steps forward. Treated superficially, that phenomenon may appear to be an anomaly, but its source is not hard to find. With the prices of raw materials reaching new lows in the world market, the powerful class of semi-feudal landlords together with the more reactionary sectors of the agrarian bourgeoisie, both groups formerly interested in having the country serve as a vast supply-house for the world's highly-developed capitalist nations, started to flood the internal market with their products. Assured of a cheap supply of raw materials, the anæmic national industry received a powerful impetus and industrialization, particularly in the state of São Paulo, proceeded apace.

The combination of factors, temporarily ushered in by the world depression, also had a positive effect upon the relations existing between the dominant classes. An irreconcilable contradiction, the crux around which national political struggles were waged during pre-depression years: should Brazilian economy be geared to serve the internal or external market?—was momentarily mitigated. The ruling classes were for the time being reconciled, and Vargas' position was relatively secure.

The end of the world economic depression changed the whole complexion of the country's economic and political relations. The renewal of world-wide economic activity entailed greater and greater demands for Brazilian raw materials in the world market. Prices offered in London or New York were higher than what the native industrialists could safely afford to pay. The former latent contradictions came to the fore again. Two opposite camps started to organize their forces for the coming, inevitable struggle. On the one hand, the new industrial bourgeoisie of São Paulo in political accord with the agrarian bourgeoisie of Rio Grande do Sul. The two leaders of that coalition, Armando de Salles Oliveira and Governor Flores da Cunha of Rio Grande do Sul, were political cronies of Vargas in 1930. On the other hand, the country's semi-feudal *Latifundistas* in agreement with the reactionary agrarian bourgeoisie of the north. The latter aligned themselves with the landlords because they found it increasingly difficult to compete with the southern agrarian bourgeoisie whose productive apparatus is far more advanced. Vargas is the political representative of that obviously more reactionary combination.

The above was the basic, internal relationship of forces in the days preceding the November 10 *coup d'état*. The hold of the Vargas clique over the country had been decidedly weakened after the October 1935 leftist rebellion led by the National Liberation Alliance had been quelled. Lacking a substantial mass support, the São Paulo industrial and southern agrarian bourgeoisie opposed to governmental policies, Vargas maintained himself in power by military terror expressed by the almost

constant "state of siege". The president realized that a fairly-held election would spell his doom.

Inter-imperialist rivalries expressed themselves within the molds of those internal antagonisms. The main imperialist contradiction in Brazil still is between Great Britain and the United States. British interests, economically supreme in São Paulo, were decidedly opposed to the National government. Their motives were easily discernible. Vargas, lifted to power with the aid of American dollar diplomacy in 1930, heeded favorably the exigencies of Washington imperialism striving to secure economic hegemony over Latin America. The Brazilian government and Washington worked in the closest harmony, as expressed in the collaboration between the Brazilian and American delegations at the Montevideo conference in 1933, and at the Buenos Aires peace conference. Furthermore, Secretary Hull's reciprocal trade policy, aimed at finding markets for American industrial products, found a stalwart supporter in the Vargas régime.

Two years before the November 10, 1937 *coup*, Vargas started to make friendly overtures to the *Integralistas* and Nazi organizations. The Greenshirts and Hitlerites were allowed to carry on unrestricted political and social propaganda activities. Beginning with the first "State of War", General Newton Cavalcante, the real *Integralista* leader, participated in the councils of the government. During the forty days of the second "State of War", General Cavalcante was the president of the "National Commission against Communism" which, besides controlling the political life of the country, prepared and organized the movement culminating in the November 10 *coup*. Moreover, the Vargas government granted economic concessions to German imperialism and by means of a trade agreement, agreed to barter raw materials for industrial commodities.

An apparent contradiction appears to exist. If the Brazilian government was pro-American why did it grant ever larger concessions to the Reich, to the evident detriment of Wall Street interests?

We must not forget that Brazil has the characteristics of a semi-colonial country and is not a colony of any particular imperialist power. This distinction is not purely nominal but has concrete historical significance. It implies that unlike, let us say, the Indian bourgeoisie or semi-feudal classes, the Brazilian ruling classes have a relative degree of independence. While it would be tantamount to sheer political infantilism to consider it possible for any Brazilian economic class, excluding the proletariat, to wage war against *all* imperialisms, the different factions of the dominant classes struggling for power can, depending upon the concrete situation of the moment, align themselves with one imperialist camp or another. Although preferring to tie himself to the apron strings of American capitalism, Vargas' primary concern was not to assure the economic domi-

nation of the former but, rather, to consolidate the rule of those classes whose political representative he is.

After the November 1935 rebellion had been drowned in a sea of blood, the national government found itself divorced from the overwhelming majority of the Brazilian people and forced to rely upon the precarious support of the nation's armed forces. Don Getulio, the canniest of all the Latin-American dictators, knew that for the time being the only serious threat to his régime came from the São Paulo-Rio Grande do Sul coalition supported by British imperialism. He conceived the possibility of using the powerful *Integralista* party which besides having a mass movement of substantial proportions, had strong roots in the army and navy, as a means to stamp out his main opponents. To guarantee for itself the support of *Integralismo*, German imperialism's political tool on Brazilian soil, the government granted economic concessions to Germany.

The rôle of American imperialism prior to the November 10 *coup* was certainly not one of opposition to the Brazilian chief executive's flirting with and concessions to Germany and *Integralismo*. The State Department, indeed, gave passive if not active support to Vargas' intrigues since Washington fully realized the none too pleasant predicament of the former. Indeed, Ameri-

can imperialism still remained the main prop supporting Vargas.

For Wall Street the principal imperialist antagonist in Brazil was Great Britain and not Germany. The threat of German imperialism was as yet incipient, primarily commercial, and not of basic importance. Its interests coinciding with Vargas', Yankee imperialism worked for the defeat of the Oliveira-da Cunha combination. In many ways, Washington tried to strengthen the hand of Vargas, which may indicate that the Roosevelt administration had a direct hand in the preparations for the November 10 *coup d'état*. In the summer of 1937, the American government set aside a sixty million dollar gold fund to stabilize Brazilian currency and what is more significant, just a few weeks before Vargas perpetuated his rule, the State Department expressed itself in favor of leasing six battleships to Brazil.

The pro-American orientation of Vargas' "New State" is a fact which cannot be denied. With the São Paulo-Rio Grande do Sul forces defeated, the Vargas government, no doubt prodded on by American imperialism and assured of the latter's unstinted support, has assumed the offensive against *Integralismo* and German imperialism, the former's political mentor. Discontent rife against Vargas, the *Integralista* movement, granted free latitude, could eas-

ily become the center of a powerful movement against the government. After Vargas promulgated a new constitution which legalized all political parties, the government summarily abrogated the trade agreement concluded with Nazi Germany in 1936. To show that the Brazilian government definitely revolves within the Wall Street orbit, Vargas appointed Oswaldo Aranha, former ambassador to Washington and staunch advocate of Pan-Americanism and an American league of nations, foreign minister.

Startled, befuddled liberals and the high priests of Stalinist hypocrisy, the latter interested in dissimulating the true facts in the interests of the Soviet Foreign Office, at first saw the hand of Hitler behind November 10. Vociferous in their denunciations of Vargas immediately after the *coup*, these gentlemen today are silent. And why? Anxious to denounce the imperialist crimes and machinations of German, Japanese or Italian imperialism, they treacherously condone the brutal and shameless antics of American imperialism. For it is increasingly clear that as the result of the inter-reactions of intense internal and international contradictions, Vargas is the product of an unholy alliance between the most reactionary classes in Brazil and the sinister forces of "democratic" American imperialism. Bernard ROSS

## Archives of the Revolution

DOCUMENTS of the HISTORY and THEORY of the WORKING CLASS MOVEMENT

### The Question of the United Front

COMRADES, I was not present at the session yesterday, but I have read attentively the two speeches which are opposed in principle to the tactic defined by the Executive: the speeches of our comrades Terracini and Daniel Renault.

Now, I am in full agreement with comrade Radek when he says that the speech of comrade Terracini is nothing but a new and, I must confess, not quite improved edition of the objections which he once made to certain theses of the Third Congress.

But the situation has changed since then.

During the Third Congress there was the danger that the Italian communist party or other parties would engage in actions that might become very dangerous. Now, on the contrary, the negative danger threatens that the Italian party will abstain from actions which can and must be profitable for the labor movement.

It may of course be said that this negative danger is not so great as the positive danger. But time is an important factor in politics and if we let it slip by it is always utilized against us by others.

Comrade Terracini said: We are naturally for mass action and for the conquest

Trotsky's speech was delivered at the height of the discussion in the Communist International on the question of the united front. In the communist party of France, the greatest opposition to the united front came from the right wing, among whose most prominent spokesmen was the then party secretary, L.-O. Frossard and Victor Méric. As may be seen from Trotsky's polemical reply, the question of the united front sixteen years ago was bound up with the question of an early version of the People's Front, i.e., the *bloc des Gauches*, or "left bloc" with the Radicals and the social democrats, if not in the conception of the Comintern leaders, then at least in that of the right wing. Also involved was the relation between the Soviet republic and its foreign policy, on the one side, and proletarian policy in the capitalist countries, on the other. The manner in which this relationship was fixed at that time is in sharp contrast with the Stalinern manner of today. The reader will not fail to notice the topical, as well as historical, significance of the polemic.—ED.

of the masses. He repeats this time and again in his speeches. On the other hand, however, he says: Although we are for the common struggle of the proletariat, we are against the united front as proposed by the Executive.

Comrades, when the representative of a

proletarian party continually asserts: We are for the conquest of the majority of the proletariat, we are for the slogan, "To the masses!"—this sounds like a somewhat belated echo of the discussions at the Third Congress. At that time we all believed that we were already in the full swing of the revolution; the feelings and moods of the proletariat, born of the war, the rather vague sentiments in favor of the revolution—of the Russian revolution as well as of the revolution in general—were regarded as sufficient for the revolution itself. But the events showed that this appraisal was wrong. During the Third Congress, we discussed this and we said: No, a new stage is now beginning; the bourgeoisie does not stand quite firmly on its feet for the moment, but still firmly enough to oblige us communists first to win the confidence of the broadest masses of workers in order to crush the bourgeoisie.

Comrade Terracini continues to repeat: We are for action to conquer the masses. Certainly, but we have already entered a more advanced stage, we are now discussing the *methods* of winning the masses in action. From this standpoint—how to conquer the masses—the parties are divided

quite naturally and logically into three large groups:

First, there are the parties which are but at the beginning of their successes and which are not yet in a position to play a big rôle in the immediate action of the masses. Naturally, these parties have a great future, like all the other communist parties, but right now they cannot count very much upon the action of the proletarian masses for they are numerically weak as organizations. Hence, these parties must fight for the time being for the conquest of a basis, of the possibility of influencing the proletariat in its action (our English party is now emerging from this situation with ever-increased success).

On the other side there are parties which completely dominate the proletariat. I believe comrade Kolarov is right in claiming that this is the case with Bulgaria. What does this mean? It means that Bulgaria is ripe for the proletarian revolution and that only international conditions stand in its way. It is clear that in such a situation the question of the united front scarcely exists. In Belgium and England, on the other hand, it signifies the struggle for the possibility of influencing the proletariat and of cooperating in its movement.

Between these two extremes, there are parties which represent a power, not only in ideas but also through their numerical and organizational strength. This is already the case with most of the communist parties. Their strength may come to a third of the organized vanguard, a fourth, even a half or a bit more—that does not alter the situation in general.

What task confronts these parties? To conquer the overwhelming majority of the proletariat. And to what end? To lead the proletariat to the conquest of power, to the revolution. When will this moment be reached? We do not know. Perhaps in six months, perhaps in six years. Maybe the interval will differ for the various countries between these two figures. But speaking theoretically, it is not excluded that this preparatory period will last even longer. In that case, I ask: What will we do during this period? Continue to fight for the conquest of the majority, for the confidence of the entire proletariat. But this will not be attained by today or tomorrow; for the moment we are the party of the vanguard of the proletariat. And now still another question: Should the class struggle stop meanwhile, until we have conquered the entire proletariat? I put this question to comrade Terracini and also to comrade Renoult: Should the struggle of the proletariat for its daily bread stop until the moment when the communist party, supported by the entire working class, is in a position to seize the power? No, this struggle does not stop, it continues. The workers who belong to our party and those who do not join it, like the members of the social-democratic party and others, all of them—depending on the stage and the character of the working class in question—are disposed and able to fight for their immediate

interests; and *the struggle for their immediate interests is always, in our epoch of great imperialist crisis, the beginning of a revolutionary struggle.* (This is very important but I mention it here only parenthetically.)

Now then, the workers who do not join our party and who do not understand it (that is precisely the reason why they do not enter it), want to have the possibility to fight for the piece of daily bread, for the bit of meat, *etc.* They see before them the communist party, the socialist party, and they do not understand the reason why they have parted company. They belong to the reformist General Confederation of Labor [C.G.T.], to the socialist party of Italy, *etc.*, or else they do not belong to any party organization. Now, what do these workers think? They say: Let these organizations or sects—I don't know how these not very conscious workers call them in their language—give us the possibility of conducting the fight for our daily needs. We cannot answer them: But we have separated in order to prepare your great future, your great day-after-tomorrow! They will not understand this, because they are completely absorbed by their “today”. If they were able to grasp this, to them, entirely theoretical argument, they would have joined our party. With such a mental outlook and confronted with the fact of different trade union and political organizations, they have no means of orienting themselves; they find it impossible to undertake any immediate action, no matter how small or partial. Along comes the communist party and tells them: Friends, we are divided. You think it's a mistake; I want to explain the reasons. You don't understand them? I regret it greatly, but we are already in existence, we communists, socialists, reformists and revolutionary syndicalists; we have our independent organizations for reasons which are entirely sufficient for us communists. Nevertheless we communists propose an immediate action in your struggle for bread and meat, we propose it to you and to your leaders, to every organization that represents a part of the proletariat!

This is entirely in the spirit of mass psychology, the psychology of the proletariat and I contend that the comrades who protest against it with so much passion (which is easily explained by the importance and gravity of the question), reflect far more the painful process of their still fresh separation from the reformists and opportunists than the mood of the broad proletarian masses. I understand very well that for a journalist who was for a long time in the same editorial board of, let us say, *l'Humanité*, together with Longuet, and separated from him after great difficulties—the prospect of turning to Longuet again after all this, to propose negotiations to him, is a psychological and moral torment. But the working class, the masses, the millions of French workers, do not give a tinker's dam about these things (one can say “unfortunately!”), because they do not

belong to the party. But when you say to them: We communists are now taking the initiative in mass action for your piece of bread—whom will the workers condemn and pillory for this? The Communist International, the French communist party? No, never.

In order to show you, comrades, that the hesitations gaining ground in France, especially in France, do not reflect the moods of the proletarian masses, but rather a belated echo of the painful process of separation from the old party, I will quote you from a few articles. I beg your forgiveness: the French comrades make merry a bit over our infatuation for quotations; one of them has made some very sprightly remarks about the vastness of our “documentation”, but there is nothing else for us to do. Naturally, quotations are the desiccated flowers of the labor movement, but if you know a bit of botany and if you have also seen the flowers in the sunny fields, then even these desiccated samples will give you an idea of the reality.

I will quote you from a comrade well known in France: comrade Victor Méric. He now represents more or less the opposition to the united front in a manner comprehensible by all; he vulgarizes his opposition in his ironical manner. Listen to what he says. This is supposed to be a joke—a bad one, to me, but in any case, a joke:

“Why not make a united front with Briand? After all, Briand is only a Dissident, a Dissident of the first draft, a pioneer Dissident; but just the same he belongs to the great family.” (*Journal du Peuple*, Jan. 13, 1922.)

What is the meaning of this? At the moment when the Executive says to the French comrades: You, the French party, represent only a part of the working class, it is necessary to find the ways and means for a common action of the masses—the voice from Paris replies:

“Why not make a united front with Briand?”

One can say, that is irony and it appears in a paper created especially for irony of this sort, the *Journal du Peuple*. But I have here a quotation from the same author in the *Internationale*—and that is incomparably more important—where he says literally:

“And permit me to put one single question—oh! without the slightest irony . . . [notice this, comrades, these are the words of Victor Méric himself: “without the slightest irony”] . . .”

INTERRUPTIONS: For once! . . . It doesn't often happen.

TROTSKY: “And permit me to put one single question—oh! without the slightest irony! If this thesis is accepted in France and if, tomorrow, the Poincaré-la-Guerre ministry, upset, gives way to a Briand or Viviani cabinet, determined partisan of peace, of disarmament, of an accord among the peoples and the recognition of the Soviets, won't our deputies in parliament have to consolidate, by their votes, the

position of this bourgeois government? And even if—anything can happen!—a portfolio were offered to one of our people, should he refuse it?" (*Internationale*, Jan. 22, 1922.)

This appears—oh! without the slightest irony!—not in the *Journal du Peuple*, but in the *Internationale*, the organ of our party. Thus, for Victor Méric it is not a question of unifying the action of the proletariat, but of his relations to this or that Dissident, to the Dissidents of yesterday or of the day before. As you can see, his argument is taken from the realm of international policy: In case a Briand government were inclined to recognize the Soviets, would the Moscow International impose upon us a collaboration with this government?

Comrade Terracini did not say quite the same thing as comrade Méric, but he too conjured up the specter of an alliance among three powers: Powers No. 3, 2 and 2½—Germany, Austria and Germany. Comrade Zinoviev said in the plenary session, and I in the commission, that there are comrades who seek in our views or in our "deviations", reasons of state. They say that it is not our mistakes as communists, but rather our interests as Russian statesmen that drive us to the tactic of the united front. And that is precisely the veiled accusation of Victor Méric.

Now, remember that as far back as the Third Congress it was pointed out that the right wing, and particularly the lackeys of the right wing, interpreted the March events in Germany as the product of suggestions from Moscow for saving the muddled situation of the Soviets. When, at the Third Congress, certain methods employed during the March Action were condemned, it was the extreme left, the Communist Labor Party of Germany, who declared that the Soviet government is against the revolutionary movement and wants to postpone the world revolution for a time in order to be able to do business with the bourgeoisie of the West.

Now the same things are being warmed up again in connection with the united front.

Comrades, the interests of the Soviet republic cannot be other than the interests of the international revolutionary movement. If this tactic is injurious to you, comrades of France, or to you, comrades of Italy, then it is completely injurious *also to us*. And if you believe that we are absorbed and hypnotized by our position as statesmen to such an extent that we are no longer able to judge and grasp correctly the interests of the labor movement—then it would be proper to introduce into the statutes of our International a paragraph which says that the party that has arrived at the lamentable position of the conquest of power must be expelled from the International. (*Laughter*.)

Instead of such accusations—note that they are not formal accusations, but insinuations which go hand in hand with the more or less official and ritualistic eulogies

of the Russian revolution—I would rather that we were criticized a little more. If, for example, we were to receive from the Central Committee of the French party a letter saying: "You are now following the New Economic Policy; take care that you don't break your neck, for you have gone too far in your relations with the capitalists"; or if the French delegation were to say: "We have seen your military review; you are copying the old militarism too closely and it may have a bad effect upon the young workers"; or if you were to say: "Your diplomacy is much too diplomatic; it gives out interviews, it writes notes which may hurt us in France"—in brief, if you were to criticize us openly, dotting the *i*'s and crossing the *t*'s, such forthright relations would be far more desirable to us than the detestable manner which goes in for hints. But all this is in passing.

After the argument from international policy, Victor Méric has an argument of a sentimental character:

"Just the same, this coming January 15, when we commemorate the two martyrs, it will do no good to come to speak to us about a united front with the friends of the Scheidemanns, the Noskes, the Eberts and other assassins of socialists and workers." (*Internationale*, Jan. 8, 1922.)

Naturally, this is an argument that cannot fail to influence very simple workers who have a revolutionary feeling but not sufficient political education. Comrade Zinoviev referred to it in his speech. And comrade Thalheimer said: Comrades, if there are sentimental reasons for not sitting down at the same table with the people of the Second and the Two-and-a-Half Internationals, these reasons are valid primarily for us Germans. But how can a French communist make a statement which amounts to saying that the German communists are devoid of this revolutionary feeling, of hatred against the traitors and assassins of the Second International?

I think that their hatred is not less than that of the literati and journalists who were removed from the events. If our German comrades nevertheless carry out the tactic of the united front, the reason is that they see it as a political action and not at all as a moral reconciliation with the social democratic leaders.

The third argument is more or less decisive. We find it in an article by the same author:

"The Seine Federation has just adopted a decision on important questions: it rejects the united front by a strong majority. This simply signifies that although a year has passed, it has no intention of reversing itself. This means that after having consented to perform the painful operation, which the Tours split was, it refuses to rake up everything all over again, to appeal to those people from whom we separated." (*Internationale*, Jan. 22, 1922.)

That is how the united front is presented. It is the return to the situation before Tours. And Fabre, the hospitable Fabre, declares that he is entirely in agreement

with the tactic of the united front, but with one observation—and for myself I have no observation to make:

"Why should socialist and labor unity have been destroyed, with pistol in hand?"

Thus it is all clear. By putting the question in this way, acceptance of the united front means the return to the situation before Tours, it is collaboration, truce, the holy alliance with the Dissidents, the reformists. After having put the question this way, there follows the discussion on the tactic to adopt: to accept or to reject. Méric says: I reject, together with the Seine Federation. Fabre says: No, I accept, I accept.

Comrades, even in Frossard, who is certainly a politician of great value, whom we all know and who does not deal only with the funny side of a question—even in him we do not find weightier arguments. No, it is still the idea of a reconciliation with the Dissidents and not the question of the united front. Now I ask: does this question exist in France or not?

The French communist party has 130,000 members; the party of the Dissidents has a very weak membership and I draw your attention to the fact that the French comrades have named the reformists the "Dissidents". Why? So as to denounce them before the proletariat as disrupters of the united front, as Dissidents, that is, as social-traitors. Similarly, the revolutionary C.G.T. calls itself "Unitary" in order to demonstrate that one of its aims, its main aim, is to assure the unity of action of the proletariat.

I might also say that your methods and your actions are better than the arguments you have employed against the tactic formulated by the Executive Committee of the Communist International. I repeat: the party has 130,000 members and the Dissidents, let us say, 30,000, 40,000 or 50,000. No matter. . . .

INTERRUPTIONS: 15,000! Yes, the figures of the Dissidents are not always exact! It's very hard to learn what they are.

TROTSKY: They are a minority, but not an entirely negligible minority.

Then there are the trade unions. A few years ago they had two million members; at least so they declared—the statistics of the French trade union movement are more spirited than its revolutionary enthusiasm—and now—I take my figures from the speech of comrade Renoult—there are 300,000 members in the Unitary C.G.T. Before the split the trade unions had 500,000 members all told.

Now, the proletarian class in France numbers millions.

The party has 130,000 members.

The revolutionary trade unions have 300,000.

The reformist trade unions have perhaps a little more or a little less than 200,000.

The Dissidents have 15,000 (30,000 or 40,000).

That is the situation.

CONCLUDED IN NEXT ISSUE

Moscow, Feb. 26, 1922 Leon TROTSKY

# BOOKS

## A New Lenin Book

NEW ECONOMIC POLICY AND SOCIALIST CONSTRUCTION. Volume IX of the Selected Works. By V. I. LENIN. xi+505 pp. New York. International Publishers. \$2.00.

Lenin, the theoretician of the Bolshevik party, was also its political leader. In the selection of his speeches, articles, letters and notes under review—covering the period of 1921-1923—he was preoccupied with the immediate, practical problems of Soviet power. Available now for the first time in English are his speeches on the trade union question—against Trotsky and Bukharin; his speech at the Tenth Party Congress on the New Economic Policy and his articles against bureaucracy, notably on the reorganization of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection and "Better Fewer, But Better".

In the *New Masses* (May 10, 1938) Joshua Kunitz in a review of the volume, entitled "Additional Light on Trotsky and Bukharin", writes that the more one reads Lenin's polemics against Trotsky and Bukharin on the trade union question "the more uncannily revealing and prophetic they seem, especially in the light of the Moscow Trials". The political errors of Trotsky and Bukharin "distract" the party from practical work; their "factionalism" is unwarranted by the nature of the differences, etc., wrote Lenin. And Kunitz adds: such behavior was not episodic but characterized their conduct at every decisive stage of the revolution—finally taking the form of treason, spying and murder.

If Kunitz had been consistent in his insipid falsifications, he would have charged that Bukharin's "factionalism" was dictated by the German Foreign Office! For according to the latest Moscow trial, Bukharin (whom Lenin, two years after the dispute, called "not only the most valuable and biggest theoretician of the party, but also may be considered the favorite of the whole party") was already a foreign spy during the trade union discussion!

Neither does Kunitz discuss the political and personal relations on the Central Committee following the dispute. For it is well known that in the last two years of Lenin's life the latter struggled against the growing state and party bureaucracy with Stalin at its head; that the article on the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection contained in the present volume was directed against Stalin—and for that reason was almost suppressed by the Central Committee.

The Stalinist editors of Lenin's works are also "selective". They do not publish Lenin's letter against Stalin on the national question; nor his letter breaking off all personal relations with Stalin; and certainly not the last letter which Lenin sent to the party calling for the removal of Stalin as general secretary of the party, and ex-

pressing high esteem for Trotsky, Pyatakov and Bukharin.

During the period of 1922-1923, Lenin sent several letters to Trotsky asking him to take up the cudgels against Stalin on the national question and the struggle against bureaucracy. The letters were put at the disposal of the Commission on the History of the Party, but never published!

In fact events have been moving so fast in the Soviet Union, that the present volume had to be published in English without any notes at all! In the preface the editors state: "Developments during the past years, however, imperatively call for a thorough revision of these notes [of the Russian edition.—J.C.] and the M.E.L. [Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute] is now engaged in revising them for publication in Russian." Since the task is taking longer than anticipated Volumes IX, X, XI and XII of the Selected Works will be published in English without any notes!

Lenin's writings are difficult to understand without extensive explanatory notes; the difficulty is multiplied a thousandfold when the annotations are in accordance with the latest Moscow frame-up trial. In this sense we can be grateful for the absence of any notes! One will find Trotsky's letter to the committee on party history (included in the *Stalin School of Falsification*) a most valuable commentary on Lenin's writings during this period.

The trade union dispute (1920-1921) is described by Trotsky as "a search for a way out of an economic blind alley". At the end of the civil war, industry and agriculture were at a standstill. The peasants, now that the armed civil war was over, opposed forced requisitions of grain. Among the workers, dissatisfaction developed in face of the inability of the Soviet régime to satisfy their material needs. At the same time a tremendous bureaucracy had developed—an officialdom, separated from the masses, and composed in large measure of bureaucrats and specialists of the old régime.

What was to be done? There were no ready-made formulæ. Inside the Bolshevik party serious differences arose. Different individuals and groupings put forward one or another policy.

In February 1920, Trotsky proposed a modification of War Communism by the establishment of a progressive tax on agricultural produce in place of the forced requisitions, permitting peasants to sell their surplus products in a delimited market. The aim of the proposal was to encourage agricultural production, supply industry with raw material, satisfy the pressing needs of the workers and strengthen the relations between the Soviet state and the peasantry. The proposal was rejected.

In May of the same year, Trotsky, in the name of the People's Commissariat of Ways

and Communications, issued the famous Order 1042 for the reparation of locomotives. This plan, based upon the experiences of the Red Army, brought excellent results. Trotsky, generalizing this plan, proposed in December 1920 that the trade unions become direct instruments of the Soviet economic bodies for the revival and development of industry. As he later put it: when his proposal for the modification of War Communism was rejected he sought a way out of the economic impasse "along the opposite road, i.e., along the road of rigid management and closer inclusion of the trade unions—not as mass organizations but as administrative machinery—into the system of economic management under War Communism" (*Stalin School of Falsification*, p. 30).

Lenin did not agree with this policy. He contended that "the trade unions are not state organizations, not organizations for coercion, they are educational organizations, organizations that enlist, that train, they are schools, schools of administration, schools of management, schools of communism" (p. 4).

Trotsky held that the old rôle of trade unions as class struggle instruments of the proletariat was outlived under the proletarian dictatorship. In this he was repeating the argument which up to that time was common to all Bolsheviks in their struggle against the Menshevik conception of the "independence" of trade unions. Lenin now, however, modified this partial truth. Even under the Russian Soviet régime, he contended, the trade unions must defend the class interests of the proletariat. But is there not a workers' state in Russia? "Actually we have a workers' state; with this peculiarity, firstly, it is not the working class that predominates in the country, but the peasant population; and secondly, it is a workers' state with bureaucratic distortions". (P. 33.) The trade unions should defend the class interests of the proletariat against the bureaucracy, the bourgeois specialists and the pressure of the peasantry upon the Soviet apparatus, according to Lenin. At the same time they should participate in the Soviet economic bodies responsible for management of industry, learn how industry is operated, prepare themselves for the taking over of direct management of economy (the goal set for the unions in the Bolshevik program).

Within the Central Committee of the party Lenin proposed to solve the differences on the trade union question in a "practical, businesslike" way. A commission was elected for this purpose but Trotsky refused to serve on it. He stated that "until I am permitted, equally with all other comrades to discuss these questions in the full scope of the party press, I expect nothing from this cloister discussion of these questions, and hence from the work of the commission" (*cf.*, Lenin, p. 58).

Lenin thought that in view of the nature of the differences and the condition of the country a public discussion on the question was not warranted. However Trotsky insisted upon the discussion, and the Central Committee concurred—Lenin found him-

self a minority in the C.C. This origin of the public discussion accounts for the sharpness of Lenin's polemic. For he made it clear at the outset: "We shall not find anything serious in the sphere of differences in principle no matter how diligently we search for them." (P. 6.)

Nor did this dispute interfere with the common struggle of Lenin, Trotsky and Bukharin against the Workers Opposition (led by Shlyapnikov and Kollontay) which proposed a complete reorganization of Soviet economic management; the immediate transfer to the trade unions of direct management and control of industry.

The party membership was asked to solve these differences. All groupings were permitted to present their views to the members and seek to win delegates to the Tenth Party Congress, March 1921. Lenin's trade union theses were adopted. However, at the same Congress Lenin, with the warning of Kronstadt before him, proposed the New Economic Policy—an agricultural tax instead of forced requisitions, limited "free" market, private trade and a system of economic concessions to foreign capitalists under state supervision. The Congress adopted this policy as a way out of the existing economic impasse. The new relations resulting from the N.E.P. soon required a new trade union resolution. The old dispute between Lenin, Trotsky and Bukharin disappeared. The 11th Congress (1922) adopted the new resolution.

The Tenth Congress condemned the Workers Opposition platform as expressing "a syndicalist and anarchist deviation" and decided that the "propaganda of these ideas" is incompatible with party membership. At the same time the C.C. was instructed to issue symposiums and other publications where the problems raised by the Opposition could be discussed from all sides. But how could the Congress condemn the propagation of particular views and at the same time provide a medium for their expression? Lenin replied: "Do you not see—you agitators and propagandists in one form or another—do you not see the differences between the propaganda of ideas in fighting political parties and the interchange of opinion in special publications and symposiums?" (P. 129.)

Faction formations on the basis of differences resolved by the party Congress—for the time being at least—were prohibited. However, the existing differences could be discussed, should be discussed, according to Lenin, without interfering with the practical work of the party as guided by the adopted decisions. The theoretical discussions could then merge with the "political" discussions in the next pre-congress period.

Party congresses were held annually in the first period of the Russian Revolution: from 1917-1922, six years, six congresses! In 1923, Lenin was too ill to participate actively in party work; Stalin had already gotten the upper hand. There was no congress that year. From 1924-1938, fourteen years of Stalin rule, five congresses!

These figures are however only symbolic.

One has only to compare the character of pre-congress discussions and the proceedings at the congresses to see the deep chasm which separates the two periods. Discussion of differences was the very life-blood of Bolshevism under Lenin. Sham unanimity, violent suppression of all oppositions, totalitarian rule are the "party" methods of Stalin.

Lenin in his last period of political activity saw a growing bureaucracy which threatened further to separate the vanguard from the masses and bring about the destruction of the Soviet régime. His proposals for checking the bureaucracy were all within the limits of the dictatorship of the Bolshevik party whose "old guard" was but a "thin stratum" of the party. They can be found in the articles, "How to Reorganize the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection", and "Better Less, But Better". It is debatable whether these measures would have achieved the desired results. In any case, they called to the attention of the entire party the need for struggling against, checking, limiting the bureaucracy. Others, notably the 1923 Opposition led by Trotsky, were the continuators of Lenin's struggle; their victory might have resulted in the revival of Soviet democracy.

The objective conditions—the cultural backwardness of the country and the defeats of the workers' revolutions in Western Europe—militated against their victory. Lenin, at the Tenth Party Congress, reiterated the old view of the Bolsheviks that in Russia ". . . the socialist revolution can be completely successful only on two conditions: first, on the condition that it receives timely support from the Socialist revolution in one or several advanced countries . . ." (p. 108). The absence of such "timely support" strengthened the reaction in Russia. Stalinism, the child of this reaction, became the father of greater defeats, catastrophes and counter-revolutions.

In the struggle for world socialism an understanding of Lenin's writings and the early policies of Bolshevism are indispensable. The approach to such an understanding is supplied by Lenin's advice to the communists of Transcaucasia (April 14, 1921):

"Do not copy our tactics, but think out for yourself the reasons why they assumed these peculiar features, the conditions that gave rise to them, and their results; apply in your republics not the letter, but the spirit, the sense, the lessons of the experiences of 1917-1921."

Joseph CARTER

## America, I Love You

MY AMERICA, 1928-1938. By LOUIS ADAMIC. xiii+669 pp. New York. Harper & Brothers. \$3.50.

Louis Adamic evidently emptied his files and notebooks to manufacture this large volume. Or, rather, drew from them at random. It is the collected by-products, not very thoroughly distilled, of a decade's operations by a professional writer. Nearly everything is here: patches from the diary;

dozens of letters from friends, and the replies to letters; old magazine articles and obscure pamphlets; an excellent ghost story and amateur philosophizing; interviews, character sketches and random meditations.

"Each of us living in the United States has his own America . . .," Adamic begins. "This book is an attempt to draw a partial picture of *my* America between 1928 and 1938. . . . It is made up . . . of things and people, chiefly people, within my experience and observation (from various angles, in various moods) during these last ten years in the United States that seem interesting or significant to me personally as an individual and as an American, and lend themselves to telling at this time."

I am old-fashioned enough to believe that it is an author's responsibility to integrate his material in terms of a more ordered and objective structure than that which Adamic here suggests. So integrated, and cut in half, *My America* would, I think, be a much more consistently readable book. However, its present looseness by no means prevents it from being frequently interesting in compensation for the repetitions and dullnesses.

Adamic has at least three important virtues for the writing of this sort of book. He has a genuine and active curiosity. When he hears that the textile towns of New England are in a bad way, he at once visits them, to see for himself. When he reads about sit-down strikes, he goes to Akron to find out how they started. To discover what the depression is like in human terms, he gets himself into the homes of the unemployed. When he becomes interested in a person, through one means or another he meets and talks to and if possible makes himself a friend of that person. From this derives a commendably first-hand quality in much of what he writes.

Adamic has also, or seems from the evidence of his books to have, a higher degree of reportorial honesty than is nowadays usual. Adamic reports what he has seen and heard and felt; and, however cockeyed may be his interpretations and conclusions, the report itself seems to be scrupulously honest and direct. This happens even when he himself cuts none too brave a figure in the report. The habit has, it may be remarked, often got Adamic into trouble, with manufacturers, trade union leaders, and the subjects of his interviews or character sketches.

Lastly, Adamic has a kind of feeling for what is sociologically important. The feeling, not backed rationally, leads him grievously astray, as when it makes him offer Black Mountain College as a first major step toward an American utopia. But it is sustained enough to cause him to give a large section of this book to the C.I.O., to insist on the significance of the problem of the thirty million "New Americans"—children of immigrants, and to end with a chapter on "The Next War".

These three virtues would be quite enough to produce an admirable book of "observations" or "impressions", a book

of the sort that is always enjoyable and needed, and seldom found. The values which *My America* has are due primarily to these virtues. But, unfortunately, Adamic is not content with them. He aspires to another rôle: to that of theorist, generalizer, on the American scene; and long, dreary pages are up to their necks in his wilted theories and his limp generalizations.

A great scorn of "doctrinaire", "schematic" thinking—by which he means any thinking stemming from Marx—is Adamic. "Isms" and "shortcuts" have no application to America, legislates Adamic. And, with this as a foundation, the experienced reader will be not at all surprised to find out that Adamic's own thinking is precisely distinguished as—doctrinaire and schematic; and lurching ever and again toward "ism" and shortcut.

The basic ism is none other than our old friend Reform-ism. The guiding schema for interpretations is certainly a simple one. America is "democratic in politics and absolutist in industry", and this "basic incongruity" explains all else besides. Quoting, and agreeing with, Edward Adams Cantrell: "America as she stood—democratic politically, absolutist industrially, dynastic economically—was . . . an incongruity . . . this incongruity was the source of all manner of contradictions, hidden conflicts, social and political perversions, neuroticism, and violence within the country as a whole, within groups and institutions, and within individuals." And as for "shortcuts"! Consider that the ultimate "danger" for the C.I.O. is that its leaders are not sufficiently interested in "workers' education"; that the solution of the problem of the thirty million New Americans lies in a voluntary organization to make them aware of their cultural and historical backgrounds and thus remove their inferiority complexes; and that the present government can keep America out of the war by appropriating now for housing and conservation the forty billion dollars which the war will cost.

The class struggle, revolution, violence, class consciousness, are all Old World notions which have no relevance to America. The hope of America lies most unequivocally in such "fundamental democrats" as Jack Raper of the *Cleveland Press*, Walter Locke, the "free editor" of James M. Cox's *Dayton Daily News*, and Arthur E. Morgan, inconveniently thrown out of Washington for sabotage of the T.V.A. while Adamic was finishing his proofs; and, above all, in the LaFollettes and the Wisconsin Idea, which Idea has also just had a none too savory blossom, but awkwardly after the book had already gone to press.

Adamic, starting out to see America, "a Land Nobody Knew", with fresh and open eyes, desiring to become, "in some small way determined by my ability", one of the Darwins "who would get busy in the vast Sargasso Sea that was America", ends miserably up in these crippled platitudes and utopian fantasies. There is, it is true, some

excuse for him. His own background in Central Europe encourages him to over-emphasize and misinterpret this country's political democracy, seeing it not as one specific form of capitalist rule now getting itself primed and ready for its own fruition in fascism but as an independent ideal divorced from social context. And, secondly, Adamic's own direct and honest observations of the working class parties in this country—in particular of the Stalinists, about whom he has a good deal to say—have left him rightly convinced, since he identifies Marxism with these parties taken as a whole, that if such be Marxism neither he nor America should wish any of it.

But to react from a too hurriedly scanned European background and a legitimate disgust with the ways and men of the last decade of American socialists and Stalinists to such an extreme of muddled, wishy-washy and indeed Philistine democratism will hardly provide Adamic with the compass he asks for and needs in order to chart and illumine his Sargasso Sea. The "basic incongruity" of his account of his America is obvious enough at a single reading: his directly observed material painting a land poisoning mightily for devastating and world-shaking crisis; his theories imagining an indefinitely "long road" of stumbling but evolving "progress." J.B.

## Premature Patriotism

I LIKE AMERICA. By GRANVILLE HICKS. 216 pp. New York. Modern Age Books. 50c.

Professor Granville Hicks, that man who works his way through colleges selling the *New Masses* instead of the *Red Book*, is here again. He's made a discovery. It hasn't anything to do with great traditions or Jack Reed as a People's Fronter. This time Mr. Hicks has found nothing less than the skeleton of a Mayflower ancestry in his family closet and an abiding affection for America in himself. Overwhelmed, naturally, with his discovery, as who wouldn't be these days, he rushed into print with the sensational news.

Hence this book, in which the absorbing description of the life and times of a middle-class intellectual with a farm and a family and a fireside is interrupted from time to time with unpleasant references to the poor people who are, unlike Mr. Hicks, ill-fed, ill-clothed, ill-housed. There, indeed, is Mr. Hicks' point: for he likes America, really he does, and he's a-feared that these under-privileged folk don't share his affection.

The book may come as a surprise to some. Is this the man who was eased out of Rensselaer, 'way back there, for believing in barricades and revolution and stuff? Is this the Vermonter who sold his Mayflower birthright for a mess of Third Period pottage? What's become of that redder-than-Bill-Dunne's-rosy-nose Marxist professor whose lectures on the class struggle used to lay 'em in the aisles, back in the halcyon John Reed Club days?

Well, that was long ago, and it's hardly

fair for carping critics to recall that they-knew-him-when. The fact is that Mr. Hicks has become a very reasonable citizen, full of sweetness and light, as befits a man of his position and background. He's right in there waving the flag with the best of them. The fact is that Mr. Hicks has gone and retrieved his birthright on a pretty shrewd deal—he only had to trade the complete works of Marx and Lenin for it, and they were pretty dusty anyhow. Here, if you've got four bits and a strong stomach, are 216 pages of proof thereof, bidding you, the underprivileged, to go and do likewise.

This book, as the blurb announces with commendable candor, is "merely a statement by a middle-class American", and a *middle* middle-class American at that, drawn up out of professional hours. (Mr. Hicks, like Norman Thomas, is a busy man, what with his writing and the farm and everything; he is for Socialism in his Spare Time.) But the author piles into his conservative class confrères in no uncertain terms. "My thesis," he informs them with quiet Vermont pugnacity, "is not that I am as good an American as you; that is too modest a claim; I maintain that I am a better American."

Now, you may not like Mr. Hicks, but that is no rash statement. There's no gain-saying it: he proves his claim to the hilt, and administers a sound thrashing to his stand-pat colleagues in the process. First of all, he points out to the boys that the old, outworn technique of warbling the Star-Spangled Banner and extracting oaths of allegiance just won't go over any more. These are troublous times, and the underprivileged, even those of *old American stock*, mind you, are no longer taken in by those hackneyed ritualisms. New ideas, fresh slogans, a novel approach, that's the thing. So Hicks puts it right up to his class brethren: "Your method," he says accusingly, without mincing words, "has proven singularly unsuccessful. . . . I think they [the underprivileged] will become patriots if they understand my kind of patriotism."

Well, God help Hicks, you may say, if they (the underprivileged) ever *do* understand his kind of patriotism; but that's hardly the point. What Mr. Hicks is concerned with is to show that the Bolsheviks (of his stripe, which is yellow in color) have shaved off their beards, put on clean collars, and filled their bombs with Scotch-and-soda. That's so the gentlemen farmers along the Hudson, who are also for progress, can invite them up to their estates for the week-end, just to talk things over and collect money for Spain, without being afraid that they'll use the wrong fork. Mr. Hicks doesn't put it quite that way, but you get the idea. His point is that you can belong to the communist party, and believe in socialism and justice and fair play, and still love the old stars-and-stripes, long may she wave. He proves it too. Nobody can set this book down without feeling that he's proved it.

The underprivileged, who are sometimes downright intransigent, may consider that Mr. Hicks' patriotism is a mite premature.

Some of them—the ill-clad, ill-fed, ill-housed—actually *hate* this America that has Mr. Hicks starry-eyed. Mr. Hicks says that everybody could have over 4,000 smackers per year, if things were fixed right; we've got all the natural resources, and besides, it's a beautiful country, and that's why he likes it. You might come across an underprivileged chap muttering to himself on a windy corner about how he hasn't got the dough yet, and the natural resources aren't greasing his pocket or even his gullet, and it isn't his country yet so far's he can see, so to hell with it. But Mr. Hicks can well answer that this book wasn't written for that particular audience; what he wanted to do was to show the middle-middle-class people, who already have their 4,000 iron man and maybe more socked away and who can afford to be tolerant, that it's a swell country. And if you look at it that way, from the vantage point of your farm and fireside, you've got to admit he's right. Just get yourself a fireside and try looking.

Some old-timers, who don't keep up with things, were a little puzzled about Mr. Hicks' being hired to teach up at Harvard. They didn't know about this book, which was published coincidentally with the announcement of Mr. Hicks' appointment. The book clears up that little matter too. Evidently, if Mr. Hicks' protestations of patriotism are not all eyewash, and we know they aren't, he has quite a job to do up Cambridge way. It's going to take some doing to water the subversive Harvard Crimson into a decent red-white-and-blue. But Mr. Hicks will be equal to the task, if his book is any indication.

As for the old-timers, who wonder what's becoming of the Modern Age, what with such books being turned out, we advise them to peek into Earl Browder's *The People's Front*, if they like their patriotism straight and without the literary trimmings. Browder can't spell quite as well, but he gets the same ideas across more authoritatively and he's got a pretty nifty ancestry too, if you care to look into it.

Bernard WOLFE

## John Bull's Other Hell

FAMINE. By LIAM O'FLAHERTY. 466 pp. New York. Random House. \$2.50.

O'Flaherty's latest and finest book is a novel which puts flesh once more around some of the grimmest bones in the history of British imperialism. In 1845 a famine wiped out 729,000 of the 8 million inhabitants of Ireland and drove hundreds of thousands overseas. The superficial cause was a sudden and mysterious blight which destroyed virtually the whole potato crop. The real cause was English capitalism. In the previous century the peasantry had been dispossessed of the fertile eastern lands and driven into the disease-breeding bogs and barren rocks of the "western world". By allowing a half-acre of arable soil to each fifty acres of bog, the English parliament fostered a new growth of population and of stock and grain production,

and drained off into England every penny of the new wealth as it was created. The land rentals were raised to keep pace with fertility so that if a tenant put a new shirt to his back he was taxed for it. In 1798, under the stimulus of the French Revolution, the Irish rebelled, and were promptly shot into submission or transported for life. A period of hopeless submission followed, fostered by the swarming priests who wished to keep their own tithes secure. Reviving resistance was diverted by native demagogues like O'Connell into fruitless campaigns for taxation of the landlords. The bloodsucking continued meanwhile; in the year 1844 the English squeezed from Ireland five million pounds in rent, one million head of stock, and practically all the grain grown. It was this strangulation which created the conditions for general starvation when, the next year, blight destroyed the one food permitted the Irish, potatoes.

O'Flaherty's book is primarily concerned with the sufferings of starving Irish in that year but he shows himself fully aware of the causes leading up to it, and he dramatizes also the instructive conduct of the British rulers in the emergency. Peel's Government first saw to it that every pig and cow was shipped to England for back taxes and that those still in arrears were driven on to the roads. Then the Mother of Parliaments lent Ireland money at five percent for a fantastic plan which anticipated the worst features of Roosevelt's W.P.A. and the English Means Test. It was a works-scheme which expressly stipulated that "no useful work was to be performed", neither reclamation, industrialization, nor road-building, and that no peasant still with a scrap of blighted land to his name or a copper saved was to be employed.

Instead, the half-starved evicted males were set to work at eightpence a day throwing dirt down the hillsides to block existing roads. With the pennies they were supposed to buy American cornmeal sold through private traders at incredible prices. A horde of boondoggling English officials, sent over to watch that no landholder got food and that none of the dispossessed did useful work, quickly embezzled the funds. Men died of starvation while at work; those with money bought passage to America; the masses, caught on the putrefying potato lands, existed for a while on nettles and scraps, then died in hundreds of thousands from famine and the plagues generated by it. The mask of Catholic civilization slipped away; men survived by abandoning their parents, by theft and murder, by eating the dogs which had fed from the corpses of their own relatives. Some went insane and killed their children. Rebellion, which could have been powerful a year before, was now impossible except from the most vigorous youth. The authorities occupied themselves with outlawing and shooting these, and with burying the plague victims to avoid being infected themselves.

O'Flaherty does not attempt to picture the whole enormous tragedy but epitomizes

it in a cross-section of "Black Valley", a Galway parish of 5,000 people in the fatal year. At the apex of the local pyramid is Chadwick, resident agent for the absentee landlord. A drunken impotent sadist, he acts on the theory that the country is overpopulated and the more Irish who die the better. He is eventually exterminated by a sudden revolt of the workers he has driven into famine. The sole doctor of the valley is a wistful incompetent, a Chekhov type, ineffectual because of his own ignorance, the general poverty, and the superstitions which have clung to the peasantry since the days of the Druids. A kindred character is the neurotic Protestant parson, vaguely altruistic, talking like a village Norman Thomas. His flabby efforts to aid are foiled by the jealous priests and by the hatred of the Catholic masses who are taxed to pay his living. The more representative cleric is Father Roche, also well-meaning but stupid and self-deceived by the Christian dogma "that no cause was worth the shedding of a single man's blood". Only when it is too late, and the Great Hunger is on them, does he see that this precious blood "was going to rot in starved bodies; bodies that would pay for the sin of craven pacifism the punishment that has always been enforced by history".

The focal characters of the story are a peasant family, the Kilmartins. The old man is the world-type of farmer, enduring, ignorant, toiling forever, clinging to the land as "the life that God ordained"—and left to die on it, the last human being in the valley. Half his children had already died from the tuberculosis which was bred, like the blight, of bogs and poverty. One son, Martin, is hunted for the killing of the agent Chadwick; he escapes to the islands and is protected by a mysterious "big man with yellow hair", an organizer for the revolutionary Young Irelanders. Their maxim is that "them who strike a blow deserve to be looked after. Them that won't fight can die of the hunger". It is the stark minimum of the revolutionary principle, renewing and perpetuating itself. Martin and his enduring young wife and child are smuggled on a ship for America; there they are to join other émigrés and return with strengthened forces "to free Ireland".

Incomparably better than *The Informer*, *Famine* has, for obvious reasons, not been similarly publicized by Hollywood. It is not only an illuminating historical study to set against the prissy fairy tales of Yeats and the fake primitivism of Playboy Synge; it is also a finely conceived story, with a sombre unity of theme lightened and yet intensified by passages of idyllic prose. The early love of Martin and Mary recalls the finest of O'Flaherty's early sketches, such as "Milking Time", and there are incidental portraits which are like the best of Turgenev, sharp with oddity and yet carrying the ring of truth. The prose is not entirely free from monotony or from narrative clichés, but the general effect is one of clarity and dramatic concentration.

The book fails chiefly in its inability to

# CLIPPINGS

## A Modern Bolus

Reviewing *Traitors in American History*, James Oneal (*New Leader*, June 11, 1938) compares its author, Earl Browder, to the old Alabama romancer, Ovid Bolus, Esq., whose "genius for lying was encyclopediacal. It embraced all subjects without distinction or partiality. The truth was too small for him".

THOMAS CONWAY, an Irish general in Washington's army, and other officers were involved in a scheme that "centered in the assassination of Washington and his closest comrades," says Browder, just as "the Trotsky-Bukharin plot centered on the assassination of Stalin and his closest co-workers."

One who writes such stuff is either an ignoramus, a faker, or both. The facts are that Washington had lost a number of battles and General Gates had won one, whereupon Conway got the idea of having Washington replaced by Gates. The matter became public, Conway and a few of his cronies were discredited, *but there is no evidence whatever of any plot to murder Washington or anybody else.*

Why Browder did not add that Washington executed Conway, Gates and several others must always remain a "Marxian" mystery. He might just as well have had these officers executed and added one fiction to another.

Browder also writes that in 1797 Congress impeached Senator Blount of Tennessee "for treasonable conspiracy", but the "traitor found protection in the Senate of which he was a member".

This is another falsehood. "Congress" did not impeach Blount. It was the Senate that only not impeached him but expelled him from that body but Browder has the Senate protecting him! Before Blount could be tried on charges he was elected to the Tennessee Legislature where he was able to defy the Federal authorities. *Had he lived in Bolshevik Russia he would have been "tried" in the communist press and then been sent to a firing squad. . . .*

He quotes Claude G. Bowers to prove that the Federalist "conspirators were planning an armed *coup d'état*" in 1803. Bowers wrote: "IF a resort to arms were necessary it was HOPED that Hamilton would agree to become commander-in-chief." Thus we learn that on the basis of an "IF" and a "HOPE" a conspiracy was being planned! So we are entitled to shudder that the Federalists followed a course like that of the dirty "Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites" in the Soviet Union.

The more we follow "history" the more we are thrilled. He sees part of the "treason" in the smuggling across the Canadian frontier during the second war with Great Britain by way of New York, Vermont and Lake Champlain. The fact that smuggling included New York, a state that supported the war, suggests nothing to our "historian". The smuggling merely means not "conspiracy" or "treason" but that the economic motive of profitable trade proved stronger than "patriotism" for con-

tractors and thousands of farmers, traders and merchants.

We get a fearful shudder and are drawn closer to Stalin's slaughterhouse, however, when Browder writes that "*It was wholesale treason in the American Army that opened up the national capital, Washington, to the British Army*".

Where did he get this extraordinary information? From any government records, any private correspondence of those who "opened up the national capital" or any other reliable documentary material? No. It is pure fiction. Browder gets it out of a vacuum. In brief, the man lies.

He turns to Aaron Burr's intrigues and produces another dreadful bed-time story. It is known that Burr had at one time thought of seizing the government, but his main intrigues had reference to the West. However, Browder writes: "*In the Burr conspiracy were involved many of the highest army officers, judges of the U. S. Courts, Senators and Congressmen, federal and state officials of all sorts, and the whole leadership of the Federalist party at one time or another.*"

Where did Stalin's commissar get the evidence to warrant writing that paragraph? There is none. He simply plunged into his consciousness and transformed phantoms into facts.

Browder is indignant over Burr's harboring the idea of seizing the government, but he has forgotten M. Olgin, his fellow communist, author of a pamphlet urging American workers to engage in general strikes and armed insurrections, finally seizing Washington by force, arresting the President and members of his cabinet and establishing a Bolshevik dictatorship. *What's the difference between Burr and Olgin, Mr. Browder? And what's the difference between Burr and you, considering that the former was a notorious liar whose word could not be trusted even by his most intimate friends?*

Browder sums up his delightful fiction by saying that during 38 years the U.S. Government "*had to deal with tens of thousands of traitors in a population of three to six millions*". Writing for bourgeois dandies who dream of barricades in their parlors, Browder serves them such tripe for lunch. Needless to say, the above statement is also gross falsification.

He crowns this edifice of fiction by saying that "*the original conception of democracy*" in the United States was the "*single party*" and that the one-party régime was abolished by amending the Constitution after "*more than a quarter century of independence!*" Thus we learn that the communist dictatorship is also merely following an early American pattern!

THE press reports that the authorities in Rhode Island are pressing charges against the communist party for having used the American flag for commercial purposes by reproducing it, allegedly in violation of the law, on the cover of one of its agitational pamphlets. This time we take the side of the Stalinists, and that firmly. They are the only ones who really need to wave the American flag to prove their patriotism, and therefore deserve special dispensation!

survey the tragedy as a whole, and to get inside the skin of its revolutionaries. To convey the total Irish scene, the author relies mainly on historical asides almost in the manner of Scott, while, within the microcosm of Black Valley, he concentrates upon the types of secondary social significance—the futile petty bourgeois, the aging peasants, the rapacious agent. Least individualized are the outlawed Martin and the yellow-haired Young Ireland who, historically, represent the most heroic and the most miraculous beings of their day. To the endurance shared by others they added the fire and craft and intelligence of the revolutionary. When O'Flaherty proves capable of re-creating the rebellious as vividly as the passive victims of Britain in Ireland he will have arrived at full stature as a novelist.

E. ROBERTSON

WE URGE all readers and friends to give all the support they can, both moral and financial, to the newly-created American Fund for Political Prisoners and Refugees. In the committee are Martin Abern, James Burnham, James P. Cannon, Rose Karsner, Pearl Kluger, Fanny Nef, George Novack, Lyman Paine and Jac Wasserman, all of whom are well known for their activities in the past in defense work. There are hundreds of political prisoners and refugees from fascism whose views are such that they receive little or no aid at all from the existing liberal or Stalinist organizations. The new American Fund has as its primary aim assistance to these revolutionists. All inquiries and funds should be sent to George Novack, Room 1609, 100 Fifth Ave., New York, N. Y.

### Where to Buy

#### THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

- Modern Book Store, 509½ West 5th Street, Los Angeles, Calif.  
S.W.P., 205 Lissner Bldg., 524 So. Spring St., Los Angeles, Calif.  
McDonald's Book Store, 65—6th Street, San Francisco, Calif.  
Post Office News Co., 37 West Monroe St., Chicago, Ill.  
S.W.P., 160 No. Wells St., Rm. 308, Chicago, Ill.  
S.W.P., 54 Central Sq., Rm. 12, Lynn, Mass.  
Labor Book Shop, 919 Marquette Ave., Minneapolis, Minn.  
S.W.P., 147 West 5th St., St. Paul, Minn.  
Foster Book Co., 410 Washington Blvd., St. Louis, Mo.  
The Book Nook, 24A Meremac, Clayton, Mo.  
Modern Books, Ltd., 12 Church St., Cape Town, South Africa.  
Advance Book Shop, 10 Campbell St., Sydney, N.S.W., Australia.  
Mrs. M. Brodney, Bookstall, Trades Hall, Melbourne, Australia.  
Workers Party, Foster Lane, off Foster Street, Sydney, N.S.W., Australia.  
Clapham Socialist Book, 79 Bedford, S.W. 4, London, England.  
W.I.N., 14A Chichester Rd., Paddington, W. 2, London, England.  
M. Johns, 7 Southwark St., London, S.E. 1, England.  
E. Fitzroy, Battersea, S.W. 11, London, England.  
H. Cund, Book Shop, 1, St. Hilda St., Liverpool, England.  
T. Mercer, Book Shop, 52 Auldhouse Rd., Glasgow, C, 3 Scotland.

# TWENTY-SEVEN COUNTRIES!

THE NEW INTERNATIONAL has readers in twenty-seven countries, in every continent of the world:

United States	Belgium
Canada	Holland
Mexico	Switzerland
Columbia	Czechoslovakia
Panama	Denmark
Cuba	Sweden
Porto Rico	Norway
Uruguay	Palestine
The Argentine	Syria
Chile	India
England	China
Scotland	Japan
France	Egypt
	South Africa

We have readers not only throughout the U.S.A. but as far south as Johannesburg and Capetown (a hundred readers!) and as far north as Saskatchewan, Oslo and Oeland. The review is read in Beirut, Bogota and Bombay; in Amsterdam, Aberdeen and Allahabad; in Cairo, Cuesmes and Calcutta. It is an international review in every sense of the word.

It is to our friends all over the world, and especially to those in the United States, that we appeal for aid in our work of continuing uninterrupted publication. We do not clamor or exhort. We rely upon our readers who appreciate the review and who know what it would mean to miss an issue.

All contributions should be sent to

## THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

116 UNIVERSITY PLACE  
NEW YORK, N. Y.

# PARTISAN REVIEW

AN INDEPENDENT LEFT-WING LITERARY MAGAZINE

In the July issue—

*Dwight Macdonald*: The Decline of the Soviet Cinema, 1930-1938

*Philip Rahv*: Notes on Dostoevsky

*Victor Serge*: Limits and Possibilities of Marxism

*Meyer Shapiro*: Lewis Mumford and the Big City

*William Troy*: *Thomas Mann* (Part II)

In the June issue (still on sale)—

*Rosa Luxemburg*: Letters from Prison

*Edmund Wilson*: Karl Marx, a Prolet-Play

*James Burnham*: Modern Literary Criticism

*Louis M. Hacker*: History and the Business Man

SPECIAL OFFER TO READERS OF  
*THE NEW INTERNATIONAL*: 6 ISSUES FOR \$1!!!!

Partisan Review  
22 East 17th St.  
New York City

Enclosed find \$1. (Or we will bill you.) Please send me the next six issues. (Regular rate is \$2.50 a year.) (Add 25 cents to these prices for Canada, 50 cents rest of world.)

Name.....

Address.....

City.....

JUST PUBLISHED

# REVOLUTION

and

# COUNTER-REVOLUTION

in Spain

by FELIX MORROW

205 Pages      Cloth \$1.00      Paper 50¢

PIONEER PUBLISHERS

100 Fifth Avenue      New York City