

**STALIN'S SLAVE LABORERS... by Jack Weber**

**The New** \_\_\_\_\_  
**INTERNATIONAL**

JULY • 1947

**HENRY JUDD:**

**Germany After the Moscow Meet**

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**STALIN'S EASTERN EUROPE "REVOLUTION"**

**ERNEST ERBER:**

**The Class Nature of the Polish State**

**A. RUDZIENSKI:**

**Structural Changes in Eastern Europe**

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# THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

A Monthly Organ of Revolutionary Marxism

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## NOTICE TO OUR READERS

A combination of technical and financial difficulties have caused the last three issues of our publication to fall ever further behind our publication date. It proved impossible to publish our May issue before the end of that month and we have, consequently, issued it as our July number. Since we publish ten issues a year, we are omitting the May and June numbers from the 1947 volume instead of June and July, as has been our practice during the last two years. Subscribers who pay for a year's subscription will receive 12 issues, as in the past.

As a result of our uncertain publication date, it has once more become necessary to omit our customary "Notes of the Month." This popular feature will reappear with our August issue with comment on the Truman Doctrine and the anti-labor offensive.

## Business Manager's Corner

While the circulation and financial position of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL have shown gratifying improvement during the past year, we find it impossible to carry out our hope and intention that we publish twelve issues, one per month, during the year 1947. The major reason for this is the steadily mounting costs in printing, with which our increased income has been unable to keep pace. During April, our printing bill increased by 25 per cent.

At present, the press run and circulation of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL is holding steady at 3,000 copies per issue. These copies are *all* sold and used, and represent a substantial gain over our previous circulation. The greatest gain of all in circulation has been on newsstands, particularly in New York City where approximately 500 copies are sold each month, with the help of the attractive and now familiar posters put out by our Poster Service.

Subscriptions come in steadily, but not in sufficient quantities. Our subscription list has expanded, and the high percentage of renewals indicates the real interest in the magazine. What is lacking is a steady and regular effort on the part of NEW INTERNATIONAL supporters to get new and additional readers. A regular flow of subscriptions, a most important source of revenue to the magazine, can only come through sustained pressure and efforts.

Among the most gratifying improvements in the circulation of the magazine has been its great foreign circulation expansion. With the exception of those countries upon which the "Iron Curtain" has descended, there is hardly a country in the world where THE NEW INTERNATIONAL does not go! Some countries (England, France, India, etc.) have substantial bundle orders; in other countries there are large numbers of individual subscribers who circulate the magazine widely. Requests for back copies of the magazine come in constantly. Even the Kremlin has a subscription! (No doubt read exclusively by Politburo members.) It is expected that this foreign circulation will continue growing.

Through constant exertion and activity on the part of our agents, we hope to so increase our circulation and income that the regular and timely appearance of each issue will be assured. The 1946 bound volume of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL, containing 10 issues for that year, will shortly be on sale. Orders are accepted now and will be filled as soon as we receive the volume from the bindery.

THE PRESS MANAGER.

# THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

A Monthly Organ of Revolutionary Marxism

VOL. XIII

JULY, 1947

NO. 5

## Stalin's Slave Laborers

*The Extent and Significance of a Modern Phenomenon*

History records no greater crime than that of the Stalinist régime in its treatment of the victims in the concentration camps. Hitler's methods were not original. They ran parallel with, if they were not mere copies of those utilized by Stalin. If Hitler sent millions of people, primarily the Jews, into the gas chambers, the Russian camps have crushed, dehumanized and done to death more victims than all other concentration camps combined. For a time the war brought a decrease in the slave labor population of the *lagiers*, as Stalin's hell-holes are called. But this was only because the Kremlin found it necessary to use many of the male prisoners as a stopgap in the front lines, where they were quickly mowed down. This was part of the price paid by Russia for Stalin's being taken by surprise despite all the warnings that the Nazis would invade Russia. The end of the war once again reversed the trend. The far-away Siberian wastes are filling up anew. The slave labor enterprises of the MVD (the GPU) are operating full blast. There is, nevertheless, a distinct difference so far as the outside world is concerned.

The Iron Curtain has been definitively pierced. The war broke down the frontiers so zealously watched by the Stalinist border guards. Masses of people were hurled across the boundaries, first one way, then the other. Hundreds of thousands of Poles, among others, more than half of whom were Jews, fled before Hitler's armies in 1939 into Stalin's share of Poland. The Russian criminal code forbade entry into Soviet territory without proper credentials. What did it matter that the boundaries had been shifted arbitrarily overnight! That irony was only deepened by the clause in the "most democratic of all Constitutions," Stalin's own, which specifically set aside any punishment in case anyone was forced to flee across the borders as the result of political or religious persecution. The Polish refugees were arrested, imprisoned for months, then sent to hard labor in Siberia for three to eight years. This applied to old and young, the feeble and the strong, worker and bourgeois. The invasion of Russia in 1941 paved the way for the agreement with the Polish government in exile headed by Sikorski to build a Polish army on Russian soil. This made it possible for those who had survived—and they were a minority—to return ultimately to Western Europe. The testimony of these people concerning the *lagiers* and slave labor in Russia has only begun to be poured out to the world. There are in addition many Russians, some who had been prisoners of war, some slave laborers for the Germans, others Red Army deserters, who resist all attempts to force their return to the "Fatherland." The experiences of these Russians under Stalinism are destined to make a deep imprint on world opinion in the coming period. Humanity has, to all appearances, remained quite indifferent over a period of years to the stifled

cry of slave laborers of the GPU. The evidence of the frightful conditions maintained in the *lagiers* came out before the outbreak of the war in a thin trickle only. But the fog created by Stalinist propaganda is being dissipated by the quantitative weight of unimpeachable testimony. Hitler and Mussolini have disappeared from the scene, leaving behind only the despicable Franco. Now the workers of the world will be brought face to face with the Soviet dictator Stalin and his methods.

The change in attitude bound to come in world opinion will be due only in part to the wider evidence of the truth concerning Russian concentration camps. It will also be due to the chilling of the political atmosphere which has already begun. There is a certain similarity in this sense with the attitude shown toward Hitler. The brutalities practiced by the Nazis first of all on the German workers, later more horribly on the Jews, were known to the diplomats and to the molders of opinion in the capitalist world. That world accepted the sacrifice of the Jewish masses in its stride so long as Hitler was carrying through the counter-revolution in Germany. It was only when Hitler turned his attention outward against the rival imperialists that the latter developed humanitarian feeling about Nazi atrocities. These "feelings," having served their temporary political purpose, have long since been discarded. There is somewhat of an analogy, within limits, in the attitude toward Stalin. The ruling strata of the rest of the world viewed with undisguised satisfaction the bloody annihilation of the older Russian revolutionary generation by the Kremlin bureaucracy. Stalin was laying the ghost of the revolution; the sympathies of the capitalist world were with him, not with his victims. But Stalin is now pressing outward and the feelings of the great power politicians are being ruffled. Soon these imperialist spokesmen will begin to discover the awful plight of the starved and beaten victims in the Russian *lagiers*. The tone of disinterestedness, even of equanimity, with which the previous revelations were received, will give way to another wave of humanitarianism.

How is it that the working class has not lifted its voice against the inhuman cruelties of the terror régime in the Russian slave camps? The answer would have to include a full history of the confusion introduced into the ranks of the workers everywhere by Stalinism. Those who come out of Russia to live abroad after suffering the tortures of the damned in the *lagiers*, express utter astonishment at the inability of people to comprehend what is taking place under Stalin's rule. T. S. Eliot speaks in his introduction to the powerful book, *The Dark Side of the Moon*, of the power of planned ignorance. This is indeed the role of Stalinism. But Eliot fails to mention that, with all the cunning disinformation created by the

Kremlin, with all the aid from the Communist Parties and their fellow travelers abroad, there had to be also a certain amount of connivance on the part of the capitalist world across the frontiers to maintain the Iron Curtain.

The title of the book itself gives part of the explanation of the difficulty for the truth to find its way to the masses. It was Arthur Koestler who referred to the vastness of Siberia with its exiled millions as being as "remote from the Western observer as the dark side of the moon from the star-gazer's telescope." The anonymous Polish woman who has condensed thousands of documents written by the Poles released from the Russian concentration camps, adopted her title from this expression. The sympathies of the writer, an adherent of the former London exiled Polish government, point in a direction not palatable to the radical of whatever shade. But the facts she presents are absolutely incontrovertible. She writes with utmost objectivity and with surprising restraint. This book must be read by every person who wishes to know about Russia. Every single document of the unfortunate Poles, and they come from all walks of life, makes clear that what they endured was not something unique or special. They participated in the common experience of the millions upon millions of Russians in the same camps. The Poles could at least sustain themselves on the faintest of hopes that some day they would again return to civilization. But the Russians were sunk in complete, unrelieved despair, for so long as the Stalin régime endured there was not the slightest hope that any of them would ever again return from exile. The stark fate of these lost souls beggars all the horrors that one can imagine, all that have ever been imagined in literature. Stalin practices cannibalism not in its literal sense, but just as surely in the sense of devouring the flesh and bones of living humanity in the form of slave labor.

There was one practice among others that Stalin and Hitler had in common. Their armies carried with them in their conquests lists of "undesirables" who were to be arrested immediately. It is hardly surprising that both lists were headed by revolutionists. First on Stalin's lists were Trotskyists, members of pre-revolutionary parties such as the Mensheviks, the Social Revolutionaries and anarchists. One such list that fell into foreign hands had fourteen categories. The eighth included refugees and political émigrés from other countries; the tenth any persons who had traveled abroad. Last of all came aristocrats, landowners, wealthy merchants, bankers and industrialists. Stalinism reintroduced Asiatic justice into Russia, for it takes not individuals who are wanted but their entire families. It goes even further. In the course of raids on some house or other in search of an individual, frequently enough the GPU arrested everybody in the house for whatever reason. The mass deportations from Poland were planned by the GPU in four great waves: in February, April and June of 1940, and again in June, 1941. The first waves caught in the net representatives of all political parties of whatever shade of opinion, including the leaders of all Polish, White Russian, Ukrainian and Jewish socialist organizations and of socialist trade unions, members of working-class committees, organizers of working class, peasant and other youth institutions.

The utter cynicism of these "purges" is summed up in that which took place in June, 1941. Up to that time the GPU had utilized local committees of Communists and sympathizers, and even workers' militias. These local Communists had often enough helped choose those to be deported to Siberia. Their own turn came last! All those who had had any kind of deal-

ings whatsoever directly with the Red Army, all known Communists, were shipped off in the fourth series of raids. What a curious light (let us say it mildly) this throws on the policy advocated by some Trotskyists to have Polish workers in partisan militias place themselves under the direct command of the Red Army generals! That policy certainly facilitated the task of the GPU of uprooting every vestige of working-class independence.

The description of the deportation trains is poignant and tragic beyond words. The utter indifference to considerations of common humanity evinced by the Red Army guards is a measure of the dehumanizing effects of life under Stalinism. The Poles thought first that this was due to the Russian hatred of Poland. Not at all! "It was still very difficult for people coming from outside the Union to understand that such things could be everyday sights; that members of these people's own families, their fellow workers or neighbors, might as easily have been transported in similar trains to similar destinations. . . . It was still some time before they understood that all this was not some otherwise unheard-of proceeding against themselves as foreigners, but that the whole system and the institutions to which they were being taken had, in fact, come into existence and continued to exist as a normal part of life for Soviet citizens."

All Russian literature of Czarist times—it is the profound contribution of that literature to the world—is permeated with the deepest feelings of humanity, to the very point of inward torture. Stalinism has, at least outwardly, registered its greatest success in creating the complete atomizing of society in place of solidarity. Each is intent on his own salvation and is trained by terror to show utter lack of any concern for the suffering of his neighbor. This is true of ordinary life. It is trebly so in the *lagiers*, where the sheer problem of survival brutalizes every living soul. A survivor gives this description of the long march from the detaining center to the camp: "A nineteen year old boy with blood pouring from his lungs, fell for the last time and was so savagely beaten with rifles that, in the words of the witness reporting it, 'he was beaten into the ground.'" Since law meant nothing at all, the GPU being a law unto itself, everything was arbitrary. The crowding of prisoners in trains, then in prison cells, was something incredible, a country-wide practice of the black hole of Calcutta. Is it surprising that in prisons also the terms used by the wardens have become once again identical with those used in Czarist times? A well-known Socialist sums up the treatment of prisoners as follows: "The prisoner is to get it into his head as soon as possible that he is nothing but a thing and that nobody has any reason to be particular about the way he treats him."

Stalinism is shown at its "purest" in the slave labor camps. Here is the final outcome of the GPU system. The Russian prisoners have a saying: "Nobody leaves *lagier* behind. *Lagier* is forever!" Yet occasionally a medical commission makes the rounds and releases from labor the total wrecks who have not yet died. "In September and October, 1941, a medical commission from Magadan visited some of the Kolyma mining and lumber camps. A long procession of human phantoms appeared in the town and were put into ships. Those who saw them go aboard could hardly believe they were human. It was a procession not of human beings, but of corpses and trunks. The majority had neither noses, lips nor ears; very many were armless and legless. Among these was a handful only of Poles. The rest were all Soviet citizens. The Magadan

commission had recognized them as being unfit for work! In Magadan it was said that, once aboard ship, they were taken out to sea and drowned, but there is not any proof of this."

There is a Soviet "opera" unknown to the rest of the world. It is just the kind of grotesque and gruesome occurrence that one would expect under the rule of Stalin. In many of the camps the slave laborers are accompanied to work each morning by a Russian orchestra! The prisoners sing to its accompaniment a mournful dirge:

"And if you don't accomplish the norm

They give you only three hundred grams of bread."

Food is distributed by "Kettle," of which four or more categories are prescribed, from the punishment kettle up to the special kettle of the trustee. The kettle depends upon the amount of work accomplished, the unit being an impossible norm rarely if ever achieved. The slaves must put in twelve hours of hard labor besides the hours of exhausting marching to and from the places of work. After the invasion of Russia by the Nazis, there were never any free days. No political prisoners were allowed to hold any sort of administrative posts, even the most minor. Such posts when held by prisoners were given to the common criminals of the underworld. These brigade leaders became bestial slave drivers in order to protect their own few privileges, above all those connected with food. One survived, under a system bound to be corrupt from top to bottom, only through "blat," inadequately translated as graft.

It is the extent of the slave labor camps that freezes one's blood as much as the unmitigated blackness of their administration. "From this first-hand evidence it is known that vast regions about Kuibyshev, in northern Siberia and in Kazakhstan, with, to the north, the whole of the Komi Republic up to Archangel, with Novaya Zemlya, have camps of this kind along almost every kilometer." In all this territory the MVD holds complete sway. There exist only guards and guarded! This tremendous GPU state is divided into zones, each territory enclosed within barbed wire, patrolled by armed guards and their dogs, and made doubly secure by lookout towers and storks' nests containing sentries. The population of these camps has never been divulged but is estimated anywhere from ten to twenty millions of souls. All these slaves are engaged in the building of canals, railroads, roads and bridges, factories, towns, ports, mining, forest clearing, or in cultivating gigantic state farms of ten to twenty thousand hectares.

The concentration camps of Stalin, euphemistically called "corrective labor camps," are the index of the fear in the hearts of the Russian rulers, and of the terror required to hold down the Russian population. A régime built on measures of this kind and on so vast a scale is inevitably one of profound crisis. But like all such phenomena, it takes on an independent development of its own with its own "vested interests." It is a source of vast profit to the state rulers and to the GPU. The Gulag, the labor camp administration, tries to fill in the glaring gaps due to failures in the bureaucratic five-year plans. The interstices of these plans, based on the most intense exploitation of the Russian proletariat, are cemented with slave labor outright. The turnover of labor in the giant clusters of camps is an important factor to be reckoned with in its effects on Russian life. Twenty to thirty per cent of deaths each year in the mines of the Far East and the Far North are common. Those who are released after serving their terms, are required to stay put in the places of exile, but are still counted as "lost"

to the GPU. Replacements are ordered by the Gulag from the country-wide collection centers. Kravchenko showed how these demands from above influence arrests and rearrests on any available pretext or none at all. In colonial days the English resorted to impressment for their navy or for colonizing of the New World. But never in all history has there been outright enslavement in any country on such a scale. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* made a great appeal against the separation of families under slavery. This is a commonplace of Soviet life. In fact there is a special camp in the Karaganda cluster in Central Asia known as the "Wives' Camp" and used for the wives and widows of former Soviet leaders.

It is clear why Stalin needs an Iron Curtain. He has much to hide. Not all that he would like to keep hidden has to do with military secrets. When the Poles began their trek back after their belated release—the big majority of them remain buried in Russian earth—Stalin did his best to force them to become Soviet citizens in order not to let them out with the information they possessed. Stalin claimed that the Jews taken from Poland were Soviet citizens (as in the case of Ehrlich and Alter). He finally permitted the one hundred and fifty thousand of them, survivors of over half a million, to emigrate. The loss to the camps in this process was made up with German, Italian and Japanese prisoners of war. It was also made up with those Russian prisoners of war who were repatriated from Western Europe, those of them who were not shot outright for having committed the crime of seeing too much of the outside world. Stalin is fearful concerning the Russians who have fled abroad, including a large number of Red Army deserters. They may become the new centers of resistance, just as did the exiles under the Czar.

The challenge to humanity that exists in such glaring form in the Russian slave labor camps cannot be ignored without extreme peril to the working class of the entire world. If it is the workers everywhere who must free themselves and all the oppressed, it is certainly the workers of all other countries who must come to the aid of the workers ground into the dust in Russia. There are those who would remain silent on this question because they fear that any agitation against Russian slave labor will become a weapon in the hands of the imperialists who seek in time to wage war on Russia. There is no better weapon with which to arm these imperialists than working class silence on this life-and-death matter. If the vanguard of the workers is unable to rally the working class in fierce protest against such inhumanity, then reaction will seize on the issue for its own purposes at a suitable time. To fail to raise this issue without let-up because of a fear that reaction will profit from it means only that one does not know how to make use of the issue in Marxist fashion. Silence means to participate in the worst crime in all history. It is hard to believe that the working class, with the facts already known, can allow another May Day to pass without the cry: "Down with Stalin's slave labor camps!"

We Trotskyists owe a special duty to those comrades who gave so heroic an example to the world (it is now revealed in the testimony gathered by S. Mora and P. Zwierniak in *La Justice Soviétique*, as quoted by the Menshevik Dallin, whose factual gathering of material is most praiseworthy, though his motives fall under the shadow of imperialism) at the camp in Vorkuta. Several dozen of them, while they were still together, "decided to eternalize the people's memory of them by a last manifestation of their inflexible will, and thus re-

main victorious even if condemned to hard labor." They presented demands claiming the right of political prisoners to be separated from the criminals, the right to be employed only for work corresponding to their professions, and the right not to be separated. They then started a hunger strike until success or death, a hunger strike lasting for 120 days without interruption! Many died despite forced feeding. "When all the efforts to break their spirit proved ineffective, the Trotskyites were separated with the help of a pack of fierce dogs unleashed in their barracks." All were certainly shot later. The memory of these brave ones is surely eternal! Their challenge to us must be met.

The Russian phenomenon of slave labor is a challenge also to our theories. Never forget that the camps control vast sections (states within a state) of "nationalized property." This nationalized property—mines, factories, forests, railroads—is completely in the hands of the GPU. Such nationalized property has become completely identified with direct state slave labor. It is a kind of "pure form" of the tendency that exists under completely reactionary Stalinism. It is the most urgent warning that the mere words "nationalized property" or any formula using these mere words without complete and concrete analysis is dangerous and misleading. Nationalized prop-

erty under Stalinism, in or out of the concentration camps, is permitted to serve the masses not in the slightest degree. Our deepest sympathies go everywhere to the exploited and oppressed masses. We defend them, their welfare, *their* conquests, not those of the privileged and exploiting minority. The concentration camps in Russia with their millions of forced laborers, are an important part of the evidence that the nationalized property taken by the masses in the October Revolution, has been wrested completely from the hands of the working class. That property today serves the interests of the rulers completely. The Wallaces, fearful of any new revolution inside Russia because such a revolution will endanger the entire capitalist system which they defend, shut their eyes to the existence of bestial slave labor in Russia. But only such a revolution can free the millions of political prisoners from the *lagiers* and prisons. Only such a revolution can restore the nationalized property to the masses from whom it was usurped. The American working class can help their suffering Russian brothers and sisters along the path to the renewal of the socialist revolution by protesting in one mighty voice against the retention of the concentration camps for slave labor in Russia.

JACK WEBER.

April 27, 1947.

# Germany After the Moscow Meet

## Imperialist Politics and Mass Starvation

*The situation here is desperate. Not only materially, because of our not having any clothing and not enough to eat—but above all from a spiritual point of view! The worst part of the whole matter is, however, that every German man and woman who hated injustice and who, on that account, was against Nazism and Militarism—is today silent. They fought in word and deed against the Nazis and believed that, after the overthrow of this evil, justice and real freedom would stay. They did not flinch before prison and concentration camp. They always pointed the way out to these deeds of horror and injustice, etc. But where are these anti-fascists today? They are no more to be found! They are in small posts, disappointed and depressed and must recognize that the Nazis are overthrown only in name, that the Hitlerite spirit is triumphant, and by no means only by way of the Germans! Everywhere one hears—you must! Free expression of opinion? No. The Germans are afraid of everything, of every word—of the CIC, secret service, Sureté and GPU. And this is precisely the most terrible thing—there is no difference in the times to be noticed. On account of this, everyone is silent; those who stood up for truth and right and those who quite obviously were anti-fascist. Today the lukewarm, the mediocrities who everywhere and always are up in front, today they speak. But these men will not help us. (Extract from a letter from Germany)*

In the first half of this series of two articles on Germany today (Cf. February, 1947, issue of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL) we described the breakdown of the Potsdam agreement, and the launching of the struggle between the rival occupying powers for possession of German resources and industrial capacity.

It must not be imagined that this reversal in the prior trend to de-industrialize Germany has, as yet, produced any notice-

able or notable results. The over-all mass misery of the German people, in all zones, continues as before, as the nation ends its second post-war winter. The *New York Times* traveling correspondent, Mrs. Anne H. McCormick, graphically reports the situation. "A tiny trickle of heretofore unavailable goods—ersatz soap, wire spectacle frames, wooden or composition soles—is displayed, but it is the barter shop and bulletin boards advertising articles for exchange that attract the crowds. Production is beginning, say military government officers, but little evidence of it appears on the counters of empty shops or in the motley clothing the people wear. . . . Nothing new is being built.

" . . . the population looks worse and works less than last year. They are thinner, yellower, slower-motioned, more threadbare. The military government health figures tell a story of decreasing resistance reflected in worried, pinched faces of women, hollow-eyed men, weak-lunged children. . . . With few exceptions, the whole population is hungry. . . ." (*New York Times*, October 20, 1946)

The Allied Central Economic Commission that sits in session at Berlin set the average German living standard in March, 1946, at one-third below the pre-war level, or equal to the level of 1932—a year of intense economic depression. But this was a distant objective, resting upon the assumption that the Potsdam accord would be worked out. The reality is far different. The following chart gives the *official* ration standards (daily) as of now. Even these standards of slow starvation are mainly honored in the breach!

American zone .....	1550 calories daily
English zone .....	1550 calories daily
Russian zone .....	1263 calories daily
French zone .....	1014 calories daily

Aside from the dubious value of employing caloric intake as a standard of actual food values, it is perfectly clear that this is a diet of slow murder, particularly if prolonged for any period. It has been in effect since October 15, 1946, and rests upon certain assumptions not always fulfilled—namely, that the Russian zone supplies its *entire* food supply by itself; that the British and American zones supply respectively 600 calories and 900 calories daily out of their own production. The Allies supposedly are to make up the difference, but the constant food crises indicate this systematically falls short of fulfillment.

Furthermore, the catastrophic long range effects of this deadly diet of undernourishment are already visible. All those diseases that take hold most easily in an organism weakened by lack of proper food—tuberculosis, heart diseases, skin diseases, endemic illnesses of all types, not to mention mental disturbances—are rapidly spreading among the German population. Lieutenant General Clay has admitted the existence of over 100,000 tuberculosis cases alone in the American zone, of which 85,000 are not being treated in hospitals but are, instead, free to spread infection. The physical undermining of the German nation physically is unprecedented in European history. That this should happen “according to plan” is inconceivable except in the modern world. Fritz Sternberg, writing in the February 8, 1947 *Nation*, is correct in stating, “No lengthy documentation is needed to prove that even the increased food ration of 1,500 calories is absolutely insufficient. With the workers so undernourished, an increase in German production to the minimum figure set at Potsdam is impossible. People must get more than 2,000 calories a day if industrial activity in Germany is to be revived.” And he quotes the apt summary of the general social condition of Germany in the remarks of Dr. Kurt Schumacher, Social Democratic leader in the British zone:

The situation in Germany is such that 35 per cent of the inhabitants have not only retained all they possessed before the war but have become in effect even richer because the others have become poorer. Another group, about 25 per cent, have not enough to live on but through connections of all sorts manage to keep body and soul together. The rest of the people, 40 per cent of all Germans, have nothing but their food ration cards. Such conditions mean latent social revolution.

“Connections of all sorts” refers, of course, to the black market. Only the German middle class that retained some savings can engage in these “connections.” But all signs prove that these people are now rapidly exhausting their savings, and selling the last of their valuable accumulations. The haunting fear of a wild inflation, followed by a devaluation of the *mark* that will wipe out whatever remains of their savings, has been heightened by wide rumors of impending financial changes in the Western zone.\* Butter sells for 200 *marks* per pound on the black market (\$2, if we accept the 10 cent evaluation of the *mark*), or three packs of American cigarettes. Current production, such of it as remains in Germany, is too minute to alleviate any of the pressures placed upon the German population, physically or morally. It is a piddling production, compared to the needs, despite the economic unification of the British and American zones. The German people today stand at the lowest and most humiliating point of their history, in terms of living standards, economic activity, morale, and cultural life. It is inconceivable for them to sink lower, or to pass through another such winter as that of 1946-47, without a national catastrophe. But this poses squarely the entire prob-

\*Now announced as a 90 per cent devaluation of the *mark*; that is, one new *mark* to be issued for each ten old *marks*!

lem of a unified Germany, with a revived national economy—or, in political terms, the Moscow negotiations between the Big Powers for a German Treaty. Potsdam is dead; what shall take its place? This is the issue which confronts the Big Four enslavers of the German nation.

### The Moscow Conference

For six solid weeks, the Big Four Foreign Ministers sat in Moscow, attempting to draw up peace treaties with Austria and Germany. Not only were the efforts to conclude an Austrian treaty unsuccessful—contrary to first expectations—but in addition, all efforts to approach even tentative agreement on the fateful German question have failed, unless the establishing of strategic diplomatic positions can be called success. The divergence of views is wide, reflecting the depth of the imperialist antagonisms over, not only what kind of oppressive treaty to impose upon the Germans, but, more important, in which direction Germany shall move in the future.

The question is not one, actually, of whether or not a German treaty will be drawn up and ultimately signed. None of the participants in this contest of sinister bargaining—sinister because it directly involves the fate of 65,000,000 peoples—have illusions on this score. The retired Secretary of State Byrnes spoke recently of perhaps two years of negotiations; Britain's Bevin is as sceptical; others question whether a formal accord will ever be reached. The terms of the treaty itself are formalities, embodying politics and policies that each of the powers are already putting into practice, or intend to put into practice. The real question is whether these policies can be bound together, temporarily at least, by some common denominator formulas, or whether the divergencies will lead to a premature breaking apart of the Big Four, in turn precipitating an inevitable war. Since it is our contention that at the present stage none of the Big Four desires, or is prepared, for war, there will be no such split. Whether this will lead to the actual formulation of a general treaty for Germany is impossible to say. But it will certainly lead, in practice, to a series of agreements, if only on a day-to-day basis, if only to prevent the complete disintegration, economically and socially, of the German nation.

The German policies of the imperialist powers then, proceed on various layers of development, thus accounting for its complexity, confusion and contradictions. Each power, within its zones, pursues its own unique goals; but each power is forced to arrive at some common basis of operations with its rivals, to prevent the situation from getting out of hand, to hold the German people in check. The Potsdam Agreement was such an understanding. Time and developments buried it. The Moscow Conferences of the future will arrive at some new understanding, regardless of whether it is embodied in treaty form, until fresh developments revive the problem in a different form. But so long as imperialism keeps its hands on the throats of the German people, the “German question” will be the uppermost issue in European politics.

What are the basic differences between the Allies in the matter of writing a German treaty? *Pravda* provides a convenient source for listing the major suspicions and accusations held by Russian imperialism against its “democratic” opponents. From various articles published in this official source book of Russian imperialist policy, the following may be deduced:

(1) Most basic accusation of all is that rival Anglo-American imperialism, with the intention of basing itself upon the Ruhr industrial potential, is building up a Western Germany

anti-Soviet *bloc*. The positive aspect of this accusation is the demand of Russia for a share in the control and production of the Ruhr—an issue that proved to be one of the major points at issue in Moscow.

(2) The British nationalization for their zone, and the modified American version of these plans, are disguised plots—in the eyes of Russian imperialism—for the restoration of Western Germany's war industries. These plans, it is charged, would still leave the industries under the influence of "private owners and monopolists" who would remain leaders of German economy.

(3) The economic unification of the British and American zones is part of the scheme to form a Western Germany, under Allied control, and then—hiding behind the excuse that collapse is inevitable—to partly rebuild this area, cut off from the Eastern (Russian) zone, and prepare the stage for a new European war. Parallel with the process, it is charged, goes the conscious disorganization of economy so that German industrialists are being forced to "yield a considerable portion of their property to United States and British capitalists."

(4) From these charges, there follow a series of secondary, subsidiary accusations. These themes upon which the Russian press constantly harps are: (a) Failure of the Western Allies to carry out the disarmament program; (b) Failure to give Russia her share of promised reparations from the Western zone; (c) Sabotage of the Potsdam Accord, and economic unification of the two zones to offset this sabotage; (d) Failure to carry through the denazification program and, in fact, conscious protection of important Nazi officialdom, with a deliberate building up of reactionary political groups (Christian-Democrats, etc.); (e) and, finally, tendencies toward erection of a decentralized, federalized and easily controlled governmental structure for Greater Germany. The mere listing of these points indicates the depth and quality of the differences between the great imperialist rivals. It will not be easy to arrive at even a temporary accord; one that can survive more than a few years. The dispute over Germany is more than a matter of disagreement on important, even fundamental, issues. It is, at bottom, an irreconcilable disagreement between the Anglo-American capitalist-imperialist system and the Russian bureaucratic-collectivist imperialist system. It is a dispute that will endure, in varying degrees, until the inevitable war comes; or until the international working class is capable of solving it in a different fashion.

Out of the Moscow Conference has emerged the following general picture of American policy with respect to Germany. It is a policy that is distinguished by confusion, half-heartedness, unbalance and that general incapacity to drive through a definite program that so characterizes American imperialism in all fields.

America desires a long, indefinite occupation for the obvious purpose of retaining strong positions throughout Europe. America desires an exceptionally weak central government, to prevent its use by the German Stalinist (that is, pro-Russian) movement, and to prevent any state manipulation by a possibly revived German bourgeoisie. This weakened system is known as a federated German structure, giving full play to all the centrifugal, provincial and regional forces (most notorious of which is Bavaria) that exist in the country. America desires a limited, tightly controlled economic productivity that will satisfy the imperialist utopia of (a) providing a satisfactory market for the United States; (b) keep the population suffi-

ciently clothed and fed so as not to encourage resistance; (c) yet limit productivity to a sufficiently low degree that German export competition will not exist. The impossibility of achieving such a balance accounts for the numerous contradictory statements and actions (attacks on German cartels, followed by attacks upon nationalization schemes, etc.) that make it almost impossible to make any sense out of American policy for German industry.

The truth is that there is no set policy, particularly with respect to a perspective for the industrial and economic future of Germany. For the first period of occupation, the notorious Morgenthau-Pastoralization plan prevailed in practice. Every effort was made to reduce German productivity to new lows. The *political* meaning of this plan, operating in the setting of growing American-Russian conflict, forced its conscious abandonment. No clear alternative replaced it. The series of three reports of the Hoover Commission represent a definite alternative and would mean, if put into practice, a sharp break with past and present policy, the re-industrialization of the Anglo-American zone, and the pouring of vast sums into this area to "prime the industrial pump." This alternative has not yet been accepted, even though the tendency is in that direction.

But it is, at best, only a tendency. The American authorities, for example, are attempting to sabotage and thwart the proposals of the British for the full merger (without limitations) of their respective zones, together with the outright nationalization of all heavy industries within the two zones, and their operation under a centralized state system. The British seem anxious to drive straight ahead and create a clearly delineated Western Germany (into which the French zone will be forced), with an economic life of its own that will counterpose one *bloc* in Europe against the Russian *bloc* of Europe that remains behind the Iron Curtain. But American imperialism continues to waver, to drift from day to day, food crisis to food crisis. The money it puts into Germany, for materials and food, is too small an amount to provide the necessary "lift" to the badly damaged and disrupted economy. This money, then, represents wasted capital, poured down the drain. Energetic billions rather than timid millions would change the story. But this appears most improbable because of the fears of a revival of a powerful competitor and rival at an inopportune moment; that is, when the entire capitalist world can only fearfully speculate on how soon (not whether) the next world economic crisis will occur. American policy with respect to Germany will thus continue without hope, without decisive action, without plan. It will be a day-to-day policy, meeting each new crisis with temporary measures, and *guaranteed to continue the present general stagnation and hopelessness, both economically and morally.*

The prospects for the building up in Germany of a mass, popular movement of resistance to the occupying forces of all countries, now seem quite favorable. The activities of the revived German trade union movement, particularly in the British zone, are important steps in this direction; above all, the reassertion by the German working class of its role as leader of the oppressed nation. More and more, the masses of Germans are becoming aware of the impossibility of their living under indefinite occupation by foreign powers, and of the fact that the axis of their struggles to live revolves around the issue of regaining their independence and freedom to exist as a nation.

HENRY JUDD.

# The Class Nature of the Polish State

## A Reply to Ernest Germain

The Polish question is today the acid test for the two opposing concepts that have struggled for supremacy in the Fourth Internationalist movement since the American party split over the issue of defensism in Russia in 1940.

The importance of the Polish question does not stem from the possibility of the Fourth International effecting the situation one way or the other in that unhappy country in the foreseeable future. Unfortunately, few Polish Trotskyists have survived the ravages of the Gestapo and the GPU. The task of rebuilding the revolutionary movement in Poland is, of course, related to the theoretical and political dispute represented by the Polish question. But the immediate and over-all importance of the Polish question exists in the fact that the political line taken on Poland will indicate whether the Fourth International will pass yet deeper into the shadow of Stalinism or whether it will resolve its political crisis by cutting itself free from the Russian axis, around which its politics have revolved, and emerge as a revolutionary, proletarian force, truly independent of the two great imperialist power combinations that dominate world politics.

The reason why Poland provides such an exceptional test is that the Polish situation combines the two main theoretical questions that divide the international Marxist movement today. These are (a) *the Russian question* and (b) *the national question*.

The Russian question is involved in the form of (a) Russian occupation, (b) Stalinist domination of the legal labor movement and the native Polish régime and (c) the nationalization of the decisive part of Polish economy.

The national question (which is for Europe but a concrete manifestation of the broader theoretical problem of retrogression) is present in the form of (a) a nationally-oppressed country with a movement for national liberation and (b) a brutal police dictatorship with a mass struggle for political democracy.

Realizing the key importance of the Polish question to the programmatic struggle in the international movement, the Workers Party established its position nearly a year ago. It appeared in the form of an editorial in our issue of August, 1946. Since then we have had many occasions to elaborate upon aspects of the Polish question, mainly through the excellent contributions of our collaborator, A. Rudzienski. However, we have not had occasion to re-state our fundamental analysis and basic conclusions. In the absence of such a re-statement, our factional opponents, with a woeful lack of intellectual integrity in polemics, have so distorted our position in their desperate efforts to refute it, that we find it necessary to re-state (and even in part reprint) our position to clarify the atmosphere before making a polemical reply to these attacks.

### The Workers Party Analysis

Our analysis of the Polish situation can be summed up in the following points:

(a) Russian control of Poland is basic to Russia's position in Eastern Europe as well as important to Russian economic needs;

(b) it is to Russia's advantage to rule Poland through a "native" Quisling régime, dominated by a Polish Stalinist apparatus, rather than by direct Russian military control;

(c) due to international power relations and to efforts to placate public opinion in the West, as well as resistance in Poland itself, Russia is forced temporarily to tolerate a legal opposition in the form of Mikolajczyk's Peasant Party;

(d) due to the police régime which throttles a free political life, a vast underground opposition exists;

(e) this opposition is composed of heterogeneous and antagonistic elements, as was the wartime anti-German resistance movement, both in Poland and in Western Europe;

(f) the only political aim held in common by the entire opposition is that of national liberation;

(g) the predominant character of the opposition is that of a bourgeois-democratic movement, mainly composed of peasants, reflecting in the underground the political views of the Peasant Party;

(h) this underground has a strong proletarian wing, with its main center apparently being the industrial city of Cracow, composed of old PPS and trade union cadres which refused to submit to the Stalinist rape of the official labor movement;

(i) the underground also has a reactionary, bourgeois-feudal-clerical wing, composed of old Pilsudski elements, organized in the NSZ;

(j) the reactionary wing of the underground is increasingly less important as a political factor as a consequence of its loss of an economic base through the nationalization of economy and the breaking-up of large estates and as a consequence of desertions to the Stalinist state apparatus;

(k) the actual state power in Poland is Russian imperialist rule;

(l) the latter seeks to consolidate its rule through the crystallization of a new bureaucratic class, composed of the Stalinist political apparatus, the state job-holders, the Russian-trained officer caste, a section of the old reformist labor bureaucracy, and the technical personnel of the new nationalized economy—a bureaucratic class in the image of the Russian ruling class but subservient to and dependent upon the latter;

(m) the ultimate aim of the Stalinists in Poland is to proceed by stages to eliminate all opposition and all "unassimilable" elements and achieve a totalitarian state resting upon a nationalized economy, identical with, and incorporated into, the Russian political and economic structure.

### The Political Conclusions

On the basis of this analysis, our original statement offered the following political conclusions:

The new political pattern of Poland consists, therefore, of a crystallizing bureaucratic class basing itself upon a nationalized economy and ruling the country by police terror, accompanied by demagogic gestures to win some proletarian and peasant support. It is opposed by a broad popular movement of peasants who rally around the banner of democracy and receive support from such divergent elements as the reactionary and fascistic former rulers, on the one hand, and the best socialist elements of the proletariat on the other.

This political pattern is no phenomenon peculiar to Poland, but extends to all the occupied territories. This poses for the revolutionary Marxists a most critical situation. It gives flesh and blood to

the theoretical question which the movement posed when it considered Trotsky's slogan of self-determination for the Ukraine. The question is: what is the revolutionary Marxist attitude toward a broad opposition that rallies under democratic slogans against a totalitarian régime that bases itself upon nationalized economy?

How do the actual forces in conflict pose this theoretical question? In its crudest form it *seems to be* the question of the relative weight of *nationalization of economy* against the relative weight of *political democracy*. This is becoming one of the touchstone questions of our times. Woe to the movement that chooses wrongly or seeks to ignore it.

*The revolutionary socialists, of course, want BOTH, nationalization AND democracy. That is the socialist solution everywhere. In Russia the struggle for the revolutionary overthrow of the régime will begin as a struggle for political democracy as the instrument by which the rudder can again be placed in the hands of the masses. In the United States the struggle for nationalization of economy is the struggle for the indispensable framework for a democratic social, economic and political existence for the masses.*

But the essence of politics is not merely what we *want*. A political line must proceed from the reality of the existing struggle. The main battle lines are not drawn up between a socialist proletarian movement and the Stalinist régime, nor between a socialist proletarian movement and a Mickolajczyk régime. The main battle lines find the Stalinist dictatorship confronted by a popular opposition movement headed by Mickolajczyk. Our problem is to create a Third Camp which will fight both against Stalinist totalitarianism and the bourgeois reaction inherent in the petty bourgeois peasant movement. But the question is: where are the elements *today* out of which such a Third Camp can be constructed? Are they in the GPU-staffed, misnamed "Workers Party" and the GPU-staffed government unions? Or are they in the opposition elements grouped around Mickolajczyk? It is precisely in such a posing of the question that the difference between the French situation and the Polish situation comes to the fore. In France the decisive sections of the proletariat are in the Stalinist and social democratic camp. The power, however, remains in the hands of the capitalist class. The class interests of the Stalinist workers require that they engage in a class struggle with the bourgeoisie and aim toward a proletarian solution. The Marxists seek to drive this struggle to its ultimate revolutionary conclusions as a means of breaking the workers from the Stalinist straightjacket, bound in France as elsewhere by the limits imposed by Russian needs. In France, therefore, the elements for a Third Camp are today in the Stalinist and Socialist parties. Without them there will be no socialist revolution in France.

In Poland the case is radically different. The bourgeoisie has, for all practical purposes, been expropriated. The workers do not engage in a class struggle in industry against a capitalist owner. Those workers who support the Stalinist régime do so under the illusion that socialism is being constructed or out of purely opportunist motives, like jobs or food rations. Those workers, on the other hand, who wage a class struggle today, do it precisely *against* the Stalinist overlords of government and industry. In order to wage that struggle effectively they must fight for the democratic rights of existence as a labor movement, the right to free speech, to organization, to a free press, to assembly, etc., all finding their final expression in the slogan, "Out with the Russians!" and "Long live a Free Poland!" These are rights for which the vast majority of the Polish population yearns today and which finds its distorted expression in the Mickolajczyk opposition. It is here that the revolutionary Marxists will find the decisive elements for the Third Camp, i.e., a revolutionary, proletarian, socialist opposition to the Stalinist dictatorship. The political line of the Marxists must, therefore, be one of critical support to the Mickolajczyk camp.

What is meant by "critical support"? It means first of all complete *political independence* from the Mickolajczyk movement. It means political criticism of that movement. It means independent proletarian organizations in the shops and proletarian methods of

\*Throughout the article, Germain chooses to speak of "Shachtman" rather than the Workers Party, thus giving the impression of a polemic directed against an individual rather than a party which represents a counter-position to that of the majority in the international movement; e.g., "The Shachtmanite thesis and the thesis of the Fourth International." We suspect that Germain is unconsciously expressing a view found in some quarters of the movement that parties are merely appendages to "leaders." Though Shachtman has not had occasion to write on the Polish question, he is in full accord with the party position, which, of course, flows from its basic views on the Russian and national questions.

struggle, all aimed at wresting the leadership from Mickolajczyk and making the proletariat the leader of the broad people's movement against the Stalinist régime. The proletariat cannot remain on the side lines when two sections of the nation stand locked in deadly struggle.

If barricades arise between the two camps, on which side do the Marxists seek to rally the proletariat? In Poland today the civil war smoulders underground and we must take a position. Do Polish Marxists condone the GPU arrests of Peasant Party leaders as being the liquidation of capitalist restorationist elements? Or do they actively fight alongside of the Peasant Party leaders to defend them against GPU persecution? For the Marxists, the revolutionary socialist struggle is the only decisive one in a historic sense. However, where they cannot determine the nature of the struggle, they must lead the proletariat, as an independent force, into that camp which represents the best possibility of socialist advancement.

We ask our reader's indulgence for the necessity of reprinting this key section of our statement. We are sure, however, that our readers, regardless of their political judgment of our position, will agree that there is a need for such a restatement when our opponents have chosen to restate our position for us in the following piece of skullduggery:

Shachtman's position can be summarized as follows: "I consider as primary my right to be able to express my own opinions. I abandon in advance the attempt to conquer this right *within the framework* of the defense, of the expansion, and of the consummation of expropriation measures against the old possessing classes. I refuse to get mixed up with those opportunistic workers who choose their camp solely on the basis of questions of food rations and of jobs. I am ready to return the factories to the bourgeois and the land to the landlords on condition that I have freedom to smear as much paper every week as I desire."

The above appeared in a polemic against us in the *Fourth International* of February, 1947, under the title of "The Conflict in Poland" with the sub-title, "From Abstentionism to Active Intervention—In the Camp of the Class Enemy." The author of this particularly ignorant and vicious piece is one Ernest Germain, of late, unfortunately, regarded as the leading theoretician of the Fourth International. We can only list this sad fact as further evidence of the extent to which Marxian thinking has been lowered in the world workers' movement, including its vanguard, the Fourth International. Yet, since we must assume that Germain's article is the official reply of the leadership of the Fourth International, the further development of the discussion on this question requires that we come to grips with this article rather than ignore it and permit it to pass into the oblivion it deserves.

### On the Nature of State Power

Basic to any discussion of whether one should support the state power or the opposition that seeks its overthrow is the question of the nature of the state power. We are, therefore, considerably pleased to note, early in Germain's article, a section boldly entitled, "The Class Nature of the Polish State." After telling us that Shachtman\* will not succeed in confounding the "militants of the Fourth International" by posing questions about the nature of the Polish state, and after reminding us that the question of the nature of a state is not "a subject for cheap jokes," and that Trotsky devoted twenty pages of *The Revolution Betrayed* to explaining the nature of the Russian state plus forty (!) additional lines for summary, Germain finally launches into *his* explanation of the Polish state. He begins by formulating a broad theoretical precept as to the nature of state power, the first sentence of which reads:

The nature of the state is dependent in the last analysis on the class structure of society.

We take this to mean that the state is the political expression of the class that is economically dominant. However, as Germain states, this is true *only in the last analysis*, i.e., only

in the historical sense and not in every given instance. If it were true in every given instance there could never be a proletarian revolution. For the proletariat seizes the state power at a time when the bourgeoisie is still the dominant class in the economy. "In the last analysis" means, therefore, in so-called normal periods and above all not in times of revolution and counter-revolution. Consequently, in the latter periods one cannot determine the class nature of the state power by examining the economic structure of society. How then can one determine the class character of a state in time of revolution and counter-revolution? We shall answer this question presently, since it contains the powder that blows apart Germain's laborious theoretical structure, which we have not yet finished examining. Germain continues:

But this structure [the class structure of society] is in turn reflected in the structure of the state itself and can impose *forms* upon it which are in contradiction with the class interests of the ruling class. (Italics in original—E. E.)

If this is not gibberish, then we must take it to mean that the state does not correspond at *all* times and in *every* respect to the class needs of the dominant class. The state is subject to the stresses and strains of the class struggle and can yield to the measure exercised against it from below. This is, of course, a daily feature in the political life of bourgeois democracies, especially in those where the direct administrator of the state is the labor bureaucracy, such as the British Labour government. In dictatorial régimes, the state, as with all institutions in the superstructure of society, develops interests of its own and often imposes these upon the dominant class. The latter phenomenon Marxists have long ago given the name of Bonapartism. Often the political heads of the state, the ideologists of the ruling class, follow policies in keeping with the *historic* interests of the ruling class at the expense of its *immediate* interests and a sharp political struggle ensues between the majority of the ruling class and its state apparatus. The régime of Roosevelt and the New Deal was an example of the latter.

However, whereas the policies of the state in all of the above instances "are in contradiction with the class interests of the ruling class" (Germain) *they never upset the social order which gives to the ruling class its dominance*. If the policies of the state systematically destroy the social order of the dominant class, these policies are part of a *social revolution* (or counter-revolution). We do not know what Germain understands by *forms*, which he italicizes. If he means *political* forms like monarchy, directorate, republic, fascist dictatorship, etc., this is quite in keeping with what we have outlined above. What other possible forms could there be imposed upon "the structure of the state"? Since the state is a *political* instrument, its forms can only be political forms. If Germain knows of any other, we wait to be enlightened.

### Germain Sees . . . a Bourgeois State

What is the purpose of this theoretical introduction to Germain's conclusions about the class nature of the Polish state? Its purpose is an attempt to prove that the *nationalization of economy* is a state form imposed upon the Polish bourgeoisie by its own state. Or, to put it differently: the fact that the state renders the bourgeoisie propertyless does not alter the fact that the state is still a bourgeois state!

We are willing to grant that all manner of contradictions may make their appearance between the interests of the bourgeoisie and the policy of the bourgeois state but the one that we shall never see is precisely the one Germain would have us believe is taking place in Poland—a bourgeois state carrying

out an economic policy that removes the bourgeoisie from its dominant place in the economy by taking away from it the ownership of the means of production, i.e., passes the death sentence upon it.

"But we cannot, in any degree, equate the nationalizations to an 'expropriation of the bourgeoisie,' or to the destruction of capitalism, which Shachtman seems seriously to imply," protests Germain. Why? Germain tells us why in the very next sentence: "The former proprietors are to be indemnified up to the end of . . ." Take a guess! 1996 perhaps? No! ". . . up to the end of 1946!" And Germain wrote his article on November 15, 1946, when the Polish bourgeoisie had a life expectancy, as rentiers of the state, of exactly six weeks!

But there are additional reasons adduced by Germain. We read on:

A *part* of these indemnities can be invested in new *private* industrial and commercial enterprises, explicitly authorized by the law. A system of special credit is functioning for the "private sector" of industry and commerce, and is designed to favor the development of medium and large *commercial* enterprises, as well as medium *industrial* enterprises of certain sectors (the only ones which can at this time be created by the Polish bourgeoisie with the capital at its disposal). (Our italics—E. E.)

What does this add up to? To the fact that a *part* of the money received from the state may be re-invested. (We do not know what happens to the other part, but taxes probably account for much of it.) Where may this part be invested? In commercial enterprises of both medium and large size. What does this mean? The former proprietor of a manufacturing plant may open a store, even a big one. Where else may this remnant of his capital be invested? In industrial enterprises. In any the capitalist may choose? No. Only in "certain sectors" as "explicitly authorized by law." May he open as large a plant as he chooses? No, only a medium industrial enterprise. This is the best he could have done in any case, Germain assures us, since the Polish capitalist has little capital left. With such a "capitalist state" to look after his welfare, little wonder! But then, you see, that is one of the contradictions of which we were warned in advance. And life is so full of contradictions. Most anything can happen—especially in these days, and above all, in Poland.

Of course, capitalism has not been abolished root and branch in Poland. Who is Germain polemizing against to prove this point? Certainly not anyone who has written in these pages. Capitalism was not "abolished" in Russia until the first Five Year Plan, and then not entirely. A well-known expert on Russian affairs recently wrote in the press of the Fourth International that he had located a kulak in Novi-simbirsk who owned his own cow. And it recently came to light that there are private watch-repair shops in Moscow itself, thinly disguised as artisans' collectives.

What was the NEP in Russia during 1922-28 but permission for small and medium capitalist enterprise, particularly in commercial undertakings, to operate subject to strict regulation by the government? Nor do we contend that capital in Poland today has been restricted to channels as narrow as those of the NEP. But the difference is one of *degree* and *direction* and not one of type. A proletarian state in Poland would not necessarily go beyond the scope and tempo of nationalization as carried out to date by the Stalinist régime. The Civil War in Russia necessitated wide and sweeping measures of expropriation; measures from which the NEP marked a retreat in the interests of economic rehabilitation. A workers' state which is in a position to set its own pace of nationalization will take proper care not to throw the country into economic

chaos by nationalizing a lot of medium and small industry and commerce before the economic institutions of the state are in a position to utilize them properly.

### The Economy in Poland

What then is the nature of the economy in Poland today? Is it private capitalism? Is it "state capitalism"? Is it bureaucratic collectivism? The nature of the economy is not uniformly any one of these. As with every economy in *transition* from one social order to another, the Polish economy has a *mixed* character. But the real question cannot be answered by determining *just how much* is privately owned and *just how much* is state owned. Such figures are not without interest, but they cannot answer the key question: *toward what social order is the economy in transition?*

How can one determine this? In a bourgeois economy which operates free of hostile state interference, the basic trends are the result of the inner laws of motion of the economy itself. In this case it suffices to study the economic trends and generalize upon them. But where the direction of economic development is not automatic but state-directed by an anti-bourgeois force, the "laws of motion" arising from the blind working of economic laws can be *cancelled out* by the planned intervention of the state.

During the 1920's in Russia, the accumulation of kulak and Nepman capital began to outstrip the accumulation of capital in the state-owned economy. On the basis of an analysis of economic trends alone, one would have to say that the further development of the economy on the basis of these laws of motion could only result in the complete triumph of capitalism over the nationalized economy. Trotsky predicted this and proposed a *program* to prevent it. The essence of this program was to use the state power over the economy to *cancel out* the blind working of "laws of motion." The means by which this was to be done were two-fold: (a) a planned program of accumulation of capital for the expansion of the nationalized sector of the economy and (b) state measures directed against the kulaks and Nepmen, especially tax measures, which would halt their growth and, finally, systematically reduce them. Unfortunately, Trotsky believed that the Stalin bureaucracy was a pro-bourgeois force and incapable of maintaining the nationalized economy against capitalist pressure. Trotsky, consequently, failed to foresee that the bureaucracy, also, could use the state power as an economic force against the capitalist trends, in the interests of its own special position, without thereby strengthening the proletariat or moving toward socialism. In line with his mistaken analysis, Trotsky was forced to regard the Five Year Plan as a temporary "left zig"—i.e., a pro-Stalinist and pro-proletarian measure taken under the pressure of the workers—on what was otherwise a "zig-zag" course toward capitalist restoration. The sad fact, however, was that while there was less capitalism than ever in Russia at the end of the Five Year Plan, there was also less socialism than ever, despite the vast expansion of the nationalized economy.

If a study of the economic trends alone cannot tell us toward what the economy is in transition, how can we discover the answer to this latter question? *By analyzing the class nature of the state power which is determining the direction of economic development.*

This brings us back to the question we posed earlier but postponed answering; namely, how does one determine the class nature of state power in periods of revolution (or counter-revolution) when the state does not necessarily represent

the economically dominant class? One determines it on the basis of *state policy* toward the different classes composing the social order. How did we know that a workers' state was at the head of Russian society despite the NEP concessions to small capital? Because the state policy was predominantly a pro-proletarian policy. How did we know that the workers' state was degenerating? Because its policy increasingly favored the special interests of the bureaucracy at the expense of the proletariat.

We must therefore ask: If Germain states that Poland is ruled by "a bourgeois Polish State apparatus" and that "the structure of this state remains unchanged" from that of the pre-war state, why has the Polish bourgeoisie fared so badly at the hands of its own state?

### Which Class Holds Power?

The next question which immediately suggests itself is this: which class has been favored by the state policies in Poland? Before answering this question, we will first examine another aspect of the nature of state power to determine in whose hands the Polish state rests.

Germain belligerently asks us:

How were you able to write an editorial of close to 4,000 words on Polish policy without telling us explicitly what is the class nature of the state and of the society in that country?

Four pages later in his article, Germain himself quotes our answer:

According to the editorial writer of the *NI*, "the Stalinist régime is seeking [!] to compose [!] the new bureaucratic class from the state apparatus. [The exclamations were inserted by Germain.] "Ah-ha!" Germain wants to say. "You see, they are only *seeking* and want to *compose* but the editorial writer does not explicitly tell us who holds the state power today."

Who holds the state power today? In Poland? Of course, we did not explicitly set down the answer to this. Because we don't know? No! Quite the contrary, because we were sure that *every* schoolboy knew the answer to this question. When we said the "*Stalinist régime* is seeking, etc.," whom did Germain think we had in mind? Lest we not be sufficiently explicit, we will answer at greater length the question of who holds the state power in Poland today.

What is the state in the last analysis? As Engels was at such pains to make clear, it is "an armed power." Lest one think this too narrow a concept, Engels adds that "it consists not merely of armed men, but of material appendages, prisons and repressive institutions of all kinds. . . ." And Lenin comments on Engels' definition and says somewhat categorically: "A standing army and police are the chief instruments of state power."

What standing army is the backbone of state power in Poland? *The Russian army*. What police rules the country? *The GPU*. What repressive institutions exist? *Special courts and concentration camps for the opponents of Russian rule*.

We hope that Germain will not quibble about the fact that in addition to the Russian army of occupation there is also a "Polish" army that wears Polish uniforms and even has officers who speak Polish without Russian accents. Their arms, however, are Russian, both in origin and in point of control. We are even willing to grant that many of the chiefs of the Polish GPU speak Polish. Here, however, we are not ready to guarantee that they speak without a Russian accent.

What is the nature of the state power in Poland today? *The nature of state power is Russian imperialist rule, i.e., occupation, domination, oppression and exploitation of the country by the bureaucratic collectivist state power of Russia.*

This is the bald fact which it seems everybody in the world knows (whether they call Russia bureaucratic collectivist or not) but which, it would appear, everybody has carefully withheld from Germain out of regard for his tender sensibilities.

What is the state power in Japan today? Everyone knows that the real state power rests upon the American imperialist forces of occupation. The United States being a capitalist power, it leaves undisturbed the basic class relations in capitalist Japan. Here there is no contradiction between the régime of MacArthur and Japanese capitalism, insofar as their common desire to maintain capitalism is concerned.

### How Is Conflict Being Resolved?

But we know that where a contradiction does exist between the basic social aims of the state (i.e., the armed power) and the economically dominant class, this contradiction cannot continue indefinitely. If it did, then the entire Marxist theory that the state is an instrument of force in the hands of the economically dominant class would be invalidated. Germain correctly notes, in connection with another point, that the workers' state in Russia ruled for some six to eight months with only few nationalizations. But this situation could not continue. Either the capitalist owners of industry would overthrow the Soviet state and again take the state power or the Soviet state would remove the capitalists from their economically dominant position by expropriations. If there is a contradiction between the class aims of the state power in Poland and those of the bourgeoisie [whom Germain considers still the economically-dominant class], how is it being resolved? We submit that all evidence proves that it is being resolved by systematically removing the bourgeoisie from its role as the "dominant class" in the economy.

"The character of the state which appears in its structure must rest, however, on a well defined social base," we are told by Germain. The real state power in Poland, the Russian imperialist occupant and the native Stalinist-Quisling apparatus through which it rules, certainly intend to give their state power "a well defined social base." But other than Germain thinks, it will not be bourgeois. This latter illusion rests upon yet another theory of the majority which is basic to their analysis of Poland. This is the theory that the Russian bureaucracy seeks to restore capitalism in Russia, and, consequently, to maintain it where it already exists. For you see, when all is said and done, Germain proceeds not from the nature of the economy in Poland *but from the class aims of the Russian bureaucracy!*

But the political intervention of the Soviet bureaucracy was primarily *counter-revolutionary*. The Soviet Army was used to "restore order," re-establish the authority of employers and to rapidly rebuild a *bourgeois* Polish state apparatus.

Here we can clearly see that the Polish question is indistinguishable from the Russian question. How can it be otherwise when the real state in Poland is the Russian military power plus its native apparatus? The analysis of the Polish situation, therefore, cannot be the same for those who see a workers' state in Russia as for those who see bureaucratic collectivism or state capitalism in Russia.

The above quotation reveals that those who hold the view that Russia is a workers' state and that the only alternative is the restoration of private capitalism can only equate counter-revolution to *bourgeois* counter-revolution. If the "Red Army" enters Poland to suppress in incipient proletarian revolution, Germain can only conclude that it does this in order to place the bourgeoisie in power. That the Russian army may smash a proletarian revolution and simultaneously move to eliminate

the bourgeoisie is ruled out as "Shachtmanite" revisionism (and in more truculent moods as Burnhamism).

According to the majority theory the Russian bureaucracy plays a *dual* role: reactionary and progressive, i.e., pro-capitalist and pro-socialist. It is either one or the other. If it suppresses a proletarian revolution, it must be pro-capitalist. If it divides the land and nationalizes economy, it must be pro-socialist. Accepting this mode of reasoning for the moment, we ask Germain this question: If one casts up a balance sheet of the Russian record in Poland, placing all the "progressive" acts in one column and the reactionary ones in another, which reveals itself as the decisive class policy, the pro-capitalist or the "pro-socialist" measures?

What have been the pro-capitalist measures in Poland cited by Germain? The Russians (a) saved the Polish bourgeoisie from a proletarian revolution and (b) generously permitted the bourgeoisie to keep its small and, to an extent, medium enterprises.

What have been the "pro-socialist" measures according to Germain? The Russians (a) nationalized banking and the key industries and (b) broke up the remaining landed estates. In the words of Germain, "the total expropriation of the bourgeoisie after an eventual conquest of power by the proletariat presents itself as infinitely easier and requiring less expense than in 1939" and therefore "economically, socially and technically the reforms of 1945-46 *facilitate* the realization of the socialist revolution."

Can one assume anything else from this balance sheet than that the *decisive* class policy in Poland has been anything *but* pro-bourgeois? Germain could conceivably conclude that the policy has been "pro-socialist," but hardly pro-bourgeois.

### Russia's Aim of Structural Assimilation

We cite one more item of evidence from Germain to bolster this conclusion. In explaining the reasons for the nationalization policy, he sums them up as: "... workers' pressure; the tendency toward statism inherent in Polish capitalist industry; *the tendency toward structural assimilation inherent in the policy of the Soviet bureaucracy in the 'buffer' countries.*" (Our italics—E. E.)

We ask: if it is the aim of the Russian bureaucracy to assimilate the Polish economy "into the structure of the USSR," will this be done on the basis of a Polish *bourgeois* economy? How could a bourgeois economy be grafted onto the collectivized economy of Russia? Or does Germain see in this, as did Oehler a few years ago, the secret design of the Kremlin to bring capitalism back into Russia? "Structural assimilation" to Russia! This is a most gloomy perspective which the Polish bourgeois state has outlined for the Polish bourgeoisie! Never has the "executive committee of the bourgeoisie as a whole" shown such disregard for the most basic interests of its constituents, including their very lives!

### Comparison of Poland and Spain

But Germain cites us an historical precedent for what is taking place in Poland. What is the precedent? The Loyalist government in Spain during the Civil War. Here, he says was a bourgeois state which fought the bourgeois as a class, the vast majority of the latter having been in the camp of Franco. Germain, however, omits one item from his analogy between Poland and Spain of 1936-39. The entire activity of the Republican government after July 18, 1936, was not merely to oust the workers from the control they had established in industry, but to conduct a *consistent policy of restoring the property to the bourgeoisie*. This latter policy was most ardent-

ly pursued by the Spanish Stalinists, under the direct orders of the Russian Ambassador in Madrid. Those bourgeois who had fled abroad but had not taken an active part in the Franco rebellion were even invited to return and resume their bourgeois functions.

Why did the Spanish bourgeoisie encourage the Franco uprising? Was it because the People's Front régime was going to expropriate them? No. It was because they viewed the Republican government as too weak to prevent a proletarian revolution. They viewed Azana as the Russian bourgeoisie viewed Kerensky and, like the Russian bourgeoisie, the Spaniards sought its own "Kornilov," unfortunately, a victorious one. Does any Polish bourgeois oppose the present Warsaw government because it is weak in the face of a threatening proletarian and peasant upheaval? They could find no stronger counter-revolutionary régime than the one now in power. However, a régime that saves the bourgeoisie from the proletariat only in order to expropriate the bourgeoisie itself is of little consolation to the latter. The Stalinist course in Spain was anti-proletarian and pro-bourgeois. The Stalinist course in Poland is anti-proletarian and anti-bourgeois and pro-bureaucratic collectivist. They find themselves able to achieve in Poland today what was out of the question in Spain—namely to recast Polish society in the image of Russia.

### Russia's "Children"

As a consequence, Shachtman asserts that the "unique" Russian bureaucratic class can produce children—"intentionally," of course, in order to insist on the determinist and historical character of this strange "sociology," which continues out of laziness of thought to call itself "Marxist"! We have the right to ask him: And the French Stalinists, wouldn't they, too, like to form a "new bureaucratic class," if God furnishes the occasion?

Yes, Germain may as well know the worst; the Russian bureaucratic-collectivist class can "produce children." Not only "intentionally" but also "necessarily."\* What is at the root of the Russian expansion into the "buffer-states," according to the position which Germain holds? At the root is the bureaucracy's concept of how to defend the "Soviet Union." The very term "buffer" indicates this. But what is a more reliable buffer-territory, one with a bourgeois economy or one with a nationalized economy? Obviously, the latter. Yugoslavia is certainly more reliable than Finland in case of an American attack upon Russia. If the antagonism between Russia and the capitalist world rests upon two mutually hostile social systems, why should Russia *desire* to have the *enemy* social system behind its first line of defense (the iron curtain) and extending right up to the frontiers of Russia itself? We speak of "desire" here for it is Germain's contention that Russia *seeks* to restore and maintain capitalism in Poland. We credit the Kremlin, if solely from an aim of self-preservation, with enough foresight to have the "intentions" of extending its social system throughout the buffer territory.

However, more than that, Russia finds it *necessary* to expand imperialistically due to her own economic needs. We dealt with this at length in an editorial in the April, 1946, issue of this publication. The same point is made in different terminology in the *Fourth International* (March, 1946) where we read on page 103 as follows: "The régime [in Russia] sees no way out in the economic field save through the realization of the fourth Five-Year Plan, which cannot be achieved by the devastated country without the resources of the 'buffer zones.'" Most certainly "the resources of the buffer zones" cannot be

\*Since we are dealing with Poland, one of the "buffer" states, we will refrain from dealing with the question of the nature of Stalinism in the capitalist world in this article.

exploited by continual looting. They must be geared into the economy of Russia. This is what Germain speaks of when he refers to the Russian aim of "structural assimilation." What will these "assimilated" states be other than "children" of the Russian bureaucratic collectivist system? E. R. Frank, in his study of the buffer-states, admits that Yugoslavia looks terribly much like Russia already, though he also gags at calling it one of the "children."

If capitalism is everywhere in decline, it is at its most feeble stage precisely in this buffer zone of Russia. Short of a war, this territory is lost to capitalism. The latter system no longer has the dynamism to make a come-back here. Certainly, Germain would be one of the last to predict an economic resurgence of world capitalism that would sweep over into these states. The only capitalist resurgence that is possible lies along the path indicated by Truman's intervention in the Eastern Mediterranean—military might. Unless the proletarian revolution intervenes with its solution to the desperate situation of these nations, the vacuum will be filled by Russian policy—ending in bureaucratic-totalitarian rule by a new exploiting class that basis itself upon a nationalized economy.

But in France, too? mockingly asks Germain. Yes, the French Stalinists, too, seek to develop bureaucratic class rule, and "if God furnishes the occasion," they will. This occasion, however, we do not see in France today nor for a long time to come. If it materializes, it will not only denote a crushing defeat of the European proletariat at the hands of Stalinism but it will also be the signal for the outbreak of the Russo-American war for world supremacy.

Why should the fact that the French Stalinists seek bureaucratic class rule of their own strike Germain as extremely preposterous? He should be well acquainted with the following quotation:

The predominating type among the present "Communist" bureaucrats is the political careerist, and in consequence the polar opposite of the revolutionist. Their ideal is to attain in their own country the same position that the Kremlin oligarchy gained in the USSR. They are not the revolutionary leaders of the proletariat but aspirants to totalitarian rule. They dream of gaining success with the aid of this same Soviet bureaucracy and its GPU. They view with admiration and envy the invasion of Poland, Finland, the Baltic states, Bessarabia by the Red Army because these invasions immediately bring about the transfer of power into the hands of the local Stalinist candidates for totalitarian rule. (Leon Trotsky, *The Fourth International*, November, 1940.)

You see, this "strange 'sociology,' which continues out of laziness of thought to call itself 'Marxist'" did not even originate with us! We deem it far less "strange" than that sociology which sees the class aim of the bureaucracy of the "workers' state" to be the rebuilding of the "bourgeois Polish State apparatus" by means of nationalizing the economy and partitioning the land. We cannot refrain from noting that the Russian bureaucracy, no doubt, does this "intentionally" to help poor Germain resolve the many theoretical contradictions he finds himself in.

### Shachtman's View in 1941

But Shachtman did not say that the Russian state could produce children when he first developed his theory of bureaucratic collectivism in 1941, complains Germain. This is not entirely true. For the Russian state already had produced several children by that time. Esthonia, Latvia and Lithuania were small nations but they were nations nevertheless and as capitalist as many another. Russian occupation, however, did not "rapidly rebuild a bourgeois [Esthonian, Latvian or Lithuanian] state apparatus." It recast these nations in its own

image of bureaucratic collectivism, or as Germain would have it, it "structurally assimilated" them. The assimilation has been so thorough that these nations have almost passed out of the memory of mankind.

Shachtman would have floun in the face of well-known facts (and facts which helped his case rather than weakened it) to deny that bureaucratic collectivism in Russia could have offspring. What our resolution on Russia in 1941 did say was that the Second World War would be decisive in the great contest between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie and that regardless of which won, the bureaucratic collectivist class would have an equally limited future. History has proven that we were one-sided and therefore wrong on this score. We were wrong not because we believed in the theory of bureaucratic collectivism, but because we did not fully comprehend and develop all the ramifications of this theory and continued to operate on many of the false concepts laid down by Trotsky on the Russian question. The result of the war was (a) the failure of the proletarian revolutionary wave to reach even the heights of 1917-23, (b) the terrible disorganization and disintegration of capitalism in Europe and (c) the emergence of Russia as the second greatest world power, supported in Europe by mass Stalinist parties. Rather than a limited future, bureaucratic collectivism today enters the lists as a powerful contender against both capitalism and the proletarian revolution. We took note of this changed relationship in the International Resolution of our party convention of May 1946 and

stated that the future of bureaucratic collectivism was not absolutely decided but would be resolved in struggle. We seek to effect the outcome of this struggle by being active participants.

That is why we remain unrattled when Germain, after noting that we see Poland as the pattern for the other states of the buffer zone, asks: "Does he [Shachtman] perhaps think that King Michael finds himself at the head of—a bureaucratic state?" A pattern according to the dictionary is "anything cut out or formed into shape *to be copied*." Stalin works with the easiest material first, i.e., Poland and Yugoslavia. Rumania, together with King Michael, will have their turn in being cut to the pattern. Meanwhile Stalin has use for King Michael—who has about as much power in Rumanian affairs as Kalinin had in Russia, a good deal less, in fact. Stalin has use for all kinds of conscious and unconscious collaborators—from the Metropolitan of the Holy Synod in Moscow to those who call upon the Polish masses to defend the Stalinist police régime against the bourgeois democratic peasant movement. As to the number of countries in which, and the extent to which, the "pattern" will be used, this—we repeat—will be decided in struggle.

ERNEST ERBER

(The concluding portion of this article will appear in our next issue. It will deal with the struggle for democratic rights, the relative value of nationalization, the national question, the question of class criteria, the two lines in practice and the international power relations involved in the Polish situation.)

# Eastern Europe Structural Changes

## The Effect of Stalinist Occupation

In the November, 1946, issue of the *Fourth International* there appears an article by E. R. Frank on "The Kremlin in Eastern Europe" which is intended to represent the theoretical point of view of the Socialist Workers Party on the problems of the revolution in Central Eastern Europe. A resolution by the IEC of the Fourth International, which appears in *The Militant* of December 7, 1946, officially confirms Frank's point of view. The resolution, which speaks of the proletarian struggle against both camps in Poland, Stalinism and the opposition, dedicates its entire exposition to the struggle against the legal and illegal opposition, defending in reality, the policies of the Stalinist-assassin régime and its economic and social "reforms." What a handsome example of international solidarity with the blood-stained Polish proletariat and the rebellious poor peasantry! What loyal "critical" support of the Stalinist régime in Poland, which is as effective as it is "critical"! For if anything matters to Stalin today, it is not the support of his fifth columns, but rather the "critical" support of the "fellow travelers." The tenor of the official resolution and Frank's theoretical commentary places the authors of both documents in the ranks of the "fellow travelers," in the ranks of the "critical" opposition to His Majesty, Stalin.

Let us speak concretely: Frank patiently explains to us various phenomena and phases of Soviet policy in the "sphere of Soviet influence." As a consequence of the inter-imperialist agreements at Teheran, Yalta and Potsdam, the Red Armies

occupy this part of Europe up to the Trieste-Stettin line. The Red Armies established new régimes based on the coalition between the collaborationist bourgeoisie, whom Frank calls "far-sighted" and "progressive," and the Stalinist bureaucracy. The economy imposed on these countries has a mixed and bastard character, being based on a partial or almost complete state capitalism (Czechoslovakia) existing side by side with private property permitted by the Stalinists. The nature of the economic and social policies followed in these countries ranges from a coalition with the bourgeoisie to a "monolithic" government (my expression, not Frank's—A. R.). In spite of the reactionary role of the Stalinists relative to the situation of the working class, in spite of a policy of robbery and plunder which Frank admits, he absolves the "Stalinist reaction" by virtue of the simple fact that "the overturn in Eastern Europe possesses many highly progressive features, the redistribution of land, the confiscation and nationalization of industry." In brief, Frank attributes a decidedly progressive character to Stalin's "social revolution" in Europe. "If a social revolution signifies the transfer of power from one class to another, then certainly a *social revolution* (my emphasis—A. R.) was set in motion in Eastern Europe after the 'liberation.'" A neat example, indeed, of Frank's "Marxist" reasoning!

In spite of its having realized this "social revolution," Frank is not at all satisfied with Stalinism, above all the "Red" Armies. The advance of these armies awakened, according to Frank, the revolutionary consciousness of the workers who oc-

cupied the factories and formed workers' committees in all the countries that the "Red" Army approached. According to Frank, it would seem that the Red Army is a revolutionary factor in Europe. But contrary to ordinary logic and contrary to all Marxist dialectic, this same army which "awakened the revolution" was transformed into a counter-revolutionary force which disarmed the workers, protected the bourgeoisie and capitalism, imposed governments of coalition with the bourgeoisie and the "bastard" régimes, protected private property and throttled the very same revolution which its approach accelerated and encouraged. In spite of all this, after imposing its government, Stalinism realized "progressive reforms," a species of "social revolution" nationalizing industry and distributing the land. Not only this, it pushes the régimes of coalition toward the "left," purging them of the bourgeoisie and the vacillating social-democrats, peasants, etc., in order to create a more "socialist" régime. To support this thesis, Frank takes up in detail the developments in all these countries and above all, in Poland and Czechoslovakia.

### **Hosannahs for the Quislings and the Far-Sighted Bourgeoisie**

According to Frank, the Stalinist régime in Czechoslovakia is the "mildest" and the most "democratic," thanks not only to the tolerable economic situation, since Czechoslovakia did not suffer as much from the ravages of war as the other countries, but above all, thanks to the "foresight" of the liberal bourgeoisie and the "progressive" middleclass represented by the "far-sighted" Benes, who collaborates with the Russians in the introduction of the "social revolution" in Czechoslovakia. In order to support his "very Marxist" and magisterial thesis, Frank invokes the testimony of that well-known "Marxist" organ, the *Manchester Guardian*, during the period when the liberal section of the British bourgeoisie had illusions about the possibility of international collaboration with the Russians in order to save the British Empire at the expense of the peoples oppressed and subjugated by imperialism. What was advocated by this organ of British imperialism was the division of Europe into two spheres of influence, British and Soviet. Benes, who accepted this point of view, was then the "far-sighted" and "progressive" favorite of British imperialism. Today the *Manchester Guardian*, having lost its illusions about a "peaceful agreement" with Moscow, looks to a military alliance between Britain and the United States, and consequently no longer sings the praises of Benes. Today the very same "progressive" organ which the Marxist Frank relies on so much, would welcome more "audacity" and more opposition in the style of Mikolajczyk from Benes.

Frank's remarks indicate that he knows as much about Czechoslovakia, its economic and political structure, as he does of the Czech and Slovak tongues, and of the principal actors in Czechoslovakian politics. After the Hussite revolution, the Czech people suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of the Hapsburgian Catholic reaction, and fell into a feudal servitude for almost four hundred years. During this period, the Czech nation almost disappeared, losing almost all of its national consciousness and its spirit of rebellion. In 1848, when all the peoples of Europe rose up against Czarism and absolutism, the embryonic Czech bourgeoisie supported reactionary Pan-Slavism, opposed the Polish and Hungarian revolutionaries, and defended the Hapsburgs and Metternich. Marx's condemnation of this counter-revolutionary attitude is very well known. *Masaryk himself, first President of the post-war*

*Czech Republic, was a supporter of the Hapsburg monarchy until the years of Odboj (resistance.)* The steady decline of the monarchy, foreshadowing its inevitable defeat, convinced Masaryk of the necessity of Czechoslovakian national independence. This was the reason why this partisan of the Hapsburg monarch came to be the "father of the Czechoslovakian Republic." The role played by the Czech legions against the young Soviet Russia should be known to Frank. The greater part of the Czech bourgeoisie, though not German speaking, always signed for the good old days of the Hapsburgs, because in those days Czech industry enjoyed access to wider markets than the small territory of the republic could provide.

When Hitler occupied the Sudetenland, the greater part of the Czech bourgeoisie favored peaceful collaboration with Hitler in order to save themselves from the Soviet Union, and with the hope of repairing the loss of the Sudetenland with the broader German markets. The same "far-sighted" Benes did not call the people to arms but to "order" and to "peace" and to accept the dictates of Munich. He turned a deaf ear to the outside world and did not create a government-in-exile before the situation had matured. The majority of the Czech bourgeoisie, led by Hacha, collaborated with Hitler, drawing all possible material advantages from the situation. Benes took upon himself the task of annulling the effects of this activity by creating the pro-Allied government-in-exile. When the Russian Armies approached Slovakia, Benes, knowing the drift of the imperialist agreements at Yalta, chose to accept the imperialist dictate and submitted to Stalin. As a consequence, he was spared a struggle, was given the post of president, and succeeded in saving part of the bourgeoisie. *But in revolutionary and Marxist language this is not called "foresight" but naked, unrestrained and shameless opportunism; it is called the miserable betrayal of the people and the proletariat of Czechoslovakia, the betrayal of its social and national emancipation and of its future.* An opportunistic bourgeois organ can call this "foresight" when it falls in with the interests of British imperialism, but not a Marxist who pretends to be a theoretician of the vanguard of the world proletariat. True, the political régime in Czechoslovakia is milder than in Poland, but it is also true that *its control is more totalitarian.* Thanks to the traitorous and Quisling role of Benes, Stalinism dominates all the key position without any competition. The elections gave a crushing victory to the Stalinist party. The old social-democrats have been eliminated. Fierlinger and Lausman, whom Frank admires so much, do not play any major role in the Czechoslovakian social-democracy. Hampel, Soukup, Falta and so many others have disappeared (Soukup was assassinated by the Nazis). Benes himself is but his own shadow, a puppet who is afraid to open his mouth. The Czech press writes that he is sick and will probably step down from the presidency. Frank should not take his own ignorance for "theory" and inform his readers so badly. Benes is not "far-sighted" but a Stalinist Quisling, Moscovite Hacha, a traitor. The "mildness" of Stalinist methods in the Czechoslovakian Republic is not due to the "foresight" of the bourgeoisie but to the lack of a revolutionary proletariat, of an internationalist Communist Party, of an aroused national resistance.

### **Condemnation and Contempt for the Worker and Peasant Opposition**

Frank evaluates the Polish situation in accordance with the same *a priori* schema, without drawing upon any other sources than the Anglo-Saxon bourgeois press or the Stalinists

in the English language. The régime of bloody Stalinist terror is not explained as the product of an imperialist policy and the occupation of Poland, but as the result of the stupidity and lack of "foresight" on the part of the Polish bourgeoisie.

"Because the Czech liberal bourgeois is bending over backward to keep on friendly terms with the Kremlin, the People's Front government has survived in more or less original form." Completely false, because Stalinist totalitarianism is almost as advanced in Czechoslovakia as in Yugoslavia, but by "cold methods."

"In sharp contrast to Benes and his policy, the Polish government-in-exile in London, dominated by the same colonels who controlled Polish politics for two decades, remained obdurately anti-Soviet. Even in exile they continued their mad, adventuristic game of trying to play off the Western powers against Russia." This ignorance served up with so much assurance and arrogance to the poor readers requires historical explanation in order to set the facts down correctly. For almost four hundred years, Poland was not defeated by the Russia-German reaction. Not until the end of the 18th century and the beginnings of the democratic revolution did this defeat take place. And even then Poland's defeat was not total in character, for as an ally of France she could still present certain conditions to the Congress of Vienna, obtaining a satellite state with a limited constitutional character. Each fifteen or twenty years, the Polish nobility and bourgeoisie rose up against the Russian autocracy, their struggle constituting the hope and inspiration of democracy and socialism in Europe. Marx and Engels supported this struggle without any reservations. Lenin gave the following evaluation of the Polish uprisings: "While the popular masses of Russia and the majority of the Slav countries were sunken in a profound sleep, while in these countries there were no independent movements of the masses, the liberation movement of the Polish nobility acquired a paramount importance, tremendous in scope not only from the viewpoint of Russian democracy and democracy for all the Slavs, but for all European democracy as well." (Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. II, p. 276.) With the defeat of the last revolution in 1894, the Polish proletariat assumed the role of leadership in the social and national revolution in Poland.

Although Frank is ignorant of this role, we do not have to explain to him that this proletariat gave rise to such leaders as Rosa Luxemburg, Tysza Jogiches, Unschlicht, Kohn, Hanecki, Marchlewski, Dzierzynski, Warski, Koszutska, Domski, Dabal, not to speak of the prominent reformists in the Viennese, Berlin and later Polish parliaments (such as Daszynski, Lieberman, Purak, etc.). The Polish proletariat struggled against the Czars, against the "Colonels," against the Nazis, and now with heroic valor that has no precedent, they defy Stalinism.\* The Polish CP had to be liquidated and the old Polish Marxists assassinated like the Russian Bolsheviks. The underground and the Warsaw insurrection, whose backbone was the proletariat, was assassinated by Stalin-Hitler with the consent of the imperialists. Stalin could not appear in Poland as a savior, and had to introduce his government on bayonets. Frank says that Stalin came to an agreement with a provisional Polish government in 1944, a government composed of

\*For Lenin, the Polish nobility's movement of liberation against Czarism was revolutionary in "gigantic form"; for Frank, the worker-peasant opposition, basically revolutionary against the "Stalinist reaction," is counter-revolutionary, is an agent of American imperialism. What an aberration of logic, an aberration toward Stalinist reaction, an anti-working class and anti-socialist aberration.

Stalinists, reformists, democrats and populists. I know all the actors and signatories to this agreement. There were no Social-Democrats there, outside of Drobner and Haneman, who could never represent the PPS (Polish Socialist Party), because they belonged to a small grouping of the NSPP (Independent Socialists) which they themselves liquidated before 1938. Now both are in opposition, Haneman in prison. There was no "democratic" party in Poland, its leader is an old "Colonelist" and apologist for the terror set in motion by Pilsudski and Rzymowski. The Peasant representatives were hardly there. Only GPU agents and "fellow travelers" appeared on behalf of the Stalinists. Such questions, Comrade Frank, must be understood, and if one does not know them they must be studied.

*The "union" between Mikolajczyk and Lublin was dictated by the imperialists and repudiated by the Polish people. The furious resistance against Stalinism in Poland was not due to the lack of "foresight" on the part of the Polish bourgeoisie, nor of the London government-in-exile but to the revolutionary past and the revolutionary resistance of the Polish proletariat, whom no one has been able to subdue until now, neither the Czar nor the Colonels, neither Hitler nor Stalin.* What is historically correct is that the government-in-exile is not controlled by the Colonels. The Colonels were overthrown in 1939 by Hitler. What arose was a government coalition between the national-democracy, the peasants and the Socialists, headed by Sikorski. After his death there came into being the Peasant-Socialist coalition, headed by Mikolajczyk. The government of Mikolajczyk-Kwapinski (PPS) was supported by the anti-Nazi resistance movement in Poland. *The resistance movement and the Warsaw insurrection were crushed by Stalin, not because they were reactionary, but because they were to the left of the Russian bureaucracy.* The Reformist-Peasant government, which would have realized the same state capitalism that Stalin is bringing about, but within the framework of national independence and respect for the bourgeois democratic rights of the proletariat, constituted a mortal danger to the Stalinist reaction and its bureaucratic régime. It represented a mortal danger because the possibility of opening the road to socialism would exist.

*The opposition of the Polish proletariat and peasantry does not prove its backwardness, but rather its great historical experience and its revolutionary consciousness. To identify this opposition with that of the bourgeoisie is to render excellent service to Stalinism and the rest of the reaction.* Furthermore, it is no longer certain that all the bourgeoisie supports the London government and opposes Stalinism. There is a strong group of National-Democrats in the Warsaw government, led by Grabski, old leader of the reaction, and a group of "Colonelists" headed by Rzymowski, Szwalbe (now a "Socialist"), Kwiatkowski, etc. On the other hand, the government of London is led by the genuine PPS, ranging from men like Arciszewski, Kwapinski, over to the left wing of the PPS represented by Prager, Ciolkosz.

### **The Nature of the Anti-Stalinist Opposition**

In Poland there are two kinds of opposition today: 1. The rightist and remnants of the bourgeoisie, and 2. The peasant-worker, led by the peasants and supported by the workers. The main forces of the reaction are to be found today in the Stalinist camp, including the former bourgeois collaborators. The Stalinist terror is not due to the reactionary opposition, but in the first place, to the worker-peasant opposition which threatens the foundations of the Stalinist régime. Mikolajczyk

was ready to play the part of a Polish Benes, but Stalin required a government that was completely his own in Poland. *Poland is not Czechoslovakia; the contradictions between the two imperialist camps make of Poland a sensitive nerve-center, and for this reason Mikolajczyk, with all his "good will," who wished to create a government loyal to Moscow, though autonomous, was defeated.* For a thousand years of its history Poland never engaged in any compromise on the issue of its sovereignty and territorial integrity. In 150 years of Russian domination, a pro-Russian government was never established, nor did the Russians wish to risk such a government, deeming their own régime necessary. According to Frank's criteria, which considers it far-sighted for the Polish bourgeoisie to reach an understanding with Stalin, Colonel Beck was very "far-sighted" because he desired an understanding with Hitler and yielded Danzig and the Corridor to the latter. However, this agreement was rejected by the vast majority of the Polish people, with the workers and the peasants in the vanguard. It will hardly be possible to realize such a deal with Stalin either, even though a good part of the bourgeoisie, perhaps even the majority, so desires it. The workers and peasants, you see, are "short-sighted."

It is our belief that the illegal, extreme nationalist right wing will inevitably be annihilated by Stalinism, not because the latter plays a progressive role but because its reactionary and imperialist policies demand such a course of action. Economically, the bourgeoisie has already been annihilated. *The second opposition to Stalinism, that of the peasants and workers, has a completely different character.* The peasant movement of Poland is one of the most democratic in all Europe, owing to the agrarian structure of the country. Apart from the numerous agricultural proletariat, there exists in Poland an enormous preponderance of poor peasants, semi-proletarian in type, who account for almost 80 per cent of the rural population. *The "kulak" in Poland was a stratum without economic importance.* Only in Western Poland (Posen) were the rich peasants strong, thanks to the Bismarckian reforms. The Polish peasantry was opposed to Pilsudski and the Colonels, struggled against the Nazis, and now struggles against Stalin and his "state capitalism" (à la Frank). The "opposition" of the poor and middle peasantry to the "state-capitalist" monopoly of the bureaucracy is not reactionary but progressive, because *the weakening of the Stalinist régime does not weaken the development of Poland toward socialism.* The aroused opposition of the peasantry is also proof that *the Stalinist agrarian reform did not have any great importance in Poland, and that, consequently, the famous "democratic revolution" is a fraud.* The support given by the workers to the peasants is also proof that *the Polish proletariat understands the reactionary role of Stalinism, a piece of evidence that supports our point of view. For this reason, we ought not to permit Stalin to annihilate Mikolajczyk and the peasants, but ought to defend them from Stalinism.*

It is a fact that Anglo-Saxon imperialism tries to take advantage of the Mikolajczyk opposition for its own ends, but this does not mean that the worker-peasant opposition is a mere instrument of imperialism and represents the reactionary Polish bourgeoisie. *The proletariat also has the right to take advantage of the inter-imperialist contradictions for its own ends without being bound to either imperialist camp. The Polish people have no desire to serve as an instrument of imperialism, nor do they desire a new war which would take place on Polish soil.* The Polish people remember well

the British betrayal of 1939, the betrayal of 1944, when the Warsaw revolution was drowned in its own blood with the mutual consent of the imperialists and the advice of the Fourth International that the Warsaw insurrection subordinate itself to the Russian Army. But the petty bourgeois and peasant opposition, and even more so the proletarian opposition, has the right to take advantage of the inter-imperialist struggle, the Anglo-American pressure on Stalin, in order to conquer a margin of liberty and to lessen the pressure of Russian imperialism in Poland. Such a course should not be taken to represent the pressure of American imperialism. It is well to remember that Lenin also knew how to take advantage of the Entente's opposition to Czarism in 1917.

Briefly then: In Poland there are three broad camps—1. The Stalinist reaction. 2. The reactionary nationalist opposition. 3. *The peasant-worker opposition which struggles for a "new Poland, authentically democratic and socialist."* *The rightist opposition is doomed to annihilation because it is reactionary and utopian. The peasant-worker opposition is to the left of Stalinism and therefore its defeat signifies our defeat. The opposition, whether it wills it or not, opens the road for Europe and Poland toward socialism.* Our task is to combat the petty bourgeois-peasant illusions on the possibility of "peasant democracy," that is, petty bourgeois, and to give a socialist and revolutionary consistency to this movement, laying bare the vacillations and ambiguities of Mikolajczyk. Behind Mikolajczyk's back an anti-Stalinist, independent Socialist Party has been formed with a centrist-reformist character. It is our duty to fight at their side and to give them a developed revolutionary program. If we isolate ourselves from this movement and declare it "reactionary" we give aid to the Stalinists and close the road to revolutionary developments in Poland. This, the Fourth International and Comrade Frank ought to understand.

#### **What Kind of "Social Revolution" Is Taking Place in Central Eastern Europe?**

Analyzing Russian economic policy in occupied Europe, Frank arrives at the conclusion that generally speaking, a "state capitalism" of various degrees of perfection and completion is being set up. He attributes "highly progressive" virtues to the Stalinist nationalization of industry, forgetting that this nationalization is reactionary because it serves the aims of Russian imperialism: plunder, robbery and spoliation for the purpose of "primitive accumulation" of capital (courageous Frank! He always sees some progress). He also estimates the progressive worth of the Stalinist agrarian reforms to be considerable, arguing, however, only on the basis of the figures emanating from Stalinist sources and taking the official declarations of the Stalinist ministers for good coin. For these reasons, Frank, though he analyzes the political crimes of the "Stalinist reaction" (bravo, bravo), absolves them for the fundamental reason that Stalinism realizes, in the Marxist sense, a "social revolution," "if the social revolution signifies the transfer of power from one class to another." (Here Frank recognizes the Stalinist bureaucracy as a new social class, thus tacitly accepting Shachtman's theory, nothing more and nothing less!) For this reason, Frank gives "critical support" to the Stalinist bureaucracy against the anti-Stalinist opposition (Frank does not distinguish between the reactionary bourgeois opposition and that of the worker-peasants) classifying the entire opposition as "reactionary." Accepting for a moment Frank's logic, we ask: *What kind of "social revolution" occurs*

under Russian occupation? Are there two kinds of revolution in our time—socialist and bourgeois-democratic? The Stalinists proclaim that they are realizing a phase of the “democratic revolution.” If Frank accepts this point of view, he ought to demand the liquidation of the Fourth International and request admission into the Stalinist Party in order to aid with his critique the realization of this so “highly progressive” social revolution. If the GPU does not accept him, then he ought to transform the Fourth International into a pro-Stalinist party, which from the “critical” point of view will support Stalin’s so “highly progressive” historical realizations.

A considerable Marxist political literature and the experience of the most important Communist parties of this region of Europe, the Polish, German and Czech parties, teach us that the democratic revolution terminated in these countries in 1918-20, with the liquidation of the Russian and Austro-Hungarian feudal empires, with the setting up of the national bourgeois states, with the agrarian reforms in Poland, Lithuania, Finland, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, etc. The figures of the agrarian reform in Poland demonstrate the much greater sweep of the bourgeois agrarian reform than that of the Stalinists. The Polish Republic distributed more than 3,000,000 hectares, the Stalinists only 1,300,000. The Polish agrarian reforms began in the Western part in 1821, in Austria in 1848, in Russia in 1864. There were much larger estates in Eastern Prussia, Pomerania and Mecklenburg than in Central Poland, yet no one dares affirm that Germany was a feudal country. The agrarian reforms in the Baltic countries, in Rumania and in Czechoslovakia were much more “radical” than in Poland itself. The first régimes established in these countries were bourgeois-democratic, for the first time in history. In Hungary, a short-lived socialist régime was established. In Germany, attempts were made to put such a régime in power. The programs of the Communist Parties in their best days, whether Polish, Czechoslovakian or German, were: *The socialist revolution is on the order of the day.* If Frank accepts the Stalinist theory of a “democratic revolution” then he betrays the Marxist program. The truth is that Frank is simply impotent before this crucial problem. With his theory of “mixed economies” and the “bastard” régime of property forms, and the Stalinist “social revolution,” Frank has stumbled into a blind alley. What kind of a revolution is it, Comrade Frank, socialist-bureaucratic or bourgeois? The workers of Europe as well as ourselves desire an answer.

We believe that *the democratic revolution was completed in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Eastern Germany, Rumania, Hungary and Yugoslavia in the years 1918-20.* The weak and sickly native bourgeoisie and its capitalism gave way to twentieth century Bonapartism in these countries and evolved toward an imperfect totalitarianism which fell under the influence of German fascism (Pilsudski in Poland, Horthy in Hungary, the dictatorship of King Alexander in Yugoslavia, etc.) This type of régime was not pure fascism because it lacked the capitalist and imperialist base, par excellence, of fascism as in Germany. The German occupation signified the “totalization” of this reactionary process. *However, the German defeat liberated the social movement of the masses which tended toward socialism.* What kind of a movement was this? Frank himself replies, a socialist movement, a forerunner of the “socialist revolution,” it would seem. *It was not Stalin’s army, then, which liberated the social movement of the masses, but the historical situation, the completed democratic phase and the necessity of the socialist revolution which liberated this move-*

*ment. The “Red” Army represented the march of the “Stalinist reaction,” the march of the Stalinist counter-revolution which replaced the Nazi counter-revolution. The ingenuous belief of the masses in the revolutionary role of the Red Army cannot be identified with the real, reactionary role of this army, Comrade Frank. The role of the Red Army was clearly counter-revolutionary; its mission was to crush the social movements of the masses which tended toward a socialist revolution, the only revolution possible in any part of Europe.*

This approaching, almost imminent, socialist revolution was repulsed by the counter-revolutionary leagues, this time the Stalinists, and a “bastard” régime installed with “mixed economies” and a coalition between the “far-sighted” bourgeoisie (how nice) and the Stalinist bureaucracy. If this régime cannot be democratic because the democratic stage has already been concluded, according to Marxist theory and program, then it can only be a socialist revolution or the counter-revolution. *We affirm that it is a Stalinist counter-revolution which realizes this “state capitalism,” the rule of Russian imperialism which carries out the sack and spoliation, the “primitive accumulation” of capital; it is the reactionary Stalinist dictatorship which engages in the persecution of the worker and peasant masses, the savage terror against the Trotskyist opposition and the elemental opposition of the workers and peasants. For us, the “capitalism of the state,” with its “nationalization of industry,” with its “agrarian reform,” signifies neither “progress” nor a “highly progressive social revolution,” but the only possible form of the imperialist counter-revolution which can forestall the socialist revolution in this part of the world. For this reason, we distinguish between the reactionary and bourgeois opposition and the socialist, worker-peasant opposition, albeit elemental, to Stalinism. For the same reason, we consider the Stalinist régimes, “combined” with the “far-sighted” bourgeoisie, as centers of reaction and counter-revolution, which we must combat tirelessly and without truce until the death. We support the elemental opposition of the proletariat, peasantry and lower middle classes against this Stalinist “revolution,” with the aim of opening the way toward progress, toward a socialist revolution that is the antithesis of Stalinism.*

The same Comrade Frank who admitted the “capitalism of the state,” the “primitive accumulation of capital,” the “Stalinist reaction,” fell into a lamentable eclecticism, attributing to these phenomena a “highly progressive” role. Worse still, the Marxist who aspires to lead the world movement against Stalinism, gave frank support to Stalinism against the workers’ opposition, the progressive opposition of the workers and peasants. This high dignitary of the socialist revolution, this Marxist “without stain or fear of reproach” turns out to be an eclectic centrist, a “conciliator” in the style of a Kautsky in the year 1947, an objective ally of the world counter-revolution, represented in Central Eastern Europe by the “Stalinist reaction.” For him the counter-revolution is identical with the “socialist revolution” and the worker-peasant opposition, still elemental, still groping, and still without revolutionary leadership, is synonymous with the “bourgeois-capitalist reaction.”

This is indeed a lamentable tragedy, or tragi-comedy of errors, Comrade Frank. Were you to lead the struggle of the Polish or German anti-Stalinist and potentially revolutionary workers and recommend that they support Stalinism because it fulfills a “highly progressive” mission, a mission that is in its essence a “social revolution,” these workers would give you

a thrashing, and with good cause. Unfortunately, it is you who at this moment administer the blows, treacherous blows (although we acknowledge that it is done without conscious intent) to the proletariat and poor peasantry of Poland who, for the moment, support Mikolajczyk because he is the only one who resists the very Stalinism which the "Marxist" Frank supports. It is to end this tragi-comic situation that we must try to knock some sense into his thick and stubborn skull. Per-

haps the stars that will light up under his skull will bring some light into his blind alley. If our effort succeeds it will help prevent the defeat of the revolutionary proletariat and rebellious peasantry who struggle against Stalinism, and against whom Frank wishes to strike a mortal blow because he cannot distinguish them from the capitalist reaction.

A. RUDZIENSKI.

(Translated by Abe Stein.)

# The Problem of "Political" Literature

## Koestler, Orwell and Schneider

In preface to a few words about Isidor Schneider's recent novel,\* it might be worth while to consider first the "political novel" as a literary form and, second, specifically such works as *Darkness at Noon* and *Animal Farm* and, third, the relationship of these works to *The Judas Time*, which is ostensibly presented as a counter-statement to them, as well as a counter-statement to left anti-Stalinists generally.

The so-called political (or journalistic-political) novel can be seen as merely the proletarian novel with surface differences. The assumptions of the political novel are those of the proletarian novel, among them: truth is an absolute and therefore a simple quality; human beings should be treated in terms of political category; thus, social and personal ambiguities are irrelevant. The spirit of fiction, which is its explorative quality, disappears or is minimized to the point of banality.

Considered in its political effects, *Darkness at Noon* can be characterized as an anti-Stalinist work that has helped Stalinism a great deal. The book is anti-Stalinist in intention but pro-Stalinist in results; the question of course hinges on the character, Rubashov. A lesson to be learned from Rubashov is this: opposition to Stalinism, from a socialist point of view, amounts to Stalinist activity by definition. In other words, socialism and Stalinism are twin fiends out of the same witch—*history*, evil by definition. As Peter Loumos pointed out (THE NEW INTERNATIONAL, August, 1945), here is the key to Rubashov's demoralization and defeat—Rubashov is his own cannibal and he ate himself up. So do all socialists who oppose Stalinism, it must be concluded. This is exactly the text of

\**The Judas Time*, by Isidor Schneider. The Dial Press, \$3.00.

the most strenuous and mountainous propaganda campaign ever built by the Stalinists; and the question it poses is beyond doubt the most immediate of the times.

But Irving Howe, in an answering letter (THE NEW INTERNATIONAL, October, 1946), disagrees with Loumos' attitude, and criticizes him sharply. Howe refers to Koestler's literary abilities, speaking of the writer's remarkable gift to "touch the heart of the modern problem," of Koestler's work on the whole as being "dialectical exercises in *idea-moods*," and of the essays of *The Yogi and the Commissar* as "*politics-in-metaphor*." Howe himself is quite aware of the political weaknesses of Koestler; Howe would agree that every pressure—politically and journalistically speaking—demanded a resolution of the Moscow Trials, that *Darkness at Noon* is falsely presented as that resolution. Howe himself is aware that neither Rubashov nor the actual figures in court were the subject of the Moscow Trials. But Howe forgives Koestler on the basis of literary appreciation: "touch the heart of the modern problem," "*idea-moods*," "*politics-in-metaphor*." The language of this appreciation indicates empty phrasemaking and confusion, not comprehensible literary feeling. We must offer the following contradictory estimate of Koestler's art.

It is suggested that the book, *Darkness at Noon*, differs in sophistication and intention from the proletarian novel, but not in fictional methods. Like the proletarian novelist, Koestler treats human beings in the light of political category—despite pretentious "complexities." He inserts truths as a series of frozen formulae. The consequence is that dramatic ambiguities in Koestler's work are contrived, and by this token emotional resolutions flat, lifeless. Koestler's

principal sustaining qualities are, first, a reportorial sincerity, which expresses, but does not dynamically project, his own personal fears and, second, a smooth glibness and, third, a quality that can be described as a nose for news.

But then Irving Howe offers an additional reason for rejecting the criticisms made by Loumos. Howe says: "Loumos condemned Koestler for not writing a novel which *Koestler never intended to write*." But is *intention* always sacrosanct? Howe himself characterizes Koestler as a "skillful novelist-journalist." Then why is a skillful novelist-journalist permitted to ignore journalistic responsibilities toward fact? The same justification could be found for Isidor Schneider's *The Judas Time*—Schneider merely didn't *intend* to write the full truth about American anti-Stalinists. No more than Koestler *intended* to write the full truth about the Moscow Trials.

A similar criticism to that of *Darkness at Noon* can be made of Orwell's *Animal Farm*. But in this book at least, George Orwell is certainly inferior to Koestler. Orwell is really so bad in *Animal Farm* that as an artist he bears comparison to Walt Disney. The quality of Orwell's fantasy, as fantasy, is close to that of the fantasies of Disney; Orwell furthermore treats the characters of his animals with as much political rigidity as Disney treats with social rigidity the characters of his animals. *Animal Farm* can be viewed as a derivative of both Walt Disney and of proletarian art. But Orwell's political message is far more blunt than that of Koestler. In brief, that political message is this: Marx-Lenin can be seen as a pig, and socialism as animalism, or piggery. Naturally it follows that this piggery is (and ought to be) dominated eventually by Stalin, the biggest hog of them all. Again, here is anti-Stalinism from the point of view of reaction. To

the extent that it might demoralize socialist energy it is helpful to Stalinism.

Isidor Schneider's novel is not a counter-statement to Koestler and Orwell in the sense intended. Schneider's book is a counter-statement, nevertheless. Schneider has done the opposite of what apparently he was trying to do, which was to write a pro-Stalinist book that would "answer" all socialist or leftist anti-Stalinists, as well as, ironically, the reactionary anti-Stalinists, Koestler and Orwell. *The Judas Time*, by its nature, will have an anti-Stalinist effect. It will emancipate as many people, perhaps, from Stalinism as Koestler and Orwell have unwittingly sold into reaction.

## II.

In *The Judas Time*, truth is absolute, and therefore simple. Human beings are treated in terms of political category, and in this work social and personal ambiguities are irrelevant. Schneider's crudity takes away all camouflage, exposing the result that awaits the writer who approaches fiction with contempt for the nature of fiction.

First, *The Judas Time* might be examined as a political document. Here the symbolic prologue is interesting. This symbolic prologue gives a new account of Judas Iscariot. The New Testament states that Judas betrayed Christ for silver, then hanged himself for shame. However, Schneider's imperialist Roman soldier says that Judas betrayed Christ for principle—accepting thirty pieces of silver because he had originally given that to Christ's movement—and that he then retired to an estate run by his own "peasants and herdsmen," where he mellowed and lived a cultivated life. Now, the principle of Judas' betrayal was this: he noted that Christ threw the money-lenders out of the temple, and deducted from it Christ's forthcoming betrayal of Christianity.

TRANSLATION: *Pravda* (?) states that Trotsky betrayed Stalin for capitalist approbation, then in effect knocked out his own brains with a pick-ax for shame. However, Schneider's Hearst reporter says that Trotsky betrayed Stalin for principle—accepting capitalist praise because he had originally given praise to Stalin's revolution—and that he then retired to a Mexican estate run by his own "peons," where he mellowed and lived a cultivated life. Now, the principle of Trotsky's betrayal was this: he noted that Stalin threw the fifth columnists out of the Soviet Union, and de-

ducted from it Stalin's forthcoming betrayal of the Russian Revolution.

The following objections to this symbolic prologue might be made: 1. Even a Hearst reporter has greater respect for the facts than indicated here. 2. The first sentence is confused. 3. It wasn't Stalin's revolution. 4. Trotsky is beyond peons, etc. 5. Stalin didn't throw fifth columnists out of Russia. 6. Stalin resembles no other figure in history less than Jesus Christ, but it is true that his rule has some of the historical attributes of Christianity, such as the Inquisition.

It should be added that this prologue reads like Thomas Mann—if you can picture Thomas Mann with stylistic hydrophobia.

In *The Judas Time* itself Schneider has written an affirmation to all charges, practically, that have been made by Stalinist authority against the Trotskyites. (Here it must be pointed out parenthetically that to the author of this book "Trotskyite" is a remarkably inclusive term. It is used to indicate anyone who: (A) is a member of the Trotskyist parties; (B) uses the terms "Stalinist" or "Stalinism"; (C) makes criticisms of the Stalinists that also have been made by Trotsky or Trotsky's followers; (D) on occasion, anyone who makes any kind of criticism of the Soviet Union. Schneider's effort to affirm is principally made through characterization. Trotskyites—we will stick with this terminology—are presented and characterized; and at the same time in opposition to them Stalinists—we will stick with *this* terminology—are presented and characterized. How does Schneider characterize his Trotskyites and his Stalinists?

The Trotskyists are characterized as follows: they are pornographers, sexual braggarts, whore-mongers, and adulterers. They are sadists, anti-Semites, liars, snobs, and egomaniacs. They are sneaky, sly, and cowardly; they are pompous, blustery, and rude. They get "mysterious" desires to murder Trotsky himself. The Trotskyites, Schneider tells us, believe in the politicalization of art, but at the same time, Schneider tells us, they believe that art should *not* be politicalized. They cooperate with fascists, and secretly admire fascists. They are ungrateful and hate people who do them favors. They work with the FBI against ex-comrades and get urges to kick pregnant women in the belly. They have faces "purple like butcher's meat." They are despicable, loathsome, disgusting,

nauseating, etc., etc. In short, these Trotskyites are animals.

The Stalinists are characterized as follows: noble. And their nobility is as great as the putridity of the Trotskyites. When the Stalinists are insulted by a Trotskyite they usually turn the other cheek. They give the Trotskyites chance after chance to behave; only an emergency can force them to a rebuke. They are rational and patient. When there is a hearing to oust a Trotskyite, it is a *Trotskyite-to-be* who conducts the prosecution. The Stalinists all love each other sincerely, and they love little children. Just before an attempt, delayed for years by proletarian painting, to have a child a Stalinist husband says to his wife the following words—we quote them not merely to indicate the spiritual stature of these characters, but also to indicate the literary style in which they are presented:

Little Rose, beloved little flower, sweet Rose, you will bloom too. Your bud will open. I see now. I'm not blind any longer. I know what you want when you look at a child and color up. You will bloom, too, sweet Rose. Your bud will open, little mother Rose.

It should be added that the Stalinists do not think much of Trotsky's prose. But, they are also brave and loyal to their ideals, and they are devoted. They don't try to disrupt, they try to cooperate. And if they make criticisms, these criticisms are constructive, but they seldom make criticisms. At all events, not once in this book does a Stalinist appear as anything less than heroic.

Such is *The Judas Time*. Its crazed hysteria absolutely suggests the guilt, not of "Trotskyites," but of Stalinism, and with good luck the book will injure the Communist Party as much as a Hearst campaign will help it. No human being above grade C can read this book and fail to be appalled. This must include many of the group of liberals and workers now sympathetic to Stalinism.

It is unnecessary to add that the lines of all Stalinist formulae are enmeshed in this book, like strands of glue. As indicated before, the book is written in the manner of a pulp story, but not as well. It seems to contain more gruesome metaphors and bad writing than nearly any book ever sold by a reputable American publisher.

The "novel" can be seen as a reflection of the terrible wretchedness of Isidor Schneider, and as a definitive comment on politicalized literature. But it

# The Literary Left in the Middle '30s

## From "Proletarian" to People's Front Literature

In the *New Masses* of April 9, 1946, Albert Maltz stated in an article, "Moving Forward": "In the Thirties, as there now seems to be general agreement, left-wing criticism was not always conducted on the deepest or most desirable or most useful level. Its effectiveness was lowered by tendencies toward doctrinaire judgments and toward a mechanical application of social criticism. And these tendencies *must* be understood and analyzed if working class culture is to advance to full flower. [Italics in original.] But, on the other hand, the inadequacies of criticism, such as they were, are only a small and partial aspect of the left-wing cultural movement as a whole. The full truth—as I have been aware of for many years—is this: from the left-wing cultural movement in America, and from the left wing internationally, has come the only major, healthy impetus to an honest literature and art that these two decades have provided. Compound the errors of left cultural thought as big as you will—still its errors are small as compared to its useful contributions, are tiny as compared to the giant liberating and constructive force of Marxist ideas upon culture. As a matter of sheer fact this is such a self-evident proposition that it doesn't require someone of my conviction to state it: it has been acknowledged even by reactionary critics who, naturally, have gone on falsely to declare that the liberating force of left culture has run its course and expired."

At the suggestion of the editor of a well known quarterly magazine, I wrote the following article. This magazine, however, decided not to publish it for the alleged reason that it dealt too much in personalities. After trying to publish it in one or two other magazines and having it rejected, I put it away in my files. But in the light of the fact that the Stalinists again are speaking in "left" terms, and in the light of the fact that

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shows more than the misery of one person, more than the poverty of a literary form. It exposes very directly the moral gangrene of Stalinism, and in this sense it should be recommended.

CALDER WILLINGHAM.

Albert Maltz and many others in the *New Masses* and elsewhere are offering new interpretations of what happened in Stalinist literary circles in the 1930s, I think it pertinent to publish this article now as a contribution toward keeping the record clear, and in order to remind the younger generation of writers and intellectuals of what really happened in the 1930s. In this spirit, I publish the article.

Also, it is hardly necessary to add that the same spirit of literary terror pervades the world-wide Stalinist movement at the present time. One instance of it has been the cultural purge in Russia in 1946. All over again, the leading cultural figures of Russia were attacked and required to make confessions and to pen public retractions. Among those forced to such indignity have been Shostakovich (his "confession" appeared in the *Saturday Review of Literature* of January 25, 1947) and Eisenstein. This would be comic if it were not so grisly, so menacing.

All is rather somnolent on the so-called proletarian literary front. The official left is no longer so ambitious, energetic and arrogant as it was in the first half of the 1930s. Then, the subject of proletarian literature was frequently discussed and hotly debated in the journals. The movement was consciously promoted by the self-styled "Marxians," who conceived themselves to be genuine "scientific" critics of literature; often they wrote with the conceit of history. The novelists of the movement were producing a rapid succession of books. A few of these works, such as Nelson Algren's *Somebody in Boots* and Henry Roth's *Call It Sleep* are of worth. But I believe that most of those novels were overpraised, even log-rolled, far beyond their merit. The critics of the movement legislated what themes and subject matter a novel should have. And when this legislation was more or less fulfilled in a novel they praised it unduly. Then, if someone criticized the particular work as bad, he would (in all likelihood) be taken over the coals by Michael Gold, who was in the habit of making his own particular conception

of "loyalty" to the movement a primary basis of literary appreciation. The growth of the left wing theater was also celebrated; it was confidently predicted that the revolutionary drama would drive Broadway to cover. The young left wing poets, just beginning to lisp their numbers, were regarding themselves as the leaders in a renaissance of American poetry. In brief, proletarian literature, like *Eclipse*, was first, and the rest were nowhere.

### Literary Left in Decline

Today this entire movement seems bankrupt. Many of its exemplary writers have long been rather silent. Some have obtained jobs in Hollywood and elsewhere, and the more commercialized spheres of art and journalism have attracted their energies. The little left-wing magazines which sprouted all over the country, and which were received as a sign of youth and growth—these are practically all defunct. The Theater Union, after an abbreviated season in 1936, has been disbanded. The Group Theater was temporarily disbanded. In 1937 it returned only briefly. However, the Group Theater can no longer be considered a conscious part of the left-wing theater. For in 1936 its board of directors published a statement in the *New York Times* in which they definitely separated themselves from the cultural left. They declared that their aim was to produce good plays, irrespective of social orientation. This was a denial of a fundamental conception of the entire left-wing cultural movement. The magazine *New Theatre* (which lived a short life as *New Theatre and Film*) was the organ of the left-wing theater; it has been abandoned, apparently for good. Many of the so-called proletarian novelists have had no new books published in two or three years, and the reputations made for them by critics like Granville Hicks are embalmed in the dust of forgotten book reviews. Some of those works which have appeared in the last two years are miserably mediocre. I refer to such novels as Isidor Schneider's *The Kingdom of Necessity*, Clifton Cuthbert's *Another Such Victory*, Edward Newhouse's *This Is Your Day*. In general, there are fewer cultural organs of the official left, and those that remain

grow increasingly dull and sterile. Where there was once frenzied sectarianism, there is now such roominess of acceptance that even commercial writers of no literary consequence are admitted into the fold. And at the same time political dogmatism and hysteria have intensified.

## II

Alan Calmer, an editor of *Proletarian Literature in the United States*, published an article in *The Saturday Review of Literature*<sup>1</sup> under the title of "Portrait of the Proletarian as Artist." Mr. Calmer is not politically opposed to the Communist Party. He is not, to use the prevailing language of anathema and excommunication, a "Trotskyist." Therefore, not even an editor of the *New Masses* is likely to describe his literary article as an attack on humanity by an ally of William Randolph Hearst. In his article he attempts to explain the causes and to trace the process behind the sudden disintegration of the official left-wing cultural movement. He points out the contrast between the old period and the present one: "In the old era, only Marx's and Lenin's observations on art were free from criticism; now critics who maintain that even nostalgic feudal fiction 'belongs to us,' are heralded as Marxists." He illustrates how, with the change in the party line, the old sectarianism was abandoned with unabashed opportunism. He suggests that this shift is confusing to the young proletarian writer. His article is an alarm signal, and in it he puts his finger on one of the causes of the present state of disintegration; it is "the subjection of literature to the tactics of a political party."

### Example of French Revolution

Keeping this in mind, I believe that some historical exposition is in order. Behind the widespread agitation for a proletarian literature in this country there stands the Russian Revolution. It is to be remembered that the effects of the great French Revolution were international, and of a cultural and social as well as of a political nature. In other countries, the French Revolution became a political axis, and its influence reached into other fields of interest. French influence spread over Europe. As one example of this, I might cite the impetus given to American democratic sentiment by the French Revolution, following our own Revolutionary War.

1. *The Saturday Review of Literature*, July, 1937.

This impetus influenced the plays and the journalism of the period. One of its manifestations was the spreading of a sentiment against aristocracy, a sentiment expressed even by the growing American plutocracy that had been ushered into the tents of the mighty by the victory over England. A parallel manifestation is observable in the case of the Russian Revolution. Before the Russian Revolution, there was an international Marxist movement. Marxism claims to be a world philosophy, encompassing all phases of human activity. Consequently it is historically normal that cultural struggles in Russia, the land of the first Marxist revolution, should carry into other lands.

One of the cultural struggles in post revolutionary Russia centered around the question of a proletarian culture and a proletarian literature. The first years after November were years of chaotic ferment. There were many schools in Russian literature, and these all competed to gain literary hegemony. This was the period when the best post-revolutionary Russian literature was produced, with books like Isac Babel's *Red Cavalry* and Neweroff's *City of Bread*. The struggle reached even the topmost ranks of the Communist Party, and a commission composed of Trotsky, Lunarcharsky and Bukharin was formed to study the question and define the party attitude on literary questions. The decision to permit an anarchistic competition of groups and schools which accepted the Revolution established an essentially "hands off" policy.<sup>2</sup> All groups which accepted the October Revolution were to be permitted free scope. Such an attitude was essentially the one Lenin and Trotsky took toward art; both of them inclined toward the "garden" view of culture. Culture was for all. All were to be educated and encouraged to partake of its fruits. Thus, Lenin once said, "We need the theater, not so much for propaganda as to rest hard workers after their daily work. . . . We must preserve the beautiful. . . . There is nothing better than *Apassionata*. . . . The prole-

2. The reader who wishes to investigate this literary struggle should consult such books as *Voices of October*, by Joseph Freeman, Joshua Kunitz and Louis Lozowick, *Artists in Uniform*, by Max Eastman, *Literature and Revolution*, by Leon Trotsky, *The Mind and Soul of Bolshevism*, by René Fucloep-Miller. The files of the magazine, *International Literature*, published in English in Moscow, will also be valuable. *Problems of Soviet Literature*, by A. Zhdanov, Maxim Gorky, N. Bukharin, K. Radek and S. Stetsky, present attempts to explain the line of "socialist realism" which followed that of the RAPP period.

tarian culture must appear as a natural development. . . . Every artist, everybody who wishes to, can claim the right to create freely according to his ideal."

### The Fight Against "Trotskyism"

It was as a result of this ferment and struggle that Trotsky wrote his book of literary essays, *Literature and Revolution*.<sup>3</sup> In it he argued that there could not be a proletarian literature, for the time elapsing between the November Revolution and the period of the socialist classless society would be too brief in the historical sense. The aim of the proletarian revolution was to create not a class culture but a human and socialist culture. Trotsky also spoke for art's own laws and for the continuity of the creative tradition.<sup>4</sup> After Lenin's death, Trotsky was on the way out. Because of the political struggle between the Left Opposition, which he led, and Stalin, Trotsky's views on literature and culture were attacked. The Stalinist literary group, *At Your Post*, conducted the fight against Trotskyism, and it was the central agent in forming the organization of Russian writers known as RAPP, which advanced theses such as the following: "The rule of the proletariat is incompatible with the domination of non-proletarian ideology and consequently non-proletarian literature."<sup>5</sup> And this: "The path which the proletariat has followed in the field of politics and economics should also be followed in the field of art—that is, the road to hegemony, the seizure of power by the proletariat in the domain of literature."<sup>6</sup> Both the point of view and the pogrom

3. When Leon Trotsky's *Literature and Revolution* appeared in English, Michael Gold wrote of it in *New Masses*: "America needs a critic." While disagreeing with Trotsky's thesis concerning proletarian literature, Gold wrote: "Trotsky's book on literature is an amazing performance. This man is almost as universal as Leonardo da Vinci. The Revolution shares with the Renaissance the fact that men have again become versatile. . . . Trotsky was the most single-minded of pacifists but made himself the best general and military tactician in Europe. He is a great financial expert. He is now chief organizer of the reconstructed Russian industry. He helps direct the diplomacy. He reads and writes five or six languages, and knows the intimate affairs of every country in the world. Occupying a group of positions that would correspond to several cabinet offices in this country, combined with the presidency of the steel trust, and rubber, oil, and textile industries, this man finds time to turn out at least two important books a year, some of which serve as textbooks in economics and history, besides scores of articles on industry, international politics, the Einstein theory, finance, Freud, the American agrarian situation, Chinese history, and labor movements, poetry, the atom, the stage—every phase of intelligence that the Revolution must use or understand. . . . Criticism like Trotsky's is creative criticism."

methods of RAPP were transported to this country.

Historically, then, it was to be expected that the international effect of the Russian Revolution would be social and cultural as well as political and ideological. It was to be expected that there would be a reflection of Russian literary struggles in our own country. In general, culture is now international rather than national, and the effects of literary tendencies in one country carry over into other countries. The particular effect of Russian literary struggles was a consequence of Stalin's victory and the fight against "Trotskyism" which was carried on in all fields. In essence, this resulted in complete subjection of literature to politics, the hitching of literature to the party line. In this country the agitation for a proletarian literature came most forcibly during the days of the so-called "third period" of the Communist International. During that period, the party line was based on the premise that an epoch of capitalist stabilization in the West following the World War had ended and that the proletariat of the advanced Western nations was on the eve of seizing power. As a class, the bourgeoisie was losing its grip. The workers of the world were preparing to overthrow their masters and become the dominant class in modern society. If the bourgeoisie was on the eve of losing state power, it was deduced, the bourgeoisie was no longer capable of contributing to literature. For bourgeois literature was without hope, defeatist, pessimistic, despairing. Having a class orientation, it was dedicated to emphasizing bourgeois values and defending the bourgeoisie against the workers.<sup>7</sup> If workers were subjected to it, their revolutionary hope and optimism would be corrupted. The time had arrived, then, to create a proletarian literature, and the vanguard of the proletariat was the Communist Party. Those who were not with the party were against it; they were the class enemies of the proletariat. To this category belonged the Socialists. They were the

4. Trotsky's thesis on literature is connected with his theory of permanent revolution and a discussion of it involves political and literary eschatology. Particularly in the light of the course of history since it was written, this is not now the aspect of his book most interesting for America. The value of the book in America now would be twofold: the specific literary studies of Russian writers and the attempt to found literary criticism on a materialistic and naturalistic basis.

5. These quotations are from Joseph Freeman's summary of this group's position, printed in *Voices of October*.

6. *Ibid.*

main adversaries because they were "social fascists." And in the field of literature, all liberal and radical writers, all novelists working in the traditions of realism and naturalism in terms of the internal logic and development of literary tendencies, were attacked, as were the Socialists in the political arena. The conception of the role of the party was carried into literature. Thus Edwin Seaver once stated: "The literary honeymoon is over, and I believe that the time is fast approaching when we will no longer classify authors as proletarian writers and fellow travelers, but as party writers and non-party writers."<sup>8</sup> Joseph Freeman, in his introduction to *Proletarian Literature in the United States*, approved this statement.

### Social and Political Motives

It should be pointed out that in much of the agitation for a proletarian literature, one simple distinction was almost never made. It is the distinction between what might be termed *social motives* and *political motives* in literature. Many of our apologists for a proletarian literature were not demanding *social motives* only. *The were demanding a definite political motivation.* The motives and intentions they demanded were not precisely the same as those that went into the work of Dickens when he attacked prison conditions in England. Nor were they precisely the same as those that went into the composition of Zola's masterpiece, *Germinal*. Dickens attacked prison conditions and agitated for a change in them because of their effect on human beings. Zola studied and observed life in a mining community closely and attempted to describe that life with the utmost precision. In both instances the authors wrote in terms of their own ways of seeing life, their own temperaments, the logic of their own literary developments. The apologists for a proletarian literature not only demanded that the writer do as much in terms of the present as did Dickens and Zola in their own epoch; they called upon the novelist (whether they realized it or not) not only to see life, but to see life as a corroboration of the prognostications of the Comintern. They wanted

7. My own views concerning the categories of "bourgeois" and "proletarian" in literature, and concerning the literary notions in general advanced in this movement during this period are contained in my book, *A Note on Literary Criticism*, and therefore I shall not go into detail concerning them here.

8. Quoted in Joseph Freeman's introduction to *Proletarian Literature in the United States*.

the author to see the party line working out in life, irrespective of what was actually happening. Thus they would tell the writer what theme he should use in his novels, what classes he should write about. The warrant offered in justification of these demands was Marxism. They were "dialectical materialists"; that is, true scientists. The truth they spoke was scientific truth. They knew the laws of social action and their speech embodied that law. They knew history and they spoke in its name. To repeat, theirs was the conceit of history.

Writers often allowed themselves to become so badgered and upset by this agitation that they tended to become dual intellectual personalities. There was frequently a split between their literary aims and their political affirmations. They had to apologize because they failed to see the party line in the life they depicted, in the literature they read and valued. Thus they would often say that they liked such and such a book, that it was literature, but... "it isn't our stuff." Sometimes this agitation even went to the point of castigation of literary forms. A leading figure of the movement once called free verse a "fascist" form, and the young poets had to waste time in the useless effort of disputing him.

### "Party Line" Literature

The basis of this criticism was almost always "ideological." The writer was often criticized because he wrote about the wrong subject matter. The writer was told to be a Marxist, and to change history with a lyric or a novel. He was told that in the present epoch there was no time for the description of that incipiently fascist class, the petty bourgeoisie. He must write of the manner in which the workers were becoming class conscious. In other words, he was told to describe the workers as they were described in the prevailing party line. Methodologically, the fallacy here was what Alfred North Whitehead has described as "the fallacy of misplaced concretization." An analysis of life is, by definition, an extraction of elements from life. Mere analysis, that is, the party line, was concretized and substituted for the raw, emergent movement of life itself. The psychology of human beings was deduced not directly from experience but from a set of political theses. Philosophically, this was backhanded idealism, the very tendency then being so violently attacked by those who were

thus themselves taking a side door into idealism.<sup>9</sup>

Social motives have been apparent in literature for a long time—long, long before our recent agitation for a proletarian literature. A continuation of such motives in terms of the internal logic and development of literature—a continuation of the creative literary tradition itself—was neither meant nor asked for. Political motives were behind the demands of the “Marxians.” They were not merely asking the writer to speak truthfully of social problems, they were asking him to advertise the Communist Party.

Discussions of proletarian literature do not appear in journals as frequently as they once did. There is a reason. The party line, upon which the agitation for a proletarian literature was based, has been changed. The present line postulates as the central issue of the contemporary world the struggle between progressivism and reaction—democracy versus fascism. The tactics based on this line call for organization of all progressive forces in a popular front against reaction. Applied to the cultural field, this means a front of all anti-fascist intellectuals and writers. In many instances, the writers to be won over to this front are the very ones who were so stupidly attacked and so patronizingly insulted in the so-called “third period.” It is obvious that such writers (with “bourgeois” reputations) cannot be won over if the critics are to continue attacking their work as they once did. The new line demands that the old literary attitudes be sidetracked.<sup>10</sup>

Anyone who has followed the *New Masses* literary section from 1933 on will readily perceive that the old literary attitudes have been sidetracked. The old fanaticism is gone. Writers who were attacked are now praised, flattered, cajoled. The *New Masses* motion-picture critics are constantly measuring Hollywood productions in order to ascertain which are so many inches over toward the side of progressivism. A Hollywood scenarist like Donald Ogden Stewart is referred to as a man of genuine literary attainments and definite importance in the history of American letters. Even

9. In this period, for instance, some attacks were made on John Dewey as an “idealistic” philosopher.

10. A good contrast in the moods and attitudes of the two periods is to be found in the proceedings of the first and second American Writers' Congress, *American Writers' Congress*, edited by Henry Hart, and in *The Writer in a Changing World*, also edited by Henry Hart.

Fannie Hurst receives serious consideration. Any writer who makes the least gesture toward the official Left is now more than likely to receive kindly treatment and free advertising from it when his books appear.

The new orientation demands tactics completely opposed to those which were used in the so-called “third period,” and the new line has effected an almost complete reversal of literary appreciations. The case of Archibald MacLeish might be cited. In 1933 he was excoriated, and young left-wing poets were warned to beware of him. When his poems, *Frescoes for Mr. Rockefeller's City*, appeared, Michael Gold in the *New Republic* castigated them as possessing reactionary implications and revealing the “fascist unconscious.” Now Mr. MacLeish's alleged “fascist unconscious” is forgotten. He “belongs to us.” He was a featured speaker at the second American Writers' Congress. He makes no apology for that “fascist unconscious” and his work is no longer attacked.

#### Intolerance Continues

On the surface, it would seem that the new line makes for greater liberalism and tolerance. It would appear that greater literary freedom is now permitted and that the official Left is going to grow up. But appearances are deceptive. The new orientation requires that the old scapegoats be freed from literary pogroms, and that a new group be found to take their place. This has happened. All writers who declare themselves against war and fascism, who affirm faith in democracy, who accept the official interpretations of the Soviet Union, the Kremlin foreign policy, the new Soviet constitution, and the Moscow Trials—they are left alone and are eligible for admission into all revised categories of “honest” intellectuals. They are working for the future of humanity. But whether or not their literary work has integrity is not particularly important. If, for instance, they work in Hollywood on an anti-labor film—well, they can be excused. After all, they have no more control over the product of their labor than has a Bethlehem steel puddler. But if, because they oppose war and fascism and believe in human rights and freedom, they express skepticism toward the Moscow Trials, that is another matter. Then they are that “honest” intellectuals (revised category). They are enemies of mankind. They have entered Mr. Hearst's valley of San Simeon. On the basis of such a line, the old intolerance

flourishes as ever. If anything, political dogmatism has been intensified under the new line.

One reason why the new slogans have become an effective cover for a continuation of intolerance is that a number of respectable writers have more or less been won over as allies. They serve the function of attractive bay windows. The official Left is tolerant of them. They help out by occasionally making speeches, by occasionally writing in the *New Masses*. They are allies to be exhibited in public. Writers like Archibald MacLeish, Malcolm Cowley and Donald Ogden Stewart fall into this category. They do not do the hatchet work. But the hatchet work is done. And when it is, such “allies” make no protest. It is all for the sake of humanity.

Proof of increased intolerance is to be found, for instance, in an article contributed to the *Daily Worker* on October 20, 1933, by V. J. Jerome, a party functionary who works in the cultural field. It is titled, “No Quarter to Trotskyists—Literary or Otherwise.” I quote from this article at considerable length because it is most revealing. Mr. Jerome writes: “What are our forces doing on the literary front to expose and drive out from our midst the Trotskyist imposters? What is being done by our comrade writers to attend the warnings sounded by Comrade Stalin in his great address on *Mastering Bolshevism*? How should they work to hurl out of the way the Trotskyist obstacles to promoting, through the powerful medium of the pen, the People's Front principles? What should they do to bring socialist achievements of the Soviet Union closer to literary creators and audiences? . . .

“What strikes one at first glance is the too common notion that the struggle against Trotskyism concerns the party and trade unions but not writers; that the literary battle is a thing apart from the political struggle; that the Farrells and the Lionel Abels and the Rahvs may be Trotskyites [sic!] but as writers they belong with us in one confraternity—a ‘united front,’ you might say. Otherwise, how shall we explain their inclusion in our anthologies [??] and the prize of their ‘style’ [??] in our magazines? Not that this notion is prevalent everywhere in our literary circles; but it does obtain in varying degrees and when encountered is often met by a thoughtless conciliatory attitude.” (It would appear that the “style” of *Studs Lonigan* is threatening to become a Trotskyist men-

ace to the working class front—in fact, to the human race.)

Mr. Jerome goes on to criticize the *New Masses*. If a writer is attacked there as “Trotskyist,” Mr. Jerome does not want the editors to grant the common democratic and editorial courtesy of allowing him to reply to such attacks. He says, “To admit the right of counter-revolutionaries to the platform or press of the working class or the progressive movement on the assumption of ‘tolerance’ or ‘fair play’ means to accommodate the worst enemy which now confronts the forces of world progress.” (This means that he wants all such writers barred from contributing to organs like *The Nation* and *New Republic*.) It should be pointed out here that the definition of a “counter-revolutionary” changes with each change in the party line. It is to be remembered that three years ago Mr. Jerome would not have publicly criticized any statement of, say, Karl Radek, and that he would have been very likely to have called “counter-revolutionary” any American writer who challenged an article of Radek’s. One gets dizzy keeping account of who is, and who is not, a “counter-revolutionary.” Such an effort demands a separate full-time study.

Mr. Jerome concludes: “It is time to recognize that Trotskyites, ‘literary’ or otherwise, are engaged in tearing down all that we are working to build up, that the class struggle permits no rotten liberalism towards our enemies, that the fight against fascism demands the complete routing and annihilation [??] of Trotskyism. The writers of the progressive camp — Communists, left-wingers and progressives generally — with *New Masses* as the rallying voice, can play an important role in the developing People’s Front by being consistent in their anti-fascism, by being simultaneously loyal to the principles of the People’s Front and ruthless with the enemy — with fascism and Trotskyism.”

### **“Trotskyists” to Be Barred**

The expressed purpose of the People’s Front is to defend democracy. Two of our most precious democratic rights are free speech and the right to be considered innocent until proved guilty. What kind of loyalty is Mr. Jerome speaking of when he demands that the *New Masses* and, also, progressive magazines deprive writers of these rights whenever Mr. Jerome’s party calls them “Trotskyists”? For Mr. Jones does not confine his meaning of “Trotskyist” to the political

followers of Leon Trotsky, who call for the Fourth International, and who are organizationally connected with the international Trotskyist movement. *He refers to all sorts of writers who maintain their independence of judgment and arrive at conclusions on political, intellectual or literary questions which happen to differ from the prevailing views held on these questions within the official Left movement. Here he reveals that his mind has a totalitarian cast.* He lets the cat out of the bag. He talks of democracy and uses new slogans to cover the naked face of intolerance.

This intolerance becomes clear if we remember what he has said of “Trotskyites” and his call for their “annihilation” [?], and then cite instances of “Trotskyism” mentioned in the official and semi-official press. What are some of the crimes of “Trotskyism”? One is that of unfavorably reviewing Robert Briffault’s novel *Europe in Limbo*. The radical critic, Phillip Rahv, committed this crime in *The Nation*.<sup>11</sup> He concluded his review thus: “Mr. Briffault is interesting for his eccentric disposition, which in its composite effect recalls to us such diverse figures as H. L. Mencken, Benjamin De Casseres, Nietzsche, Dean Inge, and William S. Hart with a smoking gun in each hand and tears in his eyes.” Michael Gold exposed this “Trotskyist” crime in a *Daily Worker* column entitled “A Literary Snake Sheds His Skin.”<sup>12</sup> He called Mr. Rahv a “literary snake,” and added that “there is something sneaky, too, about *The Nation* in encouraging him.” Rahv, it seems has no right to criticize this novel because Mr. Briffault is “a great anthropologist who turned at fifty-five to novel writing, and did a really original thing in making a best-seller out of the revolutionary criticism of capitalism.” Michael Gold refuses to grant Rahv the status of literary critic, declaring that Rahv attacks Briffault “not as a Trotskyite, mind you, but as a literary critic.”

It would appear from the above that there is no end of damage being done to contemporary American letters. “Trotskyism” in American letters, according to the official Left, is becoming the same kind of devil under everybody’s bed that Rousseauism was in the mind of the late Dr. Irving Babbitt.

### **Hitler’s Tactics in Literature**

The moment one discusses the “offi-

11. Phillip Rahv, “Europe in Melodrama,” *The Nation*, October 2, 1937.

12. *The Daily Worker*, October 12, 1937.

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cial Left” in American letters one is led into discussing almost everything but literature. This very fact should make clear to the reader the degree of genuine interest the “official Left” has in literature. Literature is subjected to political expediency. It is part of a monolithic political movement. It is dominated by totalitarian states of mind. In one period, book reviews end with discussions of industrial activity in the Soviet Union and condemnations of a “social fascist.” In the next period a book review is likely to turn into an alleged “Trotskyist” plot to break strikes. The “official Left,” literary and otherwise, uses the same tactics that Hitler does. It lumps all who disagree with it in the same category. This is a familiar political trick. It has nothing whatever to do with literature.

The consequences of applying such tactics in literature should be clear to those who read this article. When writers become absorbed into the official Left, they unwittingly fall into line. The official Left is primarily a pressure group. It uses culture and literature as a means of advancing itself as a *pressure group*. The writer who maintains his intellectual independence is bound to become lost and sidetracked in its mazes, especially if he is a literary critic. There is no place for the literary critic in such a political movement. When he becomes part of it, he finds that maintenance of his literary tastes constantly involves him in criticism of the books of his “political” allies and comrades. If he is a novelist, he finds himself running afoul of a party line laid down by an infallible set of leaders. These leaders are all *dialectical materialists* and are furnished with the key to all history. Whatever they do becomes historic necessity. Their premises concerning life are handed to the writer as life itself, and he is to write books celebrating them. Furthermore, he will awaken one morning and read in the *New York Times* that the party line has been changed. He will suddenly discover his comrades applying the new party line in literature, praising new literary allies. He will find commercial writing and Hollywood, the foe of his every literary ideal, now being given serious attention. It is apparent that there can be no creative and intellectual continuity in such a literary tendency. There can be no expansion of literary sensibilities. There can be no development of those intellectual perspectives necessary to fertilize a literary move-

# On the Significance of Koestler

## The Conclusion of a Polemic

An astonishing discussion has appeared in THE NEW INTERNATIONAL on the novelist, Arthur Koestler. It began in August, 1945, with the publication of Peter Loumos' review of four books by Koestler. Loumos subjected the author and his works to a critical political evaluation. In October, 1946, THE NEW INTERNATIONAL published letters by Neil Weiss and Irving Howe in reply to Loumos. Whatever importance this discussion has arises out of Koestler's prominence as a "literary" figure of our times. In the strictest sense of the word, Koestler is not a novelist but a writer of fictionalized current events, or journalistic novels. He has achieved a considerable notoriety precisely because his subjects are topical. His most powerful book, *Darkness at Noon*, fictionalized the Moscow Trials and developed the character of Rubashov to describe the system of terror in Russia and the art of obtaining confessions by the GPU. The book gave Koestler a reputation out of all proportion to his intrinsic worth and caused people to overlook his progressive deterioration as revealed in *Scum of the Earth*, *Arrival and Departure*, *The Yogi and the Commissar*, and now, *Thieves in the Night*, dedicated to Jabotinsky, who was a fascistic Jewish leader.

As the first fictionalized work on the Moscow Trials, *Darkness at Noon* was a graphic account; the verisimilitude of Koestler's portrayal, that certain knowledge that comes from having been an experienced Stalinist who knew the methods of the police regime, in some respects overshadowed the political implications of the book. For it marked the first hesitant step by Koestler to identify Stalinism with Bolshevism and the Moscow Trials with an inevitable fate of

ment. In terms of literature, there is no sanction for the cultural policies which the official Left has successively implemented. If the official Left wishes to establish political sanctions for its cultural policies, it must come forth and do so by showing the co-relationships between literature and politics. At the present time the only sanction offered in its defense is its own infallibility. And it goes almost without saying that creative writers do not fare well in infallible political movements. If they allow themselves to be compromised by this movement — as many contemporary American writers have—then the future opening up for them is more likely to offer the roles of demagogues, political hacks, and literary cops than those of poets, novelists and literary critics.

JAMES T. FARRELL.

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revolution. It was followed by his complete abandonment of socialism.

Half-digested Marxist ideas, misconceptions of socialism, and a revulsion toward his own past have driven Koestler to irresponsible public "problem-posing." His fictionalized illustrations of common affairs is combined with eclecticism and an espousal of pessimism, nihilism and reactionary ideas. Now he has completed a full circuit: the revisionist Zionist became a Stalinist; the Stalinist became a vague socialist and anti-Stalinist; the vague socialist and anti-Stalinist became a critical democrat who found his only escape from "inner-conflict" by joining the camp of the Western imperialists; and, the imperialist democrat, appalled by British policy in Palestine, became again the revisionist Zionist.

### Koestler's Turn to Psycho-Analysis

Having lost his socialist perspectives, Koestler turned to a crude psycho-analysis as the answer to his inner needs. In expressing his own subjective travail he was at the same time expressing the doubts, vacillations and blindness of many tired radicals and more particularly, of many young people who were disoriented, principally by the triumph of Stalinism and their inability to solve adolescent problems of maturing and finding their place in the real movement of social struggle. Koestler's pessimism has had a considerable influence even on people in the revolutionary socialist movement.

It is this which compelled Loumos to write his essay on Koestler. The essay is not in the first place a "literary review," or "literary criticism"; it is a political evaluation of the sterile, reactionary and destructive political writing of an avowedly political novelist.

Weiss' letter is clear to the extent that the confusions of Koestler are his own and have become a political program for him. That is why he resents what he calls Loumos' "heel-clicking," and "theological tub-thumping." That is why he is afraid that Loumos' type of criticism, and more important, his attitude toward Koestler will breed "a race of . . . hopped-up 'Marxist' monsters who will anoint themselves sole custodians of the ideas of socialism. . . ."

### Party and Literature

An honest attempt at a Marxist evaluation of a political-literary work, often provokes this kind of "defense of literature," which is really in no need of it. It is the literary man striking his own "easy attitude" and sanctifying literary works. In this case, Weiss was offended, not so much by anything outrageous that Loumos wrote, but obviously by the fact that Koestlerism, synonymous with his own political confusion, was subjected to a vigorous condemnation. That is why it was rather unfortunate that Comrade Howe felt compelled to come to Weiss' assistance. Listen to Howe:

"Weiss is essentially correct when he

charges that Marxist reviewers are prone often to 'strike easy attitudes' and indulge in 'theological tub thumping!' For as *sometimes* happens a review which merely indicates that the author is not a revolutionary—a fact which any moderately intelligent person already knows—is of little value." (Emphasis mine—A. G.)

Involved in this dispute, in part at least, is the question of literary criticism, the relationship of the revolutionary socialist party to it and the *limits* of this relationship. It is necessary to reconsider this question and to be done with it in order to come to grips with the specific dispute under discussion. When Weiss speaks of "heel-clickers" and "tub thumping," and Howe echoes his fears and warns against them, they do Loumos an injustice, implying that this is what he did in his review. They express, in part also, a reaction to the Stalinist attempt to embrace literature in its totalitarian vise, to compel writers to conform to a "party line" and to make them create works along the lines of theses and resolutions.

Although Stalinist criticism has nothing in common with Marxism, Weiss and Howe, confusing and sometimes identifying the two, are apparently afraid of the rebirth of Auerbach, once head of *International Literature*, and his literary Gestapo. The amalgam of Marxist criticism and Stalinism is unjustified, as recent experience alone has shown. Howe's comments on *Marxist* reviewing are extremely exaggerated, as is evidenced in this present dispute.

When Howe says that Weiss is "essentially correct" he reveals that in reacting to the Stalinist school of literature, he is guilty of an equally objectionable error: a tendency to separate literature totally from politics. Moreover, he displays an unwarranted impatience with what has been called the "intervention" of a revolutionary party in a field which should presumably be left to "specialists." Aside from the fact that some literary specialists make a mess of literary criticism the revolutionary organization does take an interest in literary affairs, and must in those instances where literary predictions are frankly political.

There was something hysterical in the attack on Loumos. Why? Loumos did not question Koestler's freedom to write his book or anything else that lay in his head to write; he did not propose that Koestler should be barred from writing. He did not propose that Koestler should be censored by some exalted board, or that he should write anything he is incapable of writing. (Ex. He did not say that the character Rubashov should have been a Trotskyist.) All that Loumos did was to describe the significance of Koestler's works, concluding that he was anti-Marxist, anti-socialist, and a deadly influence upon young and inexperienced people. And he summarized his view of Koestler excellently in parabolic fashion:

"There was once a little fish that leaped from the polluted Stalinist stream while it

still had vitality. Watching it flop back and forth on the bank, other little fish hoped it would return to a clear stream, and, swimming upstream, gain its full vigor. But the little fish had been so long in the filth and the mire of the political stream that it thought all the streams were polluted; so it tossed back and forth on the bank until it died. The smell of death is unmistakable."

Is Loumos correct or not? That can easily be answered. Weiss' answer, at least, is clear enough from his article. But what about Howe? His own contribution reveals confusion because he answers both yes and no.

Howe's criticism implies that what literature really suffers from, and in this case, Koestler, is a superabundance of party criticism. Yet, Howe must know that exactly the opposite is true. If anything, Koestler has been permitted to ply his *trade* with little or no accounting by the Marxists. The fact is that Koestler has not been burdened with criticism from the left. The defense made for him against "heel-clickers" and "theological tub-thumpers," is therefore gratuitous. Most important of all, the comments of Weiss and Howe are not primarily literary judgments, but political ones.

### The Most Pressing Problem

The way in which they pose questions reveals what is wrong with their point of view. The problem of the day, for example, is not to curb those who "anoint themselves sole custodians of the ideas of socialism." Nor is it to defend literature and the freedom of writers from the brutal and overwhelming power of the Marxists. On the contrary, the most pressing cultural problem of the moment is to defend artists from the growth, power and degenerative influences of bourgeois and Stalinist totalitarianism. The unfortunate fact is that the "custodians of socialism" are few in number. The unfortunate fact is that there are too many Koestlers. The unfortunate fact is that Stalinism, the antithesis of Marxism, socialism and socialist methodology is, for the time being, triumphant. The unfortunate fact is that there are too many defenders of Koestler's reactionary ideas and his "frame of reference," and too few defenders of Marxism and the ideas of revolutionary socialism. To be worried about "theological tub thumping" at a time when the great task of revolutionary socialists is to resurrect Marxist thought is to show a woeful misunderstanding of our times and our needs.

Now, good, bad or indifferent, Loumos made a political evaluation of Koestler, his role and influence. Was he within his right to do so? This is in part the dispute which Howe has himself raised. As to the specific question of Rubashov, the "hero" of the book, Howe wrote:

"He (Weiss) is further correct when he accuses Peter Loumos, . . . of succumbing to the fallacy of condemning Koestler because the main character of *Darkness at Noon*, Rubashov, is portrayed as a vacillating bureaucrat who capitulates to Stalinism rather than as an intransigent oppositionist. Loumos condemned Koestler for not writing a novel which Koestler never intended to write."

What Loumos did in his review was to show the transformed "old revolutionary" as a Stalinist bureaucrat, still represented by Koestler as the "old revolutionary," and that it had its counterpart in Koestler's "substitution of Stalinist folderol for Marxist tenets," and that, "Mr. Koestler's contentions on these two points (morality and the nature of the Stalinist regime) bear as little similarity to Marxism as Rubashov bears to a revolutionary." The whole point in Loumos' review is that the acceptance of, adaptation to, or capitulation to, Stalinism makes one cease to be a revolutionary.

Howe engages in a polemic on something Loumos did not say, but makes no comment on the main point of the review. Was Loumos within his rights to examine all the political implications of Koestler's writings? This is really the question. What Loumos did was legitimate criticism of avowedly political works. Think of what would happen to literary criticism if Howe's "standards" were adopted by Marxian critics! Taking his little dogma seriously it would have been impermissible for Howe to write his letter. For, if it is wrong to criticize an author for what he had "never intended to write" the critic would be bound to discuss *only* what the author's background, training, education, limitations, prejudices, ignorance and predilections permitted him to create. If criticism is to be delimited by an author's intentions and confined only to his sphere of observation and the material which he knows, then criticism cannot be thorough and all-sided.

It is easy to see that Howe's "standard" is absurd. It is a foolish yardstick because no serious critic can truly adhere to it. It is faulty too, because it has no point of departure. The task of the literary critic was once described by James T. Farrell as becoming "the agent that makes for the understanding and evaluation of literature," and striving "to make the meanings of books clear, to draw out these essential meanings and refer and assimilate them in a wider social area." By Howe's standard of literary criticism Trotsky, for example, would have been unable to write his penetratingly brilliant essay on Celine when he foretold his reactionary, fascist evolution not only by what Celine wrote, but even more by what he did not write, or "intend to" write.

### The Limits of Marxism

The science of Marxism is a universal one: it is the science of the social revolution. With the weapon of historical materialism, Marxism has been able to analyze capitalism, and to provide answers to the main economic, political and social problems of our times. Marxism does not and never pretended to answer all the problems of mankind. It does not, for example, pretend to solve all personal problems, but insofar as it points the way to the solution of the social problem of society, it *contributes* to the solution of personal problems. In the field of literature, Marxism can have no dogma. But in providing us with the method of historical materialism, Marxism can help a person to become a better literary critic. Its revolutionary universality can break through the encrusted education and faulty vision produced by the limited horizon of

bourgeois thought and culture. This is especially true when bourgeois criticism, given the present decay of capitalism, is a reservoir of reactionary ideology and politics.

What bourgeois literary criticism lacks is precisely the quality and combination of the social vision, understanding and perception of Marxism. This is not to say that bourgeois critics cannot be penetrating and significant. As a rule, however, they are entirely empirical, or without method or aims. To put it more bluntly, the Marxists have unparalleled political understanding in a world in which all fields, including the literary, are saturated with politics. Marxism has proven itself superior to all alternative theories of politics and can be of tremendous aid to an aspiring literary critic.

The problem of the relation of literature to the revolutionary party is not a new one. It has been clouded by the disorienting influence of Stalinism. But here, we are dealing not with a Marxist aberration, but with anti-Marxist, totalitarian doctrine misrepresenting itself as Marxism. Anyone who understands this, should not, however, confuse it with Marxism.

It does not follow from Marxist criticism that every type of writer and everything written must be poured into a mould, or that every artistic product can be "class-angled." That is obviously foolish. But, then, no real Marxist demands this. Literature, like all art, is a social product, and, as Trotsky once wrote, "a social service." One of its aims is to explain the nature of experience in its infinite manifestations as honestly and fully as it can. The task of the critic is to understand and explain. Style, technique, form, inner-structure, craftsmanship, narrative and whatever else one may wish to add, are not the *sole* areas of literary criticism. Criticism does not and cannot end at this point. The mere "love of words" provides only a personal emotional experience. This is not to say that these aspects of the arts are unimportant. No, nor are they incompatible with what I have said above. A lack of them to one degree or another, *a total incompetence in expression, produces poor creative works*. A minimum of competence is required; the greater the competence, the better the work. But after all this is said, there is still the more important matter of content, meaning, significance and influence.

Aside from its many schools, the literary world, is composed of an almost infinite variety of writers: mystery writers, historical, topical, psychological and political novelists. The Marxist does not necessarily have to examine each of them minutely. So far as the matter of taste is concerned, it is essentially subjective: but, this too, is conditioned by environment, training and ideology. The Marxist does not seek to restrict taste or to advise the individual on what he should or should not like. He endeavors to understand what the writer is trying to say. He wants to assess his importance, to evaluate his writing, not only literarily but socially, and when the work warrants it, politically. Howe's conception of literary criticism is, in addition to what I have already said, crude. He has difficulty in this case because Koestler does not think of himself first as a novelist. He wants to be regarded

as a "social theorist" who has proposals for the solution of life's main problems.

### Howe's Eclecticism

Howe's views on literature are eclectic, as revealed in his attitude toward such reviews as Loumos' and the efforts a revolutionary party makes in evaluating the political writer. A genuine attempt to understand and evaluate a writer is rejected as "party-attitude," "interference with literature," an "attack on literature," and this literature is torn from its social environment. To assert the social nature of literature is to invite the comment; "You can't class-angle literature, you can't use a political yardstick in literary criticism." It is a wearisome thing to deny that this is what Marxism prescribes in the field of literary criticism. It does not call for "political" analysis and criticism, except where books are frankly political. In the specific case of Koestler, the fact that he uses the medium of the novel for the purpose of expressing political ideas and formulating a political program does not entitle him to escape the responsibilities and consequences of his device. Howe argues that the case of Koestler is different from that of a political writer because the former has expressed his thoughts in novels and, where under other circumstances we would not give an author any license for irresponsibility and confusion, the fact that Koestler is a "novelist" places him in plane apart from the political writers. (At the same time Howe does not want to grant him "any degree of irresponsibility" in his literary work either. In other words, he has two points of view on this.) This is what is objectionable in Howe's point of view and is revealed in his comments on Koestler's contributions as a literary man.

In the first part of his letter, Howe writes: "the glitter of his metaphors often veils some very shoddy thinking. . . . What then is the value of Koestler's comments on the failure of the Second and Third Internationals? Next to none, I think . . . Koestler abandons the attempt to analyze politics with methodological rigor in favor of a brilliant but inadequate literary impressionism." You are led to believe that Howe is beginning to get somewhere. But, no. Howe gets lost in the conviction that novel-writing places a man apart as the following successive quotes indicate.

"Yet Koestler remains with us. We feel that he has not yet been completely disposed of, that a 'definitive' reply to him has not yet been written. We answer his generally incorrect impressions with our generally correct formulae, but we still are not thoroughly satisfied."

Howe takes in a wide territory with the word "we." Neither the Workers Party, the editorial board of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL, nor the overwhelming majority of revolutionary Marxists believe this. To answer "generally incorrect impressions" with "generally correct formulae" is not the worst thing that can happen. It has in its small way contributed to the descending curve of Koestler's influence. We are concerned here primarily with a question of judgment which the reader will be able to determine for himself. For example, according to Howe, Koestler is "painfully relevant

to this world." In what way is Koestler "painfully relevant to this world?" Because he is concerned with what has now become rather commonplace in political and social thought? Only because he has taken them up in the form of the novel. The problems he writes about are the problems which wrack the world revolutionary and labor movement. There is hardly a class conscious person, let alone an articulate one, who is not, and has not been for ten to twenty years, aware of the "problems." But to Howe, it is Koestler who "is unparalleled (!) in his ability, which amounts almost to an uncanny instinct (!) to touch the heart of the modern problem."

Yet, it would be "unparalleled" only if an old and trained functionary of the Stalinist school, like Koestler, who gained political experience and awareness, did not "touch" upon the "modern problem." But that which is impressive about Koestler, however, is that, having graduated from that school and broken with it, he writes so shallowly about the "relevant" problems of the day and causes Howe himself to write:

"He cannot adequately state this 'modern problem' as a coherent political proposition; he certainly cannot suggest an adequate solution; but he can touch it with all the devices a skillful novelist-journalist has at his command."

### World Is Less Simple

What is the heart of the modern problem which the incoherent and inadequate Koestler states? Howe replies, "It is partly the fact that the world is no longer as simple as it was 25 years ago, despite all those in the revolutionary movement whose minds still function as if it were 1920." The implication here is plain. We have left the plane of literary criticism (indeed, we have hardly been on it) for a political one. What Howe means is that the trouble with the Marxist movement is its belief that the world is as simple as it was 25 years ago and that too many of its minds "still function as if it were 1920." The Marxist movement has been narrowed down considerably and it should not be difficult to be concrete at this point, but the very vagueness of Howe's reference indicates that he means the Marxist movement in general, encompassing its various wings. The movement is thereby excoriated because it has not answered or solved the "painfully relevant," but unspecified problems of the day.

To say that the world is no longer as simple as it was 25 years ago, is saying exactly nothing. The whole Marxist movement grapples with a wealth of new problems precisely because it recognizes that the world is "not as simple as it was 25 years ago." One need only stop to think about this proposition for a moment to understand how true it is. Is there a single political problem which Koestler has raised which was not long before him considered by the Marxist movement? The question really answers itself.

The world was not simple 25 years ago! The slightest acquaintance with history will reveal that to anyone. And it is only because the proletariat did not solve the problems of those years that the socialist movement is in its present crisis. It is more important, however, to understand that the problems of today are the extension of the unsolved

problems of 25 years ago, in more agonized and aggravated form, because of the defeats of the proletariat and the rise to world power of Stalinism. **What Howe fails to see is the continuity of the basic social problem and the continuity of its solution.** For an understanding of the problem, for a solution of it, one cannot, by Howe's admission, go to Koestler because "he cannot adequately state" it, nor provide an "adequate solution." Since he merely "touched" the problem which so many have before him, no special homage need be paid him. **What is important** is that Koestler's influence is reactionary and anti-socialist. And it is this which should invite Howe's scorn rather than the admiration which he expresses because he believes that Koestler has made a great contribution to politics. It should be obvious to the reader by now that Howe's comments have little or nothing to do with literary criticism, but are essentially political. His exercise about the theory and practice of literary criticism, aside from its basic errors, is entirely beside the point.

There are many other aspects of Howe's criticism which space does not permit me to deal with. They are "the perplexing phenomenon of Stalinism," the "complex political, semi-political and personal problems which have resulted in the revival of philosophical anarchism, the rise of religious and mystical philosophies, the 'new failure of nerve,' etc." In all of these matters, Howe expresses a strange and false point of view. No one proposes to "indulge in the gross error of judging a novel merely by political standards." That should be clear by all that has been written. But again, a frankly political book has to be judged politically. There is no point in Howe's stricture because he himself proceeded to discuss precisely the political-social-personal questions presumably raised by Koestler.

### Koestler as Politician

That Howe is not on solid ground is revealed when he says that Koestler "dwells in an ambiguous twilight zone," that he is not a "novelist of dimension and density," and that he is not a "scientific political analyst." But then he is merely saying what so many of us said long ago. Why, then, his perturbation and excitement and swift rush to join Weiss against Loumos at the same time that he says we should not accord Koestler "any degree of irresponsibility"? Because Howe is not certain of the ground he stands on, because he is expressing his contradictory position by artificially separating acknowledged political literature from politics itself. His views on literature are subjectivist. He writes, for example: "Together with Weiss I recognize that there is more than one universe of discourse in human existence; politics is not the totality of life." The whole point is, however, that Koestler's "universe of discourse" is politics and Howe's statement becomes gratuitous.

Howe wants "to reconcile . . . economic centralization with our desire to preserve individual rights and private liberties," the "major problem of our time." This is a major problem of our time. But so is the struggle of mankind for peace and security. If Howe will think out the problem further, he will find that every "major" problem of our time is a political problem. Therefore

the modern problem is effective political action; the modern problem is to assist the masses to become politically class-conscious in order to hasten the abolition of capitalism. Thus, even the meanest problems of life are subsumed by politics.

This is the political age of mankind and to say as Howe does that "politics is not the totality of life," is to close one's eyes to what is important and what is not. No Marxist has ever said that all there is to life is politics. But politics is decisive. All the other aspects of life—culture, leisure, the development of the individual, emotional conflicts, etc.—are dependent upon and determined by

## A REPLY BY IRVING HOWE

"A minimum of competence is required . . ."—Albert Gates

Were there only at stake different estimates of Koestler, I would not reply to Comrade Gates; the polemic has wound through so many months few readers remain familiar with it. But Gates' article is such a conspicuous example of what is objectionable in the way some Marxists discuss literature that it should not go unchallenged. I shall restrict myself to a few central points which indicate, I believe, a persistent if unwitting attack by Gates on the practice of literature.

1) Originally involved was an important matter of critical methodology. In my letter (October '46, NI) I criticized the method by which Peter Loumos had reviewed Koestler's *Darkness at Noon* in the NI. Loumos, I wrote, had "succumbed to the fallacy of condemning Koestler because the main character of *Darkness at Noon*, Rubashov, is portrayed as a vacillating bureaucrat who capitulates to Stalinism rather than as an intransigent oppositionist. Loumos condemned Koestler for not writing a novel which Koestler never intended to write."

As support for this judgment, I quote from Loumos' review: "Rubashov speaks with sympathy for the masses. Rubashov was an 'Old Bolshevik,' a 'hero' in the Civil War. In short, this party wheelhorse . . . is trotted out by Koestler and accepted by most readers as an inflexible old revolutionary." After which, it wasn't difficult for Loumos to denounce Koestler for portraying Old Bolsheviks in the light of Rubashov.

There is the context of the dispute. I insist that anyone rereading *Darkness at Noon* will find in it no suggestions that Rubashov was the *only* kind of oppositionist; the very fact that Rubashov debates within himself whether or not to confess and cites to himself those who didn't, indicates that Koestler recognized that Rubashov did not represent, as Loumos charged, "the whole revolutionary movement."

Rubashov represented the type of bureaucrat who played along with Stalin for a time but who ultimately was repelled by the mushrooming totalitarianism. One may guess that Rubashov was roughly modelled on Bukharin. Loumos, who with Gates seems unable to distinguish a novel from a political analysis, condemned Koestler for choosing to portray *this kind of* oppositionist, the capitulator, rather than the intransigent

the social organization of society and the struggle to emancipate mankind from class society and exploitation. Until social emancipation is achieved, *politics will dominate life*. There is no use protesting this fact. And as long as this is true, the task of the revolutionist toward irresponsible, nihilistic thinkers and writers like Koestler is to submit them to critical examination and to say clearly and unambiguously: this man is a muddle-head who contributes nothing but confusion to the important problems of modern times. Howe's comments are in truth an evasion of the problem that is "painfully relevant to this world."

ALBERT GATES.

sigent type. But while one could legitimately criticize a *political* analysis which omitted consideration of the non-capitulators, the same criterion needn't apply to a novel.

The novelist *does* have the right to delimit his material, to say "I will write only about *this* kind of oppositionist, not the other." The task of the critic is not—as do Loumos and Gates—to denounce him for the choice of his material, but to judge how profound a heightening of sensibility is evoked by his novel. When Gates objects that this method results in limiting the critic "to discuss only what the author's background, training (etc., etc.) . . . permitted him to create" he simply shows his inability to distinguish literary criticism from political analysis. For the purpose of a novel is not to disseminate information; the limitations which its author sets for himself must be accepted; and one can criticize only in terms of what he creates within those limitations.

A novel cannot be judged as a political program even when it contains political material; the purpose of criticism is not to polemicize with an author's political ideas but to evaluate his book as a work of art. Otherwise you must fall into the trap of judging "political novels" in terms of their proximity or distance from your political ideas, in which case, having abstracted the politics, you are no longer talking about the novel but about the politics which exist outside of or anterior to the novel. Why then drag in the novel at all?

### Novelist's Right to Create

But Loumos and Gates object: Rubashov used "Marxist" arguments to justify his capitulation, and that is how Koestler implied that Marxism leads to capitulation to Stalinism. Actually we don't know why the Moscow Trial victims capitulated, but it seems likely that some rationalized their action on "Marxist" grounds. That is the assumption on which Rubashov was created. But even if the assumption were unlikely as historical data, Koestler as a *novelist* had every right to create a *novel*, that is a *work of the imagination* (a province most suspect to Gates) in which a character so behaves.

To write as did Loumos, with Gates' approval, that Koestler is "palming off an apparatus man as a revolutionary" is nonsense because (a) in actual fact, there were apparatus men who had been revolution-

aries and who still *considered themselves* such; (b) Koestler nowhere implied that Rubashov was the *only* kind of oppositionist nor did he indicate acceptance of Rubashov's reasons for confessing; and (c) even if no historical counterpart for Rubashov existed, Koestler had every right to create him. But even in the narrowest terms of verisimilitude, Rubashov needs no justification.

The criticism of Gates and Loumos is thus similar to that of certain Stalinists who attacked James T. Farrell's *Studs Lonigan* for not containing a "positive" wholesome character in addition to the decayed Studs. It is an *infallible* method: you attack a man for not saying something he didn't intend to say.

2) I do not here wish to present my views on Koestler. Suffice it to assert that Gates' ponderous analysis of my one page letter does it less than justice. For instance:

I wrote that Koestler is "painfully relevant"; Gates replies by saying he deals with commonly-known subjects and that relevance doesn't make a great writer. Yes, yes, but I tried to show how that relevance to (naturally) common-place subjects is used by Koestler in a way that makes him read while others who deal with the same subjects are not read. Gates is so eager to demolish my "unorthodoxy" that he thinks I offer a value judgment of Koestler as novelist by saying he is relevant.

I wrote that Koestler indulges in "some very shoddy thinking" and that "he is not a scientific political analyst." Gates thereby concludes that "he (Howe) believes that Koestler has made a great contribution to politics." This sort of twisting just leaves one speechless; did I not have so low an opinion of Gates as literary critic I would accuse him of malice. As it is . . .

I wrote that the modern problem as *touched* (not analyzed or explained but touched) by Koestler is "*partly* the fact that the world is no longer as *simple* as it was 25 years ago. . . ." Gates counters by exploding the bombshell that "the world was not simple 25 years ago!" Of course! And certainly! But would Gates deny that the situation today facing the revolutionary movement and all of humanity, is infinitely more difficult, complex and tortured (I am searching for acceptable ways of saying "no longer as simple as . . .") than it was 25 years ago? Can't he see the difference between "simple" used as a modifying adjective and "simple" surrounded by "as" to make it a comparative?

In these and similar instances, Gates' method is to rebut a point, not by disproving it, but by citing *something else which may be true and in his opinion more important, but which is irrelevant*. Can one take that sort of thing seriously?

### Bourgeois Critics

3) Contrary to Gates' fears, I don't object to revolutionary politicians discussing literature. I raise only one minimum demand: that they know something about it, have a genuine love for creative art and not merely make a raid into literature to condemn an author's politics. For the Marxist method is no substitute for intelligence or knowledge. In short, I want *competent* amateurs. I submit that in the field of literature Gates doesn't make the grade. As witness:

*Item:* "This is not to say bourgeois critics cannot be penetrating and significant. As a rule, however, they are entirely empirical, or without method or aim." *What is Gates talking about? Which "bourgeois critics?" Is Coleridge's Biographica Literaria without method or aim? Is Empson's Seven Types of Ambiguity? Or Taine's History of English Literature? Or Mathew Arnold? Or John Dewey and Edmund Wilson and Partridge and Saint-Beuve?—all "bourgeois critics."* Gates may disagree with their method or aim, but that is not the same as denying their existence. Were this sort of pontification not so ludicrous, one could say Gates has simply committed a slander against Western culture, a slander born in innocent ignorance.

*Item:* "The mere 'love of words' provides only a personal emotional experience. This is not to say that these aspects of the arts are unimportant." If the "mere love of words provides only a personal emotional experience" then why do so many people find common enjoyment in one work of art? And why, as he asserts, is "personal emotional experience" less important than and how can it be separated from "the more important matter of content?"

*Item:* "The literary world is composed of an almost infinite variety of writers: mystery writers, historical, topical, psychological and political novelists." Surely no such catalogue of "infinite variety" has ever been devised since Polonius discovered the "tragic-comical-historical pastoral, scene indivisible, or poem unlimited. . ."

Let me repeat: my purpose in this point is not to poke fun but to question the competence of our critic who lectures on the Marxist approach to literature.

5) Gates' article shows no real concern for literature; he is not as crude as the 3rd period Stalinist, he doesn't judge a novel by party interest. But he judges it by political content. For him literature is thus

a largely indifferent *vehicle* through which ideas are expressed. True they are coated with various brands of chocolate: "style, technique, form." But the medicine is still there: "the more important matter of content, meaning." Nor is Gates fooled by the chocolate; he has been trained to want his medicine.

To attempt in a paragraph to offer a theory of literary criticism would be as foolhardy as Gates' more prolonged exercise. But I wish to suggest a few preliminaries. A work of art cannot be viewed as a container in which one finds what one already knows in politics; it cannot be measured by political criteria. Literature is above all the expression of one human faculty: *the imagination*. A novel is a *created structure of the imagination*; it contains ideological elements but it is not essentially a means for the propagation of political or any other ideas. Of course it is created in a social milieu, but the relationship between milieu and a valuable work of art is usually remote and indirect. Marxism can help explain that relationship, but since it is a theory of historical analysis and social action rather than literary criticism, it contributes little to an *evaluation* of a work of art. Such an evaluation must be made in terms of the norms and purposes of art. Marxism cannot tell us which is a great work of art or why. It isn't a universal *Weltanschauung* offering the skeleton key to all experience.

The approach of Gates and those who think like him leads to viewing a novel in terms of self-recognition: do I find in it the political ideas I *already* have? The result of this unfortunate approach is Gates' suspicion toward imagination, his absurd strictures about "bourgeois critics," his conception of literature as idea-medicine coated with style-chocolate—all of which lead to the reluctant conclusion that being a socialist revolutionary does not necessarily prevent one from being a cultural philistine.

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for Stalinism is thus a vote of despair and desperation!

Typical of the elections in the American zone was that held for municipal councils in the various towns and small cities of Bavaria (Bayern), the heart of this zone. The results revealed the essential conservatism of this area and laid a pattern that has been consistently repeated in other elections held under American occupation auspices. The election of May 27, 1946, had the following results:

- (1) Christian Social Union Party, 678,000 votes, 484 seats.
- (2) Social Democratic Party, 611,000 votes, 421 seats.
- (3) Communist Party, 143,000 votes, 47 seats.
- (4) Liberal - Democratic Party, 71,000 votes, 34 seats.

General elections in the conservative, Catholic French zone in 1946 were even more emphatically to the right in their overall character. The Christian - Democratic Party received close to an absolute majority of the popular vote, as shown in the following figures:

- (1) Christian - Democratic Party, 1,090,000 votes.
- (2) Social Democratic Party, 493,086 votes.
- (3) Independents, 410,820 votes.
- (4) Communist Party, 152,356 votes.
- (5) Liberal - Democratic Party, 45,005 votes.
- (6) Party of the Palatinate, 12,293 votes.

Note that (1) the Communists received a bare seven per cent of the vote, although the Saar industrial area is included in this zone, and (2) the outright French organized "Party of the Palatinate" received one-half of one per cent of the popular vote!

Voting in the British zone is more significant and reveals the extent to which the German Social Democracy has been resurrected as a vast voting apparatus, while also emphasizing the heavy defeat administered to Stalinism in this most advanced industrial zone of Germany. We publish statistics on several varied elections held, but all of which show the same tendencies:

*General Elections for British Zone  
(including lands and small cities)*

- (1) Christian-Democratic Party, 6,863,948 votes.
- (2) Social Democratic Party, 6,267,699 votes.
- (3) Independents, 2,718,558 votes.
- (4) Lower Saxony Farmer-Labor Party, 1,080,186 votes.
- (5) Communist Party, 992,745 votes.

Stalinism attained a bare six per cent of the popular vote. The Christian Democrats and the Social Democrats are the major political forces in this zone, as well as, generally speaking, in the western part of Germany.

*Rhineland-Westphalen District  
(including the Ruhr)*

- (1) Christian - Democratic Party, 2,500,000 votes, 6900 seats.

## AN ANALYSIS OF THE GERMAN ELECTIONS

The first elections to be held in Germany under Allied occupation took place approximately one year after the end of the war and the defeat of Hitler. During this period, all powers worked feverishly to assure victory to the particular party favored by their occupation policy. The Russians created their Socialist Unity Party and stuffed the unwilling Social Democrats into its ranks; the British fostered the Social Democrats, with their old-time and older-fashioned right wing leaders; the Americans and British built up the Catholic conservative parties of their respective areas.

In this respect, the elections summarized by us below hardly can be described as "free, democratic expressions of popular opinion." When the governing power was sure of electoral victory for its party, it permitted the elections to go through. Nevertheless, despite their artificial and highly prejudiced character, the elections can re-

veal much to us regarding the mood and feelings of the German people, and the German working class. The statistics we have published below seem to indicate clearly enough two important generalizations, or, to be more exact, two generalizations with a corollary attached to the second:

(1) The German working class has chosen the Social Democratic Party as the political instrument by means of which, for the moment, it wishes to express itself. Exclusive of the Russian zone, where it does not exist as a party, the Social Democracy mustered over seven million votes in Germany.

(2) Where the hope and possibility of some form of economic revival exists or existed, Stalinism and its party are then judged in terms of Russia and what it has done to Germany. This invariably leads to overwhelming *defeat* for the Stalinist candidates. The corollary to this generalization is that wherever and whenever conditions worsen and hope fades, the vote of Stalinism increases, and the party tends to be judged by its demagogic proposals. A vote

- (2) Social Democratic Party, 2,000,000 votes, 3500 seats.
- (3) Independents, 800,000 votes, 2600 votes.
- (4) Center Party, 400,000 votes, 921 seats.
- (5) Communist Party, 300,000 votes, 155 seats.

In the industrial heart of Germany (the Ruhr), Stalinism suffered a major defeat, receiving five per cent of a 6,000,000 popular vote.

*Zone-Wide Elections for County and Borough Seats (October 13, 1946)*

- (1) Christian - Democratic Party, 3518 seats.
- (2) Social Democratic Party, 2549 seats.
- (3) Lower Saxony Farmer-Labor Party, 325 seats.
- (4) Liberal Party, 317 seats.
- (5) Center Party, 211 seats.
- (6) Communist Party, 139 seats.

Again Stalinism is at the bottom of the list, trailing behind even the narrowest, most discredited parties of German conservatism. The present rejection of Stalinism by the German workers, under conditions that permit relative expression of democratic voting rights, is overwhelming in its clarity.\* But, it may be objected, this ap-

\*The April 21, 1947, elections in the British zone, the latest to be held, reveal a trend toward Stalinism—clearly a result of the food crisis, intense hostility to the British failures and, at the same time, a sharp warning to the authorities. Only 61 per cent of 14 million eligible voted, with the popular vote adding up as follows:

Social Democrats, 3,131,127 votes; Christian Democrats, 2,747,715 votes; Communists, 891,026 votes; Center, 597,734 votes; Free Democrats, 568,868 votes.

The Stalinist vote totaled 11 per cent of the total; a gain of 5 per cent over the previous popular election.

## RESOLUTION ON THE FRENCH REFERENDUM

The convention of the Workers Party\* fully endorses the decision taken by the PCI of France in asking the working class to vote "Yes" on the constitutional referendum in May. It hails this decision on the part of our French comrades as further evidence of their break with the sterile and doctrinaire sectarianism that dominates the politics of the IS and which has blighted so much of the heroic and self-sacrificing work of our European parties during and after the war.

The position of the revolutionary Marxists in the struggle around the constitution cannot be considered from the point of view of some abstract principle. Our position must base itself upon the essence of the question, i.e., the actual struggle of the classes for power, and the relationship of forces at a given stage of this struggle.

The French bourgeoisie understood the political effect of a constitution that placed all power in the hands of a single chamber

\*This resolution was adopted as an appendix to the "Resolution on the International Situation," published in our April issue, adopted May, 1946.

plies only to the western half of Germany, where Stalinism operates under the handicap of Allied presence. Let us look at results in the Russian occupied half, the eastern section of Germany, where the Stalinist movement is supreme in power, at least.

The Berlin election results are well known and need no repetition. The people of this city voted against both the conservative parties and Stalinism, by giving an absolute majority to the Social Democratic Party. What of the outright Russian zone?

The Socialist Unity Party (Stalinists) won a majority in only three out of the five provinces that make up the Russian zone. In two provinces (Brandenburg and Saxony), they lost to the combined votes of the Christian-Democratic Party and the Liberal-Democratic Party, as follows:

*Saxony*

Socialist Unity Party, 453,457 votes.  
 Liberal-Democratic Party, 378,196 votes.  
 Christian - Democratic Party, 238,073 votes, a total of 616,269 votes for the latter two parties.

*Brandenburg*

Socialist Unity Party, 705,514 votes.  
 Combined Liberal-Democratic and Christian-Democratic Parties, 740,517 votes.

Summarizing the total votes of all five provinces, we have the following revealing totals:

Grand total Socialist Unity Party vote, 4,960,000 (51 per cent).

Grand total Christian - Democratic and Liberal-Democratic Parties vote, 4,808,000 (49 per cent).

Despite its open terror system, Stalinism musters a bare majority. If the Social Democratic Party was permitted to exist, it is clear that the election results would parallel those of the rest of Germany.

GERTRUDE BLACKWELL.

landed the Marxist party squarely in the middle of the bourgeois front. Under the given conditions all declarations and proclamations as to our basis for opposition to the constitution could not have availed to distinguish us in the eyes of the masses from the camp of reaction. In politics it is the political line, not propaganda, that counts. A "no" position would mean, in political language, the same political line as the camp of reaction.

A "no" vote could only be justified if the relationship of forces would have placed the MRP power in balance between us (i.e., the Marxist party at the head of the masses) and the CP-SP camp as the props of the bourgeois order. In this event, however, we would be on the eve of the struggle for power and our participation in the referendum would have been only a "parliamentary" maneuver related to (or as a springboard for) the extra-parliamentary struggle for immediate state power. In this situation our political line would be "Against the bourgeois constitution—For the Soviet Power." If in such a relationship an extreme right wing bourgeois camp also voted "no" it would be of no consequence since our struggle for power would crush it the very next day along with the Stalinist reformist center.

Had the MRP supported the "one chamber" constitution and remained part of the 3-party coalition in the referendum struggle, an entirely different relationship of forces would have prevailed. Under these conditions a "yes" vote would have no meaning, other than to sanction the 3-party coalition swindle that has for so long frustrated the desires of the French masses. Whether it would, under such circumstances, be most advantageous to vote "no" or to cast a blank ballot would depend upon many factors that cannot be posed in relation to such a hypothetical situation.

However, in the real situation, as it prevailed in May, the "yes" vote was indicated by the entire mechanics of the struggle since the liberation. These mechanics require as the next stage in the leftward movement of the French situation the adoption of the SP-CP Constitution.

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