

*The*

**NEW**

**INTERNATIONAL**

**LABOR POLICY: NEW  
DEAL TO FAIR DEAL**

by Ben Hall

***Against Both War Camps***

Two RDR Resolutions

***The Pacifism of the Masses***

by Paul Parisot

***Pravda "Discusses" Literature***

by George Fowler

***Archives ■ Book Reviews***



***THE RELEVANCE  
OF TROTSKYISM***

by Henry Judd

**AUGUST 1949**

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# MEMO

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## THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

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In the July issue of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL the last installment of Victor Serge's "The Year One of the Russian Revolution" appeared. The ten sections from Victor Serge's work were issued in ten issues of the magazine from March, 1948 to July, 1949.

This important book provides the only detailed account of the first crucial year of the new Bolshevik regime in Russia. While THE NEW INTERNATIONAL translation was somewhat abridged, in its 50,000 words it contained much important material completely unavailable elsewhere. Those of our readers who preserved these issues now have a significant addition to their libraries.

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# THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

A Monthly Organ of Revolutionary Marxism

VOL. XV

AUGUST 1949

NO. 6

## Labor Policy: New Deal and Fair Deal

Tracing the Trend Toward State Controls

By a margin of a mere two votes in the Senate, the administration lost the decisive battle on the Taft-Hartley law. A motion by Senator Lucas, majority leader, to strike out the injunction provisions of the new law was rejected, 46 to 44. Of the six senators who did not vote, four were evenly paired and so cancelled themselves out; the remaining two were administration supporters. Where were they?

One, Senator Ecton of Montana, was proudly watching his son get married. The other, Senator Wagner of New York, was ill. It was suggested, says Arthur Krock, that his physician decide if the sick senator could make one dramatic appearance on this momentous occasion. But in vain. With these two votes, the Senate would have been deadlocked; Vice President Barkley, as chairman, could have broken the tie in favor of the administration. Would have, could have; but an impatient groom and a cautious doctor decided otherwise.

### Where and When Principles Prevail

In some places, little facts like these make big history. How narrowly the will of the people was thwarted. And so, hundreds of union employees sort out lists of registered voters and compile voting records of their elected representatives. Thousands of garment workers, auto workers, and steel workers are to climb stairways, ring doorbells to call millions of their brothers to the polls in 1950. *Justice, The United Auto Worker, The Steelworker*, appeal to their readers: Elect just a few more liberals and turn back the tide of reaction.

Matters of profound principle are decided by a few hands raised in Washington. Get out and vote. The lesson is simple. But is it? Fred A. Hartley, Jr. (of Taft-Hartley fame) has devised a simple formula for making one thing seem like something else; understand it and you have a handy guide for following the great "labor" debates in Congress. "If you have a particular measure you want approved in a particular fashion, it is sometimes a good practice to include among its provisions at least one that is obviously undesirable, unworkable, or unconstitutional. By doing so, you draw the opposition fire against the particular provision rather than against the measure as

a whole." We need only remember that the "particular measure" to be put over in this case is a general labor policy and the decoy is the "injunction" provision of the law.

Gavels pound: amendments and subamendments; substitutes and sub-substitutes; intricate procedural devices; committals and recommittals; threats of a veto; compromises and new compromises. One imagines something must be going on. Rules of order and parliamentary feinting fascinate our imagination until we snap back to reality. The honorable congressmen and the president are agitating themselves over one main question: shall the injunction provisions be enacted into law? But law or no law, do you favor the use of injunctions against mass strikes? On this question, both sides are agreed. Yes! On this matter of principle, all tendencies unite.

"Although Senator Thomas' bill, supported by the Administration, mentions neither injunctions nor seizure" reports the *N. Y. Times*, "Mr. Thomas told the Senate that it was 'written in such a way' as to permit the President to seize plants or ask for injunction in critical emergency disputes." Senator Paul Douglas, another Fair Dealer, explained his own compromise bill to the Senate: ". . . there would be an implication, in ultimate emergencies of Presidential power to seek injunctions under this plan . . .", says the *Times* dispatch.

### The Attorney General Casts His "Vote"

Truman goes them all one better; why all the fuss and bother about votes in Congress when all he needs is the one "vote" of his Attorney General who reinterprets the Constitution and legalizes the injunction without a law. A report of a Presidential news conference reads, "When Mr. Truman was asked by a reporter whether he intended to reserve for the Administration the right to employ the injunction in labor disputes of a national character, he replied that he had been told the President's powers were sufficient to meet such emergencies. A question was then raised, as to why the power had not been inserted in the labor bill. This was not necessary, the Chief Executive said, since the Attorney General had advised him that the President had constitutional and implied powers" (*Times*, Feb. 4).

But the workings of the Hartley formula hypnotizes the labor leaders who close their eyes and dream of pleasant things. The *League Reporter*, published by Labor's League for Political Education (AF of L), explains, "Anti-labor Senators want the injunction provisions of Taft-Hartley continued. But senators interested in the welfare of the nation and fair labor legislation oppose the injunction strenuously." How "strenuously," we have seen. And PAC-CIO tells us, "The showdown fight came on provisions to deal with so-called national emergency strikes. T-H backers striving to insert injunction provisions in the Administration measure, pro-labor Senators fighting a desperate battle to keep them out." As "desperate" as it was "strenuous."

### **As the New Deal Emerged**

Unanimous agreement on the use of the injunction by the government summarizes a turn in the labor policy of the bourgeoisie; just what the turn means becomes clearer when we examine the old labor policy, the policy of the New Deal, and the conditions that gave rise to it.

In 1928, 268,000 people voted for Norman Thomas, the socialist. In 1932, his supporters numbered a million. Roosevelt was elected on the promise of driving the money changers from the temple. Down with the economic royalists; remember the forgotten man. The agony compressed into these four years stretched from the car in every garage to the furniture piled on prosperity's corner. The moribund American Federation of Labor, living off the dues of its employed highly skilled craftsmen, hoped for better times and prayed to muddle through somehow. It offered no promise, no hope, no future to the workers. Things are bad enough, why risk the useless venture of organizing the unorganizable, employed and unemployed? Beyond the AFL was nothing but radicals. Leaderless, the workers began to take what leadership there was.

In May, 1931, spontaneous strikes involving up to 40,000 miners blazed up in the bituminous fields around Western Pennsylvania. Grim miners—scrip money, company stores, little work and little wages—accepted the leadership of the Communist Party and its National Miners Union. In March, 1930, 200,000 men, desperate with joblessness, knowing nothing of the Comintern and caring less, somehow heard of the call for an International Day Against Unemployment. They stamped through the streets in Detroit and New York under the strange banner of the Communist Party.

The CP was in the throes of its third period lunacy; there were Communists and all others were fascists; the revolution was already under way; won or lost, the movements they led were victories, for cops' clubs, injunctions, jailings and killings would automatically pound the revolution into the heads of the

masses. Strike placards for the "Defense of Soviet China" were placed in the hands of puzzled miners. Its suicidal adventurism made it impossible for the CP and its dual unions to create any substantial and sustained organizations, but such were the times that despite themselves they were able, temporarily at least, to lead real mass movements.

Socialists and radicals of all kinds organized the Conference for Progressive Labor Action to work inside the American Federation of Labor and independently where necessary, to "work untiringly to organize the masses of unskilled and semi-skilled in the basic industries into industrial unions." In 1929, it reported "Progressives almost single-handed carried on the glorious struggle by the side of the workers in Marion (North Carolina) which focussed the eyes of labor and of the nation on the Southern textile field." In the next years it played a prominent role in strike struggles and in internal factional struggles in the unions, finally organizing itself as the Workers Party of America, which merged with the Trotskyists.

In May, 1933, at the call of Norman Thomas, Sidney Hillman, David Dubinsky and others like them, 4,000 delegates from unions, farm organizations, socialist branches and cooperative leagues assembled in Washington for a "Continental Congress of Workers and Farmers," where they adopted resolutions for a radical economic program to meet the crisis. They took no stand on political action but decided to set up united front committees in every city for mass action in pursuit of their demands. It was on the eve of the New Deal; the new President had already been sworn into office. Under his magic, the movement was liquidated in the next months.

### **Which Class Was Best Served?**

This was only one of Roosevelt's many services to the bourgeoisie. Within the next four years, Hillman and Dubinsky formed another outfit, the American Labor Party, to switch the traditional socialist vote away from their old friend Thomas to their new idol Roosevelt, by making it possible for socialist voters to cast their ballots "independently" for FDR.

Retired Marxists divert themselves with speculations on the non-class character of the state or at least its non-capitalist class character. Reminiscences of the labor policy of the New Deal, bitterly attacked by large sections of the bourgeoisie, even its majority, serve as a somewhat belated proof of their new view. They not only minimize the future of the working class, they must efface its past from their memories.

A thousand frightened businessmen, stupefied by concentration on their own red profit ledgers, couldn't see as clearly as a few far-sighted bourgeois politicians. It was impossible to piece together an intelligent bourgeois platform from the separate, disconnected aims of individual employers. Each capitalist

dealt only with his own workers; he saw simply the effects of unionization on his own enterprise, which in most cases would put him at a disadvantage in the competitive struggle; it seemed reasonable and simple to fight the drive to organize by direct and even brutal methods, methods which had always been successful. But if extended into a social policy applicable to all of industry, to the whole working class, what seemed so reasonable from the point of view of each employer could only have catastrophic effects on the stability of the whole capitalist system. Far from showing how the state acts against the interests of the bourgeoisie, the labor policy of the New Deal showed it in action as the executive committee of the ruling class. It was only the bourgeois state which could initiate and execute the necessary general labor policy.

### **The Alternatives Before Capitalism**

The alternative in the early '30s was not the simple choice between unions or no unions, between organization of the working class or no organization. Four years of pent-up misery made the drive toward some sort of organization irrepressible. But how were the workers to organize, under what leadership and under what social philosophy? This was the choice that the bourgeoisie had to make. Either the workers would organize under a "responsible" leadership or they would find an "irresponsible" one. Police measures and repression would club them to the left. Even in 1928, when peace and prosperity seemed the permanent normality, Senator Wagner saw it quite clearly when he told the New York State Federation of Labor:

In the long run, the injunction cannot stop the organization of labor. Organization springs from the most profound needs of human nature. You can't destroy the desire to organize; you can only balk it for a time. . . . What is the effect of the injunction? I am still looking at it from the point of view of the employer. Its effect is just to postpone the formation of an adequate labor organization. *It is keeping the labor movement in its fighting period*; it is preventing the labor movement from coming to full maturity and assuming the tasks and responsibilities for which it is preeminently fitted.

Dr. A. H. Millis, a member of the National Labor Relations Board, said in 1935: "If and when collective bargaining is freed from undue militancy, as it can be when wise management and good labor leadership are brought into cooperation, special problems connected with collective bargaining clear up and there are opportunities for gain to all parties."

To avoid "undue militancy" and stifle the "fighting period" summarize the aims of the Wagner Act. The workers had to be led through the placid channels of class collaboration by compelling the employers to deal with the unions. The legalization of collective bargaining aimed at the liquidation of radical and socialist tendencies. Take the workers off the picket lines; settle all questions around the table; and

a wiser, more responsible officialdom will naturally, without compulsion, rise to the fore.

"The inability of employees to unite in larger groups," Senator Wagner argued against company unionism, "has hampered the efforts of labor to preserve order within its own ranks or to restrain the untimely and wayward acts of irresponsible groups. . . . Men versed in the tenets of freedom become restive when not allowed to be free. . . . Industrial strife is most violent when company unionism enters into the situation. . . . The company union is least likely to bring forth the restraint of irresponsible employees by others of their own group. The implications of what I have just said are clear. If the employer-dominated union is not checked, there are only two likely results. One is that the employer will have to maintain his dominance by force, and thus swing us directly into industrial fascism and the destruction of our most cherished American ideals; the other is that employees will revolt, with widespread violence and unpredictable conclusions."

And so the complicated system of NLRB procedures and elections. It didn't work perfectly, mass strikes couldn't be avoided, but in the long run the objectives were realized. Labor leaders who once thought they were socialists, even extra-left-wing socialists, became idolizers of Roosevelt, then Democrats, and finally worshippers of a liberalized capitalism.

The New Deal sought industrial stability and class peace by extending the rights of the unions and limiting the rights of the employers to destroy them. The new labor policy turns the wheel in the opposite direction. It no longer relies primarily upon the voluntary, self-imposed discipline of the union and its leadership; it seeks the limitation of the rights of the union and its leadership by state controls. The turn in policy was not originated under Truman; it was begun by Roosevelt.

### **Shift in Policy—Under FDR**

The labor officialdom did well during the war. It handed over the equality of sacrifice and submitted to wage and job freeze. It made the no-strike pledge the official state religion of the labor movement. But a rash of wildcat strikes broke out, unofficial, unauthorized, "illegal" from the standpoint of the official leadership.

Threats and pleas, the stars and stripes of patriotism, the banner of union "loyalty"; rank and file soldiers with battle stars; officers and labor board officials with wounded pride all helped to send the undisciplined wildcatters back to their jobs. But the class peace was an uneasy one, interrupted by more wildcats, more trouble. Loyal and responsible as it was, no one could guarantee that the top officials could control the rank and file. Besides, who could guarantee that they would remain officials? If the leaders could not control the unions, the state had to intervene to control the unions and the leaders.

A series of anti-strike measures culminating in the Smith-Connally Act were introduced in Congress. The latter was vetoed by Roosevelt and passed over his

head. The labor leaders, who had fought the measure tooth and nail, were so grateful for the veto that they ignored Roosevelt's publicly stated message: the law was inadequate because it gave legal sanction to strikes under certain conditions. Clearest evidence of all of the shift in policy was the President's advocacy of a "work or fight" law.

### **Pieces in a Developing Pattern**

But war is war. Perhaps, some may say, it was necessary to submit to state controls over labor in the interests of a war for democracy which would protect us from the state controls of fascism. The war, however, has been over for some time, but the trend toward a new labor policy has not been reversed. It has been speeded up. It is not a question of a temporary, accidental wartime device but of a changed platform of the bourgeoisie and all its main political representatives. Truman's fines and injunctions against the miners, his threat to draft the railroad strikers are pieces of one pattern with the Taft-Hartley law. The old policy met labor "emergencies" in one way, new concessions. The new policy in another, new limitations.

Government injunctions against strikes are only a succinct summary of the modern labor philosophy of the capitalist state. These are injunctions not against violence, the destruction of property, "illegal coercion," or anything of the sort, but injunctions against strikes as such, however legal, peaceful and orderly. "The so-called national emergency provision is typical of the whole tenor of the Taft-Hartley Act," remarks co-author Hartley. And this is what is accepted by all. Government controls over the unions extends to control over the officials of unions. Anti-Communist affidavits clearly express this aim; for they are not simply directed against Stalinists. They are pointed at the existing leadership, responsible and pro-capitalist as it tries to be.

The Fair Deal Democrats, who are eminently fair and impartial, bemoan the "partiality" of the T-H affidavits. It casts a slur on the labor movement by singling its leaders out for loyalty oaths. In all fairness, they insist that employers also should be compelled to sign affidavits. Unbiased "liberalism" accepts the principle of government control over the labor leadership. This gives added significance to the remark of our well known Hartley:

"The Taft-Hartley law," he tells us, "is designed to improve the lot of the good labor leader. It is also designed to drive from the trade union movement in America those labor leaders who are not sincere in their service to their unions, those who use the trade union movement to promote every conceivable idea under the sun, other than sound labor principles." Sound principles, it should be added, simply means the "business unionism" of the AFL. He gives a few hints to the employers.

Under the new labor law it is now the duty of the employer to determine for himself which type of union leader he has in his own unions. If he has a good union leader, he should work with him and thank his lucky stars his business will not be subjected to the pulling and tugging demands of an ambitious labor leader, anxious to make his way in the world at the expense of both management and the workers he represents. Such a leader can and will work to improve the lot of his members in making them happy and contented with their employment and in helping management improve its business for the ultimate good of the workers, the investors, and the public. If an employer has a bad labor leader, he now has access to the law to protect his business and his workers.

And just who are these bad labor leaders? Not merely the Communists, in fact not primarily the Communists. John L. Lewis is one, of course; another . . . ?

To me, Van Bittner typifies the bull-headed official running the American labor movement today. He showed . . . that he respected only force in his dealings with others. If I happened to be an employer faced with Bittner or others like him representing my workers, I would close my business. . . . Presumably disrespect for government, unless it bows to your wishes, and contempt for Congress, unless it offers tribute, pay off in the labor movement today. . . . The labor movement in this nation has become sick when it produces as its top representatives men of this type.

And who is this monster frightening Mr. Hartley into print? The late Van A. Bittner was director of the CIO's Operation Dixie, vice-president of the Steel Workers Union, member of the CIO Executive Board, assistant to Philip Murray, a member of the War Labor Board in 1942. A typical CIO official whose social philosophy was molded by the New Deal and whose road to power was smoothed by it.

### **Shaped to Meet Labor's Power**

The New Deal labor policy was adequate to handle the labor movement in the infant stages of the organization of the mass production industries; it gave it a pro-capitalist slant; it shaped its general ideology; it assimilated and transformed labor officials. Now that the basic industries of the nation are powerfully organized, enrolling the decisive sections of the working class into unions, the old line is no longer adequate for the bourgeoisie. The new policy of state controls over the unions and their leadership grapples with the working class in its present advanced stage of organization.

Hartley, for example, yearns for the good old days of 1929, when "The cause of labor was being advanced by what I always regarded as the sound organizational principles of the American Federation of Labor. These principles, to refresh our memory, were based on the binding together of men engaged in closely allied activities requiring relatively similar skills. Some of these AFL craft unions are still typical of what are right and proper activities for labor."

The AFL could conduct its business unionism without strain, negotiating its contracts, winning higher pay and shorter hours oblivious to the big so-

cial and political developments of the day. A printers' strike, a carpenters' strike, they caused inconveniences here and there, but life went on normally. An occasional mass industrial strike as in the mining industry was an exceptional disaster which, in the relatively weak condition of the labor movement, could be broken by ordinary police violence and the slow starvation of the strikers.

But when steel mills, mines or auto plants are shut down by strikes today the whole economy is swiftly thrown out of balance. The threat of such a calamity is no longer an exceptional possibility but an annual or bi-annual threat hanging over the country each time contracts come up for renewal. The labor leadership, moreover, has such vast powers in its hands that it is compelled to go beyond the simple questions of wages and hours; it must take up the general defense of democracy and "civil rights"; it is compelled to intervene in the political life of the country; it has to go down into the South to try to break the power of the Southern reactionaries. This leadership, embarrassed by its own power, may dream of peaceful collaboration between workers and employers, of the intervention of enlightened government on the side of justice and humanity which would make strife and turmoil a thing of the barbarian past. But what formed the labor officialdom by creating labor unions—the class struggle—upsets such Utopian calculations.

As the arsenal and warehouse of world capitalism, capitalist United States must be strong and united. In its delicate jockeying on the world social arena, its strength and its unity must be obvious as a warning to all rivals. The government cannot permit mass strikes to plunge it into "chaos" at unpredictable moments. Dependent upon the workers who elected them and who can throw them out, union officials are no longer suitable as the main controlling and restraining influence over a powerfully organized working class.

### **Compel New Policy for Labor**

Such was the lesson of the first wave of post-war strikes. The capitalist class and all its political representatives effect a change in attitude toward the unions and the labor bureaucracy.

Under its present officialdom, the labor movement continues as of old as though nothing had changed, as though the New Deal, rebaptized as the Fair Deal, were still in effect, as though the cold war and preparations for a new war left everything in order. But as the bourgeoisie presses against the unions and squeezes the labor bureaucracy, the labor movement too will be compelled to change its policies to avoid regimentation. The first big step toward that change must be the formation of a new independent political party basing itself upon the unions.

BEN HALL

# Against Both War Camps

## **Presenting Two Resolutions Adopted by the RDR**

### ***Prefatory Remarks***

In July of this year representatives of the French RDR (Revolutionary Democratic Regroupment) gathered in Paris to assess their work of the past year, as well as to re-examine critically the RDR's part in the International Day Against War and Dictatorship held early in the year. We are printing below translations of the two most important resolutions adopted at this Conference in which the RDR reaffirmed the original policy and program upon which it was founded, objectively analyzed some of its shortcomings and failures since its foundation and sketched, in general terms, its approach to future problems.

As is known to our readers, THE NEW INTERNATIONAL has followed the development of the RDR with utmost sympathy since the original *Manifesto* created this new force in French political life. The RDR has successfully overcome the initial difficulties met by any new political organization, particularly in a country such as France, where great masses have entered into a state of political apathy and indifference,

for the moment, and must now prepare itself for more severe tasks. It has declared its continued belief in the principle that Europe must be freed from subservience to either the American or Russian war camps, and its opposition to Stalinism and reformism. The resolutions adopted naturally reflect the fact that the RDR is a heterogeneous political formation in which are united many political tendencies, with much in common.

Perhaps the most significant outcome of the RDR's national conference is the recognition, indicated in both resolutions published below, that a concrete and workable social and political program, capable of answering the problems of the French masses and arousing them from their present apathy, must be developed. The RDR has not fulfilled this need up to the present, and its ability to do so may well provide the answer as to its future and perspective. The RDR still remains the most hopeful and potentially significant organization in France, but it would be misleading not to recognize its many problems.

Perhaps it was with the idea of helping the RDR

meet its historic tasks that the well-known American teacher and philosopher, Professor Sidney Hook, wrote his report on the "International Day" in the July, 1949 issue of *Partisan Review*. Hook is a noted man of tact and charm, and his advice to the RDR will, we do not doubt, be taken in the same friendly spirit in which it is advanced. That the *effect* of Hook's advice could mean nothing less than the instantaneous death and extinction of the RDR as any kind of a force, present or potential, in the life of France is beside the point. Professor Hook's advice is based upon his experience at the "International Day" gathering where he, James T. Farrell and Karl Compton represented the American "left." It would appear that the reception accorded these gentlemen by their French audience did not quite meet the standards of politeness and, above all, gratitude which one might expect from the recipients of America's generously distributed wealth. But Professor Hook has his revenge upon the 6 or 7,000 Frenchmen and others who failed to respond with appropriate warmth!

What is Professor Hook's advice, contained by implication in his article? The RDR must become the French and European champion of the program, ideology and practice of American imperialism. In the concrete, this means endorsement of the Marshall Plan as it is constituted and operated; a still warmer endorsement and support of the Atlantic Pact; and linking of the French democratic and socialist cause with that of America and its Western bloc. Hook is now a thoroughgoing and consistent champion of the American government's broad international policy and, consistent logician that he is, misses no opportunity to speak his piece. As a polished and sophisticated person, he avoids the banalities of James T. Farrell who literally disgraced himself before a large audience by speaking as though he represented the American Chamber of Commerce at a luncheon banquet. The essence of his policy is that America is the champion and defender of Western Europe; that all political tendencies must subordinate any independent strategy to the needs of America.

In the course of his attack on the one-sided and distorted picture that many French intellectuals and socialists have of America (and it must be admitted that throughout Europe there is a widespread tendency to oversimplify efforts to grasp what America is like), Professor Hook lightly brushes over what he calls the "defects" of American capitalism. He handles the problem on the same simplistic level as those whom he attacks, except that "Jim Crow," current red-baiting campaigns in all fields and cultural Philistinism become only slight blemishes on the creamy-white skin of American democracy. Class structure, social conflicts, exploitation and other characteristics of our social system evidently no longer exist to this State Department unofficial adviser, who urges a systematic campaign to "sell" the facts of American de-

mocracy abroad. But Hook doesn't understand this Europe he visited only so recently. Its masses and its intellectuals know all about capitalism, and are not exactly unfamiliar with its conception of democracy. They have exhausted that phase of their experience, and it is excluded that America can be "sold" to them, even by sophisticated and cultured professors. True, the utmost confusion may exist as to what they do want, concretely; but they know what they no longer want. For them, it has failed, played itself out and only unique circumstances keep it alive and comparatively thriving in America.

### **Hook Musters Little Support**

Professor Hook writes of the RDR leadership, French intellectuals and such men as Ignazio Silone (whose speech to the International Day gathering may be found in the August NEW INTERNATIONAL), as though they were political primitives and fools to boot. He makes much of the ludicrous behaviour of an insignificant group of orthodox, self-proclaimed "Trotskyists" who count for zero. He mocks the French Resistance movement ("The Resistance consisted of a handful around De Gaulle, the Jews, and after June 22, 1941, the Communists . . .") and generally exhibits a complete contempt for those with whom he organized an eager association only yesterday. Hook is a deeply disappointed man, it would appear. He has recourse to that rapidly growing attitude which can be observed among American intellectuals, particularly former radicals, and which can only be described as a kind of "intellectual imperialism" and anti-Europeanism. The *rationale* in this attitude, of course, is that an ungrateful and ingrate Europe refuses to follow an American lead, while still remaining to some extent, under Stalinist influence. Even those among the RDR leaders who tended to be somewhat sympathetic to the Hook position at the "International Day" were unable to muster any support at the popular mass meeting that followed and the attitude of the audience to the Hook-Farrell-Compton program was universally hostile. And how that has rankled Professor Hook!

The resolutions adopted at the RDR conference offer further evidence of the decisive manner in which all "left" forces reject pro-American tendencies. Americans like Hook should reflect long and seriously on this. It is not due to stubbornness or anti-American "bias" induced by the social writers and novelists\* of past years. It is a rejection of the American way applied to Europe and international affairs: the way of aid administered with strings and out of self-interest; the way of atom bombs and B-36s; the way of Atlantic Pacts and strategic blocs. Hook slanders all progressive tendencies in Europe when he states or implies that rejection of this way is acceptance of the Stalinist way. It is, of course, an expression of the unique efforts of Europe to resurrect its

own independence, to become once more a free continent with its own social, cultural and political destiny. In this effort, the advice of Professor Hook is worthless and Europe rejects it out of hand. H. J.

\*A characteristically nasty footnote of Hook contained in his article is worthy of a footnote reply. In commenting upon the well-known novelist, Richard Wright, who joined with Sartre in a statement rejecting the Atlantic Pact, Professor Hook suggests that an interview with Wright, published recently in our sister publication, Labor Action, was "edited according to Bolshevik ethics." Not being trained in the editing school of Hookian ethics (if the Professor wants an example of this school, we urge him to compare his published Partisan Review report on the "International Day" with the report he originally circulated), we wish to state, it goes without saying, that not a word or comma was changed or edited in the interview with Richard Wright published by Labor Action. As to the charges in Hook's footnote, Wright is quite capable of making the necessary reply.

## **(1) Political Resolution of the RDR National Conference**

Gathered together in its first national conference for discussion and work after 18 months of existence, the RDR delegates from Paris and the provinces declare that more than ever its existence, effort and purpose are reinforced by the fraternal and unanimous accord of all its militants who, regardless of their particular nuance of thought and tendency, are in agreement in their common desire to advance a non-statified socialism in France and Europe.

In France, the RDR continues to be the only new force capable of reunifying a large number of militants of the democratic workers' movement with a view to forming an autonomous and independent left against all the forces of social conservatism, reaction, dictatorship and war within the two blocs. It denounces the impotence of a purely governmental Third Force and is opposed both to any system represented by American capitalism and its European supporters, or Soviet statism extended to the so-called popular democracies. It rejects both oppression by the dollar and dictatorship by a single party.

It struggles for the social abolition of colonial slavery. It declares its solidarity with those first efforts, comparable to its own, being born and developed throughout the world: tendencies toward an autonomous socialism, opposed to blocs; movements for

national and social emancipation of people beyond the seas; democratic, revolutionary opposition—legal or illegal—within the blocs.

The RDR will resolutely participate in international action for the formation of a unified and federated socialist Europe to which peoples emancipated from colonial tutelage may freely join.

The RDR is prepared to act in common with all forces struggling over the same road, with freedom of expression for all tendencies. It grants full autonomy to its local bodies to evaluate under what circumstances and by what means the militants of the RDR may encourage actions for common demands or join with other organizations, with full independence. It desires to be the assembling force for workers and republicans against the attacks of the neo-fascist RPF and its shock groups.

It will not struggle against Stalinist-communism by borrowing the latter's methods of calumny and persecution, but by demonstrating to the exploited and the oppressed that the RDR is in their camp and that its ambition is to become their best defender. The RDR will defend democracy, democratic liberties and the possibilities it gives to movements for human emancipation, against all neo-fascist aggressions, but also against that policy which would seek to reproduce in Europe the "Prague coup" and install pseudo-popular democracy.

In defending democracy by all means, the RDR places in the forefront working class and popular action which has, in moments of danger, guaranteed the defense and rebirth of liberty. It denounces as contrary to the elementary rights of democracy the imprisonment of miners for striking, as well as the persecution, arrest and internment of militant people overseas.

Now and forever, the RDR will support, encourage and develop all forces, commencing with and beyond political democracy, which tend to lay the basis for a true economic and social democracy.

It reaffirms once more the fundamental principle which existed at its foundation: there is no complete and real democracy without economic and social revolution; there can be no revolution or socialism possible if essential liberties and man's elementary dignity disappear.

## **(2) Defining the Tasks of the Independent French Left**

*Note: The following resolution was written by a committee composed of leading RDR comrades (Altman, Dechézelles, Fraisse, Parisot, Rosenthal, Rous and Sartre) and adopted at the RDR national conference almost unanimously, after discussion had taken place.*

When, a little more than a

year ago, the manifesto for a Revolutionary Democratic Regroupment (RDR) was issued, the militants who immediately responded to this appeal could not define what the RDR would be: a mass movement, an organization of militants or groups for experiment and research whose destiny would be to prepare for the revival of those values leading to so-

cial emancipation in a broad democratic and working class movement.

Even though they underestimated the difficulties peculiar to their position from the moment they broke with the two power blocs which were struggling for Europe, the first militants of the RDR knew they were involved in a difficult venture. They knew that whatever might

be the disaffection of the masses with regard to old formulas and outdated formations, they would still have to overcome all the particularisms and preconceived ideas to which the workers' and democratic movement, divided and in retreat, was subject. They knew that the existence of the cold war and the diplomatic, economic and political preparation for a new war was working contrary to their efforts on behalf of a democratic renaissance and tended to stifle these efforts.

### The Balance

Now, after one year's experience, the RDR has made its evaluation of what it is. Revolutionary democracy is an idea whose originality we ourselves must not underestimate. It imposes upon us the task of awakening the consciousness of and educating the masses. Under pressure of adverse forces, it is sometimes difficult to think in terms of such a perspective. Thus, it is not astonishing that, first of all, among intellectual circles and advanced militant workers, those apt to march ahead as scouts, we have carried out our first successes.

Beginning with its first public demonstrations, the RDR awoke a new hope among rather wide left socialist and left Christian groups, as well as trade unionists and militant workers of the extreme left, youth groups and colonial emancipation movements. The political principles of the RDR were revealed as capable of uniting these comrades belonging to tendencies isolated one from the other until then.

All subsequent meetings likewise showed that an attentive audience existed, and that a significant section of militants was accessible to RDR policy. The question was knowing how to win them over, to organize them and, by searching out together with them the means for our struggle, to render its meaning more precise.

In approaching the first national conference of our movement, all its militants are conscious of criticisms demanded by our one year's experience.

First of all, the RDR has experienced a comparative check in the organization of a real militant collectivity. The RDR has not "capitalized" on its influence by recruiting and organizing militants into groups corresponding to the amplitude of the tasks it proposes.

Although there has been a series of very positive experiences in various regions, the RDR has not yet defined its organizational structure. This lack of a determined internal structure, which arises in a more profound sense from the fact that we are not sure of our form, has given, in certain instances, the impression of an absence of democracy; a serious stumbling block. It is the task of this conference to establish a small number of precise rules normalizing relations

between the directing committee and lower bodies, guaranteeing those indispensable means for the movement's internal democracy and establishing, finally, the responsibility of each body of the movement in common action.

The RDR's political appearance has been outlined by a few large meetings organized in Paris. Political benefit can be drawn from them only by political cadres, united by a common point of view around several important problems on which we express the aspirations of many people who will be found for a certain period still outside the formal ranks of our movement. In this respect, it must be recognized that the commissions constituted during the RDR's first months of existence have not fulfilled the role expected of them. It is urgent to form central commissions which shall work to unify and elaborate the political material necessary for propaganda campaigns and political action. This is the condition under which those militants now gathered would be able to appear as the central core around which the participants in demonstrations organized by us could be brought together.

Furthermore, in its attempts to find a wider milieu, the RDR has experienced the limitations of such action, that of its initial principles which its spokesmen have reiterated on each occasion.

Having made these essential criticisms, it must be noted that all experience acquired has made more precise the RDR's mission as that of an organizing and animating center for different democratic and working class currents coming from the left wing of the MRP and the CFTC (Christian Trade Unions) to the extreme non-Stalinist left, among whom it has awakened many favorable echoes.

The first regrouping of militants brought about by it, its success in rooting itself in some working class and factory sectors, the meetings it has held in the provinces as well as the support given its ideas by *Franco-Tireur*, seem to be so many means leading toward a wider activity which should make of the RDR the regulating force in democratic life and which must be translated by its being strengthened in those activity sectors where it will work for the coming of a new workers' democratic and revolutionary movement.

### Political Principles of the RDR

In its Directing Committee as well as in various regions, the RDR has realized political unity among elements of different origin which form it. From this standpoint, it has given itself as an example and shown in a practical way the effectiveness of revolutionary democracy. Under these conditions, the first national conference must make precise its organizational rules, its sectors for activity and the mission of its movement.

Principles of liberty and human dig-

nity, linked with the social revolution, have guided the RDR since the first manifesto upon which it was formed.

Recent events have made these reasons only more evident.

While ideological, political, economic and social conflicts today tend to be expressed in strategic terms according to adherence to one or another bloc, the profound meaning of the RDR arises in what we define as opposition to the policy of blocs, and the placing of the interest of the working masses and the emancipation of the workers and peoples above all strategic considerations.

To the proletarians and to all oppressed, to free men, the RDR offers the hope of a future free of war, servitude and exploitation of their labor.

To the capitalist world, it declares that the only worthwhile alternative that can be and must be opposed, is that of socialism, and not the social oppression of the USSR and its assimilated countries.

The RDR declares that it is necessary, possible and urgent to offer in opposition to the Stalinist world and the new exploitation of man by man which it bears, not the maintenance or re-establishment of capitalist exploitation, but the only worthwhile alternative, democracy.

These are the principles upon which the RDR calls proletarians and free men to reassemble. It is in their name that it stands against the front of reaction and neo-fascism gathered in the RPF (de Gaulle), against the economic, social, international and colonial policy of the so-called Third Force government, and against Stalinism which makes use of working class masses and the middle class, their will for social justice and their legitimate anger, for ends which are not theirs.

### Immediate Tasks

The RDR is an indispensable element in French political life and already, to a large extent, in international life. Not only because the greatest part of its militants and sympathizers, despite its shortcomings, find in it the only movement to which they can give their support and in which they can continue their militant struggle, but also because it is the only movement capable of defending the traditional values of the revolutionary and democratic left by effectively intervening in public opinion.

Its first task, therefore, is to liven up its confrontments, its discussions, its contact work, its common actions and to advance its theme as a unifying force on the political or trade union plane. The RDR is the uniting vanguard of the democratic left.

In daily action, it supports all general and partial demands of the working masses by injecting them with a revolutionary democratic spirit, too often neglected.

For example, if it demands peace in Indo-China it is not to install in power the party which at present is leading the resistance, but so that the Vietnamese people may democratically determine their social regime, its law and its relations with the French Union, as well as the nature of its relations with France and every other nation. If it supports a strike, it is not to help a particular partisan agitation or a particular strategic plan which it may serve, but so that victory may bring about the just fulfillment of wage demands, and in the conviction that it is the fulfillment of workers' demands that will remove any basis for political maneuvers as well as reactionary adventures.

In all fields of their activity, militants of the RDR defend freedom of thought and expression against blows from the state, bourgeois conformism, Stalinist monolithicism and fanaticism and sectarianism, which prevents any revival of the workers' movement.

In the cultural field, the national conference decides that a methodical activity, which might take the form of a popular university, will be organized with the support of all those intellectuals sympathetic to the RDR.

In the labor field and its struggles, the national conference decides to support all efforts tending to bring together in action the different trade union tendencies and to recreate as close a unity of action as possible between democratic trade union tendencies. The national conference, without intending to fix objectives or slogans proper to this struggle, calls the attention of all militants and friends of the RDR to the urgency of a

revalorization of purchasing power by means of collective bargaining, on the basis of a freeing of wages.

In the scholastic field, the national conference confirms the RDR's secular position and will struggle side by side with the Educational League, trade union and democratic organizations, and groups for secular action, to win advancement for the secular school, beginning with an intensive policy for school construction and equipment.

In the colonial field, the national conference confirms its support to the demands for emancipation by colonial peoples which it explains and interprets throughout France and Europe, and confirms its active participation in the "Congress of Peoples Against Imperialism."

In the youth field, the national conference decides in favor of a major effort to reassemble democratic cadres for a youth movement, to help them by energizing youth institutions and organizing international youth gatherings.

In the international field, the national conference decides that an important part of RDR activity must be given over to the rapprochement and unification of the European and international left, to the broadest discussion between all its component currents and consequently approves the joining of RDR members in the "Socialist Movement for the United States of Europe."

#### General Objectives of the RDR

The RDR, while resolutely undertaking to defend demands common to the working class and democratic left, affirms its essential political uniqueness, not only by insisting at each opportunity

upon the practice of democratic liberties, without which there can be no possible progressive political action, but by putting forth its own program.

The RDR states that the condition of existence of the working masses can only be improved by realization of a plan of structural reforms whose general orientation it indicates and which it calls upon all organized tendencies of the labor and democratic movement to elaborate in common in the months to come.

The RDR takes into account the existence of already proposed plans. But, aside from the fact that these plans are the work of this or that movement or tendency and not of any large number of them, the RDR emphasizes as the basis for the plan it proposes to work out in common that it is a matter of working for the modification of economic forms which eventually lead to the end of social exploitation and liberation from economic and social yokes.

Only such a plan, publicly prepared and discussed, can give the working class masses confidence in the effectiveness of their struggle and reawaken the initiative of the democratic forces.

It would seem just as natural to pose before the broadest possible numbers the problem of Europe's structure, its economic and political unification, the general raising of its living standard and the realization of social democracy.

The national conference empowers the directing committee to make out of this program an essential instrument for the regrouping of anti-capitalist, anti-totalitarian democratic forces for which the RDR works, and the central theme of its propaganda during the next months.

# The Pacifism of the Masses

## A Discussion Article\* on War and Socialist Policy

Peace is a new idea in the workers' movement. Until the first years of the twentieth century, no trace of it can be found either in the basic documents or in the great debates of international socialism.

Quite the contrary. The post-1830 revolutionaries, notably Proudhon and Blanqui, inspired by the memories of the wars of the Great Revolution; of Valmy and the Year II, attacked Louis Phillip for his pusillanimous peace policy. War and revolution were intimately interlaced during the entire epoch from 1848 to 1850, during which Engels was a soldier.

The *Communist Manifesto* leaves even less room for war and peace since it expelled nations, battles, peace treaties, their dates and their heroes from the historical scene and substituted for them classes and class struggles.

Answering the objections which were made or would be made to the Communists, Marx and Engels did not feel the need to answer the accusation of desiring war or of not caring about peace. It is only in the third part of the *Manifesto*, criticizing petty bourgeois socialism, that Marx and Engels cite "the industrial war of extermination of the nations among themselves," which according to the irrefutable demonstration of Sismondi, was one of the murderous effects of the machine and the division of labor. That is all there is in the *Manifesto* so far as war and peace are concerned.

In the preambles to the *Statutes of the Workers International Association* in 1866 Marx, under the pressure of his comrades, made room for truth, justice, morals, rights and duties but no one asked him

\*Reprinted from No. 2 of *Confrontation Internationale*.

to mention peace. Neither the Gotha program, on which Marxists and Lassalleans agreed in Germany in 1875, nor the Marxist program of Eisenach in 1869 speaks of war.

In all these texts, one finds approximately the same words:

*Substitution of a popular militia for a standing army.* (Eisenach.)

*The nation in arms. Substitution of a popular militia for a standing army.* (Gotha.)

Nothing more. In his famous criticism of the Gotha program, Marx does not for a moment treat the question. The Erfurt program, adopted in 1891, and which remained the program of the German Socialists, is, let us grant it, more explicit. It reads:

“. . . Education for universal military training. Militia in place of standing armies. Only representative bodies should be called upon to decide on war or peace. Settlement of all international conflicts by means of arbitration.”

And Engels does not make the slightest criticism or reservation on that point either in the “Critique” published in the *Neue Zeit* or in his letters to Kautsky. With the phrase “settlement of conflicts by means of arbitration,” however, “social pacifism” began to appear.

In the program of the French Workers Party, written by Guesde and Lafargue in 1879, under the dictation of Marx, there is still the same point in the nomenclature of Socialist political demands: Abolition of standing armies and general arming of the people.

When the Franco-German War of 1870 broke out, Marx defined his attitude in an address to the General Council of the International, dated July 23:

“If the German working class allows the present war to lose its strictly defensive character and degenerate into a fight directed against the French people, victory will be as painful as defeat.”

On September 9, in a new address concerning the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine, Marx said this:

“The German working class energetically supported a war which it could not prevent; it supported it only for the sake of German independence and to free all Europe from the nightmare of the Second Empire. It is the workers who, together with the peasants, leaving at home their famished families, have furnished the flesh and blood of heroic armies. Decimated during the fighting by the battles, they continue to be decimated by the misery upon their return. They ask nothing but a guarantee which assures them that their sacrifice will not have been in vain, that they have won their freedom, that the victories they won against the Bonapartist armies will not be transformed, as in 1815, into a people’s defeat. As the first of these guarantees, they demand an honorable peace for France and the recognition of the French Republic.”

It can be seen that Marx and the International did not pose these problems as pacifists. On the contrary, they assigned a role to the proletariat in the wars of their times:

One would seek in vain for a chapter of extracts on war and peace in the selected writings of Marx.

What we call *war* or the fear of war stirred up the workers’ movement only begins with the nineties of the last century. The epoch of imperialism was beginning.

At first, the Marxists took a stand against any specific action and propaganda directed against war and militarism and for peace. That was the position of the Germans on the whole and, in France, Guesde’s position. It is true that the movement began to be concerned about the problems posed by the development of armaments and military training, chauvinism, diplomatic tensions. But it is the anarchists who formulated slogans which were taken over by the trade union movement, then by Gustav Hervé or Eduard Vaillant: Against War, Prepare for Revolution, General Strike Against War, Insurrectionary Strike, etc. And it is the Alemanists, reformists in no way distinguished for being more revolutionary, who are the first in the socialist movement to be concerned about anti-militarist propaganda and specific action against the war danger. (They invented the “soldier’s penny.”)

#### **In What Sense Was Jaurès a Pacifist?**

While diplomatic tension was rapidly worsening and intrigues which ultimately led to war were being concluded, the international socialist movement and particularly its French section fought an extremely vigorous campaign against the war. Jaurès lost his life in it. He had been its inspirer and organizer. What was the character of this campaign?

Upon returning from the Stuttgart Congress (1907), Jaurès, whose resolution (presented by Vaillant and himself in the name of the French section of the Workers International—SFIO) had been defeated, presented the decisions of the International Congress at a public meeting at Tivoli Vaux-Hall, endorsing the resolution he had fought against. Jaurès first showed that there was no essential opposition between his own thought and the thought of the left, notably of Lenin, Martov and Rosa Luxemburg, who wrote the last two paragraphs of this resolution. In his speech, Jaurès joined together a kind of pacifism which was current within the International to the conception which the left had made prevail at the Congress. He declared that it is no longer necessary to try to distinguish between the aggressor government and the attacked.

“The aggressor,” said he, “the enemy of civilization, the enemy of the proletariat, will be the government which refuses arbitration and which will there-

by force men into bloody conflicts." Such is the pacifist note. It is the note of a Western socialist convinced (and rightly so, we can say after the event) that war will not further the growth of socialism.

Opposed to Jaurès stood the revolutionary Marxists of Central and Western Europe, who saw in war the favorable opportunity for a proletarian uprising, for an overthrow of dynastic, bureaucratic and semi-feudal regimes and who, above all, thought of "utilizing with all their energies the political and economic crises created by war to agitate the deepest popular layers and to precipitate the breakdown of capitalist domination."

### How Jaurès Viewed Workers' Role

Jaurès commented on this last part of the resolution in the following way: "And then the International tells you that it is the right, the duty of the proletarians not to waste their energies in the service of a criminal government, but to keep the gun with which these adventurous governments will have armed the people and to use it not to shoot at workers, proletarians on the other side of the border, but to overthrow the criminal government by revolutionary means."

When war came, in spite of the immense socialist campaign, when chauvinism broke out, Jaurès delivered a speech at Lyon-Vaise which later on was reproduced and secretly distributed by the Internationalists of the Committee for the Resumption of International Relations and whose authenticity the majority, committed to *Union Sacrée*, tried in vain to refute.

It was now July 25, 1914. From the first, Jaurès called for international worker solidarity: ". . . I say that in the present hour we have terrible odds staked against us, against peace, against the lives of men, against which the proletarians of Europe will have to risk supreme efforts of solidarity." He showed how secret diplomacy and the system of collective security, of which the Franco-Russian secret treaty was the cornerstone, risked making war inevitable. He then justified as a patriotic attitude the socialist opposition to imperialist adventures, notably against the Moroccan venture.

"In so grave an hour, so full of perils for all of us, or all the fatherlands . . . we have been branded as bad Frenchmen and we were those who cared for France." With his exact knowledge of the main features of the diplomatic imbroglio from which the war resulted, Jaurès attacked imperialist policy, particularly that of France. "Each people appears throughout the streets of Europe with their little torch in hand and now here we are with the conflagration."

He showed how solidarity in crimes makes each imperialist nation incapable of preventing the imperialist crimes of the other: "The colonial policy of France, the cunning policy of Russia and the brutal will of Austria have contributed to creating this hor-

rible state of things in which we find ourselves. Europe is struggling in the throes of a nightmare."

But immediately Jaurès added that he still hoped, "in spite of all, because of the very enormity of the disaster which threatens us, that at the last minute the governments will regain possession of themselves."

Is this sheer inconsistency or the sign that Jaurès was convinced that it was impossible for the working class to stop the conflict? It was rather the very imprint of Jaurèsism which expressed the unique role played by the petty bourgeoisie in France under the Third Republic, a role that Jaurès himself emphasized in an introduction to his *Parliamentary Speeches*: ". . . the opportunity to utilize for the sake of the Socialist Party and the Workers' movement, all the disagreements among the bourgeoisie, all the forces of freedom, or all the chances of less pressure that the democratic and revolutionary tradition of France bequeathed us."

But Jaurès never stopped there. He was a realistic politician who looked things squarely in the eye. He knew that the chances of preventing war were almost nil. And he launched this sentence which the internationalists, after his death, brandished against the *Union Sacrée* socialists: "Citizens, if the tempest should break out, all of us socialists should be concerned to escape as soon as possible from the crime our leaders have committed." And he ended with an appeal to the international proletariat and to "this international Socialist Party which represents at this hour the only promise in the storm of a possibility of peace or of a re-establishment of peace."

### His Ideology Not Truly Pacifist

Four days later the *Manifesto* of the Permanent Administrative Commission (CAP) of the French section of the Workers International was published. Jaurès wrote it. This text was a practical compendium and emphasized the main features of the Vaise speech. The CAP asked the government to assure a procedure of conciliation and mediation, rendered easier by the eagerness of Serbia to grant most of the demands of Austria. It asked the government also to exert pressure on its ally, Russia, in order to dissuade it from an aggressive operation.

These were the precise propositions which represented an attempt on the part of the Socialist Party to direct French policy toward an honorable and peaceful way out. But they were combined with an appeal to the militants and to the working class for a mass campaign whose aim was to intimidate the government, if possible, and prevent its entry into war.

In these texts, written during his last hours, as well as in the whole of his activity, particularly since the 1905 unification, one cannot find a truly pacifist ideology in Jaurès but rather a combination of the parliamentarian means which he accepted and used

with an extreme earnestness, and the revolutionary means which he hoped to strengthen and make more efficient without having total and immediate confidence in them.

### Leninism and Pacifism

During the war of 1914, among the socialist left, among those who had become the internationalist minority, Lenin developed the resolutions of the international socialist congresses into a theory of the struggle against war. Without attempting to state it or trace back the main stages of the regroupment of the revolutionary socialists from Zimmerwald (September, 1915) to the First Congress of the Communist International (March, 1919), it is necessary to indicate briefly what the attitude of Lenin and the Third International was in relation to pacifism.

Pacifism established itself in the very course of the war as a political current corresponding to the feelings of wide masses. Max Adler, Marxist of the Kautskian center, asserted as far back as 1915: "After the war, socialism will become an organized international pacifism or it will not longer exist."

The harsher and bloodier the sacrifices exacted from the masses became, the more this feeling penetrated a wide zone of the international socialist movement. The growing distinction drawn by the Bolshevik émigré leaders between their position and any concession to socialist pacifism can be followed in the collection of articles published by Lenin and Zinoviev in the *Social Democrat* between November 1, 1914, and October, 1916.

Lenin's revolutionary defeatism presented itself as the logical development of the extreme positions taken by the international socialist congresses. The proletarian class struggle had to be pushed to its normal conclusion: the conquest of power. And this without consideration of the eventual military consequences of a transformation of the imperialist war into civil war.

Since any acceptance of national defense under the capitalist regime can only tie the proletarians to the war and divert them from their own revolutionary aims, military defeat resulting from the class struggle is a *lesser evil*. Through such a defeat the proletariat will be strengthened and will find the opportunity, as in Paris in 1917, to overthrow the bourgeois regime. No concession to the bourgeoisie, to *its* war, to *its* national defense—this is revolutionary defeatism.

Zinoviev wrote on the eve of Zimmerwald: "The debate boils down to a problem of struggle against bourgeois influence in the workers' movement, within socialism itself." He distinguished two positions. The first one, "without admitting pacifism in principle, is willing to consider this slogan (the slogan for peace) as being more compatible with actuality, as a slogan which must awaken the masses from now on, as a slo-

gan which will have repercussions only during the last months preceding the end of the war."

The second position constitutes "a whole system of foreign policy for socialism, to be continued after the war."

It is rather interesting to notice that Zinoviev casts aside the first position as hardly serious and necessarily doomed to help the second one. In doing so, he lays the blame on Trotsky, whom he ranks in the first category. The central criticism of Zinoviev is the following: "As a system, pacifism is a petty bourgeois and not a workers' one. In wartime, it actually leads to *Union Sacrée*. It negates the transformation of imperialist war into civil war as an objective reality and as a task. The central socialist slogan must not be peace, but civil war. War has broken out because that was not so. The disgrace is that we did not know how to defend the workers' movement against chauvinists and pacifists."

And Zinoviev lays the blame on Jaurès: "Is there anyone who can doubt that the French tribune, if the murderer's bullet had not carried him away to his grave, would now be a member of the ministers' cabinet, and would extol social chauvinism together with the whole French party?"

### At the Zimmerwald Conference

Neither Lenin nor Trotsky ever wrote that. And Trotsky rather seemed to admit the contrary hypothesis. Meanwhile the French internationalists were preparing the Zimmerwald Conference claiming Jaurès for themselves and secretly distributing his Vaise speech. Zinoviev acknowledged that he found allies among the pacifist socialists. But he specified, concerning the Independent Labor Party, that it was a fellow traveler and not a firm ally, for it lacked a consistent socialist program.

In order to demonstrate that "the principle of pacifism has always been foreign to orthodox Marxism," he enumerated the three kinds of wars admitted by Marxists: (1) revolutionary wars; (2) non-imperialist wars which, from 1789 to 1871, aimed at breaking foreign oppression and creating capitalist nationalist states; (3) wars aiming to protect conquests realized by the proletariat in its struggle against the bourgeoisie.

Throughout this article he lays blame, although confusedly, upon Trotsky and the latter's paper, *Nashye Slovo*, published in France, and tries to explain that the slogan of *peace* alone or of a *democratic peace* cannot be the slogan of revolutionists.

At Zimmerwald, Lenin had to adopt a position which is a marked retreat in relation to Zinoviev's article. Not only did he sign a manifesto written by Trotsky in which the emphasis is put on peace, but the document he had written and had to abandon did not at all emphasize opposition to pacifism.

Upon returning from the conference, Lenin hailed

the Zimmerwald Conference, in the *Social Democrat*, as a first step, but he defines its manifesto as inconsistent and timorous. His gravest reproaches were that it did not accuse the *Union Sacrée* socialists and the Kautskian center of committing the same lie that the bourgeoisie does concerning national defense in this war and that it did not speak clearly, openly and unambiguously about revolutionary methods of action.

As for the struggle for peace, Lenin considered that his thesis had in fact been taken over by the manifesto. After the Kienthal Conference, Lenin and Zinoviev grew more violent against social pacifism. As far back as 1915, they had explained that pacifism was all the more dangerous because the war was coming to an end.

### **Total Opposition to Pacifism**

"At the end of the war, communism established itself in total opposition to official pacifism. Every historical epoch possesses not only its own method of action, its own political forms, but also its own form of hypocrisy, which belongs only to itself. In former times peoples assaulted each other in the name of Christ. The advanced nations throw themselves at each other's throats in the name of pacifism. They drew America along in the war in the name of the League of Nations and of everlasting peace. Kerensky and Tzeretelli demand an offensive in the name of the 'rapid conclusion of peace.'" Thus spoke Trotsky in the midst of the Russian Revolution.

One of the 21 conditions for belonging to the Communist International obliged the Communist parties "to expose hypocritical and false social pacifism as well as self-confessed social patriotism. They must systematically demonstrate that without the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism, no international arbitration court, no debate on the reduction of armaments, no 'democratic' reorganization of the League of Nations can preserve mankind from imperialist wars."

It was admitted that the break between communism and every form of pacifism expressed more than an opposition of methods, namely, a class opposition between bourgeois influence in the workers' movement and proletarian revolution.

Such is, briefly sketched, the attitude of the revolutionary workers' movements in relation to war and pacifism.

We omitted St. Simon, who, alone among the inspirers of socialism, defined a pacifist program on the very aftermath of the Napoleonic wars, a program, besides, so brilliant that there are hardly any creations of modern international organizations which are not announced in it. But this program did not find any echo in the great workers' tradition.

We did not speak of the socialists who, in all the countries, accepted the war and made their ideological

and practical contribution to the victory of their fatherland, because they are of no concern to our topic. Only incidentally did we mention the tendency represented by Kautsky and the "Independents" in Germany, and in France by Longuet, which, without breaking with the patriotic majority, presented itself as pacifist. That tendency finally returned to the Second International, leaving the majority of its rank-and-file elements, above all, the workers, to the Communist International.

It is undeniable that up to the end of the previous World War:

(1) No pacifist tendency with a political platform of its own had established itself within the socialist movement;

(2) The most pacifist tendencies, such as that of Jaurès, expressed their preoccupation with influencing international bourgeois rivalries in a conciliatory direction every time that seemed possible. Resulting from parliamentary practice, this tendency expressed itself most emphatically in France. During the war it brought some of its forces to the international left (Zimmerwald).

(3) The left anarchistic tendencies, which extol the insurrectionary general strike against war, were reabsorbed almost completely during the war of 1914 within the social patriotic position.

(4) Communism established itself in opposition to pacifism.

### **The Birth of Mass Pacifism**

Despite appearances, the war did not end with a victory of the Leninist conceptions. Russia was and remained isolated. The power conquered by the Bolsheviks degenerated and brought Russian society, its leading party and communism as a whole into irremediable degeneration.

On the crucial point of anti-war struggle, the conception of Lenin and the Communist International, subordinated as it was to the perspective of the direct struggle for power, failed also. In effect, the theory of revolutionary defeatism played almost no role at all.

From then on, pacifism—although still unformulated and without having grown into maturity either within the workers' movement or at its side—played a first-rate role. It had to be reckoned with.

It was only a feeling, but it animated millions of men who had undergone the trial of the war with a new meaning of the word: the *destruction*, on a vast scale, of economic and social riches, of human lives, of the familiar conditions of everyday life, appeared for the first time in history. Until then, not only had war taken place in limited areas, battlefields being restricted to a few miles, but the destruction was only accessory to the battle—a consequence of the use of arms. Even the most gruesome operations of the past had been but war methods with limited effects, or

terroristic actions, aiming to subjugate a population, and not the absolute imperative of any military campaign.

In 1914, methodical destruction of the enemy, of his goods, his reserves, his industries and his morale was taught. Millions of men were used for it.

Pacifism, a mass pacifism, extraordinarily vigorous, diverse, confused and alive, responded to the carnage as an elemental and vehement protest.

The chauvinist wave of the first few weeks of the war was succeeded first in the trenches, then among the popular masses of the civilian population, by a new feeling. This transformation expressed itself most remarkably in Barbusse's document *Fire*.

At the front, under artillery bombardments, during the long, gloomy hours spent in mud, excrements, blood and vermin, in the very core of the vast machine that was an army of many millions of men, the most sacred notions were repudiated and blasphemed. Social relations of servitude and injustice were cursed by men who went to die. This was an outburst of primeval *democratism* which sapped and swamped the chauvinism of the first moment.

Then an event happened to Lenin which he was far from foreseeing when he and Zinoviev wrote their war articles: pacifism brought him to power. The transformation of imperialist war into civil war identified itself in revolutionary Russia with a conscious and deliberate use by the Bolsheviks of the slogan: "Immediate Peace." To give free rein to the pacifism of the masses sufficed to deprive the Russian bourgeois regime of its political basis, since the liberals, Social-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks could not live without Allied help, which was conditioned by prosecution of the war on the Russian front. For the Bolsheviks the problem was to transform the pacifism of the masses into a revolutionary force. This was done and was decisive in the civil war.

### **Pacifism Without Pacifists**

After the war, after the great revolutionary upheavals, when capitalist society restabilized itself, the experience of the front was forgotten. But pacifism survived and became one of the permanent traits of the masses' feelings. Everybody had to reckon with it.

Such a pacifism did not find a doctrine which could claim to represent and organize it. If it had, it would have been the most potent of political machines, but it was only an inexhaustible reservoir for all the leftist and extreme leftist movements.

Like the Russian Bolsheviks, the Communists of other countries used it in a wide measure for recruiting and influencing public opinion. Special organizations were built on this basis for veterans, women, etc. Demonstrations, and even a whole propaganda set-up kept the Communist parties in contact with pacifist currents born of the 1914-18 war.

This pacifism was the antidote—spontaneously secreted by large masses—to chauvinism, whose function had been to tie them by means of its war policy to the fate of their own bourgeoisie. In it, all non-privileged layers of the population were represented and unified. The petty bourgeois, brutally deprived of their meager privileges and thrown into the hell of war, contributed still more to it than did the workers.

### **Wooed and Utilized by All Sides**

For its part, the bourgeoisie naturally hastened to capture for itself these new forces born of the war. Capitalist Europe needed peace, either to camouflage reconstruction of a military potential and prepare for revenge, or because it was anxious to maintain the diplomatic equilibrium which was threatening to break down at the first strain. Briand's career after the war consisted entirely in using the pacifism of public opinion for the sake of the bourgeoisie of the "victorious" countries. His pacifism, based on the French regime's inner weakness and its European responsibilities, out of proportion to its available means, culminated in the Briand-Kellogg pact of August 27, 1928, which included a renunciation of war. Thereby hope was asserted that international rivalries could be settled without recourse to war, the expenses of which would be borne by the former victors and in which the bourgeois regime in Europe would be threatened with submersion.

Although pacifism was utilized by every side and was inexhaustible, it never found between the two wars its doctrinal expression within the framework of a properly pacifist action. There were many attempts, the most notable of which in France were those of *La Patrie Humaine* and *La Ligue Internationale des Combattants de la Paix*, with its paper, *Le Barrage*. The courageous, stubborn and devoted men who exerted themselves in trying to gather the masses on the exclusive ground of pacifism failed because they only succeeded in winning over individuals. Their most successful demonstrations were ephemeral. In contradistinction, the Communist Party, from the Amsterdam-Pleyel Congress to the recent World Congress of the Partisans of Peace, has shown an unequalled cleverness.

And yet from 1935 to 1939 the Communist Party was, most of the time, suspect of bellicism and antagonized thousands of militants by its far-fetched nationalism. Nonetheless the legend of "Russia, the Camp of Peace" thrived. It has continued to do so up to the present. That is why an explanation is urgently needed.

### **The Reasons for Failure**

Why did pacifism between the two wars remain, as a creation of the masses, a source of energy nourishing the existing political machines, and, as a social activity, a mere shadow?

It would be quite superficial to emphasize its, so to speak, elemental instinctive aspect, its conservative content in a profoundly biological sense, or to hold against it its vacillation between Briandism and social revolution, between individual conscientious objection and political action.

It is normal for it to have sprung up as an elemental revolt, and that, far from opposing it to socialism, draws them together insofar as their origin is concerned. The horror of killing and being killed is probably as radical a requirement of civilization as is the will for social justice from which socialism first proceeds.

Freud has said very well: "The first and most important commandment which sprang from man's hardly awakened conscience was: Thou shalt not kill. . . . It is precisely the manner in which the proposition 'Thou shalt not kill' is formulated which is of such a nature as to make us certain that we come from an infinitely large series of generations of murderers who, perhaps like ourselves, had the passion for murder in their blood."

It is not the elemental character of pacifism that poses a problem, but its inability to evolve beyond this primitive stage. Again, if one thinks of its "conservative" aspect so much (it wants to preserve one's own existence and that of others, wealth, the frame of social life. . . .) it is because it has not outgrown its childhood. Every revolutionary movement is born out of a claim to preserve, and safeguard, certain existing values.

As for the extreme confusion of means and aims which is contained in pacifism, it is the sign that it has not been able to develop, to break its ties with the world which generated it, to grow beyond its infantile utopianism or to reject reformist means. It is the sign and not the cause.

Finally, it is useless to look at pacifism itself, its heredity or its structure, for the secret of its stunted development.

As a political object, it expresses the inability of the workers' movement to prevent war, to take into their own hands the fate of society. It develops as an attempted substitute for the workers' movement in the historical tasks which belong to the latter.

As a new expression of the revolt of the masses against the specific plague of our epoch, it could win over the political majority, in the last instance, only as successor to the workers movement, only by bringing adequate answers to all the social problems posed by a world condemned to destruction.

If we were to witness such a succession and the advent of pacifism as a prevalent ideology among the laboring masses, the conclusions to be drawn would be infinitely grave. We would be obliged to confess that socialism as a general solution has outworn itself. In other words, that class society has a long future;

that the revolutionary emancipation of the proletariat and the realization thereby of a classless society have proven impossible; that the whole mental structure which the social struggles of the last hundred years and Marxism have imposed upon our epoch is also outmoded.

Such a perspective is not valid, despite the partial substitution of the socialist form by the pacifist form as the ideology of large masses, which seems to happen from time to time. Even the present, in which this substitution is more important than ever, witnesses the coexistence, rather than the mutual exclusion, of the consciousness of class division and the need for surmounting it, a consciousness which reaches the proportions of universal truth and an impatience seeking an immediate remedy against threatening war on pacifist ground.

### **Lessons of a Revival**

The vitality of basic pacifism and its sudden revival after the Second World War thus amount to a grave warning to the organized working class. But it is not enough to hear the signal. Many kinds of activists will reject the new wave of pacifism, will reject Garry Davis and the movement he has provoked, for they are certain they possess their own answers to each and every question of history. These people only show that they are already dead and buried.

A revival of mass pacifism for a period of several years at least is tantamount to a vast meditation. Revolutionists cannot look down upon that. They themselves must, for a long time, meditate upon the experience which has just taken place (and which draws the masses towards the Garry Davis myth), as well as on the orientation necessary for a new stage.

They must first observe how far Garry Davis' action goes beyond any pacifist attempts of the past; that it presupposes a democratic solution to the social drama; that it advances absolutely new, positive themes, such as world citizenship, world Constitution, and even world Government; that it has been able to win over workers' sections, which neither revolutionary syndicalism nor the various nuances of left or Marxist socialism had been able to tear away from Stalinism or to lead out of scepticism; that it has been able to build up among the rank and file a will against governments and their United Nations.

Better than that, that revolutionists must be careful, in the present scattered conditions of true socialist forces, not to oppose their own program, ideology and action to those of the pacifist revival and not to fruitlessly attempt to undertake to disintegrate it. It would be childish to serve up anew the old food, now cold and soured, to tens of thousands of people who did not find it to their taste up to now and who demand Garry Davis vitamins.

Such a movement, it is true, does not solve and,

we think, will not solve any of the questions left in midair. Nevertheless, it already has taught some lessons. The first of them is that a revolutionary and democratic renewal is perfectly possible; that it is potentially present in the current of opinion created by Garry Davis. The second one is that audacity, novelty in methods and political themes do pay. There are many other lessons. But the last one is that neither Garry Davis nor his comrades (nor his opponents!) have answered clearly enough the problems posed by the contemporary social drama. There is still room for valid answers.

### **An Examination of Ideas**

Garry Davis has not answered. At least he has given some form to the war anxiety and detected some of the necessary components of any answer. Mistrust towards governments, diplomacy and all remedies now administered to people; selection of democratic solutions; necessity to lift oneself above political routine.

Neither Garry Davis nor any pacifism will prevent war? This is an objection whose correctness needs no deepening. But the meaning of the present threat of war has need to be deepened. One of the merits of the pacifist revival is to fulfill in some way the function of making us forget ideas received. The depoliticalization of the masses makes possible the birth of inconsistent myths. If one admits that this depoliticalization does not constitute a final and irreversible evolution of decay, it calls forth and makes possible a re-politicalization on a new basis.

In effect, the ideas on war which are current even in the most studious circles of the workers movement rarely escape being distressingly useless. They date at least back to the time when Russia could be considered as an integral part of the revolution, when the United States had rivals worthy of some consideration in the capitalist world and when the workers movement acted with some efficiency as an agent of human emancipation. But times have changed. And it is far better that the masses learn to read somewhere else than in books of that time. As for the militants who claim to work for the reconstruction of a socialist movement, they have to reconsider everything.

### **Socialism and War Today**

Socialism promised peace because it offered a regime with no cause for war, that is to say, in which capitalist contradictions were overcome and national rivalries for markets suppressed. More generally every regime, according to Engels, the primitive gens excepted, finds in war the means of capturing new labor power and thus strengthening the division of labor. Such is the function of war.

It remains true that socialism is the only remedy against war at the present level of productive forces

and in the advanced condition of socialized labor. But if one considers the more general assertion of Engels, it applies preeminently to Stalinist Russia and not to America, for which strengthening of the division of labor at a high level implies, for example, the reconstruction of European economy.

Consequently, from a socialist point of view, the mystery of the present threat of war is not made clearer by repeating that the cause of any war is the existence of the capitalist regime. It is the disintegration of classic capitalism, and even imperialism, and not its development, as in the time of Jaurès and Lenin, which characterize our epoch. War in our time is a product of that disintegration. Concretely: the growth of war economy, the economic and social disintegration of Europe, the fading of democratic liberties, are three aspects of the general disintegration which first of all generate the danger of war.

This point cannot be treated seriously in a brief conclusion. It is enough to draw the reader's attention to the fact that socialism today, in order to lay claim to playing any role, must first come to grips with the causes of the war danger. The degeneration of our whole society, however hideously it may have appeared for the last fifteen years, is not at all fateful. Our effort must be brought to bear on these three decisive factors: structure of production (in other words, the struggle to use the productive forces to satisfy the needs of the masses); social reconstruction of Europe; defense of democratic liberties (their expansion and embodiment in basic social relations). Only if socialists are able to carry on that struggle seriously will they be able to say: *this war is not ours.*

PAUL PARISOT

May 1949

### **AN EXPLANATION**

Since publication of the article, "Meet Ilya Ehrenburg," in the August issue of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL, reprinted from No. 1 of *Confrontation Internationale*, our attention has been called to the fact that this article appeared originally in the August, 1947, issue of *Commentary* magazine.

THE NEW INTERNATIONAL deeply regrets this error and desires to express its regrets to the author, Waclaw Solski, who writes under the pen name of Martin Thomas, as well as to the publishers of *Commentary*.

We also wish to make clear that the version of Mr. Solski's article which appeared in THE NEW INTERNATIONAL is a retranslation from the French. This explains any variations between it and the original *Commentary* publication.

Editors, THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

# The Relevance of Trotskyism

## The Great Revolutionist's Heritage—A Discussion

It was in the month of August, 1940, that the assassin Jason struck at and destroyed the life of Leon Trotsky. In past years, THE NEW INTERNATIONAL has taken note of this memorial date by publishing, among other things, less known excerpts from Trotsky's writings, indicative of the many-sided aspects of his personality and activity. This year we are reprinting Trotsky's interesting speculations on the transformation of the family and its life under socialism and proletarian revolution. It is taken from the long out-of-print collection of essays entitled *Problems of Life*. A chapter from this work has previously been printed in the January, 1948, issue of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL.

In addition, Henry Judd's article on "The Relevance of Trotsky," representing the personal views of the author, appears in this issue as a discussion article.—Editor.

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Within a year, the first full decade since the death of Trotsky will have passed. It is to be hoped that plans now under way to organize an international symposium in THE NEW INTERNATIONAL on the tenth anniversary of Trotsky's assassination will be successful. An evaluation and estimate of Trotsky's life work, and the relationship of his theoretical program and activity to the events of the past ten years is seriously required. This checking of theory and prognosis with real development is something that Trotsky himself always insisted upon. He never excluded himself.

This particular article has the modest task of introducing the subject and indicating some of the broad problems that must be considered. It is partly motivated by its author's belief that it is high time to begin such a reconsideration, and partly by the fact that certain efforts in this direction have already been made with, unfortunately, disastrous results. The most recent one has been a lengthy article in the British *Socialist Leader*, by that publication's historian, F. A. Ridley. Ridley, in burying Trotskyism, after a series of distorted and factually erroneous statements about its history, comes up with the fantastic viewpoint that it is dead because Stalin has taken it over! Trotskyism for him, therefore, is akin to the imperialist expansionism of Russia and the extension of Stalinism. This is theoretical bumbling carried to absurdities, and such efforts must be corrected or our discussion will be uselessly sidetracked at its start.

More serious are those who, supporters or sympathizers of Trotskyism at one period in their political lives, now turn ferociously upon it and painfully seek to discover the source of all current difficulties in some fundamental flaw, now retrospectively revealed, in the theory itself. Individuals of this tendency are familiar enough and need not be cited at length. Some discover the "flaw" to have been Trotskyism's links with Leninism; others, with Marxism

in general; and one has even turned up with the novel suggestion that our present disaster had its origin in Lenin's acceptance of Trotskyism! There is no end of variations, but we find all such efforts lacking. They represent a twisted and unique form of Utopianism and panacea seeking, which, denying the dynamics of history, attempts to pass a sterile judgment on the past.

If politics is the struggle of "alternative programs," it is easy to see how hopelessly afield are these people who search the past and strain after flaws and mistakes. Explicitly, or by indirection, after they have pounced upon the historical fault of Marxism, or the Russian Revolution, they suggest what the correct way should have been. Be it classical Social Democracy, or Menshevism—its Russian expression—or even the road of liberalism—it is clear that these critics of Marxism and the Russian Revolution cannot evade the responsibility of an "alternative program." The bolder among these critics do this. But in any case, there appear to be two flaws in this method. First, it is a belittling of history since it would seem that social movements, events and changes take place much as one switches freight cars around on different tracks in a freight yard. If Russia's masses, for example, supported Lenin and his Bolsheviks, and took power together with this Party, we cannot lay this to "accident," or "mistake" or "trickery." We might as well give up the study of history.

### Towards Evolution of Marxist Program

More important, this kind of an approach has altogether too much in common with those whom it intends most of all to confound—the so-called orthodox Marxists, of various political tendencies, to whom the past is sacred, particularly their reading of it. Many subtle and skillful arguments could be found indicating what is wrong with both these approaches which, in different ways, subordinate a living analysis to sterile historic introspection. But we prefer a simple fact which suffices because it is based on reality. Namely, the fact that within the past 25 years our whole world has so changed, from every conceivable point of view (social, cultural, psychologic, etc.) that the relevance of the past, its criteria, examples and illustrations, has dropped catastrophically. Is this not a bald fact? The marking off point has been, of course, the Second World War and its aftermath, during which the most traditional conceptions of Marxism, expressed at that moment in the theories and program of Trotskyism, were found to be lacking. Insofar as revolutionary socialists have concerned themselves

with new problems of theory and practice since 1939 (and it must be admitted that this concern is at its lowest ebb since the beginning of Marxism), their efforts have been directed toward the creation of a new program, within the broad framework of Marxist and socialist principles.

Not too much progress has been made, it must be admitted, but those who raise the demand that the critics of orthodox Marxism must produce their program, both in broad outline and in detail, fail to understand the actual process by which alternative programs are worked out at crucial moments in the history of Marxism. There must be a conscious sense of crisis and open recognition that the past, in terms of program, approach and attitude, has failed and collapsed. There must be a collective will among the leaders of progressive Marxism to grapple with the new problems, and to experiment freely, even in an empiric sense. There must be a patient understanding of the fact that creation of a new program is a painful, tedious and difficult process in which the factor of trial-and-error plays its part. We find little recognition of these requirements, despite the obvious fact that Marxism, on an international scale, can hardly sink much lower without vanishing. To make one's way past those critics who abandon all (including the future) by their rationalistic approach to the past; to make one's way past those who repeat the past and are smugly content with this—this is the requirement for today. We can think of no more appropriate starting point than an examination of Trotskyism and its relevancy.

In the August 22, 1949, issue of *The Militant*, a series of articles appears, memorializing Trotsky. The tone of these articles is hardly worthy of comment, but the central theme is the "Confirmation of Trotsky's Ideas." The current "crisis of Stalinism" testifies to the "correctness of his analysis," in the eyes of his self-styled followers organized in the Socialist Workers Party, and, most unbelievable of all, we are informed that Trotsky's "major contribution" to the socialist movement in the last years of his life was his analysis of "the nature of Stalinism"! In its own fashion, this issue of *The Militant* sings paeans of praise to the leader who was never wrong and who is now more correct than ever. But Trotsky, unfortunately, cannot defend himself from his "supporters."

The above is characteristic of the movement, followers and spokesmen whom Trotsky left behind. It is doubtful if ever before in political history a truly great leader bequeathed a more pathetic group of followers whose alleged objective was to carry on in the spirit and manner of the man who headed their movement. The so-called Fourth International has proved, organizationally speaking, the most unsuccessful organization known to the history of the socialist movement. It has literally vanished from sight in most parts of the world, and it is doubtful if it could claim,

with justification, 2,000 members in all lands. In Europe, its traditional center, it has virtually ceased to exist. The one mass movement it claimed (in the remote island of Ceylon) has long since dissolved into its component elements of a popular, nationalist movement loosely held together, and a narrow clique of sectarian "Trotskyists," characteristic and typical of their fellow sects in other areas of the world.

If his organization has proved so unworthy of his name, what can be said for the political leaders and spokesmen Trotsky left behind? How fortunate for this great socialist and revolutionist that he cannot be estimated in terms of his "heirs"! If Trotsky felt called upon to denounce as epigones those whom Lenin had trained and educated, how shall we characterize this pompous group who speak in Trotsky's name? Those whom Trotsky called epigones were giants by contrast with the "leaders of the Fourth International." It is also significant that with few exceptions, at the same time, so many individuals who stood close to Trotsky and worked on an intimate basis with him have left both the working class and socialist movement far behind. It would appear that, with few exceptions, Trotsky's leading cadres tended either to degenerate into bankrupt cliques, with a bureaucratic ideology; or to leave the movement on a largely personal basis in which the element of demoralization played more than its share. One must of necessity ask himself: why did such a magnificent leader, of such heroic and bold proportions, leave behind such a short-lived movement which stumbled from one disaster to another and has now definitively collapsed?

#### **At the Core of His Perspective**

A large part of the answer, of course, lies in the false perspectives which his movement inherited from Trotsky. In our publications, on many occasions, sufficient comment has been made about this for it not to require repetition now. With the collapse of the Third International, Trotsky set himself the task of creating a new International which would carry on in the same spirit and tradition engendered by the Russian Revolution. In its basic characteristics, the epoch after Trotsky declared the Stalinist International to be finished as a progressive factor, remained as before—an epoch of capitalist decline, the threat of war and fascism, a sharpening of the class struggle, etc. But most important of all, the epoch was profoundly revolutionary and the central need was for a revolutionary leadership and a revolutionary party. There was no fundamental change, and the Fourth International would replace what had failed.

Trotsky had a rounded, internally clear and consistent view of things. Proletarian revolution was at the heart of it, just as belief in the simplistic "dialectics" of Engels was at the heart of his approach to science. Little wonder that he fought so bitterly against those who tended to upset his well worked out theoretical program with either doubts or outright

challenge on such matters, for example, as the "Russian Question." It is true that certain doubts and questionings were expressed by Trotsky himself before his death. The vague possibility of other historic alternatives than proletarian revolution were mentioned, but instantly dismissed, or ridiculed. Furthermore, the overwhelming emphasis and weight given by Trotsky were on the side of socialist revolution, most concretely expressed in his perspective that the Second World War would result in a new proletarian upsurge, carrying on where the Russian Revolution had left off and ushering in a new phase of world revolution. It is true, to be sure, that Trotsky did not foresee an imminent global victory for the proletariat, but rather a new series of revolutionary struggles, accompanied by victories and defeats, in which the Fourth International would mature and assume historic leadership. Russian Stalinism, tested and found wanting under the strains of war, would be swept aside by a resurrected Russian working class in accordance with the Trotskyist theory which saw in Stalinism an historic accident and a temporary perversion.

### A Transition Between Epochs

From our standpoint, any movement which based its perspective upon such a reading of the present and future could not but find itself increasingly disoriented by reality. It is clearly not merely a misreading of historic tempo, but a failure to grasp the profound changes occurring not only in the structure of world society, but in the source of revolutionary activity itself; i. e., socialist mass and class consciousness. Any movement which clung to the Trotsky perspective was bound to end up in that state of political paranoia, marked by a phantasy-world existence, which we see in his followers today.

We must say, in retrospect, that the period of the Second World War marks a definite transition between two epochs—the Trotsky epoch, as analyzed by the last of the classic Marxist theoreticians and revolutionists, and the new retrogressive-collectivist epoch whose nature we attempt to understand as we move into it and which presents socialist revolutionists with a new set of problems to be mastered. It is doubtful, at least to this writer, that the concepts of classic Trotskyism can be of much assistance, based as they are upon the existence of a mass socialist consciousness, forever expanding under the lash of experience and the teachings of the vanguard party. Perhaps the outstanding difference between the past of Trotsky and our present is the absence of this mass of human beings in whom socialist consciousness, to one or another degree, existed. In no nation of the world today does there exist a body of workers possessing a socialist consciousness in the traditional sense of the word; no sons and daughters of socialist fighters, trained and educated even in the inferior schools of social democracy.

There exists, to be sure, great masses of *socially*

conscious people; in fact, they are probably more numerous than ever, and offer us a clue to the kind of program required. They desire a new life, they are against war, they have hopes and aspirations often concrete in form. But to consider the Labor Party masses of England, or the best militant workers of America, for example, as equivalent to the *socialist* conscious proletarians of the past is highly misleading. Even more misleading, in our opinion, would be any reference to the working class masses who follow the Stalinist leadership.

The essence of *socialist* consciousness lies in self-consciousness and awareness; a state of understanding in which the worker himself realizes that his and his alone is the task, that *he* is the creator of the revolution and socialism. But Stalinism destroys precisely this and replaces it with its own central thought that the leadership fulfills all tasks and ushers in "socialism." Self-awareness is replaced by bureaucratic dependency and a Stalinist worker is a pitifully betrayed creature who in turn serves only reactionary purposes, thus betraying socialism.

It is time to drop our illusion of the Stalinist worker who "really is socialist." If other masses have lost their former sense of socialism through the disruption of the past by war, fascism and other catastrophes, we must admit that Stalinist masses have had this sense of socialism thoroughly perverted. The regression of capitalism has led to one result; the emergence of international Stalinism to the other.

### Problems of Socialist Program

What of other, more concrete, contributions of Trotsky to the world of Marxist theory? How do matters stand in this respect? We cannot consider here all aspects of Trotsky's work, but only the more outstanding ones. The first, of course, is his position on Russia, Stalinism and related matters. What is universally acknowledged now to have been his major theoretical and political debacle has been hailed as his outstanding contribution by his American supporters. The "*workers' state*" theory, the conception of Stalinism as a narrow, conservative and provincial force whose endurance was dubious and whose social and economic nature made imperialist expansion absurd—these and a dozen other characteristics of Russian Stalinist were the most potent immediate factor in the derailing of Trotskyism. Except for the small groups of his followers, these ideas have no status anywhere in the world today, although every socialist recognizes, accepts and learns from the history of Trotsky's specific Russian struggle against Stalinism and his running analysis of the degeneration of the original Soviet state. But no thinking person can even seriously consider his basic conclusions on Russia and Stalinism.

The "Transitional Program" was one of the more remarkable documents and summaries of Trotsky's thought in the later part of his life. It was his con-

cretization of the revolutionary perspective, in terms of tactics and strategy, we have noted above. But if one troubles to reread it today, it must be admitted it is largely useless and irrelevant. By no means because each section and each slogan is invalid—many of its details are just as correct as before. It would be necessary, however, to reincorporate them into a new transitional program harmonizing with the fundamentally changed problems of this new period. Trotsky's "Transitional Program" originates in his revolutionary perspective described above; it was the tactical and strategic means by which the Fourth International was to become the "World Party of the Socialist Revolution." This is the spirit that permeates it and this is what, unfortunately, means that it corresponds in no sense to our new requirements.

A "transitional program" is surely needed, but not one directed exclusively at proletarian and vanguard revolutionary elements, aiming to define the relationship between class and vanguard party. Trotsky's program was based upon the assumption that a mass, specific proletarian consciousness existed, in a dormant state, and required only the sting of vanguard consciousness to arouse it from lethargy. Experience, of course, was to play its role. But this proved to be, in fact, a wrong assumption. Can this be denied? The gap to be bridged is much wider and deeper than that between party and class. It is no longer a gap of inner class relationships, but rather a gap between the working class as a whole, together with its socialist consciousness, and the rest of society.

A new program must concern itself with the problem of resurrecting socialist consciousness and thereby beginning to regain for the working class its role—now lost—as leader and emancipator of society. But these are problems necessarily of an entirely different order than those Trotsky concerned himself with in his "Transitional Program." They go back to the origins of Marxian socialism itself, rather than resting upon the long Marxist tradition, as did Trotsky's program. He cannot help us with this.

### **The Theory of Permanent Revolution**

Trotsky's unique contribution to Marxist analysis, of course, was his theory of the permanent revolution. Although he lacked the opportunity to develop it in its fullest and most rounded form, his life work was permeated with the tactics and strategy upon which this theory was based. In defining the relationship between proletariat and petty bourgeoisie and bourgeoisie in backward, colonial countries, Trotsky was mainly concerned with revolutionary power. In our epoch, he maintained, those tasks formerly associated with the bourgeois democratic revolution (national independence, unity of the country, agrarian solution, etc.) could only be solved by a proletariat in power. In the sense that a *progressive, democratic and socialist* solution of such tasks can be achieved only by the proletariat, Trotsky's theory remains entirely true

and valid. But we know now that, in the form he presented it, it is no longer adequate and its proposed tactics and strategy are largely obsolete abstractions.

What has brought this about? On the one hand, imperialism is an abstract and absolute force in Trotsky's theory. Because of his concentration upon immediate issues within the national-revolutionary movement itself (as, for example, in his writings on China), Trotsky did not concern himself with changes in imperialism itself. This was, of course, entirely correct and we do not mention this in any critical sense. But, particularly since the war, the changes within imperialism have been of such a significant nature that this alone has altered the whole problem of colonialism. The outstanding example is the decline of the British Empire and the freeing of India. In terms of a mechanical application of Trotsky's theory, it is impossible to conceive of an independent India. (A large portion of the Indian Trotskyist movement, consistent to the point of absurdity, still maintains that India is not free!)

More important with regard to Trotsky's theory is the conquest of huge colonial areas by Stalinism which, in its own way, "achieves" the tasks of the "democratic" revolution. This is related to the emergence of a new force—neither capitalist nor socialist—seeking world power. Trotsky vehemently denied such a possibility, which every sane person now recognizes. It is no longer a problem of theory, but one of reality.

Since the socialist movement in those colonial areas where Stalinism comes to power now finds (or will find) that its problems are no longer those of liquidating feudalism, colonialism and imperialism, but rather of an anti-Stalinist, democratic revolution, it too faces new, undreamed of problems. It must painfully fight its way through new, unknown territory and, at best, Trotsky's theory of the permanent revolution can assist it only by the spirit of its approach, its audacity, etc.

This is no longer the colonial world of 1925-27, and it is a major task in itself to readapt and rework Trotsky's theory for this new colonial world. Related to this, of course, is the need to revise Lenin's theory of imperialism which, both descriptively and analytically, simply no longer fits reality.

We have left for the last the question of the revolutionary vanguard party. While this well may be the crucial question in the future of Marxism and socialism itself, it is not the case in any appreciation of Trotskyism. Trotsky accepted the Leninist party, to be sure, but he did not contribute much to what he took over. In fact, his main concern with the role of the party as such dealt largely with its inner degeneration (*The New Course*, etc.) and his struggle against its bureaucratism. There are indications that he tended to change his opinion on the role of the party, above all in a little-noticed article on the subject of "class, mass and party" published after his

death. But for all intents and purposes, Trotsky proposed that the Fourth International continue in the Leninist tradition.

To discuss the question of the party is really to discuss the question of Leninism and its validity today. In such a summary article as this, it would take us far afield and must therefore be left aside except to remark that whatever Trotskyist "parties" exist today are but bureaucratic caricatures of even the Leninist conception. A true, Trotsky-created party has never existed (and never will), which makes it still more difficult to talk concretely about Trotsky's conception of the party.

### Master of Tactics and Strategy

Without any pretense of more than introducing the subject, the above seem to me to represent the fundamentals of Trotskyism, and the status of these fundamentals today. This brief treatment is not adequate, but it is presented in the hope that it will stimulate thought and discussion along needed lines. But what then remains of Trotskyism as such? It is an integral part of the revolutionary socialist heritage, and as such particularly rich in instruction and rewarding in example. But its place in Marxist history must be understood in relation to the new problems of today which are yet far from solution, far from even a correct posing.

There is, first of all, the example contained in Trotsky's life itself, above all in this period of moral and personal disintegration. What has been said of Trotsky's integrity, devotion and capacity for struggle remains as true as ever. A biography worthy of his revolutionary genius remains to be written. It seems most unlikely that the socialist movement of the future, where emphasis will be placed upon the solving of comparatively small problems by popular action and in which action itself, rather than ideological thought and contemplation, will be the real instrument of education—it seems most unlikely that such a movement will produce leaders of Trotsky's caliber. If Trotsky exemplified theory and practice at their best, we must realize that the events of his life span permitted such an integration.

Marxism today is a frustrated movement, turned inward and unable to relax its limbs by activity. Socialist education in Trotsky's time meant preparation for life and practice, but that *type* of education would be worthless today since no action follows from it. Education, which means creation of socialist consciousness, must now actually become part of action itself; an education through doing. But this is only another of the many ways in which our problems differ from the past.

Secondly, the example of internationalism in theory and practice is a particularly valuable gift from Trotsky. This formed a part of his approach to every single problem, and while the "national question" is with us as Trotsky never foresaw it would be (in the

form of Titoism, it is with us in a form no one ever conceived of), the solution to this unexpected problem is still possible on an internationalist basis, without any violation of opposition to imperialist war, etc. Trotsky's internationalism, of course, is contained in his handling of each new tactical and strategic problem, and this brings us to what is perhaps—for us—the most significant part of his life and work.

Trotsky was the greatest Marxist master of tactics and strategy. Any intensive study of his writings on various revolutionary crises (in China, England, Germany, etc.) will quickly reveal this. If his proposals had triumphed, and his criticism had been adopted, all would have been different. Perhaps these writings, largely polemical and critical, will remain as his most useful products for us. Not that we may expect a duplication of the situations analyzed, but we may learn from the *approach* and *method* Trotsky used in solving amazingly complex tasks. The care with which he assembled his facts, the sweep of his approach which linked up tactical methods with strategic needs and, above all, his flexibility and rejection of doctrinaire solutions; his capacity for new ideas and experimental ways, his willingness to twist and turn sharply in accordance with his estimate of events.

We are well aware that Trotsky developed his tactics and strategy within the framework of his overall conceptions, but he never permitted himself to deduce automatically tactics and strategy from abstract principles. The general framework of Marxist and socialist thought still exists, but in a changed world. We believe Trotsky would be first to accept this and first to plunge into the work of meeting this new challenge.

HENRY JUDD

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# Socialism and the Family

## Out of Socialism's Archives: A Chapter from "Problems of Life"

The inner relations and happenings within the family are, by their very nature, the most difficult to investigate, the least subject to statistics. It is not easy, therefore, to say in how far family ties are the more easily broken nowadays (in actual life, not merely on paper) than formerly. To a great extent we must be content to judge by the eye. The difference, moreover, between pre-revolutionary times and the present day is that formerly all the troubles and dramatic conflicts in working-class families used to pass unnoticed by the working classes themselves; whereas now, a large upper part of the workers occupy responsible posts, their life is much more in the limelight, and every domestic tragedy in their life becomes a subject of much comment and sometimes of idle gossip.

Subject to this serious reservation, there is no denying, however, that family relations, those of the proletarian class included, are shattered. This was stated as a firmly established fact in the debates of the Moscow Propagandists, and no one contested it. They were only differently impressed by it—each in his own way. Some viewed it with great misgivings, others with reserve, and others, still, seemed perplexed.

### Root of the Question

It was, anyhow, clear to all, that some big process was going on, very chaotic, assuming, alternatively, morbid or revolting, ridiculous or tragic forms, and which had not yet had time to disclose its hidden possibilities of inaugurating a new and higher order of family life. Some information about the disintegration of the family has crept into the press, but just occasionally, and in very vague, general terms.

In an article on the subject, I have read that the disintegration of the family in the working class was represented as a case of "bourgeois influence on the proletariat." It is not so simple as this. The root of the question lies deeper and is more complicated. The influence of the bourgeois past and the bourgeois present is there, but the main process consists in a painful evolution of the proletarian family itself, an evolution leading up to a crisis, and we are witnessing now the first chaotic stages of the process.

The deeply destructive influence of the war on the family is well known. To begin with, war dissolves the family automatically, separating people for a long time or bringing people together by chance. This influence of the war was continued and strengthened by the revo-

lution. The years of the war shattered all that had stood only by the inertia of historic tradition. They shattered the power of czarism, class privileges, the old traditional family. The revolution began by building up the new state and has achieved thereby its simplest and most urgent aim. The economic part of its problem proved much more complicated. The war shook the old economic order, the revolution overthrew it. Now we are constructing a new economic state—doing it as yet mostly from the old elements, reorganizing them in new ways.

In the domain of economics we have but recently emerged from the destructive period and begun to ascend. Our progress is still very slow, and the achievement of new socialistic forms of economic life are still very distant. But we are definitely out of the period of destruction and ruin. The lowest point was reached in the years 1920-21.

The first destructive period is still far from being over in the life of the family. The disintegrating process is still in full swing. We must bear that in mind. Family and domestic life are still passing, so to say, their 1920-21 period and have not reached the 1923 standard. Domestic life is more conservative than economic, and one of the reasons is that it is still less conscious than the latter.

In politics and economics the working class acts as a whole and pushes on to the front rank its vanguard, the communistic party accomplishing through its medium the historic aims of the proletariat.

In domestic life the working class is split into cells constituted by families. The change of political regime, the change even of the economic order of the state—the passing of the factories and mills into the hands of the workers—all this has certainly had some influence on family conditions; but only indirectly and externally, and without touching on the forms of domestic traditions inherited from the past.

A radical reform of the family and more generally of the whole order of domestic life requires a big conscious effort on the part of the whole mass of the working class and presumes in the class itself the existence of a powerful molecular force of inner desire for culture and progress.

### Equality of Sexes

A deep-going plough is needed to turn up heavy clods of soil. To institute the political equality of men and women in the Soviet State was one problem and

the simplest. A much more difficult one was the next—that of instituting the industrial equality of men and women workers in the factories, the mills and the trade unions, and to do it in such a way that the men should not put the women to disadvantage. But to achieve the actual equality of man and woman within the family is an infinitely more arduous problem. All our domestic habits must be revolutionized before that can happen. And yet it is quite obvious that unless there is actual equality of husband and wife in the family, in a normal sense as well as in the conditions of life, we cannot speak seriously of their equality in social work or even in politics. As long as woman is chained to her housework, the care of the family, the cooking and sewing, all her chances of participation in social and political life are cut down to the extreme.

The easiest problem was that of assuming power. Yet just that problem alone absorbed all our forces in the early period of the revolution. It demanded endless sacrifices. The civil war necessitated measures of the utmost rigor. Narrow-minded, silly people raised cries of debased morals, of the sanguinary deprecation of the proletariat, etc., whereas what had actually happened was that the proletariat, in using the means of revolutionary violence forced into its hands, started to fight for new standards of culture, for genuine humanitarianism. In the first four or five years we have passed economically through a period of terrific breakdown. The productiveness of labor collapsed, and the products were of an appallingly low quality. Enemies saw, or chose to see, in such a situation a sign of the rottenness of the Soviet regime. In reality, however, it was but the inevitable stage of the destruction of the old economic forms, and of the first helpless attempts at the creation of new ones.

In regard to family relations, and forms of individual life in general, there must also be an inevitable period of disintegration of things as they were, of the traditions, inherited from the past, which had not passed under the control of thought. But in this domain of domestic life the period of criticism and destruction begins later, lasts very long and assumes morbid and painful forms, which, however, are complex and not always perceptible to superficial observation.

These progressive landmarks of critical change in state conditions, in economics and life in general, ought to be very clearly defined to prevent us getting alarmed by the phenomena we observed. We must learn to judge them in

the right light, to understand their proper place in the development of the working class, and consciously to direct the new conditions toward socialistic forms of life.

### Tackling the ABCs

The warning is a necessary one, as we already hear voices expressing alarm. At the debate of the Moscow Propagandists some comrades spoke with great and natural anxiety of the easiness with which old family ties are broken for the sake of new ones as fleeting as the old. The victims in all cases are the mother and children.

On the other hand, who, in our midst, has not heard in private conversations complaints, not to say lamentations, about the demoralization of young Sovietists, particularly of those belonging to the Communist unions of the young—the so-called Comsomols? Not everything in these complaints is exaggeration—there is also truth in them. We certainly must—and will—fight the dark sides of this truth—this being a fight for higher culture and the ascent of human personality. But in order to begin our work, to tackle the ABC of the problem without reactionary moralizing or sentimental down-heartedness, we must first make sure of the facts and begin to see clearly what is actually happening.

Gigantic events, as we said above, have descended on the family in its old shape, the war and the revolution. And following them came creeping slowly the underground mole—critical thought, the conscious study and valuation of family relations and the forms of life. It was the mechanical force of great events combined with the critical force of the awakened mind that generated the destructive period in family relations that we are witnessing now.

The Russian worker must now, after the conquest of power, make his first conscious steps toward culture in many departments of his life. Under the impulses of great collisions, his personality shakes off for the first time all traditional forms of life, all domestic habits, church practices and relationships.

No wonder that, in the beginning, the protest of the individual, his revolt against the traditional past, is assuming anarchic, or to put it more crudely, dissolute forms. We have witnessed it in politics, in military affairs, in economics; here anarchic individualism took on every form of extremism, partisanship, public-meeting rhetoric. And no wonder also that this process reacts in the most intimate and hence most painful way on family relationships. There the awakened personality, wanting to reorganize in a new way, removed from the old beaten tracks, resorts to "dissipation," "wickedness" and all the sins denounced in the Moscow debates.

The husband, torn away from his usual surroundings by mobilization, changed into a revolutionary citizen at the civic front. A momentous change. His outlook is wider, his spiritual aspirations higher and of a more complicated order. He is a different man. And then he returns home to find everything there practically unchanged. The old harmony and understanding with the people at home in family relationship is gone. No new understanding arises. The mutual wondering changes into mutual discontent, then into ill-will. The family is broken up.

### A Painful Process

The husband is a Communist. He lives an active life, is engaged in social work, his mind grows, his personal life is absorbed by his work. But his wife is also a Communist. She wants to join in social work, attends public meetings, works in the soviet or the union. Home life becomes practically non-existent before they are aware of it, or the missing of home atmosphere results in continual collisions. Husband and wife disagree. The family is broken up.

The husband is a Communist, the wife is non-party. The husband is absorbed by his work; the wife, as before, only looks after her home. Relations are "peaceful," based, in fact, on customary estrangement. But the husband's committee—the Communist "cell"—decrees that he should take away the ikons hanging in his house. He is quite willing to obey, finding it but natural. For his wife it is a catastrophe. Just such a small occurrence exposes the abyss that separates the minds of husband and wife. Relations are spoiled.

An old family. Ten to fifteen years of common life. The husband is a good worker, devoted to his family; the wife lives also for her home, giving it all her energy. But just by chance she comes in touch with a Communist women's organization. A new world opens before her eyes. Her energy finds a new and wider object. The family is neglected. The husband is irritated. The wife is hurt in her newly awakened civic consciousness. The family is broken up.

Examples of such domestic tragedies, all leading to the one end—the breaking up of the family, could be multiplied endlessly. We have indicated the most typical cases. In all our examples the tragedy is due to a collision between Communist and non-party elements. But the breaking up of the family, that is to say, of the old-type family, is not confined to just the top of the class as the one most exposed to the influence of new conditions. The disintegrating movement in family relationships penetrates deeper. The Communist vanguard merely passes sooner and more violently through what is inevitable for the class as a whole.

The censorious attitude toward old conditions, the new claims upon the family extend far beyond the border line between the Communist and the working class as a whole. The institution of civil marriage was already a heavy blow to the traditional consecrated family which lived a great deal for appearances. The less personal attachment there was in the old marriage ties, the greater was the binding power of the external forces, social traditions, and more particularly, religious rites.

The blow to the power of the church was also a blow to the family. Rites, deprived of binding significance and of state recognition, still remain in use through inertia, serving as one of the props to the tottering family. But when there is no inner bond within the family, when nothing but inertia keeps the family itself from complete collapse, then every push from outside is likely to shatter it to pieces, while, at the same time, it is a blow at the adherence to church rites. And pushes from the outside are infinitely more likely to come now than ever before. That is the reason why the family totters and fails to recover, and then to tumble again.

Life sits in judgment on its conditions and does it by the cruel and painful condemnation of the family. History fells the old wood—and the chips fly in the wind.

### Evolving New Type

But is life evolving any elements of a new type of family? Undoubtedly. We must only conceive clearly the nature of these elements and the process of their formation. As in other cases, we must separate the physical conditions from the psychological, the general from the individual. Psychologically the evolution of the new family, of new human relationships in general, for us, means the advancement in culture of the working class, the development of the individual, a raising of the standard of his requirements and inner discipline. From this aspect, the revolution in itself has meant, of course, a big step in advance, and the worst phenomena of the disintegrating family signify merely the abnormality of the form of expression of the awakening class and individuals composing the class. All our work relating to culture, the work we are doing and the work we ought to be doing, becomes, from this aspect, a preparation for new relationships and a new family. Without a raising of the standard of the culture of the individual working man and woman, there cannot be a new, higher type for family, for, in this domain, we can only, of course, speak of inner discipline and not of external compulsion. The force then of the inner discipline of the individual in the family is conditioned by the tenor of the inner life, the scope

and value of the ties that unite husband and wife.

### Elements of Progress

The physical preparations for the conditions of the new life and the new family, again, cannot fundamentally be separated from the general work of socialistic constructiveness. The workers' state must become wealthier in order that it may be possible seriously to tackle the public education of children and the releasing of the family from the burden of the kitchen and laundry.

The socialization of family housekeeping and the public education of children are unthinkable without a marked improvement in our economics as a whole. We need more socialistic economic forms. Only under such conditions can we free the family from the functions and cares that now oppress and disintegrate it.

Washing must be done by a public laundry, catering by a public restaurant, sewing by a public workshop. Children must be educated by good public teachers who have a real vocation for the work. Then the bond between husband and wife would be freed from everything external and accidental, and the one would cease to absorb the life of the other. Genuine equality would at last be established. The bond will depend on mutual attachment. And on that account, particularly, it will acquire inner stability; not the same, of course, for everyone, but compulsory for no one.

Thus the way to the new family is twofold: (a) the raising of the standard of culture and education of the working class and the individuals composing the class; (b) an improvement in the material conditions of the class, organized by

the state. The two processes are intimately connected with one another.

The above statements do not, of course, imply that at a given moment in the material betterment the family of the future will instantly step into its rights. No. A certain advance toward the new family is possible even now. It is true that the state cannot as yet undertake either the education of the children or the establishment of public kitchens, which would be an improvement on the family kitchen, or the establishment of public laundries, where the clothes would not be torn or stolen.

But this does not mean that the more enterprising and progressive families cannot group themselves even now into collective housekeeping units. Experiments of this kind must, of course, be made carefully; the technical equipment of the collective unit must answer to the interests and requirements of the group itself, and should give manifest advantages to every one of its members, even though they be modest at first.

"The task," Comrade Semashko recently wrote on the necessity of the reconstruction of our family life, "is best performed practically; decrees and moralizing alone will have little effect. But an example, an illustration of a new form, will do more than a thousand excellent pamphlets. This practical propaganda is best conducted on the method surgeons in their practice call 'transplantation.' When a big surface is bare of skin either as the result of a wound or burn, and there is no hope that the skin will grow sufficiently to cover it, pieces of skin are cut off from healthy places of the body and attached in islets on the bare surface; these islets adhere

and grow until the whole surface is covered with skin."

The same thing happens in practical propaganda. When one factory or works adopts communistic forms, other factories will follow.

Such collective family housekeeping units must be carefully thought out and studied. A combination of private initiative, supported by the governing powers—in the first place, the local soviets and economic organs—must be the first step. The building of new houses—and, after all, we are going to build houses!—must be regulated by the requirements of the family group communities.

The first apparent and indisputable success in this direction, however slight and limited in extent, will inevitably arouse a desire in more widespread groups to organize life on similar lines.

### To Realm of Freedom

For a thought-out scheme, initiated from above, the time is not yet ripe, either from the point of view of the material resources of the state, or from that of the preparation of the proletariat itself. We can escape the deadlock at present only by the creation of model communities.

The ground beneath our feet must be strengthened step by step; there must be no rushing too far ahead, or lapsing into bureaucratic fanciful experiments. At a given moment, the state will be able, with the help of local soviets, co-operative units and so on, to socialize the work done, to widen and deepen it. In this way the human family, in the words of Engels, will "jump from the realm of necessity to the realm of freedom."

LEON TROTSKY

## Literary "Discussion" in Russia

### In Which We Reprint an Article from Pravda

THE NEW INTERNATIONAL'S sister publication, Labor Action, as well as many other newspapers and magazines, have in the recent period been publicizing the current campaign in Russia against any and all international ties and influences, its most shocking form being the Stalinist version of anti-Semitism. The full flavor of the Russians' diatribes, in their own press, can scarcely be appreciated, however, merely from selected passages.

It is for this reason that the article which follows, translated from the Russian cultural press, may be of interest.

The article, which provides additional information in regard to the campaign mentioned, was published in the Russian newspaper *Literaturnaya*

*Gazeta* of February 12, 1949. (*Literaturnaya Gazeta* is the official organ of the administration of the Union of Soviet Writers of the USSR.) In addition, that issue of the *Literaturnaya Gazeta* also contained four other articles on the same theme; the article printed below was no isolated phenomenon. (The other articles were: "Love for the Motherland—Hate for the Cosmopolitans," "Living Corpses," "Raise Higher the Banner of Soviet Patriotism," and "Against the Anti-Patriotic Critics.")

This article is especially interesting, however, because its author has made it most clear that the term "cosmopolitan" refers to Jewish writers and critics. Thus he states that the cosmopolitan-objectivist views of the authors of articles on a list of writers

to be treated in a coming edition of the Great Soviet Encyclopedia are especially manifested by their treatment of Jewish literature.

In addition, they are accused of giving Jewish literature as much space as Uzbek, Cossack, and Georgian literature taken together. It must be pointed out that the Uzbeks, the Cossacks, and, to a lesser degree, the Georgians had no modern literature at all until very recently, so that their literature consists mostly of a number of epics, folk tales, etc., whereas there has been a very great volume of Jewish literature in the past two hundred years. The overtone of this remark by the author of the article is evidently that the coming edition of the encyclopedia should *play down* Jewish literature.

In addition, the cosmopolitan tendencies of the critics under fire are manifested, according to the Stalinist hack, by their lackey-like desire to ingratiate themselves with the cunning businessmen of America, Palestine and other countries. All of these criticisms, together with the way in which they are expressed, highlight the anti-Semitic overtones of the current campaign.

This article reveals a great deal about the cultural life of Stalinist Russia, in addition to its anti-Semitic features. First of all, it is assumed without question that the party is to initiate the only standards for literature, and that all other standards are automatically incorrect.

Indeed, the author of the article, E. Kovalchik, assumes that he has struck a telling blow against the "cosmopolitans" if he can show that they have run afoul of party standards, that the party has criticized them, that they lack a feeling of "partinost." (This is a word for which no exact equivalent exists in English; it is one of the recent "socialist" accomplishments in the Russian vocabulary. It expresses the idea of responsibility toward the party, loyalty to the party, and the acceptance of the predominance of the party.) A final squelcher is the charge that their statements contradict the remarks of that noted literary figure (and probable sometime expert in genetics), V. M. Molotov.

In the second place, one should note the criticism of individualism in writing. The fact that F. Levin, a critic, praised the work of certain men because they showed such an individual style of writing, that the authorship of their writing could be recognized without looking at the signature—this praise provides grounds for his criticism. The idea seems to be that literature is not to serve as a means of individual self-expression.

Here Stalinism certainly shows itself to be a unique and original phenomenon in the history of modern times at least. Where else could an author be criticized for developing an original style of writing?

Finally, there is the language used, a language which has a special significance in Russia. We do not

refer here only to such terms as "cosmopolitan," "rootless," etc., which have a specific anti-Semitic overtone, but rather to the more common language of Stalinist literary criticism.

Thus the authors whose work is being criticized are being "unmasked," that is, their "pernicious tricks and snares" are being unmasked. The critic disagrees with them, and claims that they have run afoul of the party standard in literature. Consequently men whose writing is considered to be poor do not suffer from a lack of "sensitivity," or from "poor character portrayal" or "poor imagery," etc.; they are rather accused of being "diversionaries," "disrupters," "rotten," "decadent," "pernicious," etc.

The special significance of this language is that it is the language in which accusations of *political* treason, the most serious crime in Stalinist Russia, are framed. The reader must keep in mind that this language appears not in *Pravda* or *Izvestia* but in what is supposed to be primarily a literary publication.

This is a manifestation of social relations in Russia and the ideology which has developed from them. The single party controls the state and makes its ideology supreme and monolithic. Since opponents of the regime know they will not be tolerated if they speak openly, they must, of course, try to mask their opposition. It is this ideology, which he has absorbed so thoroughly, that enables E. Kovalchik to speak of his own activity as "unmasking" and to speak of the activity of those who have deviated ever so slightly from the norm, or who have not deviated but whom the party wishes to attack for its own reasons, as "diversionistic" and "disruptive."

All of this is by no means new to those who have followed the degeneration of Stalinism. But only Kovalchik himself can convey the full impact of what "literary discussion" means under totalitarianism.

GEORGE FOWLER

The articles in the party press on theatrical criticism are a new manifestation of the constant concern of the party for the future of Soviet art and literature.

The pernicious activity of the anti-patriotic group of theatrical critics has been given an exhaustive political evaluation. Now the many cynical tricks of these critics, their tactics and methods and the harm they have wrought in their attempts to distract dramatists and theatres from the party position on art, have become clear.

Anti-patriotic tendencies have appeared not only in theatrical but also in literary criticism.

L. Subotsky, the former secretary of the administration of the Union of Writers, was the original "leader" of the group of anti-patriotic literary critics. There he accused our foremost writers of

“chauvinistic patriotism,”<sup>1</sup> an accusation which appears to be the most harmful fabrication of the cosmopolitans, calculated to weaken the blow against cosmopolitanism. *Literaturnaya Gazeta* has in its time unmasked a whole series of bourgeois-cosmopolitan publications of L. Subotsky. One of his “followers,” the critic B. Dairedzhiev in an article for the symposium *In Memory of Belinsky*, also tried to prove that there is a danger in contemporary Soviet literature of “chauvinistic patriotism.”

The editing of the symposium *In Memory of Belinsky* is a highly responsible task. But the editor of the symposium, the cosmopolitan critic F. Levin, in preparing it for publication, approved a whole series of cosmopolitan, esthetic articles.

### An Example of Diversionary Work

F. Levin has for a long time been known for his rotten position in criticism. During the last period he has especially increased his disruptive activities. While working in the apparatus of the Union of Writers (Commission on Criticism), F. Levin taught the critics, playing the role of a “mentor.” Here is an example of his diversionary “work.” In December of 1947, speaking at a conference of critics who had come from the provinces, F. Levin presented as a model to those who had assembled—Yuzovsky and Gurvich. He was not sparing in his praise for these esthetes who have, said he, “a clearly expressed personality,” and “whose articles can be recognized without signature.” He extolled the “special elegance of phrase” of these critics, “the special sharp-wittedness with which their thoughts are expressed.” F. Levin showed himself to be the zealous defender of the nonsensical and lying legend that these impudent esthetes have a special right to be the only judges of our art. Levin treated party literary criticism as if it were only annotational and dull.

The critic, D. Danin, who stubbornly strives to silence and trample down everything new and progressive in our poetry, takes a formalistic esthetic position. In what is for him a programmatic article, “. . . Passion, struggle, action!” (*Novy Mir*, No. 10, 1948) esthete and cosmopolitan Danin comes forward as an apologist of “dramatism,” only in order to inculcate our poets with decadent tendencies toward what is detrimental and disruptive.

The cynical, impudent activity of B. Yakovlev (Holtzman) who tried to drag into the pages of the

*Novy Mir* [Russian literary magazine—G. F.] a pernicious anti-patriotic article has deep indignation. B. Holtzman calumniates in it all the achievements of our literature. Masking himself with concern for the future of Soviet art, indeed using such phrases as “the duty of Soviet writers,” “Soviet literature ought to . . .,” this “critic” is anxious to show that we have no literature, in an attempt to refute the high evaluation of the condition of Soviet literature which was given by Comrade V. M. Molotov in his report on the 31st anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution. The liquidationist positions of Yakovlev (Holtzman) coincide with the positions of the long-ago unmasked partisans of “a literature of fact,” of the formalists and esthetes. Thus, for example, he accuses Soviet literature of “not saying anything about the tens and hundreds of thousands of Soviet workers.” In this itself, he ignores the powerful method of socialist realism, its capacity for deep generalization and wide typification. B. Holtzman utilizes widely the worn-out method of accusing Soviet literature of “a stencil-like quality” and a “rubber-stamp-like quality,” of the “absence of sharp conflicts,” in an attempt to discredit our literature.

### Abominable Manifestation of Cosmopolitanism

Where there are no real ideological standards, where apologetic attitudes rule, there the most abominable and wildest manifestations of cosmopolitanism inevitably show themselves. The draft of the list of names (glossary) for the second edition of the Great Soviet Encyclopedia, distributed for discussion some time ago, can serve as an example.

Those who drew up this list in the division of “Literature of the Peoples of the USSR” have permitted lamentable mistakes, which can only call forth deep indignation. The names of the poets of the revolution of 1905 are missing from this list—Eugene Tarassov, Radin, Nèchaev and other workers’ poets are absent. However, the emigrants and open enemies of the October Revolution—Merezhkovsky, Gippius, Balmont, Averchenko and full-blown counter-revolutionary B. Savinkov are widely represented. Because of a strange “objectivity” the authors of the list intend to propagandize for these dregs of literature and to present to the reader this whole selection of names of venal betrayers of the motherland, enemies of the Soviet people. The authors of the list have not neglected to mention among the names of critics and literary figures the name of the frivolous reactionary, Aichenwald. A strange attitude of apology has forced the authors of the list to commemorate all these enemies of the revolution from Merezhkovsky and Savinkov to Taffy, and to give them a place in the encyclopedia at the expense of the names of writers dear to the memory of the people.

The cosmopolitan, objectivist views of the authors of this list are especially shown by their treatment of Jewish literature, by the names they have included

1. “Chauvinistic patriotism”—The original Russian reads “kvasniy patriotizm,” which means literally patriotism of **kvass**. **Kvass** in czarist and old Russian times was the national drink of the Russian people. The term “kvasniy patriotizm” arose in the nineteenth century with reference to those chauvinists who expressed their Russian patriotism by a preference for Russian customs and ways down to the last detail, even to the drinking of kvass in preference to Western European drinks. It thus came to refer to the most backward and chauvinistic elements in Russian life, who refused to adopt any of the social, political and philosophical ideas of Western Europe because they were not in keeping with Russian traditions. The concept of “one hundred per cent American” is the closest equivalent we have in this country.

in this division. The authors have attached the completely "curious" footnote: "This list includes all Jewish literature." Contemporary Jewish literature in the list occupies as much space as Uzbek, Cossack and Georgian literature taken together.

### Criticizing Literature Forward

The authors of the list jeer at the principle of the party, at the feeling of Soviet patriotism. They take "all Jewish literature" without distinction as to country or governmental system, dragging out cosmopolitan bourgeois-nationalistic notions, playing into the hands of enemies of our motherland concerning the so-called existence of a "world-wide" Jewish literature. In their list Soviet writers stand side by side

with the cunning contemporary businessmen of America, Palestine and other countries. It is impossible to call this "conception" anything else but a lackey-like crawling before inimical bourgeois-nationalist theories.

In order for our literature and criticism to develop successfully, it is necessary to unmask to the end all manifestations of bourgeois cosmopolitanism, of estheticism and of formalism.

Soviet literature in the best of its productions displays the life-creating force of Soviet patriotism, the labor feats of our people. A deeply principled and truly party criticism, stemming from the interests of the Soviet people, must help our literature in its forward movement.

## Correspondence

### Objects

Dear Editor:

The "critical discussion of Ruth Fischer's book" (*Stalin and German Communism*) by Jacques in the April issue of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL is almost a perfect model of the type of discussion of which there has been too much in the revolutionary socialist press. Here is a fairly extensive volume written by an active participant about a varied series of important events in one of the most crucial periods in world history (about which Americans particularly know much too little). There is extreme detail of personages, political problems and differences, possible evaluations. Yet all that Jacques find of worthwhile motivation is the necessity of defending Trotsky against Fischer and, in turn, of taking pot shots at the latter, with special attention to the idea that she is probably only a lately broken member of the Stalin school herself.

Possibly much of this may be valuable, and Jacques is justified in dealing with it. But not an entire article supposedly discussing a book about the many phases of the extended post-war I German revolution. No one is going to learn anything from laborious touches like these: "Ruth Fischer never learned to distinguish between Bolshevism and Stalinism, more specifically between Trotskyism and Stalinism; which is to say, in reality, between revolution and counter-revolution." And so on and on.

There was a wealth of historical material in the book that could have been discussed. If no one were found competent for this, a simple review would have been sufficient. The strongest obvious criticism this reader could make of the volume was its overemphasis on gossip, much of it unverified. Jacques answers with better, and presumably, verified gossip. Marxists can surely do better than that.

William BARTON

## Books in Review

### Sternberg's View

*LIVING WITH CRISIS*, by Fritz Sternberg. John Day, New York, N. Y.

The value of this book lies in the author's comprehensive understanding of the world as an interdependent unit in which politics and economics have been welded together. Unfortunately Dr. Sternberg has a tendency to present these as axioms rather than as analysis bolstered by fact.

Sternberg's examination of post-war American economy is based largely on

official reports, particularly the excellent Presidential economic reports. His study of European problems utilizes much of the data collected for the first time for Marshall Plan operation. Sternberg's forte is establishment of the correct interrelationships between these no longer separable economic forces. His emphasis on the world context for American economy and the dislocation caused by the shift of overwhelming economic power to the U. S. has not been treated so thoroughly elsewhere.

In an exceptionally felicitous phrase

Sternberg describes the present period as a "truce economy"—neither war nor peace. One of the outstanding features of this era is the permanent expansion of the American state into the largest single major force in U. S. capitalism, consuming about one third of the national income. Of the swollen national budget of \$42 billions, three-quarters goes for war costs, creating an enormous fixed drain of no productive value. Of this sum \$14 billions is allocated to maintaining and expanding the military establishment. For the first time during peace, armament has a great role in American life—at a time when the state has acquired unprecedented powers.

This larger political trend is accompanied by a rapid concentration. Sternberg points to the conclusions of the Federal Trade Commission report on war-time concentration under government aegis as part of the war production program and to the post-war merger movements which have shifted the structure of the economy. Concentration was so accelerated by the war that today 250 largest American corporations have a productive capacity equal to that of all of Western Europe combined. These monstrous monopolies exercise tremendous pressure on foreign policy. The needs of big capital are best satisfied by a foreign policy that is based on strategic considerations rather than direct export of capital. It is interesting that the Republican Party, for example, has been able to form a solid united front with the Democrats on foreign policy.

Unfortunately, Sternberg does not elucidate some of his interesting inferences on the changed character of U. S. imperialism. Three markets gave the U. S. its inflationary boom character: Pent-up demand for consumer goods was made effective by war savings. Exports continued heavy under impetus of lend-lease, UNRRA and Marshall Plan aid. New capital expenditures boosted producer goods manufacture in heavy industry, as obsolete machines and plants were modernized to cut labor costs (this too under government subsidy via tax rebates).

Each of these markets is in decline today.

It is Sternberg's thesis that the rise of the military sector at a time when these other markets are falling off is of such decisive importance as to take control of the economy. For the national military establishment, to be augmented shortly by Atlantic Pact commitments, creates a new market, one that is profitable, guaranteed and particularly reassuring to heavy industry.

While there is no war party here as yet, it is Sternberg's contention that an important section of monopolists will find their best and most certain market in military production. Any sharp economic decline could alter the balance of these major industrial sectors toward a vested interest in armaments. From this arises the terrible danger of tobogganing into war in order to preserve prosperity. In this manner foreign policy becomes for the first time a decisive factor in U. S. economy. Control of the vastly enhanced power of the state becomes a major objective of all social classes.

Now this central theme of Sternberg's book gives socialists a major interpretation of current forces and it has considerable validity. However, it is questionable if it occupies the place Sternberg gives to it. The main line of development of a war party in the U. S. depends on larger considerations of inter-imperialist conflict, while the trend described by Sternberg has an abetting character. An examination of the situation in 1939 would elucidate this. Roosevelt seems to have come to the realization that the cri-

sis was not soluble by Keynesian schemes and heavy industry had become deeply involved in war production. But these were forces which accelerated, not created, the basic antagonisms. This is precisely the fallacy of Beard's theory of Roosevelt as the Macchiavellian schemer. That he was, but he was also the defender of fundamental imperialist interests.

Sternberg's major thesis is well supported by a number of corollary ideas. For example, he sketches the basic difference between U. S. and European capitalist development. While the latter expanded as the manufacturing hub of a great trading periphery that supplied raw materials and served as a market, the U. S. grew as a continental expansion on the basis of a rich home market.

America has emerged as the greatest world power but it is still not the center of world trade. It buys very little and its exports have never exceeded 10 per cent of production in peacetime. This is why the dollar shortage bedevils the rest of the capitalist world. The behemoth of U. S. industry looms over the world but is itself not involved productively to the same degree as others are dependent upon it. The result is chronic imbalance.

Europe is impaled on a terrible dilemma. It must trade for survival, but its greatest competitor must also be its largest market if the economic wheels are to turn. But the U. S. is no such market. In spite of the free flow of American oratory on the subject, the U. S. is the greatest obstacle to "free trade."

When he makes his own political pro-

posals Sternberg seems to lose some of his objectivity. He is for a Third Camp, an independent democratic socialist Western Europe, free of both U. S. and Russian imperialism. Some of the best sections of the book deal with the potential of such an entity. Unfortunately, he torpedoes his own program by his insistence on the necessity of the Atlantic Pact to safeguard Europe from Russia while it is developing this Third Camp.

That there is a contradiction between this and his earlier excellent explanation of the dangers inherent in an expanded U. S. military program is ignored. These difficulties are to be overcome by "synchronizing" a domestic New Deal with a "New Deal in our foreign policy." At this point it becomes difficult to distinguish Sternberg from the plethora of would-be-advisers-to-the-State-Department.

While insisting that "without transformation of Europe's social structure a Third World War is inevitable," the place Sternberg gives to the U. S. in Western Europe is equivalent to a veto on such a transformation. In other parts of the book, such as in his excellent chapter on Germany, Sternberg explains the reactionary consequences of U. S. intervention quite adequately.

*Living in Crisis* is an extremely lively and intelligent commentary on contemporary world politics, while suffering the faults of a too great admiration for the possible achievements of U. S. foreign policy.

JACK BRAD

# Portrait of a Socialist Rebel

## A Commendable Biography of Eugene V. Debs

This book\* is the most comprehensive and probably the best biography yet written of Eugene Victor Debs. It is full of intimate historical detail, it is warm and sympathetic and it has been written by a man who obviously knows something about the problems besetting the socialist movement at the time Debs was its leader. But, best of all, the author has absorbed something of Debs' rebellious spirit; he does not pretend to some unattainable and hardly desirable objectivity, that chimera with which liberal historians so often delude themselves. He writes with passion and commitment. And that is the best thing about this book.

Debs began his career as a conservative craft unionist in a railroad brotherhood. He preached the doctrine of class collaboration, denied that there was any necessary conflict between labor and capital and

even ran as a candidate of and held office for the Terre Haute Democratic Party: His political shifts to the left were all based on his personal experience; he did not abandon a position until the most bitter experience had proved it to be indefensible. As a consequence, his political career took on the aspects of the classical pattern sketched out by Marxism, to which only a few people rigorously adhere in practice. He began as a conservative unionist; when he saw the impracticability of craft groups he helped form the American Railway Union, one of the first industrial unions in the U. S.; and when, after the bitter Pullman strike of 1894, he saw that unionism, even the most militant unionism, was not enough for the workers, he reluctantly and hesitantly moved toward socialism. Once he was a socialist, his revolutionary spirit constantly deepened; he never succumbed to the soft conservatism, the comfortable nostalgia which has characterized so many of the leaders of the

\**The Bending Cross*, by Ray Ginger. Rutgers University Press. \$5.00.

American Socialist Party in their later years. Till the day of his death in 1926, he remained a revolutionist.

Because of this pattern in Debs' career, Ginger's book is rather dull in its beginning. Too much detail is devoted to his activities as a conservative union leader. But it quickly picks up in interest and pace, moving to an impressive climax in Debs' imprisonment during the First World War. Ginger is at his best when he describes Debs' role in the Pullman strike of 1894 and the "Red Special" electoral campaign of Debs and the Socialist Party in 1908. Then, his writing takes on body and flavor, is quick with feeling and conviction. It is good that this book has been written by a man who obviously is some sort of socialist or rebel, who does not condescend to Debs from the superior wisdom of post-New Deal "liberalism." A fighting man deserves a fighting book.

### **What Did Debs Really Believe?**

Ginger's book raises certain interesting problems about Debs and the American socialist movement. What, first of all, did Debs really believe?

In his review of Ginger's book in the *New York Times*, Sidney Hook writes that "Although Debs belonged to the more militant wing of the Socialist Party, he was really an American populist who spoke in the Marxist idiom." Hook's statement is open to serious challenge. To say that someone was a populist means that he thought in terms of "the people" versus "the trusts" or "Wall Street," that he based himself primarily on agricultural sections of the population and that he either thought of reforming capitalism or did not believe the capitalism-socialism opposition to be meaningful.

But none of these statements holds for Debs. As early as 1899, when the Union Reform Party was organized, Debs wrote: "I am not in favor of such a party as is proposed, which, in the nature of things, must be founded in compromise and cannot long survive the internal dissensions which swept its predecessors from the field." (The Union Reform Party was, by the way, considerably more radical than the ADA or the Liberal Party of today.)

Debs explicitly declared that he believed that the working class was the major force on which the socialist movement should be based; in fact, a good deal of his activity was concerned with his repeated campaigns for the formation of industrial unions. Probably his major contribution in the realm of ideas to the socialist movement was his conception of the role of industrial unions in the U. S. Debs wrote: "It is either socialism or capitalism—complete freedom or total slavery. I am a socialist without a shadow of concession or compromise." These are hardly the words of "an American populist who spoke in the Marxian idiom."

Yet the question may not be quite settled; perhaps what is involved is not what Debs publicly said or thought he believed but the deepest, most instinctive

patterns of his thought. Debs was certainly deeply involved in the American tradition—his greatest hero was John Brown. He could not help being deeply affected by the populist movement, for he grew up at a time when it was beginning to stir.

But the point is that he had made the transition from mere populist radicalism to a coherent and conscious socialist view; he said so many times over and, more important, he behaved so—from his electoral campaigns to his endorsement of the Bolshevik Revolution, from his anti-war stand during the First World War to his very last breath. True, he was hardly a Marxist theoretician or scholar, but he did consciously and rigorously function according to a central political doctrine of Marxism: the theory of the class struggle. The mere fact that he had subsumed strands of the American tradition in his thought and speech, that he had absorbed the most rebellious qualities of populist *feeling*, made him no less a Marxist. He did not, it is true, write scholarly works on the origins of Marxian thought or the meaning of Marxian ideas, but he did something that is perhaps not very much less important: he lived and fought for those ideas.

All of these things are made quite clear in Ginger's book. The problem of Debs' attitude to the Bolshevik Revolution is also clarified. Debs was instinctively enthusiastic about the revolution and remained friendly to it through the last years of his life. At the same time, he refused to join any of the Communist groups in the U. S. and remained a dues-paying member of the Socialist Party. He was friendly to the Communist groups, though critical of their sectarian attitudes on a number of questions; he was also critical of the SP leadership while remaining a member of it. There may seem to be some inconsistency in this, and perhaps there is. But the fact is that by the 1920s Debs was a very tired and worn old man who was only intermittently active in politics. His ideas were much as before, and had he actively intervened in SP affairs he undoubtedly would have clashed very sharply with its right-wing leadership. On the other hand, had the early Communist groups been a little more intelligent and flexible in their behavior, Debs would have been drawn closer to them.

### **A Man of Heroic Aspect**

But the central problem that emerges from Ginger's study is that of Debs' personality. In his relations to the external world, to American society as a whole, Debs assumed a heroic aspect that only a few men had ever done before him. The comparison with Lincoln immediately strikes one and though inaccurate in many ways if taken as an objective measuring of two personalities, it is useful if seen in terms of mass response to them. Both had that strange charismatic power which the humble leader seems to hold over Americans, and had not Debs been a socialist he probably would have become as popular a figure in

American life as Lincoln. The American people seem to prefer their heroes half saints and half simple fellows; half promiscuous and pantheistic lovers of all living things and half crude, callow, poorly educated, folksy characters. Like Lincoln, Debs seems to have had that rare capacity for loving almost all men (except Gompers; there he drew the line), and again, like Lincoln, he could be a rather coarse small-town philosopher.

Quite apart from what must have been his extraordinary technical competence as a speaker (a talent he consciously and guilefully cultivated), Debs had a far rarer gift: he could charge an audience with his own emotion, and could communicate that emotion even through the most cliché-ridden phrases. That is why, as one reads his speeches now, one is astonished at how threadbare, how devoid of intellectual body and subtlety they are; but the test is not a fair one, for Debs was one of the few natural leaders America has ever produced, a man whose ties with the masses were based on far deeper and less tangible forces than mere words.

#### His Relations with the SP

Perhaps it was his singleness of being, his unity of personality, the fact that he lived and thought as he spoke, that so impressed his listeners. Still, it is necessary to remember that the gifted leader came at a time when the socialist movement, both in the U. S. and in Europe, was on the uprise, when the effects of industrialism were first beginning to be felt in the U. S. and when the political scene was unclouded by such complicating and demoralizing factors as Stalinism and fascism. Much of the growth of the socialist movement was due to Debs' personal status, but that status could hardly have been attained if there had not been fertile conditions for the movement's growth.

In his relations with the Socialist Party, Debs' peculiar role as a leader caused continuous difficulties. He never had much sense of party discipline, even of the most general kind; he attended only one Socialist Party convention in his whole life, presumably on the ground that he did not want to get involved in factional battles. Debs felt himself to be in direct contact with the masses of workers and socialists (as, of course, he was) and did not seem to think that he had a direct responsibility to the party he led. Many of the right-wing leaders of the SP attacked him for this attitude, and while we would sympathize with Debs against them politically, we could not deny that in terms of formal relations between a leader and his party the right-wing criticism had merit. For a leader who takes the attitude of remaining above the party battle, when there is one, is behaving undemocratically; he is refusing to subject himself to the political and intellectual conditions that the members must face. And he thereby also helps perpetuate a myth about himself—a myth that, while the other leaders squabble inside the party, he rises above such petty

considerations and works for it in the outside world.

In Debs' individual case, the dangers of this sort of behavior were mitigated by his genuine extensive contact with the rank and file, his actual scrupulousness in dealing with all factions of the movement, and his personal kindness which made it impossible for him to attack sharply even those comrades with whom he disagreed. But the distasteful consequences of such leadership habits can be seen in Debs' successor as the leader of the SP, who has repeatedly used his personal prestige to edge the party into policies it might otherwise not favor.

What remains ultimately in one's memory of the story of Debs is the portrait of an extraordinarily heroic and rebellious man—one with limited intellectual powers, uncultivated cultural responses, somewhat one-sided personal attitudes, but infinite compassion and courage. We lay no monopolistic claim to his memory; we do not know what he would think or do if he were alive today, nor do we think it possible for anyone else to know. But we believe that his quick sense of rebellion against injustice, his untiring loyalty to his own beliefs and values are extremely relevant today. Perhaps the example to be drawn from his life is even more important than the precise determination of his ideas, for while other socialists have thought and written better, none has lived and fought better.

R. FAHAN

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