

*A Prophet in Search of New Values*

# Harold Laski, St. Paul and Stalin

*By J. R. Johnson*

# *The New* **INTERNATIONAL**

*June • 1944*

*The Editor:*

## **The Invasion and the Future of Europe**

*The Atlantic Charter  
Abandoned!*

*The Plan to Destroy  
Germany*

*Poland--Stepping Stone  
for Russia*

*Small Nations and  
Independence*

## **A NEW TRADE UNION PROGRAM**

*By David Coolidge*

## **The Michigan Commonwealth Federation**

*By L. Smith*

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# The Notebook

The only verbal ambiguity you will find in this issue of *The New International* comes in the following sentence: The big news of this month comes next month, which is our way of saying that plans for the publication of an enlarged Tenth Anniversary Issue of the NI have completed. July, 1944, is that Marxist milestone and we're pleased to be proud.

Ten years is a long life in a field where the magazine mortality rate is something to make paper manufacturers wish they were in the black gas business. Ten years of publishing a journal of *revolutionary Marxist analysis* is an achievement that borders on the supernatural, and as the editors will readily attest, was nearly as impossible as we could make it sound.

But the NI survived and grew because the firm, clear voice of its partisan doctrine HAD to be heard above the swirling cacophony of world events. Now tenacity has reaped some measure of its reward.

The July, Tenth Anniversary, issue of the NI will be the finest in our history IF the contributions of our readers make it possible for us to print all the articles on tab. Here are a few:

"Ten Years of American Labor's Struggle," by David Coolidge; "Ten Years of *The New International*," by the editors; "Bureaucratism in the Revolutionary Movement," by Max Shachtman; "The Revolutionary Tradition in America," by J. R. Johnson; hitherto unpublished letters of Friedrich Engels to Karl Kautsky; an unpublished article on the Italian Revolution, by Leon Trotsky; Lenin's speech to the Eighth Congress of the Russian Bolshevik Party.

All these—and others—will see the light of publication if our friends take time and trouble to use the contribution blank on the back cover of the current issue. If readers decline to have their names listed on the greetings page of the forthcoming commemorative number, we'll list them anonymously.

And if the gods and our readers' pocketbooks are with us, we'll enter our second decade of publication, to garble T. S. Eliot, not with a whimper, but with a bang. Send us your contribution NOW, so that it can be entered before the printer's deadline.

T. R. C.

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## THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

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# THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

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VOLUME X

JUNE, 1944

NUMBER 6

## NOTES OF THE MONTH

### The Invasion--A New Phase of the War

The invasion of Western Europe has begun. How long it will take the Allies to win is a moot question. Nobody knows the answer exactly, although not less than nine-tenths of the official optimism of Allied government propagandists may be safely discounted. Not that abrupt and unexpected changes in the military situation favoring the Allies are excluded. The Nazi state is not the unshakable monolith it pretends, and even seems, to be. It is not impossible that the basic forces of German imperialism may find it necessary or expedient to submit before they are exterminated by military force. However, there are not yet any serious indications of collapse or submission. Before the Allies can march triumphantly through the Brandenburg Gate, hundreds of thousands and perhaps millions of the world's youth will be bled and maimed, and the continent of Europe will be pitted with Cassinos.

#### Problems to the Fore

In any case, the invasion has opened up a new phase of the war. Conflicts, contradictions, basic problems which were kept or pushed in the background, will now come to the forefront with increasing insistence. The more decisive the battles become, the more imperiously the problems related to the war will press for solution. The more they press for solution, the less able the ruling classes will be to withhold their answers to confine themselves to generalities and hollow promises, and the more they will be compelled to translate their real war aims into plain words and plainer deeds.

Not so long ago Mr. Churchill could dismiss curtly the question, "What are we fighting for?" with his impertinent "Our war aim is to win the war"; and Mr. Hull could exclaim petulantly that he wished people would keep their noses out of politics and apply them instead to the win-the-war grindstone. But now that the people feel themselves closer to the end of the war, it is less and less possible to maintain this martinet attitude toward them. They want clearer answers to the problems which gave rise to the war and to which the war, in turn, gave rise. With the mounting list of casualties they feel they have paid more than enough, and in advance, for answers and for satisfactory ones.

The most important problem now, posed more pointedly than ever before, is the problem of Europe itself. What is to happen to the continent when Hitler's rule is brought to an end? The fate of the entire world will be determined for a long time to come by the answer to this question. If Europe will know durable peace, freedom, harmony and prosperity,

the rest of the world will be assured of the same. If Europe is to continue on its old bases and its old paths, the entire world will be driven backward, economically, politically, culturally, spiritually. Then a third world war will be absolutely inevitable in a couple of decades, at most, after the end of the second, and it is most unlikely that civilization would survive the ordeal. Everything depends upon how Europe is to be organized, or reorganized, in the immediate future.

In August, 1941, the heads of the American and British governments had their famous meeting "somewhere on the Atlantic," and on the 14th of that month issued an official statement known as the Atlantic Charter. It has since been endorsed by all the Allied belligerents. In speaking of the reorganization of Europe after the war, it is worth recalling the eight points in the Charter, described by its authors as "certain common principles in the national policies of their respective countries on which they base their hopes for a better future for the world."

#### Promises of the Atlantic Charter

First, their countries *seek no aggrandizement, territorial or other;*

Second, they desire to see *no territorial changes that do not accord with the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned;*

Third, they respect the right of *all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live; and they wish to see sovereign rights and self-government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them;*

Fourth, they will endeavor, with all due respect for their existing obligations, to further the enjoyment by *all states, great or small, victor or vanquished, of access, on equal terms, to the trade and to the raw materials of the world which are needed for their economic prosperity;*

Fifth, they desire to bring about the fullest collaboration between all nations in the economic field with the object of securing, *for all, improved labor standards, economic adjustment and social security;*

Sixth, after the final destruction of the Nazi tyranny, they hope to see established a peace which will afford *to all nations* the means of dwelling in safety within their own boundaries, and which will afford assurance that all the men in all the lands may live out their lives in freedom from fear and want;

Seventh, such a peace should enable all men to traverse the high seas and oceans without hindrance;

Eighth, they believe that *all of the nations in the world, for realistic as well as spiritual reasons, must come to the abandonment of the use of force.* Since no future peace can be maintained if land, sea or air armaments continue to be employed by nations which threaten, or may threaten, aggression outside of their frontiers, they believe, pending the establishment of a wider and permanent system of general security, that the disarmament of such nations is essential. They will likewise aid and encourage all other practicable measures which will lighten for peace-loving peoples the crushing burden of armaments. (Our emphasis.—Ed.)

Much might have been said then, and can be said now, about the real purposes of authors Roosevelt and Churchill in drawing up this document, about their ability or desire to carry out its clearly enunciated principles, or about the extent to which these high-minded principles jibed with what they and their governments were actually doing. We, for our part, said all that was necessary on this score, and have since had no occasion for retraction.

Yet the fact remains that the words of the Atlantic Charter, if they do not coincide fully with the program of inter-

national socialism, are not in conflict with it. Their transmutation into living realities would unquestionably open up a new era for mankind. What else does humanity long for beyond freedom from fear and want, the peace that means freedom from war, equal access to the wealth of the world for all, social security, an end to the burden of armaments, an end also to national oppression, freedom of movement and friendly intercourse among peoples? The Charter solemnly assured the peoples that these longings would be satisfied.

The Atlantic Charter was acclaimed by the world of bourgeois democracy. There is a New Order for you! There are the two paladins who will lead the crusading hosts in achieving it! Every means of communication at the disposal of

Washington and London was impressed into service to carry the good tidings to the remotest hamlets of the earth. Joshua made the sun stand still; but Roosevelt and Churchill were making a new sun rise. What man of good will could now fail to rally behind them?

That was three years ago. The enemy was expanding and consolidating his position in every direction. Piety was clearly indicated to London, Washington and Moscow. The devil, if we may say so, was sick; the devil a monk would be. Now it is three years later. The war is beginning to go the other way. Piety is no longer so clearly indicated. The devil, if he is not yet well, is already out of bed; and the devil a monk is he! The Atlantic Charter has been openly abandoned.

## The Atlantic Charter Abandoned

First, there was Mr. Churchill's statement that he had not become the King's First Minister to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire; and, further, that so far as Britain's colonies and possessions were concerned, the Atlantic Charter did not apply to them. The same Mr. Churchill who, together with Roosevelt, swore that "they respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live; and they wish to see sovereign rights and self-government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them"? One and the same.

Then, the repeated declarations by Mr. Churchill and other signatories of the Charter that its provisions do not apply to Germany, either. The Prime Minister noted, in his May, 24, 1944, speech, that "the Atlantic Charter in no way binds us about the future of Germany. It has no quality of a bargain or a contract with our enemy. . . . I have repeatedly said that unconditional surrender gives the enemy no rights." Here, too, it turns out that it is the same Mr. Churchill who swore, with hand on heart, that he would "respect the right of all peoples" to sovereignty and self-government, and that he would "endeavor . . . to further the enjoyment by all states, great or small, victor or vanquished, of access, on equal terms, to the trade and to the raw materials of the world which are needed for their economic prosperity." On May 24, 1944? Of course not—on August 14, 1941, when he was exceedingly anxious to be a monk!

Then, the clearly indicated intention of the Roosevelt government to take control of every possible Pacific island after the war, with no more concern over the desire for sovereignty of its inhabitants than was displayed by the Japanese when they took control of them.

Then, the cold announcements from Moscow that its seizures and annexations of territories in Eastern Europe do not conflict with the provisions of the Charter, whose signers, Stalin prominently among them, proclaimed that "their countries seek no aggrandizement, territorial or other," and that even if they do conflict, "this does not mean that the document is above criticism." When may it be criticized? In 1941? No, in 1944. Paris was worth a mass; Stalin has found that Poland was worth an Atlantic Charter.

The Atlantic Charter has served its usefulness, so far as its authors and endorsers are concerned. The war, as Mr. Churchill has just pointed out, is becoming "less ideological." Translated, this means that as Mr. Churchill sees victory nearer, he no longer finds it necessary to appeal hypocritically to the idealism of the peoples, to promise that their aspirations will

be satisfied. The real booty of the war lies within grasp. Time to take leave of this "ideological" nonsense and get down to the practical business of dividing it up among the victors.

### "Interests" Versus "Moral Principles"

"It is doubtless true, as Mr. Eden said, that Britain has not conceded an exclusive sphere of influence to Russia in eastern Europe," writes the excellent London correspondent of the *New York Times* (May 28, 1944), Mr. Raymond Daniell, "but if the keystone of British foreign policy in Europe after the war is based on wholehearted collaboration with the Soviets it is certainly impolitic to allow high moral principles to come into conflict with Soviet interests there. . . . Therefore Britain looks to the continuation of her close association with the United States and Russia after the war. Somehow Russian necessities must be reconciled with the high promises held out in the Atlantic Charter and the next few months will produce some highly interesting acrobatics in that respect."

A priceless formula, and it deserves repetition: It is certainly impolitic to allow high moral principles to come into conflict with imperialist interests—be it Russia's in Eastern Europe, England's in Asia, or America's in Africa. But what about the Charter, which embodied all these "high moral principles"?

"... The Atlantic Charter," writes Mr. Emery Reves, the author of "A Democratic Manifesto," in a most interesting article printed in the *New York Times Magazine* (April 23, 1944), "in which so many people placed their hopes for a better world, has not given the hoped-for results. It has failed to become the unifying force of the freedom-loving nations."

And, further:

In the past few months we have been told that the Atlantic Charter does not apply to India, that it does not apply to Germany, nor to Poland, nor to the Baltic countries, nor to the Pacific—a strange remedy that cannot be given to the sick and may be enjoyed only by the healthy. . . .

The Charter opened by solemnly declaring that our countries seek no aggrandizement, territorial or other. The wisdom and realism of this pledge was immediately challenged. Why should we not seek aggrandizement if victorious? Does anyone believe that Russia will not incorporate the Baltic countries, the Polish Ukraine, White Ruthenia and Bukovina? Does anyone believe that the United States will not annex islands and bases in the Pacific which hitherto were Japanese territory? Such changes are natural and inevitable, so why lay ourselves open to criticism and the accusation of isolating pledges which no one asked us to give?

It is refreshing to turn from imperialist hypocrisy to imperialist candor. Everything he says above is sheer pleasure to read—and to quote—except his last phrase. It is not true

that "no one asked us to give" pledges. The truth is that from the very beginning of the war, the millions of people who were dragooned or tricked into it have been insistently demanding from their leaders a statement of war aims, and pledges, that would commit them against the hideous imperialist policy of Germany and Japan, who "annex" and "incorporate" and "seek aggrandizement"—all without bothering to ask the opinion of the people who inhabit the countries annexed and incorporated. The truth is that these leaders did state their aims and make their pledges, in the Atlantic Charter, which they swore upon their honor and by their God to adhere to. That was when the devil was sick. Now,

Mr. Reves, who differs from the big spokesmen of imperialism only in bluntness, finds that there is nothing hideous about this imperialist policy, except the fact that it was pursued by Germany, Italy and Japan; whereas, when we pursue exactly the same course, it becomes... "natural and inevitable."

Mr. Reves is worth returning to, for he has other, and even more interesting, things to say. But before we do so, let us see what is being planned for Europe by the Allies, not in accordance with the "high moral principles" and the "high promises held out by the Atlantic Charter," but in accordance with their "interests."

## What Is Being Planned for Europe?

Europe before the war was bleeding to death from division. In an age symbolized by man's ability to travel through the air at hundreds of miles an hour, Europe was divided into more than a score of national compartments, any one of which could be crossed by airplane in two hours, and most of them in one. Not a single one—not even France, not even Germany—could assure prosperity, peace and progress within its own national boundaries. If the bigger countries could not perform this feat, it is understandable that the smaller ones could hardly aspire to a more ambitious rôle than satellite or vassal of some powerful patron.

All the countries of continental Europe were doomed to recurrent convulsions. Singly or in small blocs they were unable to deal with the world colossus, the United States, whose power all over the world reduced the countries of Europe to rations in a declining world market. Singly or in small blocs, they were unable to ward off the provocative intervention of British imperialism, whose notorious "balance of power" policy pitted country against country. Reduced to diminishing rations, economically and politically, each European country, big or small, found itself driven to seek a solution for the problems of the capitalist crisis outside its own frontiers—but only after every one of them had raised its own tariff walls as high as possible! Europe was disorganized, unintegrated, anachronistically partitioned, each country a feverish prisoner of its own national barriers, a prisoner also of the military machine which all of them concentrated on building up in preparation for the inevitable war, a military machine which devoured vast quantities of the declining national wealth.

### The Task of Unification

Salvation for Europe lay, and still lies, in its unification, in the razing of the reactionary, artificial, obsolete, suffocating national barriers so as to make possible a common and equal utilization of the productive wealth of the continent by means of a planned and organized division of labor.

Only one force existed that was capable of carrying out this reorganization, more or less as it was carried out on most of the territory of the old Czarist empire—the European proletariat. It alone could have guaranteed the formation of an economic and political Union of Europe, a United States of Europe, without violating all those aspects of the individual nations that pertain to the people: their tongue, their culture, their national traditions and folkways, their desire to exist as an entity without being dominated by others. The European proletariat failed to accomplish its mission. It would be more correct to say that the parties of the Second and Third Inter-

nationals, standing at the head of the European proletariat, failed. The catastrophic results are known. We have all paid heavily for the failure; we shall continue to pay for it for a long time.

The failure to solve the problem did not remove it from the scene. The unification of Europe, not carried out—even undertaken—by the proletariat, was carried out nevertheless, but in the most brutal and reactionary way. What could have been produced as the objective development of the socialist reorganization and rationalization of the continent by the working class, and consequently as a peace-bringing, fundamental and durable solution of all the important social conflicts and problems of our time, was produced instead as the objective development of the concentration and centralization of capital, of German capital. Europe was unified under the hegemony of the Nazi "New Order." But while the cramping customs barriers were thus destroyed, the unification of Europe under reactionary, that is, capitalist-imperialist, auspices and by reactionary methods, yielded none of the results attainable under a socialist union.

### Results of Fascist "Union"

The German big bourgeoisie won a tremendous but short-lived prosperity, but at the expense of widespread poverty and misery for the masses of Europe. National hatreds were incited everywhere in Europe on a scale and with an intensity such as the Old World had not known for centuries. Exploitation and oppression of peoples were increased beyond the memory of living generations. All traces of political democracy—the free labor movement along with them—were extirpated. Europe was converted into a world of the master, on one side, and slaves and vassals on the other. It was plunged into the most devastating and futile war in history.

A more striking example of the truth of the maxim that it is not only the "what" that is decisive in politics, but also the "who" and the "how" would be hard to find. The unification of Europe by German imperialism yielded the very opposite of all the results that a free socialist union of nations was to produce. Most important, perhaps, is the fact that the unification, accomplished in a reactionary way, created conditions and forces that could only contribute to delaying and rendering more difficult a unification accomplished in a progressive way. The Nazi "New Order" did not advance Europe, it hurled it back.

However, the notion that these reactionary characteristics are peculiar to Nazi imperialism—to say nothing of the theories (if arrant ignorance may be so dignified) that they are pe-

cular to Germans—is, to put it charitably, superficial. They are the characteristics of *modern imperialism*, and are not confined to any of its national manifestations. If they take on a more brutal (i.e., a more clear-cut) form under German imperialism, so far as Europe is concerned, this is due only to a number of secondary factors relating to the specific historical conditions in which German capitalism developed, to its specific geographical position, to its specific strengths and weaknesses, to the degree to which it has been affected by the world-wide crisis of a declining social order, and so forth. It is not at all due to any fundamental difference between one capitalist imperialism and another, as any Indian can easily explain to an American bourgeois democrat.

There is a difference between imperialisms, as has been indicated in a general way, but it is a difference in degree and not in character. The difference may be seen by comparing Germany's well-known program for Europe with the one being worked out by the Allies. Is the Allied program identical with that of Germany? Will the Allies establish exactly the same régime over Europe, if and when they crush the Germans militarily, as Germany did? It is worth while examining the three main reasons why the answer is in the negative.

### Three Differences

First, as an imperialism without an empire Germany was obliged to proceed in Europe, the only physically proximate field for its expansion, in substantially the same way that older imperialisms, like England, had proceeded in the more backward parts of the world. If the symbol of German imperialism is Poland or Lidice, the symbol of British imperialism is India and Amritsar and the slave compounds of South Africa.

Second, in order to impose an "Indian" régime over such advanced "white" countries as Poland, Czechoslovakia and Greece, German imperialism was obliged to begin by imposing a similar régime over its own working class, that is, to destroy the labor movement no less brutally than it destroyed Poland as a nation. The only one of the Allies which is in a position to act similarly in Germany—and for similar reasons—is Russia. British and American imperialism are handicapped, restrained, by the existence at home of a labor movement and (more or less) of bourgeois democracy.

Third, and very important, in the Axis alliance Germany had nothing to worry about from its ally. Italy never was a serious rival or competitor of Germany in the program for

dominating Europe; she was a vassal of Germany, a satellite at best. As compared with the relations existing between these two "allies," the relations among the United States, England and Russia are almost those of equals. None of the three can hope to achieve, at least not in the next period, the exclusive hegemony over Europe that Germany accomplished in a short space of time—and for a short space of time. If Europe is not directly threatened, once the Allies are victorious, with the same kind of "unification" it knew under Germany, it is due largely to the irrepressible rivalries among the Allies themselves, the inability of any one of them to take complete possession of the continent to the exclusion of the other two. These rivalries make impossible—at any rate, most unlikely—the subjection of Europe *as a unit*, and imply a modification of the "German unification" in the sense of a subjection of a *partitioned* continent. Every one of the bourgeoisies of Europe today bases its last hope for quasi-independence not so much upon the victory of the Allies as upon the conflicts among the three big "liberators"! That is about all they have left. What this implies for Europe, and for the fundamental problems of the continent that can be resolved only in unification of its separate parts, is not hard to imagine.

But whatever may be the difference in program for the countries to be liberated from German occupation, it diminishes almost to the vanishing point as applied to Germany herself. And Germany is the key to the problem of Europe, to which it has an even more vital relationship than Europe as a whole has to the rest of the world. If a free, peaceful and prosperous world is inconceivable without a free, peaceful and prosperous Europe, it is more significantly true that the latter is inconceivable without a free, peaceful and prosperous Germany. Fifty years of world history have meant absolutely nothing to anyone who has failed to understand this. What is in store for Germany in the not yet definitive but clearly indicated plans of the Allies?

It might be thought that with the impressively tragic lesson offered by Nazi Germany of the consequences of the application of its policies toward conquered nations, the Allies would act toward a defeated Germany with anything but the same policies. The Allies are not, however, interested in moral enlightenment. They are moved by the same forces and interests that actuated German imperialism, and abstract political lessons have no strength like the strength of economic interests. Germany, as an imperialist rival, must be destroyed to the joint benefit of the Allied imperialists.

# The Plan to Destroy Germany

The first step in the destruction of Germany is to be the complete military occupation of the country after the war. That this was one of the decisions made at the Teheran Conference is no longer much of a secret. The *American Army and Navy Journal*, which is very well informed about such matters, reported as much on January 15, 1944, when it said that it was agreed at Teheran that the three big Allies would take direct military control of the country, each garrisoning one-third of it. On March 26, the *London Sunday Observer*, "which has achieved a reputation for being right more often than wrong on diplomatic news" (says the *New York Times*), announced the gist of the details of the Teheran agreement:

1. The western boundary of the Russian zone of occupation is to run

roughly along a right angle formed by the Danube and a prolongation of the lower reaches of the River Oder southward.

2. Bavaria, Saxony and Wuerttemberg would come under the exclusive occupation of United States troops while western Germany up to the Oder as well as part of central Germany would be occupied exclusively by British troops.

3. Berlin itself would be occupied jointly by forces of the three great powers.

An almost identical geographical division of the spoils was indicated some months ago by Miss Dorothy Thompson, whose sources of information are not unimportant. On April 14 the Associated Press reported from London that "an American - British - Russian plan for administering occupied Germany is nearing completion, providing for an 'Allied Mili-

tary Government with teeth in it.' It makes General Dwight E. Eisenhower the supreme authority in areas occupied by American and British forces and calls for Russian military control of areas occupied by the Red Army." The report continues:

Other details of the program as described to this correspondent by a highly placed informant include:

Teams of military government officers are now being trained in Britain to handle every phase of German public life and to execute a complete purge of the Nazis when the Allied armies enter Germany.

The Allied Military Government organization is to be used nowhere in Europe except in Germany and in the satellite nations loyal to Berlin to the end. . . .

General Eisenhower will have a vast control, direct and indirect, over the civilian life of all of Europe liberated by the Allies until normal diplomatic channels are resumed. It is likely this will be for some time.

It is understood that the Russians have agreed to the military government principle and are now training forces to work with the Red Army in the zones assigned to it.

There is no question of self-government for Germany. The Allies are prepared to deal with a completely disorganized and decentralized country. From the lessons learned in Italy, Allied authorities have little hope of finding any anti-Nazi key figures capable of assuming leadership.

This is not all. The pinnacle, or close to the pinnacle, of imperialist insanity and viciousness is reached by the plan worked out two weeks later, on April 29, by the representatives of eight "exiled European governments"—the Netherlands, Belgium, Norway, Luxemburg, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Greece and Yugoslavia—and the de Gaulle Committee. Under the terms of this plan, which is to be submitted by these governments-without-a-country to the Big Three,

... the Allies would possess veto power over decisions of the Reichstag and other German legislative bodies if they violated the disarmament clauses to which Germany would have to submit.

One of the most drastic points is the stipulation that all German foreign holdings and investments abroad would be liquidated for the benefit of the Allies.

The project, as drafted, includes on the economic side:

1. Suppression of the Reich's war industries.
  2. Abolition or restriction of mixed industries, such as machine tools and chemicals, that could easily be converted from peace to war.
  3. Limits to be imposed on German synthetic and plastic industries.
- ... The scheme demands strict Allied control over the three following German financial powers:

1. Supervision of all German federal, state and municipal expenditures.
2. Control of all public and financial resources, including taxes, custom receipts and other revenues.
3. Control of the public budget.

... The issue of stocks and bonds would come under Allied control. On the other hand, the Allies would encourage public savings banks and other coöperative banking institutions. [Why, in heaven's name, why? Who would have any savings to deposit?—Ed.]

... The Allies would control the Reichsbank and all other state banks as well as five of Germany's most important private banks.

Etc., etc. (*New York Times*, April 30, 1944.)

Once such control were established, the German people would be as free as birds, devoting themselves to the cultivation of turnips and the manufacture of paper dolls, happy in the knowledge that they are still permitted to use any public toilet without let or hindrance from General Eisenhower or Marshal Stalin.

If it were not simply in the nature of things imperialist, the drafting of such a plan by the nine governments in exile would be hair-raising. Here are people who do not even need eyes in their heads to see with. They have felt on their own hides what it means when such a plan, such a régime, is applied to viable, and especially modern, countries. By what national-biological necromancy do they expect that the con-

sequences ensuing from such a plan when applied to a country bearing the name of Poland or France, would not follow just as disastrously when applied to a country bearing the name of Germany? If it brought tempest and convulsions, wrack and ruin, to all the countries on which Germany imposed it, why should it bring beneficent calm and joyous laughter when imposed on Germany? The utter madness of the plan is fully grasped if it is further borne in mind that this plan was submitted for the approval of the Big Three by people, every one of whom lies awake nights worrying about how much independence is going to be granted *his* country, not by the Nazis, but by England, Russia and the United States!

### The Russian Plan

Even this is not yet all, although one would think that it was enough of a free gift to Herren Göbbels and Hitler to last them for ten years of effective propaganda work among their subjects at home and their troops on the battlefields, propaganda work that would require no more effort from their otherwise inventive minds than the straight repetition of what the Allies themselves propose. Most explicit and detailed of all the plans for "liberating" Germany are those emanating from Moscow. They boil down to this idea, worthy of the genial Marshal: "Hitlerite oppression and exploitation are patently improper when applied to us, but the quintessence of justice when applied to Germany." It is said in almost those words by Eugen Varga, one of the many living synonyms Stalin employs in setting forth his views:

It would be just and practically expedient to draw workers from Germany and countries allied with Germany to work after the war in restoring devastated areas. The Hitlerite bandits who have trampled on international law are forcibly sending into Germany millions of peaceful inhabitants of occupied countries and in particular inhabitants of occupied zones of the Soviet Union, compelling them to make weapons to be used against their own country. Justice demands [that we act the very same way!—Ed.] that after the end of the war the Germans should participate [a beautiful word!—Ed.] in the reconstruction of the roads, bridges, towns and factories they destroyed during the war. (*War and the Working Class*, October, 1943.)

How many Germans are to "participate" in this slave-labor plan? The figure of ten to fifteen millions has been given! In endorsing the Atlantic Charter, Stalin must have read the promise in Point 4 "to further the enjoyment of all states, great or small, victor or vanquished, of access, on equal terms, to the trade and to the raw materials of the world." True to the promise, he plans to give at least several million citizens of the vanquished country "access" to the "raw materials" of Russia's forests, mines and fields, "on equal terms" with his own slave-labor. Is it permitted to doubt if the candidates for this "participation" and "access" will not display the necessary enthusiasm for the plan, despite the eminent "justice" of it?

(We doubt also if this enthusiasm can be generated by imitating those "Trotskyists" who reside on the remoter planets and call to the German proletariat to "defend the Soviet Union—unconditionally!" and to work with might and main "for the victory of the Red Army" which is "bringing socialism" to Europe. Although, to be perfectly fair, as the selected candidates for "participation" are crowded into Stalin's cattle cars, they may reflect that these Martian and Mercurian "Trotskyists" did, after all, tell them that while they favored Stalin's army taking Germany, they were at the same time opposed to his "methods," that is, they supported the creation of the indispensable pre-conditions that would guarantee his

use of his "methods" but did not support his using them. The "participants" will surely find this thought very heartening.)

The impressment of millions of German workers into slave labor is not the whole of the plan of our somewhat "de-generated workers' state." Stalin-Varga continues:

As regards the proportions of reparations payable from the national wealth of the aggressor countries immediately after the end of the war, it would be obviously unjust if the aggressor countries were not required to cover losses caused by them to an extent which would make their economic position no more favorable than that of their victims. Furthermore, justice demands that the property of persons responsible for the instigation of the war and persons who have grown rich on plundering the occupied countries should be confiscated and wholly devoted to reparation damage. (*Ibidem.*)

### Confiscation of Property—by Whom?

Justice is a veritable mania with Stalin, and it is a brand of justice that makes Clemenceau's Versailles Treaty look like a boon to Germany. Who is to "confiscate"? The German people, who were the first and who will be the last to suffer from the crimes of the Nazi tyrants and of the "persons responsible for the instigation of the war"? No, the Russian bureaucracy. Its formula is all-embracing. If the property of all those who are "responsible for the instigation of the war" and "who have grown rich on plundering the occupied countries" is to be confiscated and "wholly devoted to reparation damage," this means the seizure of not less than ninety-nine per cent of the industrial and financial wealth of Germany. There is hardly a single member of the German bourgeoisie who does not fall into one or both of the categories listed. A Moscow commentator on the Stalin-Varga plan makes clear that it

...contemplates the removal from Germany and her accomplices to formerly occupied territories of part of their movable property, such as machines, apparatus and equipment for industrial enterprises, locomotives, railway cars, motor transport, ships, cattle, seed and other agricultural products, coal, metal and similar goods.

Will the Germans be left any turnips, or do these come under the heading of "seed and other agricultural products"? In any case, Russia, too, will undoubtedly consent—justice is

justicel—to leaving the Germans all the equipment needed for making paper dolls.

(The latter can console themselves in the knowledge, taught exclusively by the above-noted Martians and Mercurians, that the "movable property," etc., will be promptly nationalized as soon as it reaches Russian soil and there becomes part of the "socialized economy," to be operated by the equally socialized ten to fifteen million German "participants" who will be guarded by the likewise socialized GPU, which holds the keys to the just as socialized prisons.)

An important characteristic of Germany's "movable property" is that it can be moved to the West as well as to the East. If we have dwelled on Russia's "moving" plans, it is only because they have already been avowed in writing, and not because these plans are exclusive to Russia. The other Allies, big and little, will not absent themselves from the jungle feast over prostrated Germany, any more than Italy absented herself from sharing in the Axis' spoils.

Yet, not even this is the full story of what is in store for Germany, which is another way of saying, as we have tried to set forth, for Europe. Physical dismemberment is also in store for her. That Austria is to be separated from Germany proper and then put into Allied military and economic receivership, goes without saying; it was made clear enough in the Moscow declaration on Austria made by Hull, Eden and Molotov. The press has persistently printed unofficial reports that Bavaria is to be separated from Germany; there have even been reports that the French adventure in establishing an "independent Rhineland Republic" in 1923 will be essayed again.

In Moscow's *War and the Working Class* (May, 1944), a Professor Stein, i.e., Stalin-Stein, has come out openly for the principle of dismembering Germany, and denounced the "renowned Cliveden clique" because "they are the ones who shout now that a dismemberment of German territory in favor of any other governments cannot be approved of morally." Which makes perfectly clear the category to which the Russian imperialists have already assigned anybody and everybody who opposes the application to Germany of the policy Hitler tried to apply to Russia and other countries.

## Russia, Poland and Germany

While Stalin-Stein already openly approve the policy of dismemberment, and the other Allied spokesmen make it clear enough with their hints and "semi-official" reports, the policy is already pretty specific at one point, the point where Poland is the pivot.

The Polish Empire was a creation of the Versailles map-makers. It was intended at once as a European breakwater against the Bolshevik storm-wave and a staging area for an imperialist assault upon the young Soviet republic. In 1920, it was almost conquered by the revolution—almost, but not quite. The Red Army broke through Pilsudski's legions to the very gates of Warsaw. The bourgeois world agonizedly held its breath: a Red victory in Poland meant the end of the old all over the continent, for it would be followed in a minute by the proletarian revolution in Germany. A consolidated workers' power from Vladivostok to the Rhine would be a certain guarantee of international victory. Pilsudski plus Weygand held; the Bolsheviks were thrown back. The end of the first big post-war revolutionary wave in Europe really dates

back to this moment.

The attempt to turn the successful defensive against the Greater-Polish imperialists into a revolutionary offensive against Poland herself shattered not so much against the wall of the Legionnaires as against the political unreadiness of the Polish masses; more simply, against the prevalence of social-democratic and even nationalistic ideology among them. The attempt was one of Lenin's gravest political miscalculations, and Trotsky and Radek warned against it in vain. But it was a miscalculation made within the framework, so to speak, of the struggle for socialist freedom. In the van of the Red Army marched the Polish Revolutionary Committee, headed by revolutionists like Dzerzhinsky, Unschlicht and Felix Kon.

Who is in the van of the Russian army as it now marches into Poland? The Union of Polish Patriots, whose real name should be Union of Stalinist Mamelukes In and For Poland. At its head stands not a revolutionist but a handmaiden of the GPU, Wanda Wassilewska. She is the creature who stood by coolly while the GPU murdered three successive leaderships



of Polish communism, from Domski, Sophia Unschlicht, Koszewska to Joseph Lenski, to say nothing of the Polish socialists, Ehrlich and Alter. A fit candidate for Stalin's viceroy in Poland!

Does Stalin plan to subjugate Poland to the new Russian Empire? That he can succeed, may be questioned; that it is his plan, is beyond question. Has he not expressed himself solemnly in favor of a "strong Poland," as we have been assured by authorities of no meaner stature than Father Orlemanski and Prof. Oskar Lange? He has, and he may well be believed. He is also in favor of a strong Georgia, a strong Ukraine, a strong White Russia, a strong Finland—all incorporated within a very strong Russia, and all enjoying the limitless liberties which the Moscow police régime accords the "freely federated republics of the Soviet Union."

Then what is the meaning of the dispute over the Curzon Line which is to be the frontier between Russia and Poland? The dispute is a fraud from A to Z, a smokescreen. Stalin is not interested in inches, but in miles. In "exchange" for a "rectification" of the Curzon Line, Stalin and Molotov have indicated their readiness to "compensate" Poland by annexing East Prussia. The first step in the dismemberment of Germany is to give *Poland dominated by Stalin* territory which is overwhelmingly German in its national composition.

### **Down with Fascism! Long Live Its Principles!**

It will be remembered that the partition of Germany for the purpose of military occupation will bring Stalin to the Oder, that is, as far west as Stettin. Of that area, cables the *Times* correspondent from London (February 12): "Russia might be willing, it was indicated, to see Polish territory extend not only to Stolpmünde but all the way to the Oder River. But Russia has apparently emphasized that she has no intention of backing such claims on German territory so long as the Polish government is constituted as it is at present." At present, *nota bene*, the Polish government is not constituted by Wassilewska-Korneichuck-Stalin. The correspondent continues:

It is becoming increasingly clear that Russia will have little hesitation about dismembering Germany. In the first place, she evidently wants part of East Prussia herself; she has long wanted a port much further west than Leningrad or even Memel. Consequently, she has indicated that she would like to keep Königsberg for herself.

If this plan were executed, would it not create a somewhat embarrassing situation for the sworn protagonists of the Atlantic Charter? What about the German minority that would then exist within the boundaries of "strong and independent Poland"? Here surely is an example of what the Charter, in its second point, calls "territorial changes that do not accord with the freely expressed wishes of the people concerned."

The eminent authors of the Charter, who have already agreed to the Stalin plan (this fact is confirmed by Raymond Daniell in the *Times* of March 28), have a veritable Gordian knot before them. How shall it be undone? Obviously, our Allies, democrats and anti-fascists to the lymph and marrow, every one of them, cannot and will not resort to the barbarous method by which Hitler solved so many of Europe's national problems—uprooting millions of families from home, soil and workshop, and shipping them to new territories like so many sides of beef! It is against such bestiality, is it not, that we are fighting? And, again obviously, we could not and would not be so barbarous and bestial with the German inhabitants of annexed East Prussia. Obviously? Why obviously? As a matter of fact, it is not obvious at all. The *Times* correspondent

reports:

Russia has suggested that, in view of the German policy of transferring people across Europe by hundreds of thousands, the Allies should not hesitate to accept the principle of transfer to bring about sound ethnographical boundaries after the war.

The Gordian knot is cut by "accepting the principle" of the Nazis! Down with fascism! Long live its principles!

Poland is to be subjugated and annexed by the modern Suvorovs (how perfectly proper that Empress Catherine's General Suvorov, who quelled the Polish insurrection of 1794, and carried out the second and third partitions of Poland, should now be the military icon and model for Stalin's army!). The annexation of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, so far as Moscow is concerned, is an accomplished fact which requires only military confirmation; and this too has been conceded by the other Allies. Finland, too, is to be subjugated, for the "generous" peace terms offered by Stalin would place such a crushing financial burden upon the Finns as to reduce them to economic servitude to Russia, to be followed, if not accompanied, by occupation of the country. As far off, in Eastern Europe, as Yugoslavia, Russia not only has a firm foothold through her agent, Tito, but the country has been substantially recognized as falling within her "sphere of influence" by the other Allies, notably by Churchill. If the freedom and independence of the crucified Yugoslavian peoples depends upon the Stalinist bureaucracy, it hangs by a thread; more accurately, it hangs from a noose.

There are other countries in the Eastern half of Europe. There are numerous aspects to the problem and future of that area which cannot or need not be dealt with here. There are especially countries like Greece, which touch the Mediterranean, which England seeks to hold with an obduracy that matches Stalin's toward Bessarabia; and countries like Czechoslovakia, whose fate still hangs in the balance. But, by and large, so far as Russia is concerned, Eastern Europe is henceforward to be under her rule or domination, "united" by her into an even vaster prison than she now presides over. And so far as England is concerned, this division of power on the continent has already been accepted in principle by the responsible spokesmen for British imperialism: Eden, Beaverbrook, Churchill, the *London Times*. What is still lacking for the successful and unobstructed execution of the plan is the consent of American imperialism.

One other thing is lacking: the consent of the millions of workers and peasants involved!

### **England and Western Europe**

Western Europe? If it is not to be ruled by England, it is to be dominated by her. There are many reasons why England cannot even think of subjecting the Western European countries in the same way that Germany took over Poland or Russia aims to take her over. The most important reasons have already been mentioned. In order to maintain the British Empire, England must be a strong power on the European continent. This power is to have its bases in countries representing an arc whose upper point begins in the Scandinavian countries, bows back through the Low Countries, France, Portugal and Spain, and runs eastward along the imperial lifeline through the lands on both sides of the Mediterranean, North Africa and Italy, Greece and Egypt and the Near East. All of England's diplomatic, political and economic policies in Europe today are aimed, first of all, at welding this arc firmly and keeping a firm grip upon it.

Hence the attempts to consolidate the British "sterling

bloc" out of the North and Low Countries. Hence the attempt to cement an alliance with France (England on top, France on bottom) directed not so much against defeated Germany as against victorious United States. (This is the nub of the conflict between Churchill and Roosevelt over the notorious "de Gaulle question," about which more later.) Hence England's plan to squeeze out of her share of the German spoils all she can squeeze, so that her post-war financial-economic dependence upon the United States is reduced to the minimum, with a consequent ability to reduce the Western European countries to a state of dependence upon her for their "post-war reconstruction." Hence Churchill's open support of the monarchy in Greece, as contrasted to his magnanimous cession of Yugoslavia to Russia. Hence England's intrigues in the Near Eastern possessions of France, which are to be lib-

erated from French rule in the British manner, i.e., by having good British rulers imposed upon them.

Most important, however, from the standpoint of Europe's salvation, is the fact that England will act as gendarme over that part of Germany—and it is not an inconsequential part—allotted to her in the division of the loot. Gendarme over Germany means gendarme over Europe—in this case, of half of Europe. Can or will England police France as she will Germany? Of course not. But to the degree that she makes the "liberated" countries financially-economically dependent upon her the road is open to their loss of political dependence. The one follows the other, as we say, like the flag follows the dollar.

A gloomy outlook for Europe—if the plan for "uniting" it under two (or three) masters ruling a multitude of servants is realized in life.

## Small Nations and Independence

Is that necessarily a gloomy prospect, it has been asked in some quarters. Is it not high time we recognized that we live in a new age? Is it not a fact that the small and weak countries have not proved to be viable as independent nations? Are not all nations interdependent to the highest degree? Is political independence for a nation or a people so sacrosanct that it may not be abandoned or modified even if the result is protection of the people from aggression, a higher standard of living, security and peace? In any case, is not nationalism, outlived and reactionary, and compelled to give way to a concept, call it internationalism or a system of national interdependence, more in consonance with our times?

These alluring, even seductive, suggestions are now officially, if not formally, sanctioned by the very men who wrote the Atlantic Charter. They are embodied in Churchill's plan, in Eden's plan, in Roosevelt's plan: the world must be dominated, the peace must be kept, by a Council of the Four (of the Three, for China is mentioned as a fourth as a sardonic gesture). If it is a "small nation," as Mr. Eden explained in his March address to the Free Church Federal Council, it "must have a right to make its voice heard." But no more than that. "When it comes to decide on action which only certain states by their military power are in a position effectively to take, we cannot simply count heads. The great powers [i.e., "the powers which signed the Moscow declaration," the U.S.A., England and Russia] have and must have special responsibilities in the field of security."

Here the idea of the partition of the world among three big policemen is presented cautiously and with as much elegance as possible under the circumstances. It is put much more bluntly, in more detail, and with much more "theoretical foundation," in the article by Mr. Emery Reves to which we referred at the beginning of these notes.

### A Challenge and an Answer

Mr. Reves does not beat around the bush. He calls his article "A Challenge to the Atlantic Charter." He attacks the conception expressed in the Charter all along the line. Even if he is quoted here in considerable detail, what he has to say warrants it.

He really begins with a quotation of the third paragraph of the Charter, which promised the right of self-determination, sovereign rights and self-government to all peoples, including those "who have been forcibly deprived of them."

"Here," says Mr. Reves, "in one terse phrase, is the tragic misunderstanding of our generation." Why? His argumentation is set forth as follows:

We all assume it to be axiomatic that freedom and independence are inalienable rights of man, and we are seeking to create institutions to guarantee and safeguard these rights. In the eighteenth century our forebears found these guarantees and safeguards in the principle of national sovereignty, in the institutions of the sovereign nation-state, controlled by the people, and in the rights of all peoples to self-determination, to choose the form of government, the structure of their political and economic system within the territorial boundaries of their state, of their own free will without foreign interference.

These concepts and these institutions, in their absolute form, were perfectly capable of expressing national independence as long as contact between the established national units was either non-existent, unnecessary or loose.

Since modern industrialism, science and communications have shrunk this immense planet of ours into a sixty-hour flying trip; since no nation, not even the mightiest, is economically self-sufficient; since industry seeks to gain markets all over the world and can develop only within a framework where exchange and free communication are possible, these eighteenth century concepts, as expressed in the treaties of 1919 and in the Atlantic Charter, create, in their absolute form, conditions similar to a society in which individuals may act as they please, without any limitations on their impulses, without any considerations as to the effect of their actions on other members of that society.

In their absolute form, the principles of the Atlantic Charter lead straight to anarchy in international life.

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There is nothing wrong with the ideal of self-determination. But there is something very wrong indeed with the ideal of "self-determination of nations."

This concept means that the population of this small world is to be divided into eighty or one hundred artificial units, based on arbitrary criteria, such as race, nationality, historical antecedents, etc. This concept would have us believe that the democratic ideal of self-determination can be guaranteed and safeguarded by granting people the right of self-determination within their national groups, without giving corporate expression of self-determination to the aggregate of the groups.

Such a system can give self-determination to the people only as long as their national units can live an isolated life. Since the nations today are in contact and their economic and political lives are closely interwoven, their independence needs higher form or expression, or stronger institutions for defense. In their absolute interpretation, the many self-determined national units cancel out each other's self-determination.

What was the use of the "self-determination of Lithuania" when self-determined Poland occupied Vilna? What was the use of "Polish self-determination" when self-determined Germany destroyed Poland? Unquestionably, self-determination of nations does not guarantee freedom and independence to a people, because it has no power to prevent the effects of actions committed by other self-determined nations. If we regard as an

ideal the freedom and the self-determination of peoples, we must do our utmost to prevent repeating the mistakes of 1919 and realize that "self-determination of nations" is today the insurmountable obstacle to "self-determination of peoples."

If the present trend cannot be redirected, we are heading toward nationalism more exalted than ever before. If we cling to the principles of the Atlantic Charter, we shall have to face the claims of the innumerable nationalities in Europe, Asia, even in Africa, to absolute sovereign states of their own. Since there will be no more than three powers capable of creating and maintaining armed forces in the modern sense, small nations will be forced to become satellites of these powerful industrial and military powers.

Some utopians may believe that such a triangular power structure is possible, even desirable. Actually, it is the mathematical formula for the next war. It would be a tragedy if we were so completely to misunderstand the historic significance of this global war as to create again a world order based on the archaic principles of the pre-industrialized eighteenth century. We did this in 1919. And it collapsed rapidly and completely....

The principle of "self-determination of nations" is a primitive and oversimplified expression of the concept of national independence. It is an anachronism. It is designed to work in laboratory conditions. Present-day realities, however, produce too many interfering elements to make possible the application of such a hypothetical formula without recurrent explosions....

The authors of the Atlantic Charter unquestionably visualized a world with a maximum of liberty, a maximum of independence and a maximum of self-determination of all peoples. These ideals can be consummated only if we have the courage to accept the following lessons of recent history and to draw from them the principles of our future policy:

1. All events since 1919 plainly show that "self-determination of nations," absolute "national sovereignty," as formulated in Wilson's doctrines, in the covenant of the League of Nations and in the Atlantic Charter, have failed to insure freedom, independence and peace for the peoples. Two world wars prove conclusively the mortal peril and the total fallacy of allowing the concepts of "self-determination of nations" and "national sovereignty" to chart our course. They have demonstrated to all nations the utter impossibility of maintaining peace, preserving their independence and safeguarding their security with policies based on these principles.

2. Realizing that the security of one people results from the coöperation of all to secure the rights of each, we believe that real independence of nations can be attained only by the regulation of their interdependence.

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Once this basic principle is proclaimed, understood by the majority of the peoples and established as the guiding principle of policy by our governments, it should not be too difficult for the duly elected representatives of peoples to arrive at detailed agreements, to define jurisdiction and set in motion international machinery of lawmaking and law enforcement under which we may look forward to another century of liberty and peaceful progress.

It is not yet time to settle the thousands of boundary disputes and other local problems. If we attempt a solution by applying the principles of the Atlantic Charter we shall create greater chaos than that existing today. Defending the Atlantic Charter against its critics, Secretary of State Hull declared in his recent broadcast: "The Charter is an expression of fundamental objectives toward which we and our allies are directing our policies.... It is not a code of law from which detailed answers to every question can be distilled by painstaking analysis of its words and phrases. It points the direction in which solutions are to be sought; it does not give solutions."

The assumption that the Atlantic Charter "points the direction in which solutions are to be sought" is precisely the fundamental fallacy of our policies. Real national independence and peaceful international relationship are to be sought in a direction other than that to which the Charter points. Before we act we must have sound, realistic principles. The events of the past twenty-five years and all the national political ideological and economic forces at work today make it inexcusable for us to continue to delude ourselves and to listen to false prophets, no matter how good their intentions, which preach that we may have peace merely by patching up outworn systems and revising old doctrines that have always led and will continue to lead to war.

When events and realities conflict with proclaimed principles we must not always think that such events and realities are in "violation" of the established principles. Often the anomaly is caused by false principles and can be remedied only by giving up quixotic ideas and adapting principles to realities. The present political difficulties and two years of con-

troversy over the Atlantic Charter—the weapon today of reactionary forces the world over—prove that a policy of expediency without principles can never be successful and durable. But, on the other hand, principles which cannot be applied in practice, which are utopian because they belong to the past, are even more disastrous. The centrifugal force emanating from the Atlantic Charter must be replaced by a system of principles exercising a powerful centripetal attraction within the United Nations and around them.

### The Heart of the Problem

In this own way, Mr. Reves has reached out to the heart of the problem, not only for Europe but for the entire world. How indeed shall we reconcile the "determination" of the small, economically and politically weak nations to have full national freedom with the not lesser "determination" of the large and strong nations to deprive them of their freedom? How shall we reconcile the determination of the small nations to be independent with the economic and political forces that impel them to dependence upon the big powers? If, "in their absolute form, the principles of the Atlantic Charter lead straight to anarchy in international life," and if "real independence of nations can be attained only by the regulation of their interdependence," then in what non-absolute form should the principles of the Atlantic Charter be applied? Just *how* is the "regulation of their interdependence" to be organized, and *who* is to organize it?

Mr. Reves shows a profound glimpse, but no more than a glimpse, of the real problem. The principles of the Atlantic Charter, "in their absolute form," are no solution of the problem? Then what is to replace them? Mr. Reves' impressive phrase—"regulation of the interdependence" of nations—has neither height, depth nor breadth, no shape, no flesh or bone or blood. It is so hollow that anything can be poured into it. England's attempt to "regulate the interdependence" between herself and India led, not to order and peace, but to the "anarchy in international life" that Mr. Reves aims to eliminate. Germany's attempt to "regulate the interdependence" between herself and the rest of Europe had the same consequences; and the same is obviously true of Japan and Asia. The whole history and practice of imperialism, which has brought the world to such a state of disintegration, enslavement of peoples and nations, tumultuous anarchy and recurrent wars, are based upon a theory of the "regulation of the interdependence" of nations.

Yet there are such units as nations; they do have to live with each other, and should live peacefully and in prosperity; they are dependent one upon the other; and this interdependence must, obviously, be subjected to regulation, to orderliness. To this extent, Mr. Reves is indisputably right, even if he is not another Columbus. But his answer to the problem advances us not one inch beyond the generalizations of the Atlantic Charter itself. He is not *concrete*, and in a sense, he cannot be. For him to specify *how* the "regulation" is to be organized and *who* is to organize it, would demand of him a super-imperialist candor and cynicism whose very extremeness would negate all his claims for the virtues of his conceptions.

Is there, then, no answer to the problem? There is one. It can not only be stated clearly, but more than that, it has already been tested in life and been proved efficacious and progressive. It is the answer given by scientific socialism, and applied in Russia by Lenin and the Bolsheviks—applied so successfully as to point the road plainly to the rest of the world. We will deal with it in detail next month.

In connection with the problem posed and the answer given by Bolshevism, we will have occasion to deal with other

questions. It will prove worth while, we think, to dwell for a bit not only on Mr. Reves' misunderstanding of the problem in general, but in particular his woeful failure to understand the conceptions of Mr. Hull, that is, of American imperialism, on the right of self-determination of nations. Mr. Reves seems to think that Cordell Hull is some sort of impractical idealist, whereas Winston Churchill is a man of realities. On this score, as we shall try to prove, Mr. Reves understands nothing at all, absolutely nothing at all.

Inasmuch as we, and our readers, are concerned with such as Hull and Churchill and Reves only from the standpoint of the interests of the working class and the revolutionary movement, our concluding comments on this subject next month

will deal also with the problems now facing this movement. In that connection, a new and significant development has taken place in the Socialist Workers Party which merits comment. Even before that, however, it merits publication, for every effort has been made to suppress it! We refer to the differences that have arisen in (and been rigidly confined to) the SWP leadership on the question of the struggle for democratic slogans in Europe and the struggle against the advancing "socialist" Russian army, in which a minority, represented by Morrow and Morrison, is showing that light is dawning in the SWP. The reader can surely afford to wait for one month in the knowledge that the membership of the SWP has already waited in vain for six!

# Michigan Commonwealth Federation

## *A New Party and Its Problems*

The formation of the Michigan Commonwealth Federation is a signal advance for the labor movement of the entire state and a signpost for the labor movement of the whole country. Its declaration, published after its founding conference on March 4 and 5, and attended by over 250 delegates, most of them union members, reads: "... the party shall never endorse a candidate of a rival party." This statement of policy, which excludes support by the new party to the candidates of the Democratic-Republican Parties, is the biggest step yet taken by any group representative of the labor movement toward independent working-class politics. The significance of this move is made clear by the denunciations of the Communist Party and the repeated public disavowals of the top leadership of the CIO.

While the movement for a Labor Party has been pushed back and at least temporarily defeated by the CP in New York and Minnesota, in Michigan it has arisen under the leadership of a group of second-rank union officials who are under the direct influence and pressure of the most advanced and militant section of the labor movement in Detroit.

### **Fighting Spirit in Detroit**

The most explosive situation in the country exists in Detroit. Since the entry of the United States into the war, the big corporations, aided by the War Labor Board, have withdrawn one concession after another from the unions, reducing collective bargaining to a mockery. A deliberate anti-union drive, spearheaded by the Ford Motor Company, is under full sail.

At all Ford plants, committeemen are suspended, placed upon probation, or discharged without regard for the union; contract provisions are violated and ignored; workers are reclassified or shuffled from plant to plant or department to department, and find themselves at the same work at reduced wages; dozens of persecutions, important or petty, are invented—speed-up on the job, withdrawing of chairs from the departments, timing of workers who go to the rest rooms—all aimed at a war of nerves against the unions and the destruction of the morale of their membership.

So serious and universal has this condition become that the officers of the United Auto Workers Union announce publicly that "In entire sections of the industry... collective bargaining is being denied our workers."

Not a day passes without reports of new "unauthorized" walkouts, stoppages, and demonstrations by CIO and AFL members in reply to the ever-increasing assaults upon their union rights. In every case they are knifed by the brass hats of the labor movement. It would require pages merely to list the walkouts of the last six months.

What the employers are out for is simple. In Windsor, Canada, just across the border from Detroit, a backlog of grievances led to a plant-wide walkout in the Ford plants authorized by the local union. Ford seized this opportunity to revoke its contract with the union and was compelled to back-track only after the strike continued with one hundred per cent effectiveness. The incident, however, exposes the real aim of the Ford company, the destruction of the union and the restoration of open-shop rule.

The same tactics are employed in Michigan. The policy of the top leadership of the CIO in the face of these employer provocations is worse than a do-nothing policy. They have nothing to tell the ranks except to "uphold the no-strike pledge" and to threaten those militant workers who refuse to adopt this head-in-the-sand recipe with expulsion from the unions and dismissal from the shops. But despite these threats and the advice of their treacherous leadership, the rank and file of the unions, realizing that the labor movement is in danger, reply to the offensive of the bosses with the only means at their command, industrial guerrilla warfare.

One example is local 600, UAW, at Ford River Rouge, the largest local union in the world, with a membership of over 90,000. A short time before the Windsor strike, the workers of the Aircraft Division of the Rouge plant staged several walkouts and a demonstrative barricading of the plant gates in protest against the dismissal of a number of workers and their committeemen. R. J. Thomas and the Communist-supported president-elect of the local, Grant, united to break the strike, employing methods which are becoming commonplace in the UAW. They gave the go-ahead signal to the company by announcing that no worker who actively participated in the stoppages would receive the aid of the collective bargaining machinery of the local union. As a result, more than 150 union men and committeemen were discharged or suspended.

A mass meeting of 1,500 members of the Aircraft Division voted almost unanimously for the revocation of the no-strike

pledge in defiance of the regional director of the UAW, who declared the motion improper and out of order and walked out of the hall.

In May, 6,000 workers in four Chrysler plants covered by Local 490 struck for the reinstatement of sixteen men who had been discharged. The local executive board supported the strikers. George Addes, R. J. Thomas and Walter Reuther united in denunciation of the strikers, called upon the workers to ignore the picket lines, and instituted charges against the officers and executive board of the local. In the face of these obstacles, the men returned to work upon the advice of the local leadership. The Thomas-Reuther-Addes international leadership put the local into the hands of a receiver after removing the local executive board and officers from their posts.

A second strike was precipitated, this time against the international officers, when over 4,000 workers in the Chrysler Highland Park plant struck under the slogans: "Fight for the boys who fight for you. The company fired part of your leaders. The International UAW-CIO fired the rest."

These events led Thomas to declare: "The UAW-CIO faces one of the greatest crises in its history."

### **Communist Party and MCF**

The rank and filers are becoming more and more aware that they cannot fight their employers without at the same time fighting against their "own" union top officialdom. In the last local elections in the Detroit area, one administration after another was overturned as the members of the UAW sought some method of protesting against the union misleadership, found their local officers closest at hand, and voted the out-factions in and the in-factions out.

It is this conflict between a traitorous leadership which insists upon capitulation to the employers and a militant rank and file which is looking to return to the fight against the monopolists, that sets the background for the formation of the Michigan Commonwealth Federation.

The plethora of "wildcat" walkouts demonstrates the desire of the rank and file to take up the class struggle on the industrial field. The more advanced elements in the ranks seek to translate this desire into political terms through the MCF. The same forces within the labor movement which favor capitulation, the Communist Party and the R. J. Thomas leadership of the UAW, are quick to take up the fight against the MCF.

The most vicious and irreconcilable enemy of the MCF is the Stalinist-Communist Party.

Earl Browder, reporting to the national committee of the Communist Party in January, declared: "Among the big bourgeoisie, the monopoly capitalists, there are those who will be our allies." The followers of the MCF have declared war upon these allies of the CP and the latter has taken up arms against the MCF. At the state convention of the CP of Michigan in April, the official line was laid down: "The MCF must be isolated and destroyed." And in the May issue of *The Communist*, N. Sparks, in customary CP fashion, lumps the MCF in the same pile with the American fascists and the reactionary Southern Democrats.

In attacking the MCF, the CP aims to defend its alliance with the monopolists; all political organizations, including the MCF, which even in the tiniest degree tend to fight against the big capitalists, are now labeled "fascist" by the Communists, who in 1940 defended Stalin's alliance with Hitler.

But a Labor Party has not always been "fascist." In a radio

speech on March 5, 1936, Browder sang a different tune. "The House of Morgan is the real ruler today," and we must "break the power of Wall Street." "Tweedledum and Tweedledee are still twins," said Browder, "even when one wears the cold mask of Hoover and the other the professional smile of Roosevelt." "We Communists propose," he continued, "... in every town and city, in every state, and on a national scale, to form a Farmer-Labor Party."

Times have changed, and with changing times came changes in the policies demanded by the ruler of Russia. Browder echoes Stalin's latest biddings to the American working class. J. P. Morgan? "I as a Communist am prepared to clasp his hand," says Browder in 1944. A Labor Party? "Fascist." Reactionaries become progressives with a wave of the same magic wand which transformed Mayor Frank Hague of Jersey City from the bitterest enemy of the organized labor movement into a progressive "Win the War" Democrat... with CP support.

Supporters of the MCF fully recognize that the CP is their mortal enemy, an enemy whose policies are in no way adapted to the needs of the working class but which merely put in American terminology the newest decisions of the reactionary bureaucratic ruling class of Russia headed by Stalin.

### **R. J. Thomas and the MCF**

While the CP is easily detected as a foe, R. J. Thomas and his supporters appear more conciliatory and reasonable; nevertheless they are united with the CP on this question. The leaders of the MCF refuse to recognize Thomas as an opponent—a more subtle, less decisive one than the CP, but an opponent nonetheless. They hail him as a potential friend.

The *MCF News* reports that Thomas, at the PAC convention on April 21, "branded the Republican Party as reactionary and disloyal and described the Democratic Party as chaotic." The *News* overlooks one simple fact in this roundabout attempt to make a pro-Labor Party spokesman out of Thomas: in his own way he supports the Democratic Party.

As the CP thunders "Isolate and destroy the MCF," Thomas more tactfully argues: "Now is not the time for a Labor Party." Thomas' formulation is neither a conciliatory gesture toward the MCF nor a promise for the formation of a Labor Party. His mildness in contrast to the intransigence of the CP is explained on entirely different grounds. The Stalinists support Roosevelt and oppose a Labor Party in return for Roosevelt's concessions to Stalin. Thomas supports Roosevelt and opposes a Labor Party because of Roosevelt's concessions to labor. The Stalinists are principally concerned with extracting concessions from labor for Roosevelt... that is the price they are willing to pay for the alliance with Stalin (Teheran). Thomas, however, is concerned with extracting a few concessions from Roosevelt for labor. In return for these concessions, which become fewer and farther between the more loyal labor is to Roosevelt, Thomas surrenders labor's political independence.

The difference between the Communists and the Thomasites came into the open at the last UAW convention, where the CP-Addes group demanded full unqualified support to Roosevelt while the Reuther faction insisted upon a conditional wait-and-see policy.

While the CP loudly and enthusiastically proclaims support to Roosevelt, Thomas permits himself the luxury of an occasional criticism or a politely worded "demand" upon the President... but he gives his support despite these protestations. The wait-and-see policy, of course, fooled no one, least

of all Roosevelt, who, if anything, has become even more anti-labor since the last UAW convention, coming out for a draft-labor act. Nevertheless the CIO has already thrown its support to him for a fourth term.

Although different considerations motivate him, Thomas solidarizes with the Communists in practice. "Now is not the time" is a more tactful way of saying: now is the time for full support to Roosevelt and his friends in the Democratic Party. This policy, implemented on the industrial field by the no-strike pledge and the disciplining of union militants, is expressed on the political field by the organization of the Political Action Committee of the CIO.

On a national scale the PAC is a determined foe of the Labor Party movement. Sidney Hillman, national chairman of the PAC, hailed the dissolution of the Farmer-Labor Party of Minnesota into the Democratic Party as an "outstanding demonstration of progressive unity." In Michigan, Thomas and the CIO carry out the same policy by bending their efforts to revive a discredited, defeated, and impotent Democratic Party machinery. Thomas and other CIO leaders were elected as delegates to the Democratic national convention at the state convention of the Democrats.

Thomas wants labor "in politics," not for its own program and platform but for that of the Roosevelt wing of the Democratic Party. When he declares, as he did at one of the PAC conferences, that "Labor seeks a voice in government, not the domination of government," he summarizes the political rôle he would assign to the CIO as a loyal adviser and collaborator of so-called liberal capitalist politicians. Somebody will "dominate" government; if not labor, then the big capitalists. Unless labor aims to "dominate" government it has no method of carrying out its own political program. The duplicity of this approach to politics was exposed at the Wayne County PAC convention where resolutions in favor of a guaranteed annual wage were adopted but a proposal to endorse only those candidates who are pledged to support such a program was defeated.

At the Democratic state convention, Frankenstein delivered the keynote address stating: "give us a liberal platform and we will take care of the MCF." Like Frankenstein's speech, the "now-is-not-the-time" formula is designed more for the ears of the Democratic politicians than for labor. "Not now," you see, but maybe later. . . . You'd better give us something or we may do something rash. . . . It is intended as a prod at the ward heelers . . . but that something rash never comes. That is as certain as it was guaranteed that the CIO would support Roosevelt for a fourth term despite the wait-and-see policy.

At the Wayne County convention the supporters of Reuther and Thomas united with the supporters of the MCF to keep the CP out of control of the PAC executive board. Some supporters of the MCF delude themselves into interpreting this move as a display of sympathy by Thomas for a Labor Party. Not at all. The Thomasites in this bloc realize that while the CP favors 100 per cent capitulation to Roosevelt they can only offer 2, 50, or 90 per cent.

Not to recognize Thomas as an antagonist of independent political action, or worse, to imagine that he is a friend and consequently to pacify and conciliate him instead of fighting against him would be suicidal for the MCF. Likewise for Walter Reuther, who boasted boldly that "the policy of the CIO is not to become the tail to the kite of any political group" at the April PAC convention in Detroit where the CIO became the tail to the Democratic kite. Reuther's chief rôle in

the UAW is to make radical speeches like this one in favor of the ruinous old line policies.

### **MCF Leaders, Thomas, CP**

Thomas and the CP are a powerful force in the CIO in Michigan but their opposition to the formation of a Labor Party can be defeated. Not easily or automatically, it goes without saying, but by a sustained and consistent fight for the MCF. Leftwing workers can have confidence in victory because all evidence demonstrates that Michigan union men are looking for a new program and a new leadership. How else explain the wave of walkouts, the overturn of local administrations in the last UAW elections, the powerful vote—156 out of 379—at the PAC convention for the MCF motion to endorse only candidates pledged to the annual wage? Above all, what else explains the enthusiastic response to the call for the March 4-5 study conference of the MCF.

But the leaders of the MCF, hesitant, vacillatory and unable to maintain an independent policy in action, have been frittering away the strength of the Labor Party movement at the very time when it needs clarification and consolidation.

It would seem almost axiomatic that the first task of the MCF is to campaign within the unions for support. That is where the main base for the new party lies. The temporary state committee, however, seems to think differently and in one of its first directives announces:

"The state committee wishes to stress the fact that this is a broad party of common people and urges all members considering the formation of clubs to lay the greatest emphasis on geographical clubs which enroll 'all the neighbors.'"

Anxious to avoid any semblance of "factionalism" and to avert a conflict with Thomas within the unions, the MCF heads apparently hope to build their new party in the neighborhoods, achieve some successes, come to Thomas and say, "We told you so. Now will you support us?"

At the March 4-5 conference of the MCF, Matthew Hammond, chairman, insisted over and over again that "this movement has no connection with any factions in the unions," as though it were possible to build a labor party without a pro-labor party faction within the unions. Hammond ignores the fact that one year ago, he and others were the pro-new party faction at the Michigan State Convention of the CIO and that without that faction there never would have been an MCF. And without a faction organized for a thrust against R. J. Thomas and the political ideas he represents there never will be a powerful MCF.

In the first place they do not recognize the need for a *class* Labor Party but seek a "party of the common people." Second, they stand on a platform of "Win the War," and thereby destroy the connection which must exist between labor's political struggles and its struggles in the mines, and shops. Third, they support Roosevelt and thus undermine the platform of an independent labor party. Fourth, they seek to compromise with the enemies of the Labor Party and capitulate to the PAC supporters of the Democratic Party. These policies must be understood, abandoned, and replaced with their direct opposite if the MCF is to become a potent political arm of labor.

### **Party of the "Common People" or Labor Party**

To avoid a "narrow" labor base for the MCF, its leaders favor not a Labor Party but a "broad" party of the common people. This line of reasoning determined the name of the new party after proposals for "Labor Party" and "Farmer-Labor Party" had been rejected at the original conference.

The State Committee, in the same spirit, reserves the right to limit the total vote of all bloc affiliates to 45 per cent of the total vote aimed at the coming state convention, a proposal obviously aimed against "union domination" in the hope of encouraging middle-class participation in the party. The identical false considerations will inevitably dictate the watering down of the MCF platform and program.

But there is not and cannot be any political party which genuinely fights for the common people other than one which is clearly and unambiguously a Labor Party. The concept, "common people," includes sections of the population with frequently divergent aims, who may follow labor on decisive issues but who nevertheless have points of contact and agreement with the possessing classes. While the interests of the working class are completely and consistently in opposition to those of the big capitalists, the middle-class sections of the "common people" have a divided loyalty; on the one hand, they themselves are oppressed and exploited by the big monopolists while on the other, they themselves are small-time employers of labor or sellers to labor. All the common people can fight against the big capitalists provided they ally themselves with a labor party and a labor program. If labor dilutes its own program and party, hoping to catch the common people, it thereby dilutes its fight against the big capitalists and will lose the support of the non-labor sections of the population. It was an attempt at compromise of this kind by the German Social-Democratic Party that enabled Hitler to win over the German middle class and crush the labor movement.

Let us suppose that a neighborhood is terrorized by a gang of racketeers and the inhabitants band together to drive out these extortionists. They appeal to property owners in the neighborhood for financial and other assistance to procure weapons of all kinds for the fight.

"Yes, yes, I am with you," say the property owners, "but no violence lest my property be destroyed or damaged."

"All right, we will compromise," say the reasonable leaders of the "common people." "Support us and we will oppose the gangsters but without violence. We will firmly impress upon them by resolutions, petitions, and letters that we intend to pay them tribute no longer."

But the property owner and all concerned soon discover how impotent are words and appeals before the guns and bombs of the gangsters.

"What chance can the 'common people' have," concludes the property owner. "I'd do better to remain in safe neutrality." Through their compromise the "common people" not only lose their ally but are beaten by the gangsters as well.

Let labor organize and fight resolutely, uncompromisingly, and intelligently against the Sixty Families, and the rest of the "common people," seeing the possibility of victory against a common foe, will cast in their lot.

This question, the attitude of labor toward its potential allies, will be discussed many times in the MCF, but regardless of any theory, one fact remains: the MCF will be a party based on the mass labor movement or no party at all.

Thus far its main support is from labor. The original sponsoring committee, "The Committee for the Promotion of a Farmer-Labor Party," was composed mainly of unionists. The first MCF conference was dominated by delegates and members of the CIO and AFL. The main strength of the MCF is in the industrial areas of Michigan.

The officialdom of the MCF is constituted by a group of local union officers headed by Matthew Hammond, president

of local 157 UAW, and chairman of the MCF and Paul Silver, president of local 351 UAW and Organizational Director of the MCF. These people, finding their unions unable to make any serious gains in the face of the government opposition and facing the weakening and possible destruction of their unions together with the whole CIO movement, turn to politics as a way out of the impasse.

However, they only partially approach the truth. Yes, an effective fight against the employers is impossible today unless the workers go into politics. But effective political action by labor is likewise impossible without a conscious battle in every phase of political and economic life. If politics is confined to pure and simple election activities—politics in the narrow sense—it is as impotent as pure-and-simple trade unionism. The Labor Party must demonstrate in every-day life the connection of its program with matters that concern workingmen most directly. The most vital of these problems press for solution inside the union movement.

Supporters of The NEW INTERNATIONAL, LABOR ACTION, and the Workers Party, proponents of a consistent policy of independent political action by labor, advocate that the labor movement turn the helm and embark upon a clear course of class struggle on the economic and the political field. Toward this end we propose, on a nation-wide scale the adoption of new policies, a new fighting leadership by the union movement and the formation of a fighting Labor Party. We support the MCF as one step in this direction.

The leaders of the MCF on the other hand have no all-sided program in harmony with the requirement of today. This is excluded by their slogan "Win the War," which they hold with Thomas and the C. P. Hammond and Silver can unite in a bloc for common electoral activities but they are unable to join together, with other progressives in their own international union, to fight in an organized and systematic fashion for new policies. At the last UAW convention they were lost inside the Reuther caucus and as the 1944 convention approaches we hear no word from them.

A few days after Thomas had publicly assailed the strikers of the Rouge Aircraft Division and laid them open to disciplinary action by the company, Silver eulogized him at a PAC conference and promised to vote for him at the coming convention. He laid it on so thick that Thomas replied: "I am glad to have the support of my friend Paul Silver, but what has that got to do with the subject under discussion (politics)."

Ben Garrison, president of Ford local 400 in January and a sponsor of the MCF, declared in a report to the membership of his local, after detailing the attacks by the management upon the union, "in the face of many more unfavorable attitudes which the company will undoubtedly take in the future, I call upon the workers in the plant to uphold the no-strike pledge."

In none of the literature of the MCF is there a serious criticism of the top officialdom of the CIO or of their policies in the unions and in the political field.

We can only conclude that the Hammond and Silver group, which leads the MCF, looks upon the new party not as part of a program of renewed class struggle but as a substitute for such a program.

#### **Socialist Party and Socialist Workers Party**

Closely associated with the leading core of the MCF is a group of educators and professionals following the more or less socialistically inclined liberal policy characteristic of the Socialist Party. This group has the illusion that it is helping to lead and influence the movement when it is actually being

led by the nose. They function inside the MCF in the same way as in the labor movement as a whole. In the union movement they have no independent policy and consequently are able to push themselves into minor posts and avoid any conflict with the trade union tops. In the MCF they seek a forum where they can be permitted to sneak in an occasional radical-liberal speech and into whose program they will be allowed to insert a few egregiously socialistic formulations. For these privileges they refrain from pressing for any point of view of their own and in fact have no consistent program of their own to propose.

The MCF, in its official literature, points out the need for independent participation in elections. It must recognize the need for independent class UNION policies.

Regular readers of *The New International* will be interested in the attitude of the Socialist Workers Party and the *Militant* toward the MCF. On the eve of the March 4 MCF conference, the *Militant* editorialized as follows:

"There is danger that in their impatience to get on with the formal organization of a labor party, the militants will be led into taking precipitate and premature action which may result in an abortive formation and compromise the entire labor party movement." And on its own account the *Militant* proposes, "Through the medium of a referendum or a special convention the independent labor party can be launched in Michigan under the official auspices of the state CIO."

So well attended and enthusiastic was the "unofficial" MCF conference that this policy was forgotten and not a single delegate took the floor at the main sessions to argue for this point of view. Of course, the SWP can argue, as it usually does, that on grounds of "caution" it was inadvisable to speak. The theory of "caution" is reduced to a farce when its authors, through caution, refrain from urging this very caution upon the labor movement.

The *Militant* policy was unrealistic and at bottom an attempt to confine the labor party movement to forms which would be acceptable to the top union leaders. Their policy in regard to the MCF is almost indistinguishable from that of the socialistic-liberals. Since the formation of the MCF the *Militant* has remained completely uncritical of the rôle played by the Hammond-Silver group in the PAC discussed convention in Detroit, criticizes the Stalinists and R. J. Thomas but not a word of criticism of the MCF leaders who capitulated to them.

#### **For Roosevelt or for a Labor Party?**

The labor movement must choose between two irreconcilably opposed lines of actions. *Either* build an independent labor party and oppose the candidates of the two old capitalist parties *or* support Roosevelt or some other "friend" of labor and his friends in the old parties. The MCF is on record for the first and the Stalinists and R. J. Thomas for the second of these two platforms.

Hammond and Silver, however, try to walk a tight rope between divergent courses. While the MCF, as a party, does not endorse Roosevelt, its leaders, acting as they please, call for his reelection. Their clever maneuvers, aimed at reconciling the irreconcilable, have led them and the labor party movement up a blind alley.

On what grounds can the MCF leaders argue in favor of support to Roosevelt? Is he not a Democrat?

"Yes, we are for a Labor Party," they may argue, "but since we are too weak to elect our own man let us choose the more favorable of the two capitalistic candidates."

"But," one points out, "Roosevelt uses the army to break strikes, puts over the Little Steel formula, continues Jim Crow in the armed forces, calls for a national service act, etc., etc."

"We know all that, and we oppose it," is the reply, "but a Dewey or a Bricker would be still worse."

This is the theory that we must support the "lesser of two evils" all over again.

#### **Lesser Evil and R. J. Thomas**

Once one adopts the standpoint of the "lesser evil" theory he has conceded everything to R. J. Thomas, and all the protestations about the value and necessity of an independent party are reduced to zero. Thomas carries out his line all the way, from big things (presidential campaign) to small ones (state and municipal). Hammond and Silver surrender to Thomas on the major issue and try to hold up the banner of independent politics on small matters. But if one concedes the advisability of supporting Roosevelt, why gag at supporting his stooges in the Democratic Party? Why hesitate to become a faction inside the Democratic Party and throw support to Roosevelt as the CP and the PAC do?

Having supported Roosevelt the MCF leaders have no effective reply and they wonder why the MCF makes headway slowly!

Blaine Marrin, a member of the State Committee of the MCF and a member of the executive board of the PAC, has found one solution to this dilemma. He has entered the lists as candidate for State representative on the Democratic Party ticket. Thus far, to the best of our knowledge, he remains a member of the State Committee of the MCF.

Having surrendered at least half-way to the lesser-evil theory, the State Committee cannot decide whether it is really on safe ground in advocating independent political action. The Committee is apparently unable to decide which Democrats to oppose in the coming elections and has been compelled to call a special conference one month before the state convention to discuss this knotty problem. The call for this conference, signed by Hammond, reads:

"For those offices where there are both Republican and Democratic contestants, look over the records of the two and if they seem to have essentially the same philosophy we might be able to make a good showing."

The MCF was founded in the belief that the Democratic and Republican Parties are both instruments of the capitalist class and therefore have the same "essential philosophy." When Hammond states it as a puzzle, not as a fact, he throws into question the advisability of forming and building an MCF.

We do not imply that the MCF must run a presidential candidate in the single state of Michigan or be damned. But it is necessary to explain that regardless of who wins the presidency the offensive against the labor movement will continue and that consequently the MCF can support neither Roosevelt nor the Republican nominee.

It would be futile to deny that the "lesser-evil" theory is alluring and easily deceptive or to overlook the fact that millions of workers will go to the polls in November and cast their ballots for Roosevelt on this basis.

But it is also true that there has been a steady drift of sentiment away from Roosevelt and the Democratic Party by millions of the American people who now have only the Republican Party to go to. Unless a Labor Party organizes the dissatisfaction of the American people and directs it along progressive pro-labor lines, some fantastic movement will direct it along a reactionary anti-labor road. This is just what happened to the German workers whose Social-Democratic Party



upported Brüning as a lesser evil to Hitler and ended up with Hitler victory. In Austria, Spain, and France the workers succumbed to the same ideas.

Does that mean that because the leaders of the MCF support Roosevelt in 1944 the MCF is doomed to destruction? No, but it does mean that unless the labor movement abandons its lesser-evil theory before it is too late, the defeat of labor in the long run by fascism is dangerously possible.

### Unity Compromise

While the Hammond-Silver group advocates a fourth term for Roosevelt, the socialistic-liberal group prefers its own well-meaning but ineffectual candidate, Norman Thomas. Agreement between the two is maintained by a formula impossible to uphold and consistently violated. This agreement is nowhere written or stated but is nevertheless in force.

To appease the Hammond-Silver pro-Roosevelt leadership, who want a Labor Party but who do not want to be "too fanatical" about it, it is agreed that the new party is to take NO STAND WHATSOEVER ON ROOSEVELT. And we thus witness the amazing spectacle of a new party organized immediately prior to a Presidential campaign making no reference by even a single word in all its printed material to the President.

To satisfy the anti- or non-Roosevelt forces the official policy of the MCF reads:

"The party may or may not run candidates for any post on the ballot as seems best under prevailing circumstances; but the party shall never endorse a candidate of a rival party. Being a state party it does not run a presidential candidate in 1944."

And, "The individual declares that he is not a member of any rival political party and will not support a rival party. He may vote for candidates [other than MCF candidates] for posts which the MCF does not contest."

And, "The individual will not run for office on any party ticket other than MCF."

This compromise is typical of the fake radicalism of the Socialist Party which invariably avoids posing issues clearly and sharply. The MCF is not to support any capitalist party candidates but in order not to offend anyone the NAMES of the most prominent representatives of the Democratic Party or Republican Party are kept in the shade of anonymous obscurity.

I am against extortion but I refuse to say I am against Al Capone. After all, he may have some friends among the common people. I condemn the crime but remain silent about the criminal responsible for it. That is the liberal-socialistic policy carried over into the MCF. I condemn capitalist candidates but refuse to mention Roosevelt.

As always, the advocates of a radicalism "in general" become the hangers-on in practice of a policy which they repudiate in general and in private. The pro-Roosevelt forces get all they want now out of the tacit compromise.

Roosevelt is guaranteed against attack inside the MCF while at the same time Hammond and Silver may both come out publicly as they have for the fourth term. The Detroit daily press announced that the failure of the MCF to put a presidential candidate in the field was an endorsement of Roosevelt. The literature of the MCF attacks the Republican Party and the Democratic Party but remains silent on the anti-labor measures for which Roosevelt is responsible. It criticizes the Democrats in so far as they oppose Roosevelt's own program, attacking them for favoring the poll tax, for oppos-

ing renegotiation of war contracts, for opposing the soldier-vote bill, etc. A back-handed reference to the "little steel" formula absolves Roosevelt of responsibility. "Democratic wage-czar, Vinson, held down the hourly rate of wage earners, while the cost of living soared. . . ." So you see, it was Vinson, not Roosevelt, who held down wages!

The gentlemen's agreement between Hammond-Silver and the socialistic liberals can remain intact only within the confines of their own meetings and discussions where embarrassing and extraneous matters (Roosevelt, the "liberal" democrats) can be shelved by common consent. But when the MFCers try to maintain this same agreement outside, within the labor movement it falls apart. How untenable is the agreement between the two groups was made completely evident at the first convention of the Wayne County Political Action Committee on April 21.

### MCF and the Political Action Committee

The Political Action Committee of Wayne County, as everywhere else, aims to "work with progressives in the Democratic Party to get liberal candidates" and opposes the organization of an independent party. The MCF opposes endorsement of Democrats or Republicans and supports only its own independent candidates. To the uninitiated, these two policies seem to be diametric opposites, but not to Hammond and Silver. They support the policies of both the MCF and PAC.

Hammond and Silver and a group of other MCF adherents represented their locals at the PAC convention. It is permissible and advisable in many instances for the advocates of an independent Labor Party to participate in all kinds of gatherings of workers to promote their ideas. BUT THE MCF LEADERS DID NOT GO TO THE PAC CONVENTION TO FIGHT FOR THE POLICIES OF THE MCF BUT TO SUPPORT THE COUNTER-POLICIES OF THE PAC. A battalion can enter the territory controlled by an enemy either to fight on his soil or to turn over its arms and desert.

Not a single MCF leader took the floor at any point during the convention to oppose support to the candidates of the Democratic Party. One week previously, Thomas had been elected delegate to the Democratic national convention. No word of protest from the MCFers. Ben Garrison, on the State Committee of the MCF and former president of local 400, acted as chairman of the resolutions committee reporting out pro-Democratic resolutions. Hammond was prominent as chairman of the credentials committee but unheard from in all the political discussions. Silver maintained silence at every key point in the discussions. Tucker P. Smith, publicity director of the MCF, presented a motion at the end of the convention providing for the endorsement only of those candidates who are publicly pledged to the support of the guaranteed annual wage. But seventy-five per cent of the significance of this motion was destroyed when Smith previously swallowed the pro-Roosevelt, pro-Democratic Party line adopted by the convention.

Thomas startled the membership of the MCF in a public speech at the convention, revealing that "leading members" of the MCF at a meeting in New York with Sidney Hillman had promised to support candidates endorsed by the PAC. If that is their policy, said Thomas, then I can go along with them. Even this couldn't get a word out of Hammond or Silver at the convention. The MCF News, official bulletin of the MCF, referred to this statement by Thomas and I quote the full text of this unbelievable analysis. "He [Thomas] made friendly references to the MCF."

If a corporation executive met with a representative of the union and reported "He promised not to make any demands for the workers. If that is his policy I can go along with that," the editor of the MCF News would write "He made friendly references to the union."

The PAC constitution provides for the removal of executive board members who campaign against PAC endorsed candidates. Although the PAC has made clear that it intends to endorse Democrats, Paul Silver and Blaine Marrin, both members of the MCF State Committee, accepted posts on the board. Marrin has already been reported as a candidate for the Democratic party nomination for state representative. The only course left for Hammond and Silver is to oppose running MCF candidates in any district where a PAC-endorsed Democrat is contesting the post. They can thus avoid opposing a PAC-endorsed candidate but they will also "avoid" fighting for the principle of independent workers' politics. In return for this tacit support to the PAC candidates, they hope to run an unimportant candidate here and there with the benign tolerance of R. J. Thomas and even to get PAC support for such candidates. This policy is *dangerously close* to that of the ALP in New York, whose main aim was to support old-line candidates while it ran an occasional "independent."

If the MCF should gain the support of the PAC for a few of its candidates in return for remaining silent on the deal with the Democratic Party it will have gained an inch and lost a mile. A poor preacher indeed who would close his eyes to a brothel in return for the contributions of its keeper.

All these questions will be before the Constitutional Con-

vention of the MCF at the end of July. The MCF is justifiably supported by the best elements in the union movement and is a welcome sign that the possibilities exist for a serious development toward independent working class politics. If we have adopted a critical attitude in this article it is to help preserve and extend these possibilities and prevent their being derailed by the inconsistent policies now followed by the leadership of the MCF.

The socialistic-liberal group "privately" supports its own candidates, Norman Thomas, etc. The Hammond-Silver group "privately" supports Democratic candidates. But neither are able to present a clear policy in opposition to that of R. J. Thomas and the PAC.

If the MCF is not to travel the road of the ALP in New York and end up as a wing of the Democratic Party, a clear and consistent policy is necessary. In the unions, progressive groups vital for the growth of the MCF must be formed to fight for enforcing class struggle policies; the MCF must openly take the field as a Labor Party based upon the union movement; open or tacit support to the candidates of the Democratic or Republican Parties, from Roosevelt down, must be outlawed; the PAC policy of supporting "good" Democrats must be condemned and combatted.

LABOR ACTION, THE NEW INTERNATIONAL and the Workers Party have long fought for just that program and it is in the growth of their power and influence that the best guarantee for the building of a strong, fighting MCF lies.

L. SMITH.

# Toward a New Trade Union Program

## *Changing the Direction of the Labor Movement*

In the May issue of *The New Internationalist* I discussed the trade union leadership in relation to the war, the no-strike pledge and the stabilization of wages. This article is to consider trade union leadership in relation to the economic and political needs of the working class and the programmatic reorientation of the labor movement. This question arises very acutely today and in a very practical way out of the most recent experiences of the organized labor movement not only with the trade union leadership but with industry and government. The main question is: how shall the working class secure the economic and political leadership which will provide that program necessary for promoting class-consciousness and raising the political level of the masses.

We do not ask: how shall the masses be made aware of the necessity for participating in politics, for even the trade union bureaucracy of the CIO is today conducting a nation-wide campaign to dispel political disinterestedness and inertness. This leadership has established a Political Action Committee for the purpose not only of engendering interest in "politics" in general but for concrete action in support of a particular party and a certain candidate. We pose the more restricted question of class-conscious political action, procedure and organization.

### **Policy of Political Action Committee**

Under cover of vague but profuse statements on the neces-

sity for labor to become interested in "politics," the PAC of the CIO and various internationals endorse President Roosevelt for a fourth term; before he has announced his intention to run, before the national committee of the Democratic Party has indicated its campaign platform and before the convention has met to decide the platform and select the candidates. Their announcement in support of Roosevelt came also of course before the meeting of the Republican Party convention. This means that so far as the CIO bureaucracy is concerned, neither party will be faced with the necessity to do more than utter the ancient platitudes and shibboleths on "the dignity of labor," "labor is not a commodity," and "labor is entitled to its just reward." Furthermore, the CIO leadership is willing to commit five million workers to the support of the Democratic Party, whose Administration comes increasingly under the domination of the Southern section of the party. The CIO opposes the poll-tax while at the same time endorsing the party of the poll-tax. It fights against anti-labor legislation and simultaneously supports the party of the framers of the Smith-Connally Act. Murray, Thomas, Hillman *et al.* speak out for Negro equality while in the next sentence they endorse the party of Eastland of Mississippi, who proclaims boldly in the Senate that the "white boys in the South Pacific are fighting for white supremacy." They endorse the party of Bilbo, whose teaching is that "all history and biology for the past six thousand years have established the superiority of the white race." Murray sneered at national

service legislation, calling it "quack medicine," but a few months later insisted that the CIO endorse the party whose leader proposed that "slave legislation."

### And the Policy of the AFL

The AFL claims to follow a wiser course: they do not put all of their eggs into one political party basket. They are more realistic. They put all their eggs into a basket let down by Eric Johnston of the United States Chamber of Commerce and Robert Gaylord of the National Association of Manufacturers. Green, Johnston and Gaylord are seeking an "economic trinity—of agriculture, management and labor..." They are a holy family proclaiming the deification of "free enterprise." The AFL will find itself in the very embarrassing position of seeing its saintly president seated not only at the same banquet table with Johnston and Gaylord but with Earl Browder, who has become a prophet of free enterprise and one of capitalism's most fervid defenders and well-wishers.

Moving out from its alliance with the Chamber of Commerce and the NAM, the AFL will support both parties. Two of its pillars, Tobin and Hutcheson, are already spokesmen for the Democratic and Republican Parties respectively within the ranks of the AFL. Whereas the NAM and the Chamber of Commerce will contribute money to both parties and both candidates, the Federation will act in a more modest manner and content itself with endorsing and voting for the candidates of both parties.

### The Lewis Enigma

John L. Lewis, who is called wiser this year than in 1940, has not announced his "politics" yet. In many respects Lewis' *UMWA Journal* has been serving a strange and somewhat cryptic conglomeration to its readers. The editorial utterances of Editor Adams quite often leave us in a quandary and with many questions that we would like to put to this Horatio at the bridge. What does all this radicalism mean that we read in the *UMWA Journal*? Much of it sounds like mere street-corner ranting: against the "monopolies," against "Wall Street," against the "invisible government" which, according to the *UMWA Journal*, is headed by the investment firm of Lehman Brothers, who, as everyone knows, is the banking house of former Governor Herbert Lehman, who, as everyone also knows, is a Jew. While we have the feeling that the recent number of the *Journal* which contained the editorial on the "invisible government" sounds too much like Henry Ford's old *Dearborn Independent*, we do not intend to go into this question here. We are more concerned now with the general political line of Lewis and the *Journal*.

This is not clear and we may have to wait until the miners' convention next September, when Lewis may be expected to bring up the whole matter of the elections. If the *Journal* gives any line, Lewis is still violently anti-Roosevelt. Whether or not he would have supported Willkie again cannot be known now since, as the *Journal* says, Willkie "was given the bum's rush." Some editorials sound as though they had been influenced by the opinions of the *Chicago Tribune*. Most of them are strongly nationalist and at times the flavor of "America First" can be detected. A great deal of the opinion expressed in the *Journal* is in language that reminds one of some of the strong language of the IWW. All in all, it is quite a mixture and so far it is impossible to tell just what the *Journal* is trying to say. On the question of the war, Lewis, like all the other labor leaders, is in full support. He only expresses himself on occasions when he evidently feels it neces-

sary to make this point clear for tactical reasons. Despite the fact that Lewis is regarded as the ablest leader in the country, politically he is no less reactionary and opportunist than all the rest.

This is how the matter stands with the labor organizations and in the ranks of the leadership. It is necessary to examine more closely the "politics" of the trade union bureaucracy and the type of leadership it is giving the labor movement. One fact stands out clearly: the politics of the labor bureaucracy is a declaration against the class independence of the unions and of the working class. It is a declaration that the unions shall be independent only in the administrative sense and independent only in so far as they are encouraged from time to time to shift their allegiance from one bourgeois party to the other. This is the type of "independence" advocated by the AFL.

The unions, according to the bureaucracy, must have the right to elect their own officials, to administer their own affairs and to bargain collectively with the employers. Added to this administrative independence is the demand of the trade union bureaucracy that there shall be no "politics" in the unions. Trade unions, they say, are economic organizations of labor to be concerned with employer-labor relations which involve collective bargaining for the purpose of improving the economic position of the working class.

### The Source of Labor Difficulties

While this is at least in part a correct estimate of the rôle of trade unions in capitalist society, the trade union bureaucracy sees the trade union only as it is today and envisages the labor movement as functioning eternally within the framework of bourgeois society. For the orthodox trade union leader the highest point in the development of trade unionism is the successful establishment of collective bargaining. Whenever and wherever the unions win the "right of collective bargaining," these leaders take the position that peace and harmony will reign between labor and capital. Labor and capital join hands and function in the interest of society as a whole.

Herein of course lies the beginning of the chief difficulties which labor faces. From such a position and such naïve analysis flows the repudiation of class distinctions, class struggle, and the enthronement of the doctrine and practice of class peace and class collaboration. Class differences are eliminated, the interests of labor and capital are correlated and the concept of nation, of national interest, of the people and the welfare of the people, arises. That this analysis does not fit the facts, or that it does not work, worries the trade union leadership not at all. In the first place, the majority of them do not understand the problem and the very small minority who do are motivated by personal interests, bureaucratic prestige, pessimism or renegacy from the progressive attitudes of former years.

A trade union leadership with such an outlook on capitalist society and the function of the labor movement in that society, cannot provide the impetus for the class independence of the unions nor can that leadership divorce itself completely from capitalist politics and bourgeois political organizations. It is impossible under their conservative leadership to make clear the great class divide between the proletariat and bourgeoisie. "No politics" to them comes to mean no independent working class politics, no political activity by the proletariat as a class in capitalist society. If there is no class political activity of the proletariat in capitalist society, then there can be no such thing as sustained economic activity of the working

class as a class. This, for the reason that economic and political activity in bourgeois society are indissoluble. The so-called economic organizations of the capitalist are at the same time political organizations. They are not political parties but they are the "outside" organizations which supply political programs to their political parties. This is not the only sustenance which the Chambers of Commerce and the other economic organizations of the bourgeoisie supply to the capitalist parties. They supply leadership. The bourgeois has established a configuration of relations which comprehend the whole of his life, crowned by the capitalist state with its bourgeois-democratic government. The bourgeois goes his way and pursues his activities with a high degree of class consciousness and class solidarity. The point I wish to emphasize is that the ruling class integrates its economic needs with its political demands and it is the economic needs which give content to its political demands and engender the political activity of the bourgeoisie as a class. This class takes over the state and state power for the protection of and the enhancement of its basic economic interests.

### **Class Struggle Through Unions**

When the trade union bureaucracy seeks to orient the labor movement away from proletarian class politics, it does not lead the movement to neutral ground but into the arena of bourgeois politics. It cannot be otherwise with a leadership committed to the principles of class peace and class collaboration. There is no neutral ground for classes in capitalist society. The ruling class understands this. It pursues the class struggle with unrelenting vigor and persistence. The titular heads of the class, with their academic ideologists and petty-bourgeois sycophants, always attempt to make it appear that the bourgeois leader and his class speak for the nation as a whole; for the whole people. He claims to represent the present and historical interests of all the people. His announced program is always a "people's program," his political organizations are organizations of the people; the government is "of, for and by the people" and the bourgeois vows that it "shall not perish from the earth."

The proletariat, however, in the course of its experience in the actual class struggle, becomes aware that this is not a true picture of the society in which it lives. There are blots on the escutcheon: economic crises, insecurity, extremes of wealth and poverty and ever-recurring international wars. The most advanced section of the proletariat, influenced by the revolutionists, develops to class consciousness and challenges the representations made by the bourgeoisie. Not only is the right of the bourgeois to lead challenged, but also his right to private property and domination of the state. This does not disturb the ruling class unduly because it has at hand an ally: an ally from the working class itself, the trade union leadership. Yesterday it was Gompers, Mitchell, Morrison today it is Murray, Green, Lewis, Thomas. These leaders must play this rôle and perform this service.

The small and circumscribed orbit of their thinking, their acceptance of bourgeois political and economic concepts, their class collaboration makes of them purveyors of the ideology of an alien class to the proletariat which they represent. They endorse capitalism and give it their full support. They endorse and support the political organizations of the bourgeoisie. They have no class economic and political program for the proletariat. They seek a way to resolve all the contradictions of capitalist society: whether in war or peace. More than this, they tell the working class that it has a duty to solve the prob-

lems of the bourgeoisie. They advise the proletariat that it is possible for labor to solve the complex problems of capitalist society, within the framework of that society. This can be the only meaning of the statement of R. J. Thomas that if the employers will not act in a disinterested and patriotic manner during wartime and in the national interest, then labor must.

### **A Petty Bourgeois Ideology**

This anti- or non-class struggle attitude of the labor bureaucracy demonstrates their essentially petty bourgeois class rôle. In relationship to capitalism and the bourgeoisie they belong to the working class but their economic and political thinking is that of the middle class. Along with the middle class the trade union bureaucracy is nationalistic, social-patriotic and opportunist. The economic roots of their opportunism and social-patriotism grow in the soil prepared by the bourgeoisie. Like the non-labor petty bourgeois, they receive favors from the capitalist class and support from the bourgeois government so long as they keep within the confines set for them by the rulers of society.

This class collaboration and social-patriotism on the part of the trade union leadership creates a real dilemma for the working class and an obstacle in the way of progress. This leadership, which is of the working class, which represents the proletariat, but which does not represent its class interests, is nevertheless well entrenched at the head of the labor movement. This leads trade union militants and revolutionists into conflict with the bureaucracy and into conflict with the bourgeoisie and government, which comes to the aid of its trade union allies. What is far worse, this class-peace policy of the union leaders retards effective trade union or political education of labor, spreads confusion and muddle, and creates a sort of non-political sectarianism among immature trade union militants. It is difficult for this type of worker to resolve the contradiction in his mind between the fact that the trade union bureaucracy is a part of the labor movement, retain their base in the trade unions, but who in practice attempt to serve both the capitalist bourgeoisie and the labor movement. Worst of all is the development of bureaucratic concepts and practices which make it all but impossible for militant and progressive unionists to exercise their formal democratic rights and establish democratic procedures in the union.

The naïve militant is likely to think of the bureaucracy in office or a similar group seeking office as a mere "power caucus." He doesn't and cannot go behind the appearances to the real seat of the trouble, which, of course, is the class-collaboration ideology and policies of the leadership. The everyday class struggle experiences of the rank and file bring the labor movement into conflict with the policies of the bureaucracy, which ideology the leadership has absorbed from the bourgeoisie. It is only through the suppression of democracy and the establishment of bureaucratic control that the union leadership could have any success at all in holding the unions to a policy of class peace. Furthermore, the bourgeoisie is well aware that its program for labor would be unacceptable if presented directly and bearing the label of the National Association of Manufacturers. The NAM sends its program to the schools, the press, the pulpit and the government. It is from these institutions that it is transferred to the trade union bureaucracy. It should be stated that I am not considering those relatively rare occasions when the ideas and program of the bourgeoisie enter the labor movement directly through

racketeering, collusive agreements or by the speaking done by government officials at trade union conventions. These are special situations and are themselves based on the more basic classless and non-class struggle concepts of the bureaucracy.

### **Behind the Bureaucracy**

Just as the bourgeoisie cannot in general tolerate genuine democratic procedures for the masses of the people, so the trade union bureaucracy cannot tolerate genuine democracy in the unions. The trade union bureaucracy, as is the case with any other bureaucratic group in capitalist society, takes its methods from the bourgeoisie. The dictatorship which the trade union bureaucracy establishes over the labor movement has its roots in capitalist thinking and in the capitalist way of life. Its practical forms are similar to those which the bourgeoisie has established over society as a whole: that is, it is a dictatorship.

There is an important difference, to be sure. Subjectively the aims of the trade union bureaucracy are not identical with those of the bourgeoisie. They cannot be so long as bourgeois democracy lasts. Under democratic capitalism, the proletariat has a certain amount of freedom of organization and protest. This, coupled with the fact that the bureaucracy has its base in the labor movement and draws its livelihood, prestige and power from the movement. It will always seek therefore to preserve the labor movement and struggle in its own way to improve the condition of the working class. The bureaucracy are at the same time representatives of the bourgeoisie and of the proletariat. Because of the class dominance of the bourgeoisie, however, the result is the infusion of bourgeois ideas into the labor movement and at times the complete subjection of the trade unions to the will of the dominant ruling class.

This contradiction is the very essence of the difficulties of the labor movement today, and if not resolved will become the source of more pronounced and dangerous problems of the days to come. I say that subjectively the aims of the trade union bureaucracy are not those of the ruling class. But objectively, class collaboration and class harmony produce results not desired or dreamed of by trade union leaders. It is the sincere desire of Philip Murray that workers enjoy the good life of freedom and abundance, but freedom for a subject class cannot be attained by any effort at harmonizing the interests of the oppressed class with those of a dominant class exercising a social dictatorship over the whole of society.

### **Democracy and Fascism**

Also, there are no prophets of sufficient insight or prescience to say that bourgeois democracy will have a long life in the United States. Bourgeois democracy is the pre-socialist form of capitalist political organization which gives the proletariat room for class struggle, for keeping its own leaders and the leaders of government and industry under mass pressure. For the proletariat, this is the chief distinction to be made between fascism and capitalist democracy: in capitalist democracy, with its bourgeois-democratic forms, the proletariat is enabled to prosecute the class struggle with far greater vigor than under fascism. This is not generally understood by the proletariat, suffering as it does from petty-bourgeois illusions about bourgeois-democracy. The answer usually given is that "democracy" is more tolerant than fascism, there is more freedom—freedom of thought, assembly and petition. Workers have the right to organize and bargain collectively.

The trade union bureaucracy thinks that the problem of whether or not the proletariat shall support the present war

is settled when it has been stated that there are no trade unions in Germany and that if Hitler should win the workers in the United States will be reduced to the status of the German proletariat. While this statement is the brutal truth, it is not the relevant truth for the proletariat. The statement is not meaningful, is totally inadequate, useless for the working class and harmful. Identical statements were made by the French trade union bureaucracy and French liberals, and yet Hitler is in France today and the trade unions are dispersed. In order to avoid such a defeat in any other capitalist country the proletariat must lay hold of bourgeois democracy as a weapon for unrelenting class struggle. For the working class, bourgeois democracy is only a sort of instrument in the fight for complete proletarian democracy and socialism. For the proletariat to view capitalist democracy in the manner of the middle class and the labor bureaucracy, as an end in itself, is to provide the broad highway for the victory of fascism.

This analysis indicates the imperative necessity for a new orientation of the labor movement and a new trade union leadership. There are a great number of people who believe this and have said so. There is the liberal "friend of labor," the radical militant who is disgusted with the undemocratic tactics and conservatism of the bureaucracy, the union-conscious worker who in despair concludes that what is needed is another organization independent of both the AFL and the CIO, and of course the Marxian revolutionaries. Quite often, the demand is put very simply even by revolutionaries: "the unions should throw out their present leaders," "the unions need a housecleaning," the unions must do this, that and the other. Such platitudinous advice is thrown at the rank and file of the unions in utter abandon, as though these problems of the working class could be solved by radical golden texts and admonitions.

### **Militant Unionism and New Leadership**

The problem of trade union leadership must be approached with a consideration of the questions raised in this article. Such an approach must also include a deep consideration of the history of the trade union movement and the rise of the bureaucracy in that movement. In order to understand any bureaucracy and to organize the struggle against it, it is necessary to discover its roots, the source of its power, the functions it performs and its connections, economic, social and political. Bureaucracies cannot be prevented, nor retarded, nor replaced if the only weapons available are radical phrases and adjurations.

The demand for a new leadership for the trade unions, to have real meaning, must be a demand for a new program. Not merely a new program of immediate demands such as "revocation of the no-strike pledge," "restore collective bargaining" or an internal demand for "more democracy in the unions," but more far-reaching and basic demands. The demands of the labor movement today, such as the above, are correct but they are inadequate. They are simple, democratic demands already recognized by bourgeois democracy. That they are violated today indicates that the labor movement must struggle to get these rights back. But their abrogation does not indicate that a program containing these and other demands like them is a sufficient one nor that the struggle to regain these rights is of sufficient proportions. On the contrary, it is clear now to many workers that the loss of these rights is proof that the programmatic base of the labor movement is too narrow, too petty bourgeois, too bourgeois-democratic and too deeply embedded in the conceptual structure of capitalism.

If the main consideration in any concern with the need for a new trade union leadership is not placed on the demand for a new program, a new orientation and for new methods of carrying on the struggle, then we are only insisting on the replacement of one bureaucracy by another, of one "power caucus" by another. All of the revolts, "unauthorized strikes," grumblings and dissatisfaction on the part of militant trade unionists today are inchoate, primitive, but ominous demands for a new program for the movement. Explicit and implicit

in the above presentation is the thought that the new program must exceed the orbit of immediate demands, must renounce class collaboration in favor of class struggle and, above all, must raise the thinking of the proletariat to a far higher class-conscious political level.

Since I have exhausted the space allotted it will be necessary to continue the discussion of these questions to another number of *The New International*.

DAVID COOLIDGE.

# Laski, St. Paul and Stalin

## *A Prophet in Search of New Values*

The title of Laski's new book, *Faith, Reason and Civilization*, is very accurate. He seeks by reason ("historical analysis") to give civilization (capitalism in decline) a new faith (Stalinism).

Yet this book is strange and new. Laski, ardent supporter of the imperialist war, begins by a strong tribute to the heroic deeds of European youth in the war against Hitler. But as he sees victory approaching he fears that all this sacrifice and effort may have been in vain. Laski says, as he has so often said before, that capitalism must be superseded. But Churchill, the great hero of Britain in the war, is a hopeless reactionary who admired Mussolini as long as Mussolini did not attack Britain. Everywhere the outlook for the capitalist democracies is, on the whole, gloomy. We need a new faith, new values. Then the reader, with no more preparation, is hurled 2,000 years back into the world of early Christianity.

"Political convulsion seems to combine with intellectual decay to wreck the foundations of the Roman civilization." But the great writers of the Bible, "Amos or the Second Isaiah . . . Saint Paul," by "the magic of their alchemy could not only promise regeneration to an Empire in decline; by the age of Constantine they had come to dominate the whole outlook of the Western world." It is the magic of Laski's alchemy which makes Amos and Isaiah promise regeneration to the Roman Empire. Though it is true that if they and Paul had promised any such thing they could have promised it only by magic. Let us, however, follow what Laski actually tries to do. He has by now reached Chapter IV, significantly entitled "Ideas as Acts." The argument is now in full blast. We cannot quote indefinitely. Page 27 should be read and re-read. Briefly, "The victory of Christianity over paganism meant a revitalization of the human mind." And Laski immediately poses the question: "I do not think anyone can examine with care our contemporary situation without being constantly reminded that we again require some faith that will revitalize the human mind. Almost as clearly as in the declining days of the Roman Empire, our scheme of values seems to have broken down."

It is impossible to make head or tail of this historically. The Roman Empire really began to decline some two centuries at the very least after Amos, Isaiah and Paul. After Constantine adopted Christianity as the official religion, the Roman Empire fell into greater difficulties than ever. Laski, however, goes on to give us two chapters, one on the recovery, and the other on the substance of faith. Faith. Faith. Values. Values. He then proceeds to discuss "The Soviet Idea and Its Perspectives" and "The Soviet Idea and Victory." By now we are at

Page 63. Then follows the longest chapter in the book, 57 pages on "The Source of New Values." This is what really concerns Laski. His next chapter, on Epicurus and Lucretius, is proof of his interests in this book. It is only then that he takes up the modern theme, Bolshevism and Capitalism, and moves rapidly to a conclusion. Laski does not deign to argue about Stalinist Russia. He takes its desirability for granted. Like the Dean of Canterbury but with less excuse he falls back always on "Verily, verily, I say unto you . . .", "No one can help feeling . . .", "No one can deny . . .", and so on, whenever he wishes to make a point about Russia in particular. As the scheme of his book shows, he is concerned primarily with early Christianity and the search for values. We have written before and will write again of the "labor faker" politics of Laski. What we propose to do here is to deal with him on the ground he has chosen. He claims to be exhibiting "in a general way the Marxist approach to the issues with which [he] deals." The only way to expose satisfactorily this claim is to show what we consider the Marxist way of dealing with these issues. Thus we shall expose the falseness of his historical method, which is in direct co-relation with the falseness of his political conclusions and is either the cause or the effect of them.

### **The Intellectuals in Antiquity**

It is today common knowledge that the state cult of religion in the classical world was aimed deliberately at keeping the masses in subjection. In two important periods, in Greece during the time of Epicurus and in the Rome of Lucretius, a philosophical movement fiercely attacked the official state mysticism. On each occasion the movement gained wide support among intellectuals, though the extent to which it gained really popular support is disputed. It is characteristic of Laski's historical analysis that he reports the desertion of the movement by the intellectuals because they feared the revolt of the masses, and then immediately loses himself in moral denunciations of them for doing so. Their desertion, according to him, resulted in the victory of "superstition," which dominated society and defeated "reason."

This, it is presumed, is Marxism. In reality this is no more than petty-bourgeois radicalism. On a question so crucial to his whole argument, Laski does not have a single word to say about the social relations as they developed at the given stage of the process of production. This is his fundamental error and the error of most of his kind. The intellectuals who attacked the state-religions of Greece and Rome were not intellectuals in general whose supineness we must note and be aware of. They were the fruit of a rising "bourgeoisie," and as

such were the protagonists of a materialist philosophy directed against the mysticism of a land-owning aristocracy. One suggestive investigator\* claims that this "bourgeoisie" was an investing "bourgeoisie." In a commercial society, the relation between debtor and creditor, producer and consumer, becomes an abstract relation. The investor therefore sees himself as an isolated individual, in opposition to the land-owner of the Gens who sees himself as part of an organic society. As carefully as he calculates his investments he calculates his pleasures, hence the hedonism of the Epicureans. In physics he sees nature as a collection of atoms united together in an ordered universe, etc. But this incipient capitalism which at various periods in the classical world was able to challenge landed property never became economically strong enough to supersede it. Marx states that the history of Rome was the history of landed property. No less and no more. No rival class emerged. The final breakdown of that economic order threw the whole society into chaos. Intellectuals, faithful or unfaithful, could not have saved it.

Yet Laski writes sentence after sentence like this, "The Rome that Sallust depicts for us had already begun to lose that inner integrity..." Inner integrity indeed! Maybe that inner integrity was saved by the magic alchemy of Amos and Isaiah. But lost in the pursuit and recovery of inner integrity and faith and values, Laski shows little conception of Christianity in its relation to social forces. Hear him again, "In the result it [Christianity] had relatively little influence on the realm of social constitution because..." Because what? Because "as it was shaped by Paul and his successors it emphasized this life only as the vestibule to eternity, and put the chief importance of its dreams on the next world rather than upon this." Why did they do this? And if they did this, why did Christianity become ultimately such a powerful force? There is no serious treatment of this in these pages, devoted as we have seen to drawing historical inspiration and contemporary enlightenment from the study of this period. We must develop this subject ourselves briefly. The values of Christianity are as intimately related to the values of the modern world as embryo is to mature man. The true historical connection will lead us straight to the heart of the modern problem and the fallacy of Stalinism as a source of values for a decaying society.

### Rise of Early Christianity

The rise of early Christianity took place in historical connection with the decline of Republican Rome. Ancient Rome was in unending chaos and it was only during the first century AD that the Augustan era opened up a new period of stabilization under the Caesars. The decline of the public authority broke the traditional hold upon the mind of the masses. Paul might write as he pleased. The masses for their part believed that the end of the world was at hand. They confidently expected the second coming of Christ. That was their slogan for the building of a new society. Few things are more historically dramatic, moving and significant, than this outcome of the recognition of human personality on a mass scale. But even along with that expectation of Christ's coming the early Church tried "to heal the sick, to feed the hungry, to succor the diseased, to rescue the fallen, to visit the prisoners, to forgive the erring, to teach the ignorant..." This tremendous mass movement itself attempted to form a new society on earth. It failed as it was bound to fail, but its greatness lay in the fact that it unequivocally established that all human beings were

equal in the sight of God at least. In classical society the slave was a thing. The mere presentation of the doctrine of Christianity was revolutionary. It revitalized ancient thought. Good. But let us not forget what these early Christians actually tried to do. The revitalization of the human mind was the second best and the result of the attempt to revitalize the human body.

When the Roman Empire which had unified European civilization finally disintegrated into the isolated manorial units, Christianity, i.e., the Church, succeeded to the power of the Emperors. (To confine the argument to the West) the Church it was which *organized production* in monastic centers. Priests and monks owned land and on the large domains *took the lead in the organization of agriculture*. Possessing such tradition of learning as remained, the Church became the most powerful economic, social, and political force in the early medieval world. The secular feudal lords worked hand in hand with the Church. In time, however, urban civilization revived in a commercial form. Once more, on this basis, a materialist philosophy, rationalism, became a force. But this time the intellectuals and rebel churchmen had a firmer social basis and Christianity had to make concessions. St. Thomas Aquinas achieved a rationalization of theology with philosophy. Catholicism proclaimed anew the unity of European civilization. But whereas the Roman Empire had unified Europe but had divided the world into civilized and barbarians, the medieval Church admitted the equality of all nations. Whereas the Roman unity had been based on slavery, the medieval serf had not only a religious but a legal personality. He could have a wife and family and own movables. And if he could not gain equality on earth, at least it could be his in heaven and meanwhile God had his representative on earth, the Catholic Church. What had been in Paul's day the leader of a popular mass movement was now the ruler of the civilized world. Today, as for centuries past, the church, having no economic power, can only attach itself to reaction.

Yet Laski with his concern about values and faith, spends page after page discussing, in the twentieth century, the value of Catholicism as a source of new values. "So that when men like Mr. Dawson plead so persuasively for the return of the unity of Christian civilization, especially for its return under the aegis of the Pope, the outsider is, I think, bound to ask upon what basis, especially in the realm of mind and morals, the return is to be effected..." How delicate a negative! Laski understands nothing of Christianity, neither the early flowering nor the late maturity nor its futility today. The first eruption did not owe its power to "mind and morals." The Church in its most powerful days did not owe its power to "mind and morals." And before seriously considering the Pope as a world-leader today, "especially in the realm of mind and morals," Laski should reflect on the historical method of Stalin whose state is to be one source of the new values. It is reported that at one session of the Teheran Conference Roosevelt and Churchill discoursed at length on the rôle of the Vatican in post-war Europe. Stalin so pointedly refrained from taking part that these two co-thinkers of Laski on the importance of the Pope, asked Stalin what was his opinion. Whereupon Stalin asked, "How many divisions has the Pope?" The discussion ceased.

Yet as we have stated there is a historical (and logical) connection between Christianity and the modern world. Only the truth is exactly the opposite of what Laski, with his perpetual petty-bourgeois concern over abstract values thinks it is. Modern socialism is the concretization of the desires and demands of Christianity both in its primitive and in its

\*A. D. Winspear, *Science and Society*, Vol. IV, No. 4, page 458.

advanced stages. What the masses for centuries had to transfer to heaven is now and increasingly the aim of their daily lives. This must be grasped in its entirety. The early Church did make an effort to create the kingdom of heaven upon earth by helping the poor and the afflicted. The medieval Church preached the equality of nations and the unity of European civilization under one visible ruler, the Catholic Church. So far then medieval thought represented a social ideal infinitely superior to the best classical thought. Still it was only an ideal. Its only hope of embodiment was transferred to a celestial sphere. But the outstanding feature of the contemporary world is that the *principles* for which Christianity stood in its best days are now regarded as matters of life and death by the average worker. This is no accident at all though we can only state the facts here. European civilization must become a unity? Hundreds of millions of European workers know that this must be achieved or the continent will perish. Equality of nations? That, too, the great masses of Europe passionately desire, not as an ideal but to be able to live in peace. A central government to represent the interests of all? As late as 1935, Lord Cecil could get eleven million votes in a plebiscite in Britain supporting the idea of a League of Nations. And when workers say a League of Nations and collective security they mean it. And that early attempt to succor the poor, to help the afflicted, to teach the ignorant? The great mass of the workers in European countries conceive of Labor Parties as doing just that, within the conditions of the modern world.

The whole history of civilization since Christianity consists in the concretization of the values proclaimed so abstractly (and in time deceitfully) by Christianity. Once the human personality had arrived at the stage of theoretical equality, the further progress of civilization is to be judged by the degree to which this equality is realized. Furthermore, every step toward greater equality has meant a deepening of the very concept of human personality. Commercial capitalism brought the Renaissance and the *Humanists*. The birth of industrial capitalism brought the Reformation with its principle of individual responsibility. The growing maturity of industrial capitalism brought the concept of political freedom—the Rights of Man. *But with the deepening profundity of thought develop the spontaneous claims of the masses of the people.* After the French Revolution European society produced the highest peaks of bourgeois thinking. Ricardo, Hegel, Shelley, Beethoven, Saint-Simon, Goethe, these men and their generation laid the theoretical foundations of modern society. But two decades afterward the workers in the streets of Paris demanded for the first time “the social republic.” We do not idealize the workers. Engels says quite bluntly that what this social republic was to be they did not know. But the very bourgeois society which had produced its most gifted body of thinkers and artists had also given birth to a proletariat which instinctively demanded the application to itself of every value which the philosophers and the various classes they represented had demanded through the ages.

He who would exhibit the Marxist method must grasp the full significance of that early uprising of the masses when Christianity proclaimed its message. We must watch not only the primitiveness and simplicity of its aims but their comprehensive scope. Then, by slow degrees, through the centuries, we see one part of the aim becoming concrete for one section of the population, and then another part for another section. Ideas arise from concrete conditions to become partially embodied in social classes and give rise to further interrelations

between the spiral of real and ideal, content and form. This is the dialectic to which Marx gave a firm materialist basis in the developing processes of production. As society develops, the possibilities for the individual development of man become greater and greater, but the conflict of classes becomes sharper and sharper. We stand today at an extreme stage of these interrelated phenomena of social development. When a modern worker demands the right of free speech, the right of free press, of free assembly, continuous employment, social insurance, the best medical attention, the best education, he demands in reality the “social republic.” Spinoza and Kant would stand aghast at what the average worker takes for granted today. But he does not demand them as an individual or in the primitive manner the early Christian did. In America, for instance, there are some thirteen million workers organized for nothing else but the preservation and extension of these values. These are the values of modern civilization. They are embodied in the very web and texture of the lives of the masses of the people. Never were such precious values so resolutely held as necessary to complete living by so substantial and so powerful a section of society. Socialism means simply the complete expansion and fulfillment of these values in the life of the individual. This can only be attained by the most merciless struggle of the whole class against its capitalist masters. The realization of this necessity is the final prelude to full self-consciousness. This is the basis of all values in contemporary society. All talk of values which does not see this is not only pernicious. It is dangerous. No man who understood this could jump across the centuries and seek a historical parallel for a modern faith in Amos and Paul. The abstract faith of those days is the concrete truth of today choked and stifled by capitalism. And no man who understood modern values would have to go looking anywhere for them. For those with eyes to see they are as big as mountains. Least of all would he go looking and finding them in Stalinist Russia, where the ruling class is the mortal enemy of the working class. *If this is not so, why then the totalitarian state in Russia?* To see Laski wriggling in and around this dilemma is full of values as a lesson in faith. Tennyson, who looked into the future as far as human eye could see and saw the parliament of man, the federation of the world, would be in difficulties to recognize Stalinist totalitarianism as its first installment. But Laski’s “faith” he knew and described perfectly in the famous line “And faith unfaithful kept him falsely true.”

It is time to place before these intellectuals, perpetually babbling about values, some of the elementary facts of modern life. Name any value you like. Artistic integrity? But it cannot exist in the totalitarian state. So powerful is the working class in a modern society, so widespread and rapid the means of transport and communication that once the working class is chained the totalitarian rulers dare not allow any innovation in any field. All effort must serve their domination or is *ipso facto* dangerous. The artist cannot live in an ivory tower in the totalitarian state. He cannot abstain. He must emerge from the ranks and shout his *Heil* or write his *Ode to Stalin* in manner more significant than the rest in accordance with his greater gifts.

The long overdue emancipation of women? But the totalitarian state passes the most reactionary laws and deprives woman of the gains she has made during over half a century. Witness the laws in Stalinist Russia. The personal relationships of society? Where there is not free speech in public there cannot be free speech in private. There is no need to continue with the list. The values of democracy as defended



by the working class are the values on which rest all other values, social, personal, artistic, critical, what you will. That is the culmination of the social development of two thousand years of civilization. If the liberties of the working class are destroyed, the whole heritage of civilization goes with them.

In America, Richard Wright and Martha Graham, Eugene O'Neill and John Dewey, James Farrell and Frank Capra, Wendell Willkie and Henry A. Wallace carry on their various activities by grace of the AFL and the CIO. Some of our politicians, literati, artists and others may not know this. The workers may not be aware of it either. It is true nevertheless, the great truth of our time. Furthermore, only the working class is organically a defender of democratic values. The middle class, or certain sections of it, under the whip of the social crisis, may throw over democracy and seek salvation from some fantastic doctrine. The farmers may follow their example. But organized labor occupies such a place in the social structure of an advanced community that *the greater the crisis, the more it must in its own self-defense defend its democratic rights*; and by so doing preserve all that is still valuable in the heritage of Western civilization. Where these are at stake, as they are today, isn't it a crime to perpetuate this would-be philosophical prattle about values?

### Laski, the Blind

We can now draw the historical argument to a conclusion. Laski complains that, although we are on the eve of great changes in society, the period between 1914 and 1939 saw no great theoretical works heralding the new age, as had appeared in previous periods of social preparation. What blindness is this? It is of the same type which misses so completely the significance of the social revolution attempted by early Christianity and attributes a ridiculous significance to Amos and Isaiah. First of all, what has Laski himself been living on theoretically all these years but on parts of Lenin's *Imperialism*, to mention only one book. But secondly, he does not see that never before in history has social revolution been so openly and assiduously prepared for. He looks for books and does not see the Communist International in the days before Stalin began its emasculation. He looks for theories on law and government and does not see the unparalleled value for future society of the foundation of the *Soviet* state by Lenin and Trotsky and its achievements, successes and failures until Stalin finally destroyed it by the constitution of 1936. The state resting on the soviets, the councils of the workers organized in the production process—this is what is new. How pitiable is this professor who has not a word of analysis of the new state form and the mountains of controversy it still evokes but complains that there are no books. Is greater proof needed of the bankruptcy of his historical method, alike in dealing with early Christianity, in discussing Papal leadership of modern society without a thought of the rôle of the Papacy in modern production, and now in bewailing the lack of great books during the last twenty-five years and using that as proof that the new society was not being prepared?

We denounce Laski's impudence in calling his vacuous theories an exhibition of the Marxist method. We say that a Marxist in discussing Christianity and the modern world should have at least indicated that the ideals of Christianity are embodied in the modern working-class movement.

We say finally that *for us, today*, the great inspiration of early Christianity is not the faith inspired by Amos, Isaiah and Paul. It is exactly the opposite. It is the fact that the masses, as soon as they felt themselves men, began straight-

away to build the "social republic," or at least to expect it, and in our epoch we see their successors, organized labor, making mighty effort after mighty effort to destroy the hated old society and substitute the socialist order. What connection has Stalin's totalitarian state with all this except as its open enemy? "It is not yet clear that the kind of world envisaged after victory by Mr. Churchill is the kind of world likely to appeal to Marshal Stalin. Such evidence as we have suggests that it is at least possible that they think on different lines." O delicate phrasemaker! You cannot even convincingly deceive yourself.

### An Apologist for Stalinism

This is the fundamental political crime of Laski's book. He attempts to gild the totalitarian character of the Stalinist state. He says: "If the Communist Party of the Soviet Union left the central principle of its faith to the chance decision of an electorate still in the phase where the denial of the socialist idea is the rule rather than the exception, that would be as remarkable as a willingness on the part of the Western democracies to see without repining the access of socialist parties to the state-power."

A generation after 1917 this is what Laski has the nerve to say of the electorate of Russia. He talks glibly of communism and the soviet idea. But that communism and the *soviet* idea represent a stage of democracy for beyond bourgeois democracy, to that he is totally impervious. He tells us that "the soviet citizen enjoys what may perhaps be termed a democracy of the secondary order, the import of which we must not minimize." A democracy of a secondary order! Is this one of the new values? And what, pray, is a democracy of the secondary order? "He [the Soviet citizen] may not criticize Stalin. . . ." In other words, he may not criticize the economic, social or political policy of the state. Nay, more. When Stalin's sense of values decrees that Shostakovitch's music is "modernistic" and needs to have "tunes," he cannot criticize that too. And when Molotov says that fascism is a question of taste, inasmuch as Molotov speaks for Stalin, the Soviet citizen cannot criticize that either. What is worse, he must immediately, at all meetings, public and private, heartily proclaim that fascism is a matter of taste. In return for this stultification, the Soviet citizen "can criticize his foreman or his manager; he can protest against the inefficiency of this factory or that farm or even department of state."

This is the democracy for which Laski so diligently seeks inspiration in early Christianity. Rickenbacker, a notorious reactionary, found Stalin's conception of the place of workers in Stalinist society very satisfactory. And Eric Johnston, president of the United States Chamber of Commerce, told the Russian leaders that when he, as an American capitalist, looked at their guaranteed profit he felt "like a hero." The values that they found are more serious than Laski's. That the standard of living of the Russian masses is lower than it was before 1914 has no meaning for Laski.

What is worse is that Laski has the imprudence to use the term *élite* to describe the ruling class in his new society. This is no accident. It follows automatically his attitude to the crimes committed by the Russian *élite* against the Russian people—"immense blunders and fantastic cruelties," to use his own words. He brazenly says: "I accept the ugliness of all these things and I do not even attempt to excuse them." And then this seeker after new values, having found them in this *élite* state, gives us a demonstration of the intellectual values with which he seeks new social values. "Few Roman

Catholics would today defend the barbarities of the Inquisition; but they would deny that these barbarities disprove the validity of the Roman claim." If the Catholics can do it, why can't we? Once you abandon the democratic rights of the working class in contemporary society, all is lost, even logic and good sense.

Laski has two main points. He says that the structure of Soviet economy allows the unlimited extension of consumer demand. That, we shall have to see. Secondly, he leans heavily on the Russian military victories which have without doubt been the outstanding military feature of the war. He forgets that modern Russia is the product of a revolution which wiped out the social sores of centuries and created a modern *people* in a modern *state*. No one in his senses denies that. And this modern state the workers and peasants decided to defend despite the crimes of the élite. What they really think of the élite we shall all have the opportunity of seeing in the coming period. We venture the opinion, however, that they will not think what Laski thinks.

### The Value-Seekers

Laski's book is characteristic of an increasing intellectual disintegration among intellectuals of all types. He may say, as he does in this one, that the intellectuals must take their stand with the masses. Any intellectual with Laski's ideas who takes his stand with the masses can only help to corrupt them. Daniel Bell in the May issue of *Politics* attacks Laski, but these two are of the same brand. Laski, running away from Churchill and proletarian power, embraces the Stalinist "ethos" and bathes himself in the faith it gives. Bell detests the doctrine but agrees that it is religion. "The dividing line which modern society strove to maintain between religious and social facts has disappeared in Russia. . . . That is what gives it the unity and cohesion." From both of these the Marxists have to separate themselves with an unrelenting hostility. The Russian proletariat of today is the product of the development of European civilization. Nothing on earth can

prevent its struggle for proletarian democracy. Bell confounds a modern proletariat with the masses of antiquity. It is Laski turned inside out.

It will be instructive to end with a glance at some of the most outstanding of those who, in recent years, whatever their differences, and we do not deny or minimize these differences, have one thing in common, rejection of the international socialist revolution as analyzed by Lenin. Ortega y Grasset, a Spanish intellectual, wrote a book some years ago called *The Revolt of the Masses*. Values concerned him. He was not looking for new ones. He wished to defend the old ones against the workers. They are now in the safe keeping of Franco. Julien Benda created a furore with his *The Treason of the Intellectuals*. They, these unfortunates, were not sufficiently concerned with spiritual values. Presumably these are now safe with Pétain and Laval. After a long lifetime spent in defending the sacred values of liberalism, Croce sought to put them into practice in the cabinet of Badoglio. Santayana, who wrote exquisitely on values for many years, now declares his sympathy for the values established and preserved as long as possible by Mussolini. Laski seeks and finds his spiritual home in Stalin's "democracy of a secondary type."

Sidney Hook, another expert shuffler of the value-cards, now concerns himself with the "hero" in history. Burnham goes back for inspiration to Machiavelli. At least he drew the line at Amos and Isaiah. And so they gyrate.

We, on the contrary, stand on the Leninist ground that the present epoch is an epoch of imperialist war and proletarian revolution. We, under all circumstances, place foremost the defense of the working class as the defense of modern civilization. Our task is to help in making the workers aware by precept and organization of their great task of emancipation in a society which increasingly shoves the whole of humanity down the road to barbarism. Those are the values by which we live and we are the merciless enemy of those who, under whatever banner, seek to inject other values into the working-class movement.

J. R. JOHNSON.

## In Stalin's Prisons - VI

### The Ideological Life of the Imprisoned Oppositionists

The most recent writings of our leader, in which he somewhat modified his position, had not come to hand. Thus, confusion was at its height when we finally received, in the Summer of 1932, the latest documents of Trotsky. The main piece of the lot, published abroad in April, 1931, was entitled "Problems of the Development of the USSR" with the subtitle: "Outline of a Program of the International Left Opposition on the Russian Question."

#### Trotsky's Program of 1931

The purpose of this document, and its author, conferred a particular importance upon it. We decided to make it the subject of a discussion: Didn't the Russian Opposition have to pronounce itself on its own program? However, the discussion lacked life. Nobody was satisfied, but everybody—except for the extreme left—evidenced respect for the document while evading an approach to it. Imbued with the—outlived—ideas of Trotsky on the adventurist character of the Stalinist achievements, our Trotskyists found it hard to swallow the

dithyrambs this document contained. Trotsky, now, spoke of the "truly unparalleled present successes," of the "unprecedented pace of industrialization . . . which has proved once for all the power of the economic methods of socialism." As to the famous one hundred per cent collectivization, Trotsky defined it as "a new epoch in human history, the beginning of the liquidation of village cretinism." He even admitted that complete collectivization might be achieved in "two or three years from now." After this blow, those of us who had spoken of a "mirage of figures" and of "Stalinist bluff" in connection with the Five-Year Plan, could only hold their tongues. Nevertheless, the new "program" of Trotsky evoked no sympathy. The Trotskyists of the right wing and the center found that their leader was exaggerating the success of the Plan, that such an attitude might be defensible abroad, where the Plan had to be protected from the attacks of the bourgeoisie, but that it did not suit Russia. As to the left wing, it was discontent at not finding in this program a social and political criticism of the régime.

It must be said that from the social and political point of view, the "program" of Trotsky destroyed all the hopes of the "lefts." Since 1930, they had been waiting for their leader to take a position and declare that the present Soviet state was not a workers' state. Yet, right in the first chapter of the "program," Trotsky defined it plainly as a "proletarian state." A still more serious defect in the field of the Five-Year Plan: its socialist character, the socialist character of the aims and even of the methods was insistently affirmed in the "program." His whole polemic in the social domain was reduced to a bad quarrel: "The Soviet Union has not entered the stage of socialism, but only in the first stage of an evolution toward socialism." Further on, the Five-Year Plan, founded on the extermination of the peasants and on the pitiless exploitation of the workers, was interpreted as "an attempt of the bureaucracy to adapt itself to the proletariat." In brief, the USSR was developing "on the foundation of the proletarian dictatorship...."

It was now vain to hope that Trotsky would ever draw the distinction between the bureaucracy and the proletariat, between state capitalism and socialism. Those of the left wing "deniers" who could not get themselves to find any socialism in what was being built in Russia had nothing left to do but break with Trotsky and leave the "Trotskyist collective." There were a dozen of them—myself included—who so decided. As was the custom, we motivated our departure in a written declaration.

In it we said, in substance, that Trotsky's positive attitude toward the social phenomena, along with his negative attitude toward the political superstructure, would lead logically to the conception of a purely political revolution. But such a revolution, with the best that it would accomplish, would change the personnel of the bureaucracy, introduce a bit of liberalism into it without altering the foundations of the régime. It would be a repetition of 1830....

What shocked me most in Trotsky's program was that he could strengthen the illusions of the Western proletariat about Russia, rather than dissipate them. For if Stalin said: "We have already realized socialism," Trotsky confined himself to stating concretely, "Pardon me, not socialism, but only its first stage...."

### A Break with Trotskyism

Thus, after having taken part in the ideological life and the struggles of the Russian Opposition, I came—like many others before and after me—to the following conclusion: Trotsky and his partisans are too intimately linked with the bureaucratic régime in the USSR to be able to conduct the struggle against this régime to its ultimate consequences. In his "program," Trotsky even underlined that his criticism was not that of a hostile stranger and that he regarded the programs of the régime "from within, not from without." For him, the task of the Opposition was to improve the bureaucratic system, not to destroy it, to struggle against the "exaggeration of privileges" and the "extreme inequality of living standards"—not against the privileges or against inequality in general. Let them be mitigated a little, and everything will be in order again, under the auspices of the authentic "dictatorship of the proletariat." Those whom this did not satisfy risked being dealt with as "ultra-leftist petty-bourgeois utopians," if not as counter-revolutionists.

The subsequent evolution of Trotsky was to confirm this prognostication. *The Revolution Betrayed* which Trotsky published in 1936 remains faithful to the broad lines of the

"program" of 1930. While criticizing with vigor and severity certain aspects of Soviet society, Trotsky does not change his general views on the USSR as a "workers' state"; he thus contributes to maintaining in the mind of the international proletariat the falsest and most dangerous of modern illusions.

The inhuman methods of bureaucratic exploitation to which the Five-Year Plan owes its success are called "socialist methods which have passed their test" by Trotsky. He is silent on the exploitation of the workers, he does not mention the exploitation of the peasants save to thunder against the "economic savants in the service of capital" who dare to speak of it. To be sure, it is a noble task to unmask the attorneys for private capitalism. Is that a reason for becoming the attorney for state capitalism?

Trotsky does not want to understand that the "deviations" and deformities against which he protests are only the logical and inevitable consequence of the whole system he fiercely defends. Trotsky is at bottom the theoretician of a régime of which Stalin is the accomplisher.

"Bureaucratic or proletarian opposition"—that is the title that I gave an article in which I expounded, in prison, my new attitude toward Trotskyism. I then passed over to the camp of the extreme left Russian Opposition: "Democratic Centralism," "Workers' Opposition," "Workers' Group."

What separated this opposition from Trotskyism was not only the manner of judging the régime and understanding the current problems. It was above all the manner of understanding the rôle of the proletariat in the revolution. For the Trotskyists, it was the party; for the extreme left groups, it was the working class that was the motor of the revolution. The struggle between Stalin and Trotsky concerned the policy of the party, the leading personnel of the party; for both, the proletariat was only a passive object. The groups of the communist extreme left, on the contrary, were interested primarily in the situation and the rôle of the working class, in what it was in fact in Soviet society and in what it had to be in a society which devoted itself sincerely to the task of building socialism. The ideas and the political life of these groups opened up a new perspective for me and posed problems unknown to the Trotsky opposition: How must the proletariat act in order to conquer the means of production taken from the bourgeoisie, to control effectively the party and the government, to install workers' democracy and to preserve the revolution from bureaucratic degeneration?...

[At this point we omit two sections of Ciliga's memoirs. The first deals with his further political reflections, as a result of which he came to the conclusion that he had to abandon Leninism itself, on the ground that if Stalin represented a reactionary edition of bureaucratism, Lenin represented the "liberal edition of one and the same" thing, the latter opening the road to the former. The second section deals with the notorious Moscow terror trials, dating from the assassination of Kirov. In neither section does the author recount anything especially new or valuable for our readers. In any case, the false and superficial political conclusions which Ciliga drew concerning Leninism do not in any way detract from the highly interesting account he gives of the internal life and development of our Trotskyist Opposition in prison and exile, which has hitherto been unavailable in such detailed form. This account continues in the final chapter of Ciliga's story.—Editor.]

### Regroupings in 1933

After our excursion into the field of the Moscow trials, let us return to Verkhne-Uralsk. In the summer of 1933, the prison became deeply interested in the two great events of the time: the retreat just proclaimed by Stalin, and the taking of power by Hitler.

Noting the retreat of Stalin, the Trotskyist opposition could no longer discuss the "program of retreat." Factions and splits had lost their point. Position had to be taken in face of the realities of the hour.

The right-wing Trotskyists understood that a "reform from above" could no longer be counted on. The former promoters of the split of 1931, Solntsev for the right and Kamenetsky, former "Militant Bolshevik," for the left, became the champions of unification. After some resistance, the unity of the Trotskyist opposition was reestablished in the Fall of 1931 on the following bases: freedom of opinion and of propaganda within the opposition; struggle against the Stalinist bureaucracy tinged with some timid democratic demands. The number of "deniers" continued to increase, denying to the Stalin régime the character of a proletarian dictatorship. It is odd that these "deniers" belonged at first in the old right-wing camp, whereas the little group of extreme right-wing Trotskyists, called "MPM" after the initials of its three members, Melnais, Barkin and Milman, demanded a "more loyal" criticism of the Stalinist policy, believing at the same time that the USSR was going through a "monarchical stage of the dictatorship of the proletariat," after having known the stages of class, of party and of oligarchy.

The Trotskyists were obviously abandoning their bureaucratic haughtiness for a more democratic attitude. I rejoiced over it, perhaps mistakenly, for all that was scarcely more than opportunism. Just as the NEP tinged with democracy had once been demanded, a state capitalism tempered by democracy was called for today. The idea that democracy ought to be the very foundation of socialist evolution remained alien to Trotskyism. Was it the tradition—profoundly bureaucratic—of the Trotskyists that had to be impeached, their petty bourgeois origin?

The new situation likewise facilitated unification in the extreme left-wing camp. The Myaznikov group, the "Decists," some former Trotskyists—twenty to twenty-five comrades in all—formed a "Federation of Left Communists." This federation was constituted after my departure from the Isolator, but I was able to take part in the ideological discussion that preceded it.

There was no agreement on the definition of Soviet state capitalism: was it "relatively progressive" (according to me), "purely parasitical" (according to Tiunov), did it represent a "new epoch of civilization" (as V. Smirnov declared)?

Tiunov demanded complete socialism in industry and the restoration of the NEP in rural economy. He approved "integrally" historical Bolshevism and the program of the "Workers' Opposition" and the "Workers' Group" of 1920-23. I believed, on the other hand, that the new labor movement had to take into account the experience of all the left-wing groupings—of Russian Bolshevism, of the German tendency of Rosa Luxemburg, of French and American syndicalism, etc. Naturally, the transformations undergone by the Russian revolution and the victories of fascism over the old labor movement were likewise to be taken into account. V. Smirnov, on the contrary, wiped the slate clean of historical Bolshevism and ignored the communist movement abroad, for he did not see any workers in it. In the last analysis, this led to reasoning in an absolute void.

### **Echoes of the German Crisis**

The German crisis, beginning with the Reichstag elections in September, 1930, deeply interested the prisoners. At each election, at each stage of the rise of National-Socialism,

we wrote articles, drew up comparative tables, and organized discussions during the walking hour. The *Rote Fahne* [official Berlin organ of the German CP] was the only German paper we could receive, so we read it till the paper was worn out. In spite of all our differences, we were unanimous in foreseeing the vast international import of the German events. This led us to study the problem in its general aspect: what is fascism? What is its place in present-day society? We analyzed minutely the programs of the fascist parties and the Soviet and foreign works dealing with them (I do not know how, but we even succeeded in procuring the foreign works!).

The arrival of Hitler in power provoked a veritable panic among the Trotskyists. They expected the "inevitable" aggression of Hitler against the USSR, with complicity of England and France. "Hitler and Stalin will come to an understanding," I objected to Trotsky's son-in-law, Man Nevelson. "Not possible; Hitler will not want it.—Then Stalin will come to an agreement with France." Nevelson and the other Trotskyists did not succeed in understanding that the laws ruling the foreign policy of the bourgeois states also rules that of Russia. It was these somewhat narrow patriots of "our Soviet state" whom Stalin was to accuse of collaborating with Hitler. . . .

After the collapse of the German Communist Party, a group of intransigent "Decists" spoke of forming a Fourth International. The Trotskyists of Verkhne-Uralsk were opposed to it because they still hoped for a reform of the USSR and of the Comintern. The left Trotskyist leaders, V. Yenukidze, Kamenetsky and Yak, published a manifesto which accused the "Decists" of launching a premature and demagogical slogan. Furthermore, not knowing Trotsky's attitude on this score, his partisans of Verkhne-Uralsk preferred to stand on their positions. When they learned that their leader was for a Fourth International, they did not oppose it, but did not know how to interpret the fact that the French Trotskyists had entered the Socialist Party, section of the Second International.

Zankow and Tiunov, of the extreme left, were against a Fourth International for other reasons: they were afraid that it would be another edition of the Third. V. Smirnov made a half turn; judging that a new International and new workers' organization would be, in view of the circumstances, a pure utopia, he saw no way out except in a fusion of social-democrats and communists. The former would guarantee the participation of the proletarian classes, the latter—revolutionary initiative. I had to reply to Smirnov that "the union of two corpses would not produce a living body."

\* \* \*

I took advantage of my last months in prison to assemble material on the non-communist groups.

### **Non-Communist Prisoners**

The Russian social-democrats, some fifteen, published a paper in which I recall several articles. In one, they showed that the Bolsheviks had based themselves in 1917 and during the civil war on the lower strata of the working class, but at the time of the NEP—on the upper strata of the proletariat. In an article on "The Results of the Five-Year Plan," a representative of the right wing of the social-democrats denied any substantial economic progress, whereas the author of another article, belonging to the left wing, found that the results of the collectivization were by and large satisfactory. Finally, I remember an article entitled "Hitler in Power," also written by a left social-democrat, in which the absence

of a united proletarian front was denounced as the essential cause of the victory of fascism.

The Georgian social-democrats, so far as I could gather in prison and in exile, are petty bourgeois democrats for the most part; there are only a few genuine social democrats among them. But this does not prevent telling the truth about the repression of the Georgian insurrection in 1924. The repression was conducted with unparalleled cruelty, together with provocations and mass execution, without trials of any kind; in addition, people in prison for a long time were shot, although they had nothing to do with the insurrection. This bloodbath was organized by Stalin, Ordjonikidze and Bela Kun. Numerous Georgian oppositional communists I knew at Verkhne-Uralsk told me the truth which they knew by having witnessed the repression or even by having taken part in it.

There were only five social-revolutionists at Verkhne-Uralsk, but I knew a few others in exile. Their opinions were close to those of the communist opposition. A part of them, led by M. A. Spiridonova, legendary heroine of the Russian revolutionary movement (she spent twenty-five years, half of her life, in exile), shared the views of the Trotskyists, more or less. Another group, led by Kamkov, former social-revolutionary People's Commissar in 1918, supported the views of the extreme-left communists.

The right-wing social-revolutionists, very few in number, are very hostile to those of the left wing.

The Armenian socialist-revolutionists, who constitute the "Dazhnak-Tsutun" Party, are concerned almost exclusively with national emancipation.

The Jewish Zionists belong to different shadings of socialism and concern themselves above all with the Jewish national problem in Palestine. But they are not entirely disinterested in the Russian and international labor movements.

There were not many anarchists at Verkhne-Uralsk, but I knew more of them in exile, including two celebrated ones: Jonas Varshavsky and Barmach. If the social-democrats represented the "humanist" principle in prison and the communists the revolutionary principle, it may be said the anarchists represented the ideal of chivalry. They were ever ready to support any group at all in fighting against the administration. If there was a hunger strike, it was among the anarchists that most of the mortal cases were to be found. What is more, there is a certain number of former communists and Comsol members in the USSR who, at the end of the civil war and the beginning of the NEP, joined the anarchists.

### **Composition of the Prisoners**

The toiling masses of Russia—the workers as well as the peasants—prefer, as I have already stated, passive resistance to open struggle. Gone is the epoch of the "Workers' Opposition" of 1920-23, this potent social oppositional movement of the extreme left created by the Russian workers. This situation is reflected exactly in the social and national composition of contemporary Russia. There are no more than fifteen per cent workers among the prisoners. These workers, moreover, "capitulate" rapidly enough. I have heard some of them say: "What good does it do to rot in prison? When the people rise, the hour of the opposition will have struck, but not before."

The social and national composition of the various political groupings was about as follows: the most numerous group, the Trotskyists, which could count on the sympathy of wide circles of the communist apparatus in the country, was com-

posed in prison of a majority of young Jewish intellectuals and technicians, coming out of the petty bourgeoisie of the "Jewish zone" of the Ukraine and White Russia. There were also many Georgians and Armenians of peasant origin. There were among the Trotskyists a strong group of former military men and Chekists, in which the Russians were fairly numerous.

The Russian and worker element was more considerable in the "Democratic Centralism" group (the "Decists"); it predominated in the "Workers' Group" of Myaznikov. By its composition, the right-wing opposition which began arriving in prison in 1933 may be called Russian. Thus, the two extreme wings of the communist opposition were Russian by nationality, with the peculiarity, which is symbolical in value, that the extreme right was much stronger than the extreme left wing.

In total, according to the statistics of our "Council of Elders," the communist sector of the prison was composed of forty-three per cent Jews, twenty-seven per cent Caucasians, with the Russians and some members of other nationalities making up thirty per cent. It used to be said jokingly in Verkhne-Uralsk that the Russians were only a national minority. There is no doubt that this situation, all to the honor of the Jewish, Georgian and Armenian people, constitutes the weak point of the contemporary opposition in Russia.

The bulk of the social-democrats (Mensheviks) come from the "Bund"—the old Jewish Workers' Party of pre-war times. It may be said that the right-wing Bundists moulted into social-democrats, the left-wing Bundists—into Trotskyists.

The bulk of the social-revolutionists and the anarchists is made up of Russians.

### **Another Hunger Strike**

We were to be set free, Dedich, Dragich and I, on May 22, 1933. Two months earlier, we had sent the Central Executive Committee and the supreme instances of the GPU in Moscow a declaration in which we demanded that we be allowed to quit Russia freely after having served our sentence. In case of refusal—we wrote—it was our intention to fight by every means. All the prisoners supported our demand, the "elders" of the communist sector of the prison even sending an official telegram to Moscow. It was an act of solidarity on the part of our comrades, who wished, furthermore, that we should be able to inform the labor world abroad about the situation of the political prisoners in Russia.

When the GPU understood that an organized struggle was involved, it decided to remove us from Verkhne-Uralsk on some plausible pretext, which was done on May 18, 1933. We were told we were going to Moscow: "It is probably for the purpose of talking over your declaration," the prison director told us. All the prisoners sent us on with their best wishes, while asking themselves if we were not simply being transferred to another prison. Two automobiles carried us off. Soon the one carrying my two comrades disappeared in the dust of the road. I was never to see them again. I travelled the whole day. In the evening we stopped before the political prison of Chelyabinsk. As soon as I was locked up, I declared that I had been deceived about my trip to Moscow, that I had been deliberately separated from by comrades, that I regarded this as the rejection of my request to leave, and that I was immediately beginning a hunger strike. The prison director, Dubnis, replied that in these conditions he could not take charge of my person and that he would have me returned to Verkhne-Uralsk. I was put back in an automobile and instead

of bringing me back to Verkhne-Uralsk, I was transferred to the cellar of the criminal prison of the Chelyabinsk police. My cell was cold, damp and dark. Even in the daytime it had to be lit by electricity. I had to spend two months in this cellar, without one minute for walking, one minute of sun or fresh air.

As soon as I arrived, I began a hunger strike. I knew that my comrades, wherever they were, were doing the same, as we had agreed. A special guard of GPU sbirri was sent to me, for even though I was in a prison for common criminals, it was the GPU that was in charge of me. I already had some experience with hunger. Half-dressed, rolled up in a cover, I remained abed for whole days on the bench. The days passed, long and monotonous.

On the tenth day, after midnight—the GPU likes to act at night—a group of Chekists burst into my cell. There were Dubnis and some local agents, and also old acquaintances: “the commission from Moscow,” Citizeness Andreyeva, Citizen Popov. . . . The third member of the commission, the prosecutor, had preferred to abstain. It was better, as a matter of fact, that the business was done “without his knowledge,” for it offended too strikingly all the principles of justice!

“Citizen Ciliga,” declared Andreyeva, “I have been charged with informing you that the College of the OGPU, as well as the Central Executive Committee of the USSR, reject your request for leaving the USSR. By decision of the same College, your detention is prolonged by two years. The GPU takes no note of the strike you have declared. Beginning tomorrow, you will be fed artificially. The order has already been given to the doctor.”

“The hunger strike and artificial feeding are now secondary questions,” I replied with calculated coolness. “You want to make me your prisoner and slave forever. Nothing more is left for me but a means of protest that I shall employ, suicide. Let them at least know in the West what you do with foreign revolutionists who do not want to become your valets. I shall communicate this decision to Moscow.”

“Really, when a man decides to commit suicide, he usually does not communicate it to high places.”

“My death would please you a lot provided you didn’t bear the responsibility for it. I am conducting a political struggle against you and you will be responsible for everything that will happen to me and my comrades. That’s just the point of my official declaration to Moscow: to make you responsible for my protest suicide.”

“We shall prevent you from killing yourself!” retorted Andreyeva. “Leave two agents in his cell and take away all his things!”

No sooner said than done; a few objects of prime necessity were left me; but it happened that I had hidden a brand new blade I had gotten in Verkhne-Uralsk. So I was able to reply triumphantly to Andreyeva: “A man who decides to do away with his life cannot be stopped.”

Andreyeva began immediately to use persuasion. “The Political Bureau of the Yugoslavian Communist Party has accepted the prolongation of your sentence. I can show you the written decision of the Political Bureau.”

“Don’t bother yourself; your Mamelukes, Yugoslavian or others, have no power whatsoever over me. I do not recognize this Political Bureau and I am no longer a member of your Communist Parties.”

Thereupon the commission took its leave. The next day

I sent a telegram to Moscow. No attempt was made to feed me by force.

I had nothing better to do than wait for the reply from Moscow. The prison doctor was upset: “I’m the one who is being held responsible for your life! Commit suicide or stop the strike, but decide!”

Finally, at the end of the fourth day—the fourteenth of the hunger strike—I saw the director, Dubnis, come in to announce that a telegram had just come from Moscow: my two supplementary years in prison had been “commuted” to three years of exile at Irkutsk. Dubnis thought himself a good diplomat by showing me the difference: “Irkutsk is a big city, it isn’t Chelyabinsk, you will be better off there for settling the question of your departure.”

“Thanks,” I answered, “I want to go back to Europe directly, and not by making a tour of the world through Irkutsk. But inasmuch as they say nothing more about imprisoning me again, I want to withdraw my threat of suicide, although the strike continues.”

I fasted another nine days. The twenty-third day of the strike, Dubnis presented himself and cited a new telegram which called me to Moscow. I demanded written proofs. They were given to me. I halted the strike.

At the end of two weeks, I was on my feet. I must say that Dubnis fed me very well, no doubt out of “revolutionary and internationalist” conscience, but also in the hope of “winning me over.” But nothing was said any more about Moscow. I began to get nervous. At last the explanation arrived: the stenographer had made a mistake, I had not been called to Moscow, this eventuality had only been envisaged. Several days later I was told without subterfuges that I had to leave for Irkutsk.

I declared a hunger strike all over again. But one night a group of GPU agents burst into my cell. I was shown the order to transfer me forcibly to exile. My bags were packed, I was put in an automobile and taken to the Chelyabinsk station. That is how I left, on July 20, under good escort, for Irkutsk.

What to do? Useless to be obdurate. After regaining strength in exile, I would be able to find an opportunity for continuing the fight. So I stopped my fast and began looking about at my surroundings. It was the first time in three years that I saw “the world” again. . . .

A. CILIGA.

## BOOKS IN REVIEW

### Vansittartism

LESSONS OF MY LIFE, by Lord Vansittart. Published by Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1943.

There seems to be some confusion whether Vansittart is a Baron or merely a Right Honorable Lord. What is clear is that he is a one-time British diplomat, a dabbler in poetry and drama and the proprietor of a string of initialed titles: PC, GCB, GCMG, etc., in short, a member of the neither right nor honorable British ruling class.

As is now well known, Vansittart is demoniacally concerned with the problem of Germany. *Lessons of My Life* is not autobiographical and has only one lesson: that the war and misery prevalent in Europe for the last twenty-five years

are to be blamed on Germany, for which, of course, Germany is to suffer retribution and punishment. His idiosyncrasies would not concern us if they were merely personal. On the contrary, he is merely a crude, vociferous spokesman for the prevailing opinions and attitudes of the ruling classes of the victorious-to-be Allies.

Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin maintain the silence of sphinxes on the future of Germany. Their plans are so fraudulent and bankrupt that they can best be maintained only in darkness and silence. Meanwhile Vansittart and all his offspring do the necessary "spadework," poisoning the atmosphere with hatred of Germany, and Germans *per se*, so that the actions of the victorious imperialists in regard to Germany will be justified in the eyes of the masses.

Unfortunately he has already had some success. Half a million copies of his pamphlet have already been sold. The British Trade Union Congress of 1943 adopted by a small majority the thesis that the whole German people is responsible for Nazism and the war. Unless revoked, this self-inflicted blow by the British labor movement can have an untold harmful effect.

Imperialism can be defended only by the strengthening of national prejudice. And this is all Vansittart's "theory," exhorting loudly by the conservatives and taken so seriously by the liberals, amounts to.

By studiously recording the crimes of German imperialism, by pedantically quoting every quotable Junker, general, Crown Prince and reactionary professor, Vansittart is able to agitate the reader very strongly against German imperialism; and here we are confronted by a bit of stupid magic out of the bourgeois hat. By exemplifying the manifestations of Germany only, we are to come to the inevitable conclusion that imperialism and its brutalities and crimes are attributable to Germany alone—or to the German people, all classes alike.

Any sidelong glance into the history of Europe of the last seventy-five years is enough to shove this "theory" to its proper place at the bottom of the waste basket. "Between 1870-1900, Great Britain acquired 4,754,000 square miles of territory. . . . Between 1884 and 1900 France acquired 3,583,580 square miles. . . . Germany had last acquired 1,026,220 square miles." (*War and Western Civilization*, by Major General J. C. H. Fuller.)

It is interesting to note that Vansittart treats in some detail the betrayals perpetrated by the German social-democracy, their support of war credits and massacre of Spartacus. This is unquestionably a sop to British working class opinion. But if Vansittart was at all interested in the independence of the labor movement from the imperialist state, he could mention, at least in passing, the rôle of the British Labor Party leaders, who are very cheap to hire as the bourgeoisie's watchdog, among the workers. Admittedly, choosing between the betrayals of Scheidemann and Bevin, Ebert and Cripps would be pretty much of a toss-up.

It is obvious then that to analyze imperialism as a socio-historical phenomenon would be entirely too revealing. An obscure and analysis-defying proposition that wars are caused by German national psychology serves Vansittart's purposes much better.

Vansittart's plans and advice for the future of Germany have some importance, not that they are in any way profound, but because they reveal the explosive contradictions of the entire Allied-German relationship since 1919. When the plans of German imperialism failed at the end of the First

World War, the Allies had good reason to gloat at their triumph. Lloyd George said: "One of our chief trade competitors has been crippled and our Allies are about to become her biggest creditors. That is no small achievement."

But no sooner was this triumph announced than the victorious imperialists had to prop up the German ruling class against a rebellious proletariat. This ruling class had to be propped precisely because the severe economic punishment imposed upon Germany and the consequent occupation of the Ruhr intensified the political and social crisis. Dreading the union of a Soviet Russia and a possible Soviet Germany, the Allied bourgeoisie winked at the arming of an anti-working class Reichswehr of sixty thousand men, although this was a clear violation of the disarmament clause of the Versailles Treaty. The German masses, on the other hand, were clearly told what they could not do.

In 1920, Lansing, the American Ambassador, promised food for Germany only on the condition that "Germany will prove that it can uphold law and order." The British Ambassador, Lord Kilmarnock, followed in the same vein, promised even raw materials for German industry "only if the capitalist régime remained."

By 1933 these gentlemen could breathe easier. Aided by the opportunism of the Social-Democrats and the surrender of the Communists, Hitler came into power and proceeded to torture, murder and imprison the cream of the German proletariat. The British bourgeoisie chortled with joy and made certain that nothing should jar the equilibrium of the new Nazi régime. Lloyd George rose in Parliament in 1933 to say: "In a very short time . . . the conservative elements in this country will be looking to Germany as the bulwark against communism in Europe. Do not let us be in a hurry to condemn Germany. We shall be welcoming Germany as our friend."

The British bourgeoisie did more than cheer Hitler on. Having smashed the largest and most threatening working class on the continent, Nazi Germany was now provided with arms and capital in preparation for a war with Russia.

William Dodd, the American Ambassador to Germany in 1935, wrote of a letter he received from the British diplomat, Lord Lothian, that: "The problem of the democracies as he (Lord Lothian) sees it, is to find for Germany a stronger place in world affairs, to which in his opinion they are entitled because of their power and tradition. He hopes that this can be accomplished without any sacrifice to the British Empire and with as little destruction of human liberty as possible." (Students of history will some day stand amazed at this bit of bloody hypocrisy. The liberals today, of course, can do no better than explain this as "appeasement mentality." It is only the other side of the counterfeit theoretical coin of Vansittartism.)

By 1938, Hitler had made it clear that he was going to carry out his imperialist ventures in disregard of the rôle intended for him by the British-French bloc. German exports followed by political propaganda flooded the Middle East, North Africa and South America. The bourgeoisie of France and England were divided in their attitude toward the ever-growing danger of this new imperialism. But their enthusiasm for Hitler's crushing blows against the German working class was unabated. As late as March, 1939, with an Allied-German war clearly on the horizon, Lord Kensley, publisher of the *Sunday Times*, could write: "We . . . have had no quarrel with either Germany or Italy because her system differs from our own." This view was clearly enunciated even during

the war by Anthony Eden, aspirant for the job of Prime Minister and taskmaster of the British Empire.

Occupation, dismemberment and de-industrialization of Germany (either one or all of these) is the only course left to the Allied imperialists. Their last triumph over their German rivals almost resulted in a proletarian revolution. Their support of the German bourgeoisie against the German workers resulted in a new war in which France was overrun and the British Empire nearly wrecked.

The overthrow of Hitler tomorrow will reveal a revengeful proletariat, with a capacity for struggle that will electrify Europe and the world. The Allies must therefore occupy Germany, impose severe punishment for war "responsibility" and maintain its occupation in order to carry out its punishment. This is the program of Vansittart and all the little Vansittarts who have sprung up on both sides of the Atlantic.

A new AMG, perhaps more streamlined and less clumsy than the one in Italy, will smash any revolutionary movement in Germany. This is what Vansittart means by "... the last delusion: German socialists are good fellows."

Central Europe, which cannot exist economically without Germany, will be directed to live at the expense of Germany, carting away German industry and using the Germans as a source of cheap slave labor in lieu of reparations. This is what

the *London Daily Express* means by "Whether you like it or not, vengeance on Germany is becoming the prime war aim of all Europe."

That is why the threat of a German revolution is handled by Vansittart with all the skill of a complete political idiot. First he tosses off his belief that "the only hope for German betterment is the left." He then says that a German revolution is improbable because it will be caught in the crossfire of the more extreme alternatives, nationalism or communism. The latter is unlikely because—now hold your breath—"it is not among our war aims." This does not prevent him from attacking bitterly "the members of the extreme German left who have been exercising too great an influence on our politics and propaganda." (It is unnecessary to add that this "influence" is a product of Vansittart's imagination.) Paradoxically, Vansittart must vehemently deny the possibility of a German revolution because the possibility is so terribly great!

As another generation goes to the slaughter, the ruling classes of both camps can have as "war aims" only a more intense jingoism, chauvinism and national hate. Against this we must clearly indicate the international solidarity of the working class as being not only moral and rational but as the only road to peace. Every time a Vansittart opens his mouth he makes the choice crystal clear.

WILLIAM GORMAN.

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