

The New _____
INTERNATIONAL

MARCH • 1945

NOTES OF THE MONTH

YALTA

RECONVERSION

By J. R. Johnson

From the Bureaucratic Jungle

Max Shachtman on the SWP

Discussion on the Russian Question

By the International Communists of Germany

SINGLE COPY 20c

ONE YEAR \$1.50

THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

A Monthly Organ of Revolutionary Marxism

Vol. XI

No. 2, Whole No. 95

Published monthly by the New International Publishing Co., 114 West 14th Street, New York, 11, N. Y. Telephone: CHelsea 2-9681. Subscription rates: \$1.50 per year; bundles, 14c for five copies and up. Canada and foreign: \$1.75 per year; bundles, 16c for five and up. Entered as second-class matter July 10, 1940, at the post office at New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879.

Editor: MAX SHACHTMAN

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Notes of the Month:

THE YALTA CONFERENCE..... 35

Articles:

RECONVERSION—I

By J. R. Johnson 40

FROM THE BUREAUCRATIC JUNGLE—II

By Max Shachtman 46

For Discussion:

THE HIGHER SCHOOL OF POLEMICS—I

THE RUSSIAN QUESTION 51

Archives:

REVISIONIST PLANNING AND THE WORKERS

By Leon Trotsky 59

Books in Review:

WECHSLER ON JOHN L. LEWIS

By W. J. 63

PLENTY FOR ALL

The Meaning of Socialism

By ERNEST LUND

A Popular Presentation of the Socialist Viewpoint

Why There Is an Age of Plenty

Why There Is Poverty in This Age of Plenty

Who Controls the Wealth Labor Produces

Why There Are Rich and Poor

What an Equitable Society Is

How It Can Be Achieved

Socialism as the Hope of Humanity

Ernest Lund has provided, in this pamphlet, an indispensable instrument for revolutionary socialist agitation. Avoiding the use of technical terminology, and confining himself to a simple and forceful exposition of the basic ideas of Marxism, he has written a pamphlet that any worker can read and understand.

Sixty Pages

10 Cents per Copy

Seven Cents per Copy in Bundles of Five or More

Published by the

WORKERS PARTY OF THE UNITED STATES

114 West 14th Street

New York 11, N. Y.

I enclose _____ for _____ copies of PLENTY FOR ALL.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

A Monthly Organ of Revolutionary Marxism

VOLUME XI

MARCH, 1945

NUMBER 2

NOTES OF THE MONTH

The Yalta Conference

It is difficult for the average worker to understand what took place at Yalta and to assess at their true value the reports of Churchill and Roosevelt. If he is a militant trade unionist, with some years of experience behind him, he is, in normal times, sensitive enough to the wiles, tricks, bluff, cunning, brutality and unscrupulousness of capitalists in a strike struggle. When the struggle is removed to the political plane, the worker is likely to be deceived by the fact that the center of government is remote; appeals are made to him in the name of "the nation" and it is hard to see that the state does not act as mediator of conflicting interests and guardian of the welfare of all; it is hard to see that the same capital which wages relentless war against the worker in the process of production is the same capital which controls the state and uses the same bluff, cunning, unscrupulousness, tricks and deceptions, which it uses in the struggle over wages and conditions of labor: the class struggle has been merely transferred to a new plane.

It becomes still more difficult to pierce behind the veil of capitalist politics when it deals with what is called "foreign affairs." But the same capital that oppresses the worker in the factory and bluffs him with talk about "the nation" in national politics, is the same capital which carries on its international competition, intrigues and maneuvers which periodically explode into war. The difference in its methods is one of degree, not of quality. Simply because the subjects of war, peace, international agreements, etc., are still further beyond the immediate knowledge and understanding of the average worker, there is no limit to the lies, the frauds, the almost inconceivable brazenness with which the capitalist politicians deceive the people.

They do not deceive one another. Each of them knows quite well what the stakes are and how they are to be won. But because war imposes an unbearable strain upon the soldiers, sailors, airmen and war workers, the statesmen spare no pains to disguise their actual proceedings as acts of benevolence, inspired by love of humanity and what they call "enlightened" national interest. Every communiqué and every speech is wrapped around in so many lies and presented in such a dressing that only those trained and sharpened by long years of hostility to every phase and form of bourgeois society can make some penetration into the greed, the cruelty, the rottenness, the hypocrisy, that are hidden behind the exuberant oratory and the careful, precise phrasing of official documents.

In this sphere, no conference has exceeded Yalta. The NEW INTERNATIONAL has unweariedly made the class necessity of the capitalists the basis of its analysis of the war. We shall now use the Yalta Conference to show in concrete detail what these capitalist politicians are up to. We shall use their own words.

The legend is that Roosevelt, Stalin and Churchill met at Yalta (a) to finish off Germany, the inveterate enemy of world peace; (b) to organize a new world structure so as to ensure lasting peace; (c) to settle the problems of liberated Europe so as to initiate a new era of well-being for the suffering and war-torn peoples.

All of it is lies. They met (a) to jockey for position in the scramble over the spoils of the war and to battle for positions so as to be well placed for the next war; (b) to organize a new world structure so that they could deceive the people with hopes of peace at last; (c) to ensure that they and they alone will have the whip-hand in the suppression and exploitation of the European people. We propose not to prove but to demonstrate this beyond any shadow of doubt by analysis of their own statements and relevant comments.

The Interests at Stake

Power ruled at the conference—naked power. Stalin had made the Foreign Secretaries come to Moscow in preparation for the last conference. He made Roosevelt and Churchill come to Teheran—sixty miles from the Russian border. He made them come to Russian soil for this one. Such is the relationship between the powers. Even the site of a conference is decided by the victories of the armies. That is the only law they understand.

The years 1943 and 1944 have seen the astonishing emergence of Russia as a great military power. Its armies have swept over Eastern Europe from the Arctic to the Black Sea. They hold the territories they have conquered. Russia can be driven from its conquests only by force. And where is that force to come from today? Certainly not from the armies of Britain and the United States. Furthermore, Russia's armies are still needed to clinch the German defeat. To a considerable degree Russia has now taken the place of Germany as the dominant European power.

But that was only one ace that Stalin held. He held another. Of the three powers at the conference, Russia is the only great Asiatic power in the world of today and of tomorrow. Britain's India is seething with hostility to Britain. It lies at the end of thousands of miles of communication by sea. China is even further away from the United States. Ships, men, planes, tanks and guns have to be transported there. Industrialization as far as possible and training of adequate native armies will take years. They would also constitute a deadly threat to the very imperialist power which provides them. Siberian Russia, on the other hand, with its industries and its manpower, runs along the border of China. It faces Japan. Russia has a common border with India. Bourgeois Europe is already exhausted and is a shambles. When the

European war is over, Russia, despite its losses, will be able to develop a substantial military power ready to interfere or to threaten in the Far East. The vastly superior economic power of the United States is handicapped by distance. So that Stalin did not have to say much at the conference. His power stared his rivals in the face. Roosevelt and Churchill knew exactly what they in Stalin's place would do.

Russia held a third card. The Communist Parties in Europe could bring dangerous pressure upon any existing European government, might even overthrow it. Many millions in "Red" China occupied strategic positions and looked to Russia as guide and mentor. Even in Greece, Stalin could have made almost insurmountable trouble for British imperialism by inciting instead of restraining the ELAS and the EAM. He had refrained, in pursuit of his own interests. But if his interests were threatened, he could refuse to refrain.

Roosevelt, on the other hand, still had his own war to win against Japan. He had used Britain as an outpost to prevent the concentration of European power in the hands of one country—Germany. The result had been the impending defeat of Germany, but with Russian power substituted for German power. This was the hard reality. He had no force at present with which to challenge Stalin, for a war against Russia was politically out of the question *now*.

Churchill was in much the same position as Roosevelt except that Roosevelt represented the tremendous power of American imperialism and Churchill represented a Britain in a strategically impossible situation, its Empire in decline, its economy backward, its resources wasted in war, dependent upon the United States despite its conflicts with it.

Such roughly were the forces at the conference. The European liberated countries were not represented there. Their fate was being decided but they had no power, so they weren't even asked. No. Only power sat down at the conference table and power, which, at the moment, was (roughly) represented as we have outlined it. One conclusion flows from this. *The decisions, such as they were, were the result of the force each represented, modified by the opposing forces.*

We do not deny the influence of personality in history. But the idea that Roosevelt's personality or Stalinist "realism" or the experience that comes from having worked together, or, growing confidence, altered the major lines of decision is all smoke-screen to deceive the people. What was decided was decided by force. What was *not* decided was left open to be decided by the relationship of forces at a later stage.

But these three gentlemen were acutely conscious of a third force, invisibly present at the conference. That force was the people of Europe, of Asia, and the people whom they had left at home. Every decision or avoidance of decision had to be dressed up to make a favorable appearance before the people, to encourage them to fight on, to still their doubts, to keep their hopes alive. Such was the game at the conference. Such is it now.

The Fate of Germany

Take Germany, the key to the conference, as it is to every conference. The conference laid down a list of fearful penalties to be imposed upon Germany. The conference declared that the powers had come to agreement about Germany which would be disclosed later. Lies for the most part. Read the declaration. The terms will be imposed "after German resistance has been *finally* crushed." To anyone who knows these slick artists that *finally* sounds a trifle odd. Observe then the very

next sentence: "These terms will not be made known until the *final* defeat of Germany has been accomplished." A little further down they say that they will take "*in harmony* such other measures . . . as may be necessary to the future peace," etc., etc. They promise to "remove or destroy" all German military equipment. Who will remove what? Will it be done "in harmony"? They promise to "eliminate or control all German industry which could be used for military production." Who will eliminate, who will control what, and will it be done "in harmony"? Nobody knows. They themselves do not know.

Behind these apparently innocuous sentences is hidden a deadly conflict. Who will control Germany? Only power will decide. That's why everything waits until the final, so final, defeat of German armed resistance.

Why should the future control of Germany be so important? The bourgeois commentator, Walter Lippmann, told us why even before the Conference concluded. He wrote that *THE* problem of the Conference was whether Britain and the United States would control Germany for use in a future war against Russia, or whether Russia would control Germany in a future war against Britain and the United States, or whether they could come to some agreement.

Departing from his usual urbanity, this always well-informed writer apologized for putting the thing so crudely; but if he softened it, people might not realize the seriousness of the situation.

Stalin, we should note, came with his well-publicized Free German Committee in reserve. It could become another Lublin Government, to be used against both the German revolution and his dear but treacherous allies. That problem is not settled yet. If ever the powers destroy German industry, Germany can always be rearmed. It depends upon who does the rearming. So far Stalin has not lost anything. He appears to have given up the Free German Committee (but it is still there). Instead he has got, among other things, that the question of German reparations will be discussed in Moscow. There the matter rests.

When Roosevelt returned home he walked very carefully around the German question. The *New York Herald Tribune* of March 2 commented on his speech as follows:

In his discussion of the proposed treatment of Germany, the President shows himself a good deal more sensitive than either Mr. Churchill or Mr. Stalin seems to be to the dangers of too Draconian an attitude. He is careful to describe the proposed occupation as "temporary"; he emphasizes the fact that unconditional surrender "does not mean the destruction or enslavement of the German people," but only the destruction of militarism and Nazism; he speaks only of ending Germany's "production of armament," which is a little different from the Yalta phrase, "all industry that could be used for military production," and in illustrating the meaning of "reparations in kind" he speaks of plants, machinery, materials and rolling stock but does not mention labor.

The Conference claims that it will punish the German *rulers* but not enslave the German *people*. In reality, while some outstanding leaders will be punished, German capital, the basis of German rule, will be fought over while the masses of the German people will, as far as the powers are concerned, bear the burdens of the peace.

Few know these big powers as well as do the small ones. A dispatch from London, published on the same day as the report of the Yalta Conference gave their expert opinion:

What it all amounts to, in the view of several small governments in London, is that the big powers have usurped sovereignty over all Europe and have accepted jointly the responsibility of running it at least until they fall out among themselves—an eventu-

ality against which they have sought to protect themselves by establishing a machinery for continuing the alliance after Germany has been beaten. The cynical view is that, faced with a common enemy, they have postponed crucial decisions because none of them wishes to face them at the present, when Germany's defeat is priority No. 1 among them all.

Absolutely correct. As soon as Germany is defeated the smouldering disagreement about the future of Germany will begin to crackle.

Roosevelt's Liberation

Roosevelt did not fight Hitler for Stalin's benefit. He did not fight Hitler for the benefit of the enslaved peoples of Europe. Stalin has seized all *he* aims at in Eastern Europe. The battle for the new Germany is still to be fought. Roosevelt, therefore had at least to establish his position in Western Europe. The main enemy there is the aspirations of the masses of the people. Roosevelt had to make clear that in the future (behind the cover of establishing democratic governments and "free elections") the United States was going to be as much master as was Stalin in the East of Europe. He did so with no uncertain hand.

The Declaration on Liberated Europe starts off with gaudy pleasures about democratic rights for the liberated peoples of Europe. Then Roosevelt got down to business.

"To foster the conditions which the liberated peoples may exercise these rights, the three governments will jointly assist the people in any European liberated state or former Axis satellite state in Europe *where in their judgment conditions require...*"

This is familiar language. They, these three powers, will *in their judgment* decide whether conditions demand their assistance.

Assistance for what?

"A, to establish conditions of internal peace."

So now we know! Who previously took upon himself to decide whether conditions in any country required his intervention to establish internal peace? Who but that deservedly hated and abused tyrant, Adolf Hitler?

The Big Three serve notice on the European workers to keep themselves quiet in their hovels or be forcibly dealt with.

Section C is as follows: "... to form interim governmental authorities broadly representative of all democratic elements in the population..."

And so that everyone will have no doubt as to what is intended, the Declaration says: "The three governments will *consult* the other United Nations and provisional authorities or other governments in Europe where matters of direct interest to them are under consideration."

That is one place at least where their democratic imperialism is superior to fascism. They will *consult* the authorities before they intervene. That is democracy for you.

The emphasis on their authority is stated again and again.

"When, *in the opinion of the three governments*, conditions in *any* European liberated state or *any* former Axis satellite state in Europe make such action necessary, they will immediately consult together on the measures necessary to discharge the joint responsibilities set forth in this declaration."

The gangster-like menace of the Declaration can be seen in its last paragraph. France is a liberated state, but the Declaration makes France subject to intervention whenever these three decide upon it. De Gaulle has been demanding all sorts of privileges, getting little but trying hard to detract the attention of the French people from their internal problems by posing as the rebuilders of a strong France. In their statement

on Germany, the three powers offered France a share in the occupation "if she should so desire." Take it or leave it.

But now after warning France that they will intervene in her affairs as ruthlessly as in the affairs of Greece or Rumania, they again offer de Gaulle a share of the loot if he will come in. "In issuing this Declaration, the three powers express the hope that the provisional government of the French Republic may be associated with them in the procedure suggested." France is the most powerful of the liberated nations. She and she alone can attempt to lead a coalition of resistance. She is hereby warned again. Come in on our terms or take the consequences.

Stalin has established himself in Eastern Europe. Roosevelt now prepares to subordinate Western Europe to his own control. He will use relief (promised in the Declaration) but he will use American economic power and (if necessary) American arms.

With the Declaration in one hand and American capital (and relief) in the other, Roosevelt proposes to do for Western Europe what Stalin has done for Eastern. The European governments, terrified by their economic bankruptcy and in fear of their own rebellious people, fear even to put up a squeak.

So that the great war to prevent the domination of the European continent by one power ends in its proposed domination by two, one of them not European at all. The great war to free the European nations from alien tyranny ends in proposals for a new tyranny.

The shamefulness of it! The cold-blooded use of the most generous sentiments of the American people, the expenditure of their strength and the blood of their sons, the ballyhoo about liberating Europe for freedom and democracy and now, this, the open determination to enchain them once more for the benefit of Russian and American imperialism.

The Declaration talks about doing all this until the "free promised elections" are over. But in his report to Congress, Roosevelt added yet another ferocious rider. Once there had been a "free expression of the people's will," then "our *immediate* responsibility ends..." Ends? No, sir! "*With the exception* only of such action as may be agreed upon in the international security organization," which will be dominated by these three powers.

In his long report to the Commons, Churchill left this question of the liberated countries alone, except for Italy and Greece. He prudently emphasized that he and Roosevelt were working together, hand in hand in Italy. Roosevelt came away from Yalta with his sphere of influence clearly defined. Churchill had hoped that he would be able to establish Britain along the Atlantic seaboard. Naturally he still *hopes* to do so. But what can he offer? Relief? Economic rehabilitation? He can do neither. Politically he ruined his European influence by his actions in Greece. Here we may note *how* Roosevelt helped him. As Leland Stowe has shown, Roosevelt gave him American transport planes to take in British soldiers when Britain and its Greek satellites *were losing* in Athens. But at the same time Roosevelt took care to discredit Churchill by having Stettinius, guardedly but unmistakably, denounce the intervention. It is in this way that the Conference prepared and envisages its further plans for the "liberation" of Europe.

The Partition of Poland

We do not propose to analyse the actual declaration of the Conference on Poland. Its terms are familiar, and what it means, where it came from and where it is going can be clear-

ly demonstrated from a far more revealing document, Churchill's speech.

This representative of British imperialism, who slumps lower in his chair and looks more miserable at every succeeding conference, faced a Herculean task in explaining the Polish decision to the British people.

The European war had begun, be it remembered, by Britain declaring war on Germany to protect the independence of Poland. Churchill and British imperialism care as much about Poles and their hopes for the futures as they care about the wishes and desires of Bolivians or Koreans. But Britain could not afford to see Germany spread itself over Europe by incorporating Poland. Now the terrible fact was that Poland would be incorporated from the East, by Russia. And Britain was in no position to start another war to prevent this. Churchill understood the harsh, the bitter fact of Stalin's present power. He understood also the fears of his imperialist followers; and the resentment of the British people at the old power politics reappearing so starkly even before this devastating war was over. He therefore began his speech by a most extraordinary procedure. His very first words were:

"The recent conference in the Crimea faced realities and difficulties in so exceptional a manner that the results constitute an act of state on which Parliament should formally express its opinion.

"The government feel that they have a right to know where they stand with the House of Commons. . . .

"The House should not *shrink* from its duty of pronouncing."

He had drafted a resolution and he made it a question of confidence in his government. Why should the House "*shrink*" from pronouncing? Why this threat to the House to support him or take the consequences? Obviously because Britain had been routed at Yalta. Future decisions on Europe's fate were no longer in Britain's hands as during some two hundred years of European history. Churchill knew that nothing else could have been done and so he took the unusual step of calling the decisions "an act of state" and demanding that all accept them. It is many, many decades since a British statesman has faced such a problem. Four years ago Churchill called upon the British people to fight in such a way that if the Empire lived a thousand years men would say that this was their finest hour. They responded. And what has been the result? Today, with victory in sight, the Empire faces the darkest future in its history for over a century and a half.

We do not propose to weary our readers with the historical lies and falsifications with which Churchill tried to justify the "Curzon Line." What is more important is that on more than one occasion he had to declare: "I repudiate and repulse any suggestion that we are making a questionable compromise or yielding to force or fear." But that is precisely what he had to do.

The great problem was: Would there be free and democratic elections in Poland? And here the world was treated to the farcical spectacle of hearing a British Prime Minister asking the House of Commons "How will phrases like 'Free and unfettered elections on the basis of universal suffrage and secret ballot' be interpreted?"

Is there any jackass in any part of Western Europe, or for that matter, in any part of the civilized world, which could not bray out the answer that even in bourgeois society free and unfettered elections and universal suffrage mean elections that are free and unfettered, that universal suffrage means suffrage for everybody and that a secret ballot means

balloting in secret? Why, then, does Churchill make such a colossal ass of himself by questioning the House of Commons, so proud of its democratic history and traditions, on this very question? Because, of course, as his hearers knew, Stalin's promise of free elections meant elections that were free so long as he could get his own way in Poland. And that way meant the domination of Poland by Russia. The war had been fought, among other reasons to maintain British influence in Europe. Now, that influence seemed to depend on whether Stalin would allow the Poles to vote freely. Not a single member of Parliament but knew that this was the real issue. A fascist Poland, *devoted to Britain*, Churchill would have defended as vigorously as he has defended Franco and Mussolini.

"What Is Democracy?"

This accounts for the ridiculous spectacle Churchill made of himself and the House of Commons on this occasion, so important for their beloved but exhausted Empire.

"What," he asked, are "democratic parties"? This becomes suddenly one of the philosophical problems of the age. "People," he said, "always take different views on that." He spewed forth some more casuistic muck. Then once more raised his voice in agony. "What," he asked again, "are democratic parties?" Then he answered the question himself. "Obviously that is capable of being settled." But who would settle it, that was the problem. To that problem everybody knew the answer so far. So Churchill (how pitiable a figure is this) could only ask God and man yet once more: "Will the elections be what we should say was free and fair in this country, making some allowance for the great disorder and confusion which prevail?"

Then came a masterpiece of obfuscation, confusion and evasion. "These are questions upon which we have the clearest views in accordance with the principles of the declaration on liberated Europe to which all three governments have subscribed." We have seen what that declaration says and what it means. It would affect the Polish people—not Stalin.

But, having made the best case he could, Churchill then spoke some words which more than anything else show what Yalta represented and the future that faces the world. We recommend them to our readers, for Churchill here, as so often, spoke with the freedom of desperation. "I decline absolutely to embark here upon a discussion about Russian good faith. It is quite evident that these matters touch the whole future of the world. *Terrible, indeed, would be the fortunes of mankind if some awful schism arose between the Western democracies and the Russian people, if all future world organizations were rent asunder and a new cataclysm of inconceivable violence destroyed what is left of the treasures and liberties of mankind.*"

How could any man say more clearly that all those who thought they knew better than he what democracy and free elections should mean in Poland, should bear in mind what this fanaticism on their part would lead to.

The NEW INTERNATIONAL has repeatedly stated that Stalin's real aims in Poland were imperialist, to seize that country and rule it. What particular forms that rule might take, what concessions, if any, he made at Yalta rest on the fact that he now controls the country. His main enemy, the organized Warsaw proletariat, he was careful to throw into the jaws of the German army, where it was destroyed. For the rest, the GPU is now busy preparing to make the proposed elections as free as possible by physically destroying all opposition. Then, in the typical manner that Stalin has so often used inside Russia, they will be able to declare that Poland was united as

never before. There may be changes in form. Imperialist clashes may cause Stalin to change his plans, either by a genuine modification of the government (with power still in his own hands, of course) or by still more drastic control of Poland than he envisages at present. Revolutions in Europe, the resistance of the Polish people, can alter the balance of forces. One thing, however, remains certain. No free and unfettered elections will take place. No votes, free or unfree, will alter the fate of Poland. To believe that is to sink even below the level of Churchill as he stood before the House of Commons and (may the moment live in history) solemnly asked: What is a free election?

We should not underestimate Churchill. It was the situation of British imperialism that put the clown's cap on his head. His recognition of the bleak future is shown by this. To the Polish soldiers who were fighting for the independence of Poland he offered citizenship in the British Empire. No doubt the problem of what was a free election would be easier settled in Britain than in Poland.

Other Problems

The question of the world organization cannot conveniently be treated here. In a recent issue of the *Saturday Evening Post*, Edgar Snow has placed before the American people the sharpening imperialist lusts and jealous rivalries in the Far East. Roosevelt aims to establish himself in Western Europe and Southern China. Stalin is already in Eastern Europe and Northern China. Poland is lost to Roosevelt; the ruins of Germany remain to be fought over. There has been and will be hard bargaining over Russia's rôle in the Japanese war. Force will decide.

Force will decide. Force alone decides. Once more is this demonstrated by the first sentence of the Yalta statement on Yugoslavia. France, we remember, was told to take it or leave it. The Polish government in exile was told the same. But Tito, ah! Tito enjoys the protection of Stalin. Therefore the conference proposals on Yugoslavia were introduced thus: "We have agreed to recommend to Marshal Tito and Dr. Subusitch..." Tito did not attend the conference but he was represented there all right. An extra spicy ingredient in these maneuvers is provided by de Gaulle. While he spectacularly refused to meet Roosevelt, Churchill revealed that he had invited Bidault, de Gaulle's Foreign Minister, to hear all about the conference, and Bidault had turned up. Thus de Gaulle can make his gestures to the French people as guardian of the dignity of a strong France (while the people starve); but at the same time his Foreign Minister carries on the intrigues with the other powers, based on power.

Conclusion

Yalta therefore did not lay the basis of world peace. Yalta did not mean the beginning of a new epoch of freedom for mankind. Yalta did not inaugurate a new stage of understanding between the Big Three. Yalta was a conference of imperialist politicians who settled their problems according to the forces that they control today and expect to control tomorrow. Its decisions were wrapped in a cloud of lies and falsification, but they are clear enough as far as they go. The bourgeois speeches and editorials which have followed the conference are of the same stamp—struggle for imperialist interests, representation of them to the people as the beginning of a new world order which will repay them for all their sacrifices. But the people are not fooled. Reports from Britain tell

us of the cynicism and the sense of inferiority which permeates the masses of the British people. The word cynicism should not be misinterpreted. In an individual it is often the prelude to abstention from politics. But the people cannot abstain. They have to live. Cynicism with them is but the preparatory stage to seeking a new way of life, for live they must and if not in the old way, then in a new one. The new way is socialism, the fraternal unity of the European peoples. For the British people, this problem is more urgent since Yalta. Trotsky, at the beginning of the World War, once used a phrase that the old ruling class rots on its feet. The British ruling class can no longer even pretend to itself to have a future. As Churchill ended his speech, premonition of doom and fear as to what next crept into it.

I suppose that during these last three winter months the human race all the world over have undergone more physical agony and misery than at any other period through which this planet has passed.

In the Stone Age, numbers were fewer and primitive creatures little removed from animal origin knew no better. We suffer more. We feel more. I must admit in this war I never felt so grave a sense of responsibility as I did at Yalta. In 1940 and 1941, when we in this island were all alone and invasion was so near, the actual steps we ought to take and our attitude toward them seemed plain and simple....

Now we enter into a world of imponderables, and at every stage self-questioning arises. It is a mistake to look too far ahead. Only one link in the chain of destiny can be handled at will.

Despite his personal resilience, he is old and tired. He paid a significant tribute to Eden, but if and when Eden succeeds him, he will be found to be old and tired too. The age and the fatigue are not in birth certificates or in their arteries. It is in the senile Empire which they represent.

The British people must read the writing on the wall. British labor will have to recognize that the only power which can save it is its own power in a socialist Britain; the only European combination on which it can depend for safety henceforth is a combination of the workers of Europe, the Russian workers included. For the masses of the British people, the independence of Poland is a vital necessity but it is an independence which can be gained only by uncompromising struggle against both Churchill and Russia, not by sticking one's nose in the air and bleating "What is a free election?", not by allowing Stalinism to multiply its influence over Europe, and not by listening quietly to the fears and terror and hopelessness which now are creeping on the British ruling class after the sacrifice of so much blood and wealth in the name of peace and security. Churchill and his labor lieutenants must go. They have nothing more to offer. That is the lesson of Yalta for the British workers.

And Yalta should prove a turning point in comprehension for the American workers, too. Their fate is involved. Roosevelt is now engaged in a desperate struggle for world mastery. No one can tell in what ways this will finally work out. But the conclusion is inevitable. Infinite blood, infinite tears, infinite destruction and at the end all will be to do again unless the workers break imperialist power. Yalta should be a landmark in the history of many an American worker, marking a stage where he turned away from the imperialist solution of international problems to the road of proletarian revolution.

Reconversion—1

The Conflict in the Capitalist Class

The battle over reconversion is on, and it is following classic lines. The workers have not yet expressed themselves in any organized fashion and therefore the bourgeoisie is waging an all-out battle as to how the problem is to be settled (within the well-defined limits of bourgeois society). That is the significance of the conflict between Jones and Wallace.

The actual crisis is not here as yet. When, as in the crisis of 1932, the great masses of the people begin to react to a situation fast becoming intolerable, the bourgeoisie will subordinate its disagreements behind a leader who has a mass basis powerful enough to enable him to control the nation. Such a leader was Roosevelt in 1932. But bourgeois society has moved a long way since then. The Roosevelt New Deal was tried, failed, and now is dead. But the problem of 1932 has grown. The war has so accelerated the economic and political development of the country that the defeat of Germany may overnight precipitate the opening battle not in words but in deeds, not in Senate committees, but in sit-downs like Brewster's and other mass action.

It is no mere reconversion to peace-time production as at the end of the last war. At the very beginning we have to establish the fundamental fact that under the misleading title of Reconversion is hidden, and very imperfectly, the economic and social future of the United States. The workers must know this, for the bourgeoisie has known it, since 1939 at least. In that year the National Resources Board reported to the President on the structure of the National Economy. At the very beginning of the report (p. 3) the authors uttered this solemn warning:

"The opportunity for a higher standard of living is so great, the social frustration from the failure to obtain it is so real, that other means will undoubtedly be sought if a democratic solution is not worked out. The time for finding such a solution is not unlimited."

These gentlemen, knowing that a large official report was not likely to be read by the masses, discreetly but unmistakably warned of social revolution:

"Moreover, as people become increasingly aware of the discrepancy between rich resources and poor results in living and as the ineffectiveness in the organization of resources becomes more clear, a sense of social frustration must develop and be reflected in justified social unrest and unavoidable friction. Individual frustration builds into social frustration. And social frustration is quite as likely to work itself out in socially destructive as in socially constructive ways."

At the very end of the report, in fact in a very short chapter, devoted almost entirely to this topic and entitled Conclusion, the reporters revert once more to the problem with which they began:

"The serious failure to use these resources to the full is placing our democratic institutions in jeopardy. The maintenance of democracy requires that an adequate solution be found to the problem of keeping resources fully employed...."

"This is a problem so broad in its scope and so basic in its character that no simple solution is likely to be found in a day or in a year. If a democratic solution is to be worked out, it will be the product of many minds working through a period of years."

It is obvious that, in 1939, they were not too certain that "a democratic solution" could be worked out, but that, although the time was not unlimited, it was not too limited. Since then the contradictory elements which so scared them in 1939 have doubled and trebled themselves. In 1939 they could look back to a total production of 80 billions in 1929, a crash to 60 billions in 1932 and a return to the 1929 level in 1938 chiefly through government spending and preparation for war. Today in 1945, the annual production is approaching 200 billions. A fall from this to the old pre-war fluctuations would be the prelude to disaster. Furthermore, owing to the increase in technological development, the productive capacity per man-hour, is far in advance of 1939. The problem therefore is much worse than it looks. What is infinitely more dangerous for them is that the great masses of the people, particularly the workers, have been indelibly educated by the achievements of the productive system and the social and political lessons of the war. That discrepancy between national resources and standards of living which the reporters of 1939 noticed is now the common experience of the workers. They will not stand for it a second time. That is the problem and there is no other problem. The bourgeoisie is not seeking a solution because its heart bleeds to see workers unemployed or living poorly. It seeks a solution because it knows that otherwise the workers will revolt. But if the workers will not tolerate mass unemployment, then the bourgeoisie equally will not tolerate social revolution. And to crush social revolution the bourgeoisie resorts to fascism. That is the background of the constant harping by the New Deal economists on the theme: "if a democratic solution is not worked out in time."

Democracy and Fascism.

Roosevelt, Wallace and the great mass of government politicians and bureaucrats do not want fascism. They know that fascism will sweep them and their political power and their administration boards into the dust-bin. But they know too that without the slightest hesitation big capital will exchange them for fascism if they lose the capacity to control the workers. To control the workers requires that the aforementioned discrepancy which has reached such frightening proportions must be closed. Hence today the frantic ones are the Roosevelt politicians, who may or many not worship big capital, but who know that their hides are at stake. That, so far, is the Reconversion problem, and to pose it in any other terms is to deceive not the bourgeoisie or the Roosevelt government but the workers.

Every responsible politician realizes that the opening battle, symbolized for the moment in the conflict between Wallace and Jones, is in reality a reflection of the struggle between the workingclass and capitalist society. In his "State of the Nation" message to Congress (and having the Wallace recommendation to the Senate in mind), the President spoke plainly and directly to the capitalist class. "Our policy is, of course, to rely as much as possible on private enterprise to provide jobs." Roosevelt is and always has been a pillar of capitalism, in the United States and all over the world. "But," he continued, "the American people will not accept mass unemployment or mere makeshift work." On Saturday, January 27, Walter Lipp-

mann, a reputable and sober bourgeois journalist, discussing the Wallace recommendation expressed himself with equal bluntness: "No one can doubt that the task must be undertaken; people who have seen that there can be overemployment in time of war will not tolerate underemployment in time of peace." On the same Wallace question Eleanor Roosevelt has been equally plain. "We know, we people in the United States, that the world is facing new and unpredictable conditions . . . at the same time we know that adherence to old and outmoded answers may lead to destruction." We do not need to challenge the sincerity of Wallace. It does honor to the human race and advances his political career. But the milk of human kindness, faith, courage, high wages, and decency, common or uncommon (see any editorial by *PM*, the *Post* or the *Daily Worker*) which flows so copiously from the lips of this Yankee Mahatma is not unseasoned with the vinegar of the class struggle. "We now must establish an economic bill of rights, not only out of common decency, but also to insure the preservation of our political freedoms." Our political freedoms include the right of Henry Wallace to be Vice-President, Secretary of Commerce and, possibly, presidential candidate in 1948. "Let us not forget," he adjured the Senate committee, "the painful lessons of the rise of fascism."

These gentlemen know well that they are threatened from the right as well as from the left. "Let us remember," he intones once more, "that political democracy is at best insecure and unstable without economic democracy." Then he boldly unveils the overhanging nightmare: "Fascism thrives on domestic economic insecurity, as well as on lack of or divided resistance to external aggression. Fascism is not only an enemy from without, it is also potentially an enemy from within." And with that admonitory outspokenness, verging continually from the belligerent to the lachrymose and back again, which is his special function in the Roosevelt bureaucracy, he draws the international implications of the employment question in the United States. Writing in the *New Republic* the week following his appearance before the Senate, he began his article with the following:

"Other nations look at the tremendous economic power of the United States, at the violent fluctuations in the American business cycle, at the previously demonstrated ineptitude of the American government in dealing with this problem, and, after seeing all this and looking toward the future, they shudder and pray. They pray for full employment in the United States, not because they love the United States, but because they know that without full employment there is world-wide trouble."

This is no sham battle. All sections of the bourgeoisie understand the nature of the coming crisis. The question is what to do. Wallace has, or thinks he has, a solution without which "the American way of life" goes to an inescapable crash. But the decisive sections of the capitalist class believe that his proposed solution will ruin capitalism. This is the issue. Behind the struggle of personalities and political maneuvers are two distinct lines of economic thought. Wallace proposes that the government bureaucracy manage capitalism in the interests of capital and labor. His opponents claim that it cannot be done. If there is to be any management of capital, it must be done by capital in the interests of capitalist profit. More particularly they ask Wallace: tell us exactly what you propose to do.

Wallace on the Spot

In his prepared statement to the Senate committee, Wallace stated his master's plan for sixty million jobs. As usual,

the preservation of capitalism came first. The industrial plant required "will be privately owned, privately operated and privately financed, but the government will share with the private investor the unusual and abnormal financial risks which may be involved in getting started."

What could be nicer? You make all the profits possible and we share only risks. But Bailey, the chairman of the Senate Committee, was not to be put off with election propaganda and slogans. He pinned Wallace down:

We spent on war last year \$90,000,000,000, and expect to spend this year about 75 or 80 billion. Now that makes a certain sort of prosperity. That is prosperity based on borrowing.

"You say we can produce the same condition in the post-war world. How much do you contemplate we borrow or how much would you raise by taxation to do that?"

It was a simple question, but it raised the fundamental problem. Production for war serves capitalist purposes and makes capitalist profit. When this is over, how does Commerce Secretary Wallace propose to keep the system going to continue a level of production whose main basis of consumption has been destroyed? To call a capitalist a reactionary is good but is not sufficient. If there was a capitalist means of continuing prosperity, with profits and full employment (miserable though the condition of the majority still is) the capitalist would not have to be urged to do it. All Bailey asked Wallace was: tell us how. Wallace could not answer. The best he could say was that excess savings, which people could not spend owing to curtailment of civilian production, would amount to \$100,000,000,000 at the end of 1944.

Bailey came at him again and made the central problem still more clear:

"You stated that whenever our number of gainfully employed people, on ways as good as those existing now, should fall below fifty-seven million* the Government should take steps. But you didn't say what steps. I would like to know what steps."

Wallace replied that various types of public works should be in the blue-printing stage "so that you could promptly throw them in at that time."

The Chairman: You say in your statement that you propose a reduction of taxation.

Wallace rambled again. Bailey pulled him back: It wasn't taxation?

"Then I gather that your plans contemplate continually increasing the national debt instead of reducing the national debt?"

Wallace could evade no longer. He said:

"Senator, I think that would require a very careful presentation that cannot be made in full at this time."

But he had just presented a statement filling some nine columns of the *New York Times*. Chairman Bailey, with confident irony, waltzed Wallace around:

"As I got it, when you get around to it, you expect we could pay the interest, by using a lot of stock to finance it."

Wallace never got around to it. Instead he gave a perfect exemplification of what happens to a man who is seeking to reconcile irreconcilable interests:

"Senator, to some extent you are putting words in my mouth. Some of the words came out of my mouth undoubtedly. . . ."

He had indeed condemned himself out of his own mouth. Under fire he could only say that *if* we could have 170 billions

*The *Times* report says 75 million, an obvious mistake.

worth of goods and services, the national debt would fare better than if we had less than 170 billion. To Bailey's remorseless question: how, Wallace, after flopping around like a fish thrown up on shore, could only reply "if we have the plan, it will work out well." A few seconds later Bailey said: "I have finished my questions." It was no use wasting more time on this Jack-in-the-box. As Bailey said before he cast his vote against Wallace: I shall not vote for anyone whose sole idea seems to be government borrowing and spending.

In his sketch of the American economy prefixed to the Living Thoughts edition of *Capital*, Trotsky wrote:

During 1938, which was a year of comparative economic revival, the national debt of the U. S. increased by two billion dollars past the thirty-eight billion dollar mark, or twelve billion dollars more than the highest point at the end of the World War. Early in 1939 it passed the forty billion dollar mark. And then what? . . . The New Deal policy with its fictitious achievements and its very real increase in the national debt is unavoidably bound to culminate in ferocious capitalist reaction and a devastating explosion of imperialism.

Both the capitalist Senator and the revolutionary are seeing the same thing—the process of capitalist production. Each knows that all reconciliations and palliatives are temporary, that this is a struggle to be fought out to a finish, the system to be preserved or the system to be destroyed. In between is Wallace, deceiving not one single capitalist, unable to answer a single pertinent question, but devoted to capitalism and deluding the workers with his mirage of workers' prosperity in capitalist decline.

Marx and the Industrial Reserve Army

It is not altogether disgusting but is also slightly amusing to see the bourgeois wise men breaking their wise heads against the stone wall of unemployment. Let us briefly re-state the Marxist position, best formulated by Marx in the chapter of *Capital* entitled: *The General Law of Capitalist Accumulation*. As always, no paraphrase can do service for Marx's own words: "The greater the social wealth, the functioning capital, the extent and energy of its growth, and, therefore, also the absolute mass of the proletariat and the productiveness of its labor, the greater is the industrial reserve army. The same causes which develop the expansive power of capital, develop also the labor-power at its disposal. The relative mass of the industrial reserve-army increases therefore with the potential energy of wealth." There, over seventy-five years ago, was expressed the crisis which has racked American capitalism for sixteen years and is setting the arena for what Philip Murray calls the "years of decision." For Marx "*This is the absolute general law of capitalist accumulation.*"

The clash with the theories embodied in Wallace is irreconcilable. The capitalist cannot raise wages or create full employment simply because these are desirable things. As Marx says: "The industrial capitalist always has the world market before him, compares and must continually compare his own cost-prices with those of the whole world, not only with those of his home market."* The capitalistic method of lowering costs is to increase constant capital, the mass of machinery, *at the expense of* the variable capital, the labor-force. The capitalist is constantly seeking by means of extended machinery to make fifty men do the work that 100 did previously. This law involves the whole national productive system. A motorcar is a commodity produced at a certain cost and selling at a certain price. But into it have gone the cost of other commodi-

* (*Capital* III, p. 396)

ties, coal, steel, leather, etc. Thus it is impossible to distinguish where the cost of one commodity begins and the other ends. The system has to be seen as a whole, with every producer seeking to produce his own commodity as cheaply as possible. Given such a system, full employment is a patent absurdity; high wages for all is equally an absurdity. And when Wallace proposes to substitute for the eighty or ninety billion spent on war, high wages for all and public works, the capitalists refuse to have this muddle.

From the point of view of social development and human needs, the capitalistic necessity of unemployment and more or less subsistence wages is monstrous. But so are imperialist war and fascism—both equally necessary to preserve modern capitalism. But if, as Wallace insists, he wants to preserve private enterprise (capitalism), then certain conditions go with it, and you have to accept them, or abolish the system.

Does Wallace propose to increase wages so as to consume the eighty or ninety billions which were cheerfully consumed by capitalism for its own purposes? Then the cost of every commodity would swell to such proportions that only a steel wall of tariffs could keep out the cheaper goods of foreign countries? But the consequences of that no one knows better than Wallace himself. Speaking of the pre-1933 tariff he says: "I think it was the fundamental cause of the rise of Hitler, fundamental cause for the great deal of disturbances we have found in this land. I have felt that most deeply." Whenever the Wallace type of politician feels something "most deeply," we know he is solving by emotion what has proved insoluble by his intellect. For having felt the crisis of the world market most deeply he proposes in effect to cut America off from it on a still greater scale. If Wallace will not learn, then the workers must. The consumption of the masses in the capitalist system is limited by the necessities of capitalist production. To alter that you have to alter the system.

"The General Theory"

Wallace did not create his theory. It is now the doctrine of a majority of modern economists and the history of the theory will teach the workers much about its real value and *their own rôle in economic theory*. For a good hundred years, bourgeois political economists as a body refused to concern themselves with the specific question of unemployment. Ricardo, the greatest of them all, took up the question of the effect of machinery upon the workers only in a later edition of his *Principles of Political Economy and Taxation*, first published in 1817. For the decade following, the bourgeoisie discussed political economy in realistic terms, and, according to Marx, splendid tournaments were held. But in 1830 came the revolution in Paris and after that, bourgeois economic science rapidly eliminated from its various systems anything which would enlighten the workers as to the exploitative character of capitalist production and the transitory nature of the capitalist system. As one of them wrote three years ago: "The orthodox economists, on the whole, identified themselves with the system and assumed the rôle of its apologists, while Marx set himself to understand the working of capitalism in order to hasten its overthrow. Marx was conscious of his purposes. The economists in general were unconscious."*

Conscious or unconscious, they had assumed the rôle of what Marx contemptuously called "hired servants of bourgeois society," and *that is precisely the same rôle they (and Wallace) are playing today*. The great difference is that whereas up to 1929 they boosted capitalist society and defended it

* *An Essay on Marxian Economics*, by Joan Robinson, p. 2.

only from its theoretical critics, today they are defending it against the threat of workers' revolution.

The bourgeoisie, let us note, did not depend upon economists to solve the crisis of 1929. Each bourgeois national group cut off as much international trade as possible and tried to solve the crisis at the expense of the workers and other capitalist nations. The more hard-pressed ones, like Germany, turned to Fascism, in order to crush the workers completely and get a flying start in the inevitable rush for imperialist war, i.e., the solution of the crisis by force. Britain and the U. S., richer than the rest, attempted to pacify the unemployed by doles and Government spending. It is at this period that the economists, terrified by fascism and the approach of the war, began seriously to deal with the terrible realities around them. But hired servants of the bourgeoisie they were and hired servants of the bourgeoisie they have remained. For these wise men did not say: how shall we solve the crisis of unemployment. They said something else. They said: how shall we preserve the capitalist system from this (to them) new monster which threatens it. The narrowness of the problem they set themselves ensured the futility of their various solutions.

Out of their excessive cerebration emerged one distinctive effort, written by a learned and respected Englishman, J. M. Keynes, and its very title is significant. It is called, *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money*. The workers had forced their way at last into the hitherto cushioned and carpeted floors of bourgeois economic science. If Marx were alive today, he could laugh uproariously.

We cannot here deal with the theoretical method (and substantial fallacies) of this epoch-making book. We have, however, to look at the purpose of the author and his conclusions. He is out to preserve capitalism. He says: "It is certain that the world [by the world he means the revolutionary workers—J. R. J.] will not much longer tolerate the unemployment which, apart from brief intervals of excitement, is associated—and in my opinion, inevitably associated—with the present-day capitalistic individualism." So after a hundred years these gentlemen have learned Marx's absolute general law of capitalist accumulation. "The General Theory of Employment" is but a bourgeois rephrasing of Marx's particular theory of unemployment.

"But," and here the hired servant (conscious or unconscious) speaks, "it may be possible by a right analysis of the problem to cure the disease whilst preserving efficiency and freedom." By efficiency and freedom he means bourgeois democracy. What is his main analysis? It can be stated in one word. Underconsumption. The workers do not consume enough. *Therefore* the capitalists do not invest. We must therefore raise the worker's consumption in order to induce the capitalist to invest. But here Bailey and Jesse Jones ask: how. And Keynes can do little better than Wallace. He says that the government must do it. But sitting in his study Keynes, who is no fool, cannot help seeing where this theory of his must lead. In his moderate British manner he, so anxious to save capitalism, shows quite clearly that what he is proposing may doom the system altogether. (Emphasis has been added so as to bring out clearly the more startling statements of Keynes, who is a trusted adviser and representative of the British Government.)

"I conceive, therefore, that a somewhat *comprehensive socialization of investment* will prove the *only* means of securing an *approximation to full employment*..."

The government will have to handle *all* investment. He tries to soften the blow:

"But *beyond this* no *obvious* case is made out for a system of State Socialism which would embrace most of the economic life of the community. It is not the ownership of the instruments of production which it is important for the state to assume."

That is comfort, even if bleak. But then he adds:

"If the state is able to determine the aggregate amount of resources devoted to augmenting the instruments and the *basic rate of reward to those who own them*, it will have accomplished what is *necessary*. Moreover, the *necessary measures of socialization* can be introduced gradually and without a break in the general traditions of society."

The government will decide on investment and the government will decide what the interest and what the profit will be. (No wonder Jesse Jones is threatened with apoplexy!) In passing Keynes knocks down two long-standing pillars of capitalism. He declares that his system will mean the "euthanasia of the rentier," in other words, the painless disappearance of all who live on bonds. Of the financier and the entrepreneur, he thinks that "they are so fond of their craft that their labor could be obtained much cheaper than at present." He proposes to cut their profits down, for they just love to work. In other words, despite the substantial blows that Keynes does give to the orthodox economic school, he thinks fundamentally that it is the capitalist desire to put profits in his pocket which drives him to activity and not the imperative need of the system as an organism to gather in as much profit as possible, profit being the life-blood of its existence. No wonder that when Wallace comes before the Senate and hasn't the guts to put these nonsensical theories openly, Bailey and Jesse Jones, spokesmen for capitalism, say "We will see you damned first."

It is not only that they are defending their profit and property and bonds (from euthanasia). They are as willing to save capitalism as anybody else. They, however, will save it with democracy (including Wallace) or without. They are not concerned with a "democratic solution." Capital comes first, not democracy. Meanwhile (with Fascism in reserve) they ask: how. And nobody, neither economist nor politician, can answer.

The Tower of Babel

Professor Alvin H. Hansen is one of the foremost advocates of government spending, with a portfolio full of blueprints ready to "throw in." He is special economic adviser to the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, and this Board believes that the Government must above all balance its budget, i.e. it must not borrow continuously to provide employment. But Hansen is also economic adviser to the National Resources Planning Board which believes that for this purpose the national debt can be limitless. No wonder Wallace complained of words being put into his mouth, some of which, however, had come from there. Far ahead of the others, like Achilles in battle, is Abba P. Lerner, a militant disciple of Keynes. In and out of season, he calls upon the Government to save capitalism by what he calls Functional Finance, sometimes known as Compensatory Fiscal Action. Spend in times of depression and decrease spending in times of prosperity. As for the debt, the "sky is the limit." In his pamphlet, *Functional Finance*, he accuses Hansen of being an "appeaser" who opened the gates to the enemy by craven-heartedly capitulating on limitless debt. But Father Keynes is a capitulator. Writing in the *New Republic* (June 29, 1940) Keynes himself says that deficit spending failed to produce full employment under Roosevelt because of the "gigantic powers of production," of modern industry, and he confesses: "It appears to be

politically impossible for a capitalist democracy to organize expenditure on the scale necessary to make the grand experiment which would prove my case . . . except in war conditions." (Quoted from *Post-War Monetary Plans* by John H. William, p. 80.) So that for him at least the "democratic solution" is hopeless. We ask the workers to ponder over this.

Not Marx but the Brookings Institute in *The New Philosophy of Public Debt* has shattered some of the liberties which these gentlemen are taking with elementary, in fact very rudimentary laws of capitalist economics. *If there was profit, then the private investor would invest and the politicians could be left to play their politics.* But "non-revenue producing public works cannot cover their operating, maintenance and replacement costs or interest charges. . . . It is obvious that most types of public works are useful or enjoyable. . . . Similarly, expenditures for veterans, consumption, doles, interest and so forth—necessary though they may be—provide no continuing source of public revenues." (p. 62) As Harold Moulton, the author, says a little later (about war expenditures): "They simply represent deadweight charges against the rest of the economic system." (p. 84) They are useful and enjoyable, but they produce no profit. Their cost, in production, is passed on to the capitalist commodity, and the national capitalism is thereby less fitted for the competitive struggle on the world-market both in loss of profit and cost of production. As for the more general consequences to the capitalist system, we need only re-quote Marx's quotation in reply to a similar proposal made many decades ago. "Try to create a national credit institute, which shall advance means to propertyless talent and merit, without, however, knitting these borrowers by compulsion into a close solidarity in production and consumption. . . . In this way you will accomplish only what the private banks accomplish even now, that is, anarchy, a disproportion between production and consumption, the sudden ruin of one, and the sudden enrichment of another. . . ."* This plan was a national credit institute to help workers and poor capitalists. But the whole Marxist analysis goes to prove the fantastic character of these schemes, all of which, as Marx so insistently points out, ignore the capital-labor relation in the process of production. Keynes himself has no confidence in them and the Roosevelt crisis of 1937 shows in practice what they lead to.

The Stalinists

Yet this is the type of economic thought that Wallace and the labor leaders are pumping into the workers as their salvation from the evils of capitalism in its death-agony. Why do they do it, the labor leaders in particular? It is because, consciously or unconsciously (that is for God and psychiatrists to decide) they identify themselves with the capitalist system and are terrified at the thought of what will face them if it is generally recognized by the workers that the system cannot solve the employment question. *At all costs the workers must be kept quiet and hopeful.* From beginning to end all this theorizing is directed at the workers.

If we want to see how extreme can be the ideas propagated by those whose main aim is to preserve capitalism from the gathering wrath of the working class, we can see it best in the Stalinist program. It is enunciated in Earl Browder's *Teheran*. Browder, as every one else, diagnoses the malady accurately: "The central problem is represented by . . . the eighty-five to ninety billion dollars of governmental war orders. With the end of the war, this market will suddenly and automatically disappear except to the degree that it is arbitrarily extended as

a relief measure." Now the Stalinists were at one time Marxists. They are not muddleheads. They know precisely what they are doing. *Their fundamental policy is to be of service to American capital against the American workers.* So Browder does not begin with the home market. He will expand the consumption by the foreign market. But, alas, as he himself says, "an examination of current estimates for America's post-war trade reveals that the average is around four billions and the most optimistic variants do not exceed six billion dollars per year."

From here on Browder's manner is as important as his matter. In fact both are of a piece. Browder's base is Stalinist totalitarianism. His party is as totalitarian as it is possible to be in a democratic country. He therefore expresses himself in a manner similar to his political prototypes, Hitler and Stalin. If you read attentively the speeches of the totalitarian leaders, you will notice a certain realism bordering on cynicism. They state problems brutally. But reasonable solution they have none and therefore their promises to solve these problems are frequently comical, not to say ridiculous. However, as a counterpart to this absurdity there is a menacing ferocity which threatens all opponents who do not accept their comic-opera solutions. But whereas Stalin has real power over the Russian workers, this tin-pot totalitarian has no power over the American workers. For this reason and only for this reason his absurdity predominates over his ferocity. But both elements are present.

He has to find forty billions where all other economists have at most found six. He taps the billions off his typewriter as follows: Latin-America, six billions; Africa, six billions; Asia, twenty billions; Europe, six billions; Soviet Union, two billions. "Total new markets: \$40,000,000,000." There it is, as large as life, on p. 78.

So far the comedy. Now comes the totalitarian ferocity. If America proposed this, says Browder, "There is not a government in the capitalist or colonial world that would dare (my emphasis—J. R. J.) refuse or withdraw itself from such a partnership, once the United States made clear the benefits which would accrue to all concerned." By this scheme in ten years Africa will have absorbed sixty billions of American capitalist development. How is not explained. If Browder had his way, no one would "dare" ask this question. He says so, and that is enough. Tomorrow is another day.

His proof is typical Hitler-Stalin logic. It is not difficult to prove, says he, that such a proposal is impossible (page 18). And indeed it is not. But if you do that, then you are in the "embarrassing position of having proved that all hope of full employment in America after the war is an illusion, that our country is doomed to a catastrophic economic crisis. . . ." In fact, that there is no hope except following the Soviet Union to "socialism." But Browder begins from the premise that American capitalism must be preserved. *So therefore* it is as clear as day that forty billions of foreign trade per year is possible.

Now for the home market.

Browder has one magnificent plan. Produce the goods, let the rich buy them up "and simply destroy them." This sounds like satire. It isn't. That, he says, "would be politically very dangerous, almost as dangerous as permitting tens of millions to go without jobs, and would become the breeding ground for all sorts of social and political disorders." God in his great heaven forbid any political disorders, so the great plan for increasing the home consumption by throwing forty billions into the sea every year must be cast aside. We must therefore

*Capital, Vol. III, p. 7.

raise wages. But one capitalist can't do it, because the others will get an advantage. (Browder prefers not to see that one capitalist *nation* cannot do it either without drawing all sorts of consequences.) So the government, he says, will have to do it. But he brushes the problem aside. "It is not my purpose to attempt any detailed and complete answer... how to double the purchasing power of the main bulk of the population." And on page 84 this menace to the American people shows where he really stands: "In the final analysis the American people cannot produce any more than they are able to consume."

No American capitalist has yet dared to utter such ominous words, aimed at the workers. Behind the comicalities of Earl Browder's "must and therefore can" economics lies a ruthlessness against the workers which he has learned from the totalitarian bureaucracy. Capitalism in America must be preserved. This is the decree of Stalin. And the Communist Party will preserve it *if it means limiting production to what it is possible capitalistically to consume*. The final proof of how conscious Browder is of what he is doing is his recognition that even the forty billions of foreign trade which, like Prospero, he conjured out of thin air, can *only* be paid for by returning goods, which can *only* be absorbed by home consumption. In other words, even with forty billions of foreign trade we would soon be back where we started. Browder shouts for Wallace but he knows as well as Bailey that Wallace's plan has no basis in theory or in fact. Yet his very extravaganza is only a further proof that the absolute general law of capitalist accumulation is the production of an industrial reserve army of labor in direct proportion to the potentiality of the productive power. Upon that rock these planners will break their necks.

We have given in mere outline the elements of the great problem of our time as it presents itself today. This is only a beginning. When the *London Times* says that this Wallace-Jones debate will probably take its place with the Haynes-Webster debate and the Lincoln-Douglas debates, it is indubitably correct. In one form or another, this will be the economic and political axis of "the years of decision." Old parties will break and new ones will be formed as the debate passes from the press and the political assemblies into the realities of the class struggle. The workers have to grasp clearly the fundamental issues at stake. For even today it is not only a debate. Wallace's demagoguery and his projected appointment are only one-half of Roosevelt's strategy. *The other half is to use this windy plan as a lever for binding the workers to the bureaucratic machinery of government. The Wallace appointment is part of the bait for a National Service Act. The Roosevelt plan demands the disciplining of the workers. Wallace talks but Roosevelt acts.*

(In a succeeding issue of *The New International* we shall discuss the practical Marxian program which corresponds in our day to the fulfillment of the Marxian theoretical analysis.)

J. R. JOHNSON.

A Real Bargain!

'The New Course'

By Leon Trotsky

'The Struggle for the New Course'

By Max Shachtman

Regular Price \$1.50

A One-Year Subscription to

The New International

Regular Price \$1.50

\$2.50 Together!

THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

114 West 14th St., New York 11, N. Y.

I enclose \$2.50 (cash, check, money order), for which please send me *The New Course*, *The Struggle for the New Course* and a year's subscription to *The New International*.

Name

Address

City Zone State

THE TRUTH ABOUT INDIA:

'INDIA IN REVOLT'

By HENRY JUDD

Order from the
WORKERS PARTY
114 W. 14th St., N. Y. C.

PRICE: 25 CENTS
In Bundles of
Five or More—20 Cents

From the Bureaucratic Jungle

The SWP Changes the Line

(Continued from the November issue)

The criticism which the opposition, represented by Morrison, Morrow, Bennett, and others, makes of the leadership of the Socialist Workers Party confirms our first main criticism made in the fight five years ago which led to the split in the Trotskyist movement. So we wrote in the first part of this article. The party and its political life are directed, we said then, by a clique led by Cannon which we characterized as *bureaucratically conservative*. The only amendment the new opposition was obliged to introduce into this characterization is that the party leadership is the carrier of the "germs of Stalinist degeneration." This is the latest balance-sheet that the new opposition casts up after five years in which the leadership of the SWP operated with a maximum of party unity, a maximum of collaboration from all the party leadership, and a minimum of inner-party opposition, that is, none at all.

Our second main criticism in the 1939 dispute may be paraphrased as follows: "You have converted the theory that Russia is a workers' state, and the slogan of the unconditional defense of Russia in the war, into abstractions which make it impossible for you to deal correctly with the concrete political problems of the class struggle. When you do deal with them, they bring you to a reactionary position. You base your central strategy on the defense of the Stalinist régime which is an integral part of the imperialist coalition in the war. We base ours on assembling, building and leading to victory the "third camp," the independent forces of the workers, peasants and colonial peoples fighting for freedom against both imperialist camps. Our policy will make it possible for the revolutionary Marxists to come to the leadership of the inevitably upsurging movement of rebellion. Yours will make you the apologist of Stalinism, the tail to its kite."

The Cannonites answered, as is their custom in such disputes, with a minimum of argument and a maximum of imprecation: "We reiterate our fundamental principles. We cling to our fundamental principles. We are for unconditional defense of the Soviet Union. You have capitulated, in the war, to the pressure of bourgeois democracy. You are petty-bourgeois opponents of Marxism."

Let us see how these "fundamental principles" have stood up in practice (and this is the only decisive test) in the past few years, not in the light of our criticism so much as in the light of the criticism of the new oppositionists who joined, alas, in the condemnation of us in 1939 and later. For this purpose, we have an invaluable document by A. Roland, significantly entitled "We Arrive at a Line." Roland is an old party member, and unlike Cannon and the court clique, knows something about Marxism. He was a stout defender of Trotsky's position in 1939. His criticism is all the more enlightening because of that.

Roland's Indictment of the SWP Régime

In the very first place, Roland shows again that, all sophistry, muddle-headed argument and "theory" to the contrary notwithstanding, it is impossible, in the Cannonite party, to engage in a serious political dispute without coming into head-

on conflict with the party régime which always defends its prestige and position by the methods it knows best, the methods of bureaucratism. His indictment of this régime is more damning than anything we wrote and said about it five years ago. Let us quote Roland's own words, with our own emphasis:

Here, one would suppose, is an ideal convention for the fundamental education of the party. Unfortunately, this is far from the case. Actually, *the Committee is trying to avoid any kind of real education of the membership, due to its unusual hypersensitivity to criticism*. The very resolutions adopted should have been the occasion for some open self-criticism, as I propose to show...

What concerns me is not how we arrived at a line through discussions of the [Political] Committee itself. No. I am concerned with a line arrived at without discussion at all (except on my part), without any motions made in the committee "officially"; a line that appeared in the press of the party on the initiative of the editors *with the consent of a committee within the committee*, as a "fait accompli." I am concerned with a line that was wrong not in the committee alone, but in the public press, one that has since been "corrected" after the lapse of months of incorrectness *without so much as informing the party*. I am concerned with the attempt to hide this patent fact from the convention *and to place, not organizational criticism, but political criticism, in a virtual strait-jacket under the guise of "discipline."*

A leadership that "is trying to avoid any kind of real education of the membership"; that is "unusually hypersensitive to criticism"; that follows a line, changes it into a new one or changes it back to the old without acknowledgment and even without official party decision; that operates on the basis of "the consent of a committee within the committee"—what is that but the Cannonite bureaucracy which runs the party like a clique, the clique about which we spoke so pointedly in 1939? Further material on the clique is provided us by Roland in connection with his criticism of some of the monumental, that is, typical, political blunders made by Cannon's "Russian expert," Wright. We read:

The truth is that Wright had been "hauled over the coals" for his whole line when events had broken over the head of the committee and showed how disastrous that line was. M. Stein [acting party secretary] informed me concerning this fact and was himself taken aback when I expressed astonishment that this should be done in hidden form among a group of "friends," not even in the P.C.! Naturally in that case there could be no question of criticizing Wright openly in the party or in the convention. *But what becomes then of the political education of the party membership? Are they permitted to know what is correct and what is incorrect? Or is it sufficient in a centralized party for the leadership to be educated?*

For the leadership alone to be educated would not be sufficient, but even in that limited sphere education would at least be a great step forward. It must, however, be admitted that the SWP leadership is educated to the point where it understands what the Workers Party, upon its foundation in 1940, wrote in its Statement of Principles: *An ignorant membership is a bureaucrat's paradise.*

A Picture of the Cannonite Leadership

We are told that the party must, if anything, be more centralized [continues Roland]. Why? In order that the committee may become even more separated from the membership than it already is? In order that the P.C. may make its decisions (some of which we see here) completely behind the scenes, only to have them

changed abruptly and then covered from the view of the party? In order to create the kind of discipline in which the editors are allowed to put over a line by "accomplished facts"? In order to build up a theory of an infallible leadership? In order to make it impossible to exercise criticism, the only form of control?

... Are we striving to emulate Lenin and the party in his time, or some more centralized party? It does not do to make a parade of democratic centralism just before and even, perhaps, during a convention, only to violate its real spirit all the year round. The attitude of the committee toward critics (and I include here those who are right in their criticisms as well as those who are wrong) is a completely apparatus attitude. It simply will not brook the slightest criticism. Isn't there an "anxiety complex" involved here? Instead of infinite patience in order to educate members, there is utter impatience, a real "baiting" of critics, a split spirit.

... And I say categorically that the effort of the committee to "put something over on the party" completely violates every concept of loyalty to principle and Bolshevik discipline. Had the committee been willing to enter into a wee bit of self-criticism, the outcome would have been entirely different and far more beneficial. The party would have experienced a real impetus in its education.

There is the picture of the SWP five years after it purged the "petty bourgeois opposition" and received the full, undiluted and unobstructed benefits, for the first time in the history of Trotskyism in America, of a more or less exclusively Cannonite leadership and régime. The net result is adequately stated by Roland and Morrison. Why should it be surprising? After all, the party boss received his basic training under the aegis of Zinovivist bureaucratism in the Comintern; was himself one of the "Bolshevizers" of those sorry days; and, in his "Trotskyist" period, improved on what he had learned with lessons drawn from the "successes" of Stalinism.

Now let us see what policy it is that this régime had to defend, and see it the way it worked out in practice. It cannot be over-emphasized that this is the decisive test. Trotsky legitimately applied this test to Stalinism in the period of the British General Strike, in the period of the Chinese Revolution, and throughout the evolution of Russia. With the evidence assembled by Roland, let us apply the test to the "Russian policy" of the SWP.

Roland's indictment on this score charges the leadership with: hopeless confusion; hopeless inconsistency; inability to orient itself correctly or at all toward important events; painting up, apologizing for and tail-ending Stalinism; and in general, woodenness of thought, unthinking paraphrasing of Trotsky, perversion of political line for considerations of bureaucratic prestige. For every charge, he adduces more than enough of the necessary proof.

The SWP line, boiled down to essentials, was simply this, repeated week-in and week-out: Russia is a workers' state because the property in it is nationalized. In the war, the Stalinist bureaucracy is pursuing a rôle which is objectively revolutionary. Between Stalinist Russia and the capitalist world there are antagonisms which are irreconcilable. It is the primary duty of every worker to defend Russia—unconditionally.

The lengths to which these absurd and reactionary dogmas were carried, are given by Roland in some detail. Here is one example from the pen of one of the principal official spokesmen of the party, Wright, as set down in the April, 1943, *Fourth International*:

But the same fundamental forces arising out of the irreconcilable clash between Soviet economy and world imperialism are driving the bureaucratic caste to measures which are revolutionary in their objective consequences... The Stalinist bureaucracy depends for its existence upon the maintenance of the workers' state created by the October Revolution. In desperation and as a last resort this bureaucracy has proved itself capable of acting in self-defense as to stimulate revolutionary developments.

What Has Never Been Explained

What has never been explained is this: If the clash between "Soviet economy" (What is "Soviet" about it? The thoughtless repetition of this adjective to describe the economy of Stalinist Russia, in which every element of Sovietism was long ago destroyed with unparalleled thoroughness and brutality, shows how far Wright *et al.* must still travel to break from Stalinism) and world imperialism is "irreconcilable," how did the Second World War take place as it did? We are assuming that the Cannonites acknowledge that the Second World War is being fought, that one capitalist country is attacking Russia and that most of the capitalist world is united with Russia to demolish Germany. If the "clash" is "irreconcilable" and, as the Cannonites also say, this "irreconcilability" remains "undiminished," we must conclude either that the present World War is not taking place at all—the Marlen fantasmagoria—or that it is nothing but a trifling episode, a mere curtain-raiser to the "coming" war between "Soviet economy and world imperialism."

In the second place, if Stalinism is *objectively revolutionary* and "has proved itself" able to stimulate revolutionary developments, the Marxian criticism of it ought to be reduced to fairly modest proportions. What else could a reader, who has not been immunized against such reactionary nonsense, conclude if he continued to read the SWP press? He would learn there that the Stalinist bureaucracy is not only taking measures that are revolutionary in their objective consequences, but that at one time "Stalin took preparatory steps for the Sovietization of Finland." (This pitiable muddlehead of a Wright does not even know the difference between nationalization of industry and *Sovietization*, i.e., the means by which the proletariat establishes and consolidates its class power. To him, the appointment of slave-drivers over industry by the GPU equals—Sovietization, the proletarian revolution.) And not only of Finland. Poland, too. In *The Militant* of January 29, 1944, the same Wright had these unbelievable things to say about the program of Stalin's Quislings in Poland:

... the realization of this program would signify the complete destruction of Polish capitalism and a giant step in the inevitable extension of Soviet [again: Soviet!] property forms far beyond the frontiers of 1939. In its turn, this carries a twofold threat to capitalism: first, in addition to strengthening the USSR immeasurably, it would greatly hamper further attempts to isolate it. Second, the revolutionary wave in Europe, especially in Germany, would receive so mighty an impulsion from such developments in the territories of former Poland, let alone Silesia, East Prussia, etc., that the attempt to drown the coming European Revolution in blood would be rendered well-nigh impossible.

After this, nothing remains of the revolutionary struggle against Stalinism except a demand that it... carry out its program! Nothing more than this is required to destroy capitalism in Poland and Eastern Germany—that as a mere beginning!—by extending "Soviet" property to these lands, and then to give the proletarian revolution all over Europe such an impulsion as would practically guarantee its victory.

The Stalinist bureaucracy, the GPU factory bosses, and Osobka-Morawski are not the only guarantees of the victory of the European proletariat. There is also the Stalinist army. Trotsky called it the military arm of the Bonapartist counter-revolution. Wright, however, uninhibited by Trotsky's modesty and other qualities, has a different name for it. In a 1941 article, he wrote:

"Trotsky's Red Army"

It is not Stalin's Red Army that has successfully resisted the first two Nazi offensives. It is the Red Army of the October Revolution. It is Trotsky's Red Army, which was built in the fire of the Civil War, built not from the wreckage of the old Czarist armies but completely anew—unlike any other army in history....

The Kremlin is of course trying to usurp credit for the heroic resistance of the Red Army, but Stalin will not succeed in this. We Trotskyists [Wright, it seems, calls himself a Trotskyist after all this!] link up the present heroic resistance of the Red soldiers directly with the Russian October and the Civil War.... Terrible as were the blows dealt by Stalin to the Red Army, it remains the one institution least affected [!!!!] by his degenerated régime.

From this political delirium should follow, should it not, a clarion call to the workers throughout Europe: "Proletarians, welcome Trotsky's Red Army! Welcome the liberators of the toiling peoples! Welcome the Heroic Storm-Troop Divisions of the GPU, who are directly linked with the Red October!"

What has been quoted is not an individual aberration, although that is a contributing element in this case. It is the product of a political line. We have in addition, also quoted by Roland, the case of E. R. Frank. Frank is another of the party bureaucrats who has recently decided to turn a deaf hand to "theoretical questions," under the impression that a snarl, pugnacious ignorance and phrasemongering are ample qualification. How, he demands in an article on December 4, 1943—

How is anybody going to explain today that amazing unity of Soviet peoples, that unprecedented vitality and morale which exists throughout the Red Army and the peoples of the Soviet Union, except on the theory that the October Revolution, though stifled and degraded, still lives....

Roland's comment on this panegyric to Stalinism is to the point:

The complete unity of the Soviet peoples—under the totalitarian régime of Stalin! How could one possibly call for political revolution in that case? The unity of the Soviet peoples amidst the growth of inequality and an almost complete indifference of the bureaucracy to the lot and fate of the people during the war. The unity of the Soviet peoples—and the imprisonment even during the war not of tens of thousands, or hundreds of thousands, but of millions in the concentration camps of the Kremlin! Could Stalin have wished for better propaganda in his favor? Stalin could have pointed to our press and asked what further proof was necessary that his killing off of all the oppositionists had united and strengthened the USSR.

We thereby get a very accurate definition of an "official Trotskyist," i.e., a Cannonite: He is a miserable epigone of Trotsky who cannot speak on Russia without carrying on, among revolutionary workers, better propaganda for Stalin than Stalin himself could hope for.

And by combining Wright and Frank, we get the following definition of Stalinist Russia: It is a country which is despotically oppressed by a totalitarian, counter-revolutionary Bonapartist autocracy that has converted the country as a whole into a prison for the people and is based upon Soviet property, an amazing unity of the Soviet peoples, and Trotsky's Red Army, all of which it employs to take objectively revolutionary measures that stimulate the world revolution—thus making Russia a workers' state, which is in irreconcilable antagonism to the imperialist world that is allied with it, gives it aid and comfort, and material and even political support, in return for material and political support received.

For the length of this definition, we are ready to take our

share of responsibility; for its insanity, we share no responsibility and accept none.

The reader may think: After all, it is only Wright, or only Frank, who is involved. If he is an informed reader, he may add: And after all, who is forced to take them seriously as the spokesmen of the SWP? There is *some* validity to such reflections. What is wrong and misleading about them is shown by three facts: One, that their statements appear as the official view of the SWP. Two, that they are not rebuked or repudiated in any way by the party leadership, but were and are still being defended by the latter. And three, that the boss of the party himself is of a piece with them.

To prove the last assertion, we refer once more to Roland's precious document. Following page after page of evidence on the reactionary character of the official party policy on Russia, coupled with as much evidence on the preposterous vacillation and somersaults of the party press from week to week and month to month, he arrives at the period of the Warsaw uprising of last August.* Under pressure of the stirring event, and of Roland himself, the SWP committee made another somersault in policy. It came out in favor of the Warsaw uprising, ranged itself with the revolutionists, warned them against Stalinist perfidy and counter-revolution, and called among other things for fraternization with the Russian army so as to help the Russian people "settle accounts with the bloody Bonapartist dictatorship of Stalin." Those of us who read the editorial in *The Militant* of August 19, 1944, recall with some satisfaction the policy presented in it. We recall also that it followed from the inspiring action of the Warsaw proletariat, and in no way whatsoever from anything in the analysis and policies defended up to then by the Cannonites.

The Party Boss on the Warsaw Uprising

The party boss, who was not at hand when the editorial appeared, reacted promptly, for a change. His letter of protest against the editorial is a monstrosity, but such a revealing one that we reprint it in its entirety, thanks to Roland, who did likewise in order to thwart the party bureaucracy's attempt to conceal it from the membership:

*It should be noted that we do not share Roland's own views either on the "Russian question" or on the "national question" in Europe. On the former he is attempting to break through the dilemma into which Trotsky was forced with his theory of Russia as a "degenerated workers' state." But because he is attempting the break-through along Trotsky's line he is doomed to the same failure. Like so many others—including, since the convention, the editors of the **Fourth International**—he is looking high and low for the imminent conversion of Russia into a capitalist state based on capitalist private property. He is looking in vain. It is fitting for a Wright to discover the "rising tide of capitalist restoration" in a clipping from *Pravda* which admits that a "kulak" has been discovered in some Azerbaidjanian village who has two hogs and a cow. It hardly befits a Roland. Like all others of his views, he must show us, with concrete facts, where Stalinist state property, the basis of bureaucratic collectivism, is being converted into capitalist private property. Nothing less will do, and that by Trotsky's own theory. We are convinced that, like Trotsky in the past, Roland will not be able to show any such thing. (There are many other things Roland will have to do, but for the moment we confine ourselves to one.) As to the national question, Roland is right only in so far as he rips apart the helplessness and inconsistency of the Cannonites in this question—and that he does thoroughly. As for his own analysis, the best that can be said about it is that he has succeeded in furnishing E. R. Frank with a "theoretical" argument. To identify the national revolutionary movements in Europe with the old People's Fronts, as Roland does, is at least ninety-nine per cent wrong. In a word: the latter were bureaucratically-confined parliamentary comedies to prevent action by the masses in favor of the status quo; the former are revolutionary struggles of the masses, with arms in hand, against the ruling state power. To identify the two is to reduce politics to mumbo-jumbo. The two subjects merit further and more detailed discussion, and we hope to return to them on another occasion. It is to be hoped that the discussion will no longer be so one-sided, that is, that the comrades who debate with those whom they label "propagandists for Stalin," will not shun discussion with those whom they still call—jokingly, we will assume—the "petty bourgeois opposition."

The August 19 *Militant* editorial, "Warsaw Betrayed," goes even further afield than the previous editorial we wrote about in muddling up our line of "Unconditional Defense of the Soviet Union" in the struggle against the Nazi-imperialist invaders. To call upon the revolutionary Polish workers to "organize fraternization" with the Red Army soldiers, as the editorial does, is to think in terms of establishing contact with the rank and file of a hostile military force. *But the Polish workers must be the allies of the Red Army in its war against Hitler's armies*, no matter how reactionary Stalin's policy is. Therefore, the task for the Polish revolutionaries is to *organize revolutionary propaganda* in the ranks of the Red Army, with which they will be in contact as allies, not to "organize fraternization." Secondly, the editorial adds that through this "fraternization" the Polish workers will help the Soviet masses to "settle accounts with the bloody Bonapartist dictatorship of Stalin." Our program recognizes the vital necessity of overthrowing Stalinism in the Soviet Union and has always placed this task in order of importance second only to the defense of the Soviet Union against imperialist attacks. However, it is precisely the latter consideration that the editorial slurs over, thus laying itself open to the implication of war against Hitler. Finally, the editorial again fails to put explicitly and unmistakably our slogan "Unconditional defense of the Soviet Union" against all imperialists. The editorial also takes for granted a version of the Warsaw events about which there is little information, none of it reliable and many uncertainties. A full-scale battle against the Nazis by the Warsaw proletariat is assumed, as is the "order of Stalin's generals" in halting the Red Army attack on the city. The Moscow charge that the London "Polish government in exile" ordered the uprising without consulting the Red Army command is brushed aside without being clearly stated, much less analyzed in the light of the current Soviet-Polish negotiations. No consideration is given to the question of whether or not the Red Army was able at the moment to launch an all-out attack on Warsaw in view of its long-sustained offensive, the Nazi defensive preparations along the Vistula, the necessity to regroup forces and mass for new attacks after the not inconsiderable expenditure of men and material in reaching the outskirts of Warsaw, the fact that there was a lull along virtually the entire Eastern front concurrent with the halt before Warsaw, etc. *Nor does the editorial take up the question of the duty of guerrilla forces—and in the circumstances that is what the Warsaw detachments are—to subordinate themselves to the high command of the main army, the Red Army, in timing such an important battle as the siege of Warsaw.* On the contrary, the editorial appears to take as its point of departure the assumption that a full-scale proletarian uprising occurred in Warsaw and that Stalin deliberately maneuvered to permit Hitler to crush the revolt. A hasty, sketchy commentary on events, including the badly-limping Badoglio analogy, is then fitted into this arbitrary framework. We agree, indeed, as to Stalin's counter-revolutionary intentions. Moreover, one has the right to suspect or believe personally that the Warsaw events are just as the editorial pictures them. But we have no right to put in writing in our press, and in an editorial to boot, such sweeping assertions for which we have no proof and to draw conclusions based on such flimsy information. That is not the tradition of *The Militant*. We are deeply concerned about this carelessness in writing about such a crucial question and are anxious to hear the comments on our criticism.

Let us not dwell on the style—it is as unnecessary as it is disagreeable. In any case, the political line is infinitely more important. The Warsaw proletariat was climaxing five years of unremitting struggle against its *national and class oppressor* with an epic effort. The Stalin régime was preparing its stab in the back not only with cynicism and cold-bloodedness, but above all with such obviousness as to move even the editors of *The Militant* away from this false line and toward a correct one. By defending the antithesis of what they had defended, they leaped over their own heads and—did their revolutionary duty. If, as the party boss said, they went "further afield . . . in muddling up our line of 'unconditional defense of the Soviet Union,'" it was because the line was radically false; but in "muddling" it further, they at least made one progressive contribution amidst the hundred reactionary ones they had made in the past.

What did the party boss contribute? Instructions to the effect that *The Militant* should advise the Warsaw proletariat (contemptuously referred to as guerrilla forces! Stalin's army of counter-revolution is Trotsky's Red Army, but the insurrectionary Warsaw workers are . . . mere guerrillas) to "subordinate themselves to the high command of the main army, the Red Army." Or, to translate this pompous pseudo-military wisdom: the Warsaw workers must submit to the executioners of the GPU! In what name? In the name of "unconditional defense of the Soviet Union"!

Not even the Stalinists dared to carry out the crushing of the Polish proletariat under such a banner. The boss of the SWP deserves to be remembered if only for the fact that he was the one person in the whole wide world who called upon the Warsaw workers to "subordinate themselves" to their hangman, Stalin ("the high command of the main army"). There is the fruit, *in practice*, of the "defense of the Soviet Union."

A Letter of a Different Kind

The sequel to this letter is as revealing as the letter itself. At about the same time that it was written, another letter was being written and, unknown to the party boss, transmitted to the SWP leadership. It came from a comrade with great prestige in the Fourth International, a comrade whose opinions cannot be so easily dismissed by the Cannonites with personal aspersions, dirty gossip or imprecations (be it noted that we write, "cannot be so easily dismissed"). It, too, is worth reprinting in its entirety:

I do not consider myself competent in political questions to the extent of condemning this or that line of your conduct. But in the given instance your mistaken course is all too clear to me.

Permit me a few words in this connection.

You seem to be hypnotized by the slogan of the "defense of the USSR" and in the meantime profound changes, political as well as moral-psychological, have taken place in its social structure. In his articles, especially the last ones, L. D. [Trotsky] wrote of the USSR as a *degenerating* workers' state and in view of this outlined two possible paths of further social evolution of the first workers' state: revolutionary and reactionary. The last four years have shown us that the reactionary landslide has assumed monstrous proportions within the USSR. I shall not recount the fact, they are known to you—they bespeak of the complete moving away of the USSR from the principles of October. Soviet literature for the war years (Moscow magazines which I am receiving) confirm these facts; in current Moscow literature there is not the slightest echo of socialist ideology; dominant in it are petty bourgeois, middle class tendencies; the cult of the family and its welfare. The Red Army, at the basis of whose organization were lodged the principles of the October overturn, and whose (the Red Army's) goal was the struggle for the world revolution, has become transformed into a nationalist-patriotic organization, defending the fatherland, and not against its bureaucratic régime but together with its régime as it has taken shape in the last decade. Do you recall the answer of L. D. to the question put to him in the Politburo in 1928: whether the Opposition would defend the USSR in case of war? "The socialist fatherland—yes; Stalin's régime—no."

The "socialist" has fallen away; the "régime" has remained. A *degenerating* "workers' state" presupposes that it is moving along the path of degeneration, *still* preserving its basic principle—the nationalization of private property. But just as it is impossible to build socialism in one country, so it is impossible to preserve inviolate this basic principle, if one pursues the reactionary road, destroying all the other conquests of 1917. It is necessary to explain this tirelessly day by day. It is impermissible to repeat an antiquated slogan by rote.

At the present time there is only one danger threatening the Soviet Union—that is the further development of black reaction, the further betrayal of the international proletariat. This is precisely the direction in which it is necessary to sound the alarm. To defend the Soviet Union against the régime of its "master," mer-

cilessly laying bare the policy of the master who comes to the fore on the international arena in the capacity of a conciliator with bourgeois capitalism and as a counter-revolutionist in the European countries liberated from Hitler. (As far back as 1937 L. D. wrote in the *Bulletin of the Russian Opposition* that not a single serious person believes any longer in the revolutionary rôle of Stalin.)

You are correctly criticizing the foreign policy of the Marshall, but after all, foreign policy is the continuation of the domestic policy; it is impermissible to separate the one from the other. In your position there is a crying contradiction. It is necessary to hammer away at one point: to warn against the consequences of Russian victories; to warn, to sound the alarm on the basis of the elements that have already been disclosed with complete clarity, as well as to lay bare those elements which are about to be disclosed, and at the same time to point the way out.

This letter, which is blow upon blow at point after point of the SWP position, as Roland points out, caused a sensation and complete consternation among the SWP leadership. Their first reaction: how to conceal it from the membership! And not only from the membership, but even from those leading members, like Morrow and Morrison, who were in opposition! Their second reaction: how to maintain the prestige of the party leadership, and above all, of the party boss, who had *just written* in the directly opposite sense! Thanks in large measure to Roland, the leadership succeeded in neither case. It was not for want of trying.

How and Why the Line Is "Changed"

The letter just quoted was promptly communicated to the party boss. With an agility nowhere revealed in his first letter, he prepared a retreat. He wrote a new letter to the committee which proposed, in effect, a change of policy on Russia, accompanied by all kinds of transparent "subtleties" to prove that it was not, after all, a change in policy. Like his previous letter, which said the opposite, it was couched in his customary Statesman-Tone, and intended for proclamation to the entire party membership. It prudently omitted (a) any reference whatsoever to his original letter, with which it did not jibe, and (b) any reference whatsoever to the letter we have quoted, which criticized the SWP line and urged a change in it. If any change is to be made in the party line, only One Man may initiate it—at least so far as the membership knows!

What had changed in the world situation? What had changed in the situation in Russia? For the boss, nothing. All that had changed was that someone with prestige and *authority* that cannot easily be torn down in the movement had proposed a change. In the SWP leadership, where, as Roland says, a "completely hierarchic attitude" reigns, it is not freely-expressed critical thought, not the unhampered exchange of views, not objective considerations, but "authority" and prestige-considerations that decide policy.

There, and there alone, lies the secret of the recent (essentially meaningless) "change" in the SWP policy on Russia. To the complete surprise and dumbfoundment of the membership, without their having been prepared for it in the slight-

est degree—just the opposite!—the party leadership solemnly announced that the slogan of "unconditional defense of the Soviet Union" has been subjected to "a shift in emphasis."

How delicately put! What refinement! Now, you see, due to "the shift in objective conditions" (translation: the shift in emphasis recommended by the influential comrade and the need of preserving bureaucratic prestige), the old slogan is no longer "in the fore." It is "retired" to a secondary place. Nothing wrong with it, mind you, only it doesn't have the very, very first place now. In its place "We therefore push to the fore and emphasize today *that section* of our program embodied in the slogan: *Defense of the European Revolution Against All Its Enemies! The Defense of the European Revolution* coincides with the genuine revolutionary defense of the USSR." (SWP Convention Resolution.) Apparently, before today the defense of the European revolution did not coincide with the "genuine revolutionary defense of the USSR"; but from today onward it does. That is, now that the Cannonites have contributed their tiny mite to helping Stalinist Russia grow stronger against the European revolution (Warsaw workers, subordinate yourselves to the Marshall), it is obviously high time to defend that revolution.

"You Have Strangled the Party"

No open correction of errors; no honest explanation of changes and turns; politics as an instrument of organization instead of organization as an instrument of politics—that is how the Cannonites rule and ruin the SWP. It is not necessary to emphasize that the political education of the membership is utterly impossible under such conditions. This is not to say, necessarily, that it is also impossible to increase the membership of such a party. It is possible. But it will not be a revolutionary party that deserves the name of Trotsky. It is not by accident that Roland tells of what the "authoritative" comrade wrote in another letter to the SWP. The letter, says Roland,

... reminded them (please tell us in what connection, Comrade Stein) of an incident way back in 1927 in which the Old Man and a Stalinist bureaucrat were involved. The Old Man was criticizing the Stalinists in the Executive Committee. One of them asked: "Where is the party?" and Trotsky replied: "You have strangled the party!"

Idle reminiscence? No, the comrade is making a timely, pointed—and, in its nature, a deadly—reference to what is happening to the SWP under the Cannonite régime, which Morrison rightly called the bearer of the virus of Stalinism.

The future of the SWP as a revolutionary organization is, at best, a dubious one. We recognized that five years ago. What has happened since has only made this fact plainer and caused many others to realize it. The number of those who understand this can only increase.

MAX SHACHTMAN.

The Higher School of Polemics—I

The Russian Question

We welcome the article by our German comrades as part of the international discussion which new situations, new problems and new ideas have rendered indispensable if the world Marxian movement is to be reoriented and reconsolidated. As is clear from the contents, and as the authors themselves point out, their views on one of the important aspects of the "Russian question"—the class nature of the Stalinist state—differ from those put forward by The NEW INTERNATIONAL and the Workers Party. We publish this contribution to the discussion all the more readily because, with all its polemical vigor, it is an earnest attempt to debate questions on a political and theoretical plane toward the end of a correct position. In this alone, it is already an instructive contrast to the sullen silence—and on the rare occasions when the silence is broken, the hollow abuse—with which our "defenders" of "official" Trotskyism deal with controversial problems of the movement.—The Editor.

* * *

The editorial board of the *Fourth International* has deemed it a good thing to reprint in the November issue (1944) an article that appeared in an "Internal Bulletin" of the British section. The bulletin, which contained several contributions, bore the notation: "These documents on European problems are published by the RCP as an Internal Discussion Bulletin. They do not necessarily reflect the views of the party." The *Fourth International*, for its part, prefaces the article in question with an editorial note whose most important part reads: "The article which appears below is the abridged first part of a document written in July, 1944, by a group of European comrades in London in answer to the questions raised in the 'Three Theses' and in the bulletin, 'Europe Under the Iron Heel' recently published in England."

The *Fourth International* thus does not inform its readers that it has taken its article from an "Internal Discussion Bulletin," which does "not necessarily reflect the views of the (English) party." Therewith the editorial note reflects that peculiar informational and political "scrupulousness" which is an inevitable by-product of bureaucratic stupidity.

We have of course absolutely no objection to the publication of the article in the *Fourth International* as such. For many years we have repeated on all suitable occasions what we think of "Internal Bulletins" or of bulletins in general, so far as they are anything more than an expedient for mere information or for really subordinate questions of a technical or "narrowly" organizational nature. We believe that once bulletins serve the purpose of choking off free discussion and shunting political questions to the "internal" dark-room, they are harmful and should be fought against under all circumstances. In our eyes, therefore, the editorial board of the *Fourth International* has done a service in violating the otherwise zealously practiced principle of "internal" bulletins. If the motives that guided it completely unmask their political stupidity and turn out badly for it, that does not diminish the service it has done. In addition, it places us in the pleasant position of having to polemicize not against a small group of unknown European comrades, but against the "big" SWP, which was apparently glad to be able to get its polemical powder from abroad. Why should we hide the fact that our festive cheer mounts as we see that the ox to be eaten is right big, grownup and juicy? Accordingly, we shall speak here not of the European comrades but only of the SWP. It has adopted

the lovely child with enthusiasm and without reservation—let it also pay for it.

What the Article Seeks to Do

The article seeks to criticize us and motivates that as follows:

Our world party is faced with the obligations of reviewing its forces—their theoretical clarity and their ability to give to the revolutionary class—the proletariat—what only the Fourth International can give: *program and leadership*. This is why the dispute with the group of European comrades who published the "Three Theses" (See December, 1942, *Fourth International*) has become one of the most important problems of the International. It requires the attention and active intervention of all sections of the International... [The commission indicated by the periods is not ours.—N. T.]

This group of European comrades attempts to waive aside as ridiculous the criticism of various responsible comrades in the Fourth International while continuing their false policy. For reasons not wholly comprehensible, these comrades consider their theories and conceptions as superior to those of the rest of the International. They themselves are therein their own judges—nobody else in the International has up to now confined their judgment. It is necessary to consider their theoretical venture critically.

Commentaries on Method

Wrinkle your brow as seriously as you wish over this, and you are still far from being the wiser. The truth is concrete—only a methodical investigation will show us what is hidden behind the wrinkles. Let us first go through the critical announcement sentence by sentence. We note:

a) It is correct: "Our world party is faced with the obligation of reviewing its forces—their theoretical clarity and their ability to give to the revolutionary class—the proletariat—what only the Fourth International can give: *program and leadership*."

Unfortunately, in this generally correct declaration there already lies a whole series of problems. It is very nice to speak of "our world party." It has only the one defect of not existing in the greatest part of the world. This would not be so bad in itself, and may be adequately explained by the murder of Trotsky (who by himself alone already had the weight of a world party) and the events of the last five years. Much worse is the fact that among the present remnants of the Fourth there is not the slightest international connection and even less collaboration. The International Secretariat in recent years has been a parody on everything that such an institution should mean. It is only consistent that this "body" was simply and unceremoniously buried a year ago, without the fact being communicated to anyone, without consecrating the corpse. The "international connection" consists, as formerly, in the completely one-sided and arbitrary treatment of all affairs by the SWP leadership, which employs every means of escaping any genuine control by international instances, any criticism (even the most amicable), any suggestion, etc. Nevertheless—we are no formalists and we could accommodate ourselves without difficulty even to the "dictatorship" of the SWP leadership. Its dictatorship would also not be bad if it were to display that which is involved, i.e., "theoretical clarity and the ability to give the revolutionary class *program and leadership*."

But that is just where the whole misfortune of the present Fourth lies.

There is no sense in repeating certain phrases year-in-year-out out of habit without checking their content from time to time against the reality. "To review our forces" is, in our opinion, all the more necessary, because of the little that has been produced since Trotsky's death in theoretical, political and programmatic respects. If the stupidity of a smug "criticism" compels us to take a stand on this score, then in view of the whole situation in the Fourth, the greatest candor and clarity are in place. The review of our forces begins, after long experience and painstaking checking, with the categorical declaration: Of all the legal organizations of the "official" Fourth (the illegal and emigrant organizations stand on a different plane), the SWP, both politically and theoretically, is the worst. It has nothing at its disposal that might be characterized as practical politics and rejected the proposal, for example (we are informed), to call a protest meeting on the question that has stirred up everybody, of English intervention in Greece. It has not concretized the program of the Fourth in a single point, or developed and applied the tasks of the present day accordingly. On the contrary, it has degraded it to a dead letter, ossified it and vitiated it propagandistically.¹

Comrades who show any concern over programmatic, theoretical and political questions are immediately driven into opposition, censured, and treated with hostility. What such comrades produce or could produce is hampered or rendered practically ineffectual, squashed under a mass of hopeless nonsense and idle rigmarole. One of the very few theoretically talented comrades of the SWP (A. Roland) is not reelected to the National Committee, where he should have been obliged to remain (in case of declination). As *ersatz* for politics, *The Militant* has nine alleged "fighting" slogans, among which there are brilliant beauties from old times. Next to the

1. We cannot present here a rounded criticism of the SWP policy, and must confine ourselves, at least for the most part, to substantiating our thesis by the example of the presented "criticism," whose malicious stupidity is naturally an organic part of the catastrophic decline of the SWP. But we already have no lack of detailed presentations which offer a thoroughly clear picture of the real situation. First in line is the document that Comrade A. Roland wrote for the recent convention under the title: "We Arrive at a Line." Even among politically interested comrades there is a fatal inclination to underrate the theoretical import of documents of this sort. Yet Comrade Roland has done an excellent job which merits the greatest consideration (even though we cannot by far subscribe to every word he has written). Roland demonstrates, with striking material, how, particularly in the question of Russia, even the position of 1939 (that is, the position as it was, without the adaptation to the present situation that has become so necessary) has developed away from Trotsky to the injury of the movement and has been transformed into a rear-guard cover for Stalinism. The perversity of the SWP position was obvious, but it required the intervention from an influential source to force a change here. Whereupon the by-now nauseating slogan of *The Militant*, "Defense of the Soviet Union against imperialist attack," slid from first place down to ninth, without gaining anything in value. And, above all, the magnificent editorial box of *The Militant* has been kept intact; it is part of the standing inventory and contains a quotation from Trotsky which announces that the USSR still remains "the main fortress of the world proletariat." That is how a phrase, correct in its historical position, is robbed of all its sense, and the memory of a great teacher is defiled by the reactionary harping on formulae which state the very opposite of what exists today. The situation has changed fundamentally, and the USSR does not float in the air. Stalin has finally made it the "main fortress" of world reaction, and the workers have no more vicious, cruel and perfidious enemy than it, and the "Red" Army that acts as its agent. Notions about "theoretical clarity" are surely as different as the tastes of the individual. At any rate, the SWP had to deny its taste of yesterday and to correct itself. That would have been good had not the procedure followed in this correction ruined all its usefulness. You can read in the document of Comrade Roland how this was manipulated. The "new line" is, so to say, smuggled in. Not an open word on the revision itself. Certain letters are kept unpublished under all kinds of pretexts; others are handed out without a date in order to smear over the actual situation. Read this and all the rest of it and rest assured; the sun, the moon and the stars will perish before clarity, program or "leadership" grow out of such things.

downright misleading defense of the Soviet Union, the present Slogan No. 1, in the sixth year of the war, is perfectly hilarious. It reads: "Military training of workers, financed by the government, but under control of the trade unions. Special officers' training camps, financed by the government but controlled by the trade unions, to train workers to become officers." *The Militant* shouts every week: "Join us in fighting for"—which is unfortunately as impossible with it as is a seriously meditated proposal by a newborn suckling to improve its mother's milk. Given the absolutely incontestable fact that there has not yet been the slightest fight for the nine slogans of *The Militant*, the possibility of joining it "in fighting for" is also liquidated. And with the declaration that paper is unnecessarily wasted with these slogans, and minds confused, the rest is also liquidated. For a measure that is to be carried out "under control of the trade unions," presupposes an *active trade union policy* of the organization that demands the measure. But everybody who knows the decisions of the SWP in this respect knows that it *has expressly forbidden* an active trade union policy. It has given a thoroughly opportunistic motivation for this prohibition, the net effect of which may be summarized as follows: "We cannot do anything today. But tomorrow, conditions will be favorable for us. We must preserve ourselves intact (and of course recruit members) so as to be able to take over the leadership later on." And of course the workers in the trade unions will say "later on": Aha, there you are—we've waited for you so long! All that is left is the sad fact that the SWP puts forward a slogan and calls for a *fight* for it which it does not take seriously itself and for which it rejects a fight. And that is the most vicious thing a party can inflict upon itself and upon the workers. Instead of theoretical clarity, bureaucratic stupidity; instead of leadership, bureaucratic dishonesty. That is what the balance sheet looks like on this score.

The other extreme is represented by the British organization, which, in practical politics, is by far the best organization of the official Fourth. "By far the best organization" is of course a relative term. It is limited to a specific field of practical activity, upon which our British friends enter with courage and aggressiveness, and actually present something like a "leadership" from which all other organizations can only learn. This organization takes itself and its slogans seriously—the diplomatic game of the SWP is alien to it and it warrants the greatest hopes. The main danger for it lies in its theoretical weakness, which is also responsible for its practical mistakes, propagandistic miscues, etc. To be able to fulfill the hopes placed upon it and to give the revolution a genuine "leadership," it must learn to free itself radically from the ideological influence of the SWP, whose confusion and provincialism it reflects in large measure. Like all the organizations of the Fourth, it needs more *Leninism*, both with regard to the organizational field and the system of a universal policy. "Narrow practicalism" is equally characteristic of the two extremes, the passive SWP and the active British section, and is self-understood from the formations that lie between. This "practicalism" and the low theoretical level that conditions it, are the curse of all organizations that orient themselves to an overwhelming extent upon a pure "worker"-policy.

While recognizing everything that the British section in particular represents by its sound inclinations, the review of our forces concludes with a judgment that has little in common with the blithe optimism of the claim to "leadership" constantly proclaimed for fifteen years; it does, however, correctly appraise the reality. That is, so long as the present situa-

tion of the Fourth is not surmounted, it will remain incapable of giving the revolutionary class a living program and an adequate leadership. The printed programs and principles that are not developed and practically applied, serve exactly the same purpose, regardless of the imprint "Trotskyist," as a volume of Lenin in the hands of Stalin. We hope this is unmistakable.

Commentaries on Method (Continuation)

b) "This is why the dispute with the group of European comrades who published the 'Three Theses' (see December, 1942, *Fourth International*) has become one of the most important problems of the International. It requires the attention and active intervention of all sections of the International."

After all that has been set forth here, we can only acknowledge that this second sentence of the critical accusation is completely correct. To attack the evil, it will indeed be necessary to elaborate the differences sharply and bring about a decision. The more sections that actively intervene and gain clarity, the better. We would have to be the SWP leadership to be afraid of an open struggle of opinions and the threatening "intervention."

c) "This group of European comrades attempts to waive aside as ridiculous the criticism of various responsible comrades in the Fourth International while continuing their false policy."

How things stand with the accusation that we are pursuing a "false policy," we shall see later on. The rest of the accusation, however, we accept without much ado. The reader will understand why we were infernally amused by this "criticism" as soon as we have examined it closer. It is the most stupid and ludicrous of all we have ever been served with.

d) "For reasons not wholly comprehensible, these comrades consider their theories and conceptions as superior to those of the rest of the International."

This accusation is also accepted from start to finish. It is a peculiar thing, however, with such sentences, in so far as they are directed at the wrong address. "Normally," everybody considers his own theories and conceptions "superior"—most often precisely when he knows nothing at all about what theories and conceptions are. Truly superior in *every respect* (not merely in its non-existent theories and conceptions) is what, for example, the SWP leadership considers itself; for this reason and no other it presents us with its "superior" criticism and has long ago planted us among the "revisionist-opportunists." An old proverb urges the utmost prudence with regard to the proneness of people to level light-minded accusations, and recommends that no stones be thrown by those who live in glass houses. Our critics should therefore not be surprised if the walls of their glass house rattle and our feeling of superiority is thereby substantially enhanced. We will serve them artistically.

e) "They themselves are therein their own judges—nobody else in the International has up to now confirmed this judgment."

We are not investigating whether we do not have judges outside of ourselves, and we plead entirely guilty once more to the omniscient charge. In spite of this, we certainly do not feel the slightest impulse to collapse contritely. And why should we have waited for a correct judgment by our critics, if all they have presented us with "up to now" are stupidities and intelligence tests which cannot even be judged "properly" in parliamentary expressions? How glad we would be if our critics

would only leave their petty-bourgeois scandalmongering and finally treat themselves to a critically sound judgment about themselves! However, they do not even know whether they are hitting themselves or not. We will prove this to them, and we lament only the sorry fact that in our exchanges with them all we ever get to read that is in any way palatable is what we ourselves have written.

f) "It is necessary to consider their theoretical venture critically."

That is the task that we now undertake.

The Case of Walter Held

Although in complete solidarity in theoretical and political respects, there are four groups on our side that are independent participants in the polemic. These groups are therefore not different factions or currents within the German organization—they are separated only spatially, and at a time when there was no possibility of contact among them, each of them by itself adopted the same position with (we say proudly) "deadly sureness."

The first group is represented by comrade Baum who introduced the debate on the "national question" back in 1940, and encountered the vehement resistance of the SWP in particular with an article on "Hitler's Victories." The second group consists only of comrade Held. He lived in Sweden and came forward in September, 1940, with "Europe Under the Iron Heel." The third group embraces the authors of the "Three Theses." It was able, following its release from the French concentration camps in the spring of 1941, to unite with the Baum group and (in agreement with comrade O. F., who lived far away) to present its theses for discussion in October of the same year. The fourth group, finally, consists of the publishers of the bulletin: "Europe under the Iron Heel," which contains the article of the same title by Held, our "Three Theses," and a contribution by comrade F. Brink. Thus, we marched against unsuspecting stupidity from four different points, and each adopted the same basic position independently of the others, with the various sides of the question that were treated complementing the others excellently. In contrast to the theoretical muddle in the SWP, such a result can be attained, naturally, only from a politically well-schooled organization free of bureaucratic considerations.

This is where the case of Walter Held comes in. His article, testifying to a rare perspicacity and farsightedness, still stands, and has fully merited translation into English even today, but Held himself is no longer among the living. In his attempt to escape from Sweden and to join us, he fell into the hands of the GPU and was added to the countless victims of Stalin. Stalin knew what he was doing in eliminating comrade Held. We had expected that SWP leadership would also be aware of this, and would aim at the uttermost scrupulousness in its polemical zeal against the murdered comrade.

That it did not do so, and preferred to proceed against one who was personally defenseless and one of the best of the dead of the Fourth with calumny and falsehood, is the reason for the sharpness with which we react today. To calumniate old, experienced, tested and devoted comrades as "revisionists" and "liquidators," to make arbitrary assertions, to give a false picture of past differences of opinion, to besmirch the political character-portrait of an irreproachable comrade, and to seek to transmit it in this way to posterity and to our own world—all these are symptoms of that sinister malady which fill comrade Morrison, for example, with justified concern in a number of other cases. Comrade Morrison, *who faces up to his*

hopelessly sophisticated opponents with painstaking scrupulousness and well-thought-out arguments, designates these symptoms—inasmuch as they are characteristic only of Stalinism—as the symptoms (“germs”) of *Stalinism*. He can do this precisely because he is scrupulous and operates with real arguments, but he refrains from saying more than he can justify. In the same way, anyone may assume up to the present moment that while the procedure employed against us by the SWP was *objectively* calumny, etc., nevertheless it was *subjectively* simply an incapacity for thinking and narrowmindedness arising out of various causes. However, we shall make the concrete test, and we say from the very moment when we have demonstrated here the untenability of the accusations in question, and corrected them openly, we shall call the SWP leadership unscrupulous calumniators and poisoners of the Fourth if they refuse to make a public withdrawal of their statements. If it were we alone who were involved, we would be as little “irritated” as we are (as our “own judge”) also little concerned about our future. But it is Walter Held who is involved—the dead should be promptly and unconditionally rehabilitated. Held can no longer help himself—we are the only ones who can defend him at all. And that we owe him.

The “Sins” of Walter Held

It is true: in the big dispute of 1939 which led to the split into the SWP and WP in America, Walter Held was not willing to see in Stalin’s attack upon Finland anything but an infamy for which there could be no justification or toleration whatsoever. To put it more plainly: his heart was for a failure for Stalin and for rejecting his Finnish adventure. But Held limited his position to the case of Finland, and in the question of Russia he remained at the old theoretical position that had been worked out by Trotsky. We do not examine here whether Held was right or wrong in this, but merely record the pure fact.

The “criticism” against Held knows differently, however:

That comrade Held, at the time of the Russo-Finnish war, and at the time of the controversy in the Socialist Workers Party, openly advocated “revolutionary defeatism” for Russia in *Unser Wort*—would be of relatively small significance, *viz.*, would be of interest only for the “record,” inasmuch as the present tendency assures us it agrees with Trotsky on this question.

So now we know that Held preached “revolutionary defeatism” not just for the case of Finland, but quite in general for *Russia*. The Russian question is, as is known, the bogeyman of the SWP and a writer is sufficiently suspect if he was not a one hundred percent on it. The whole thing has nothing whatever to do with the present dispute, but what can you live on if you have no arguments? Then you live on gossip and you work out a pretty “amalgam.” That is easy to fix up, because in the first place all those are also as suspect as Held who share his views in another question. The operation begins by casting doubt on the sincerity of the “present” tendency:

Until now we thought this statement [agreement with Trotsky in the Russian question] to be sincere. But what can we think of it when these comrades now publish an article [the reference is to Held’s “Europe Under the Iron Heel”] which contains the following:

“After a year of war, the régime of the iron heel has subjected almost the entire European continent. Finland, Sweden and Switzerland have still a remnant of independence and democratic form of government—however, all these countries lie under the shadow of the iron heel. All signs foreshadow that Finland will also share the fate of the Baltic countries.” [Emphasis by the critics.]

It was the fate of the Baltic countries to be occupied by Russia.

The régime of the iron heel, is thus not only German imperialism—fascism—but also the Soviet Union.

The question is, then, if the “régime” of the iron heel (fascism) can be equated with Stalin’s régime in Russia. We answer this question in agreement with Trotsky with a flat Yes. Perhaps the critics remember that we owe the designation of “Kremlinoligarchy” to nobody but Trotsky. But that would be of “relatively small significance” if Trotsky had not written explicitly:

Stalinism and fascism, in spite of a deep difference in social foundations, are symmetrical phenomena. In many of their features they show a deadly similarity. A victorious revolutionary movement in Europe would immediately shake not only fascism, but Soviet Bonapartism. (*The Revolution Betrayed*, p. 278.)

Like many ultra-lefts, Bruno R. identifies in essence Stalinism with fascism. On the one side the Soviet bureaucracy has adopted the political methods of fascism: on the other side the fascist bureaucracy, which still confines itself to “partial” measures of state intervention, is heading toward and will soon reach complete statification of economy. The first assertion is absolutely correct. (*In Defense of Marxism*, p. 11. Our emphasis.—N. T.)

To our critics’ misfortune, the same Trotsky who characterized the Stalin régime as the “most reactionary in the world,” also emphasized with reference to the Soviet Union the correctness of the sentence: “Foreign policy is the continuation of the internal.” (*In Defense of Marxism*, pp. 29f.) In a word: Held made bold enough to regard the deeds of the Kremlin oligarchy and its agents (including the “Red” Army) abroad as no better than at home, and to think: in *politics*, counter-revolution remains counter-revolution, and Fascism—fascism. To be sure, this was a thesis that we had long ago put forward and defended, on the occasion of the “Soviet Russian delivery of arms in the Spanish civil war,” even against the then International Secretariat, which was spreading the most pernicious confusion in this question. We rejected the talk that Stalin, in the interest of his domination, is compelled very often to do things which are “objectively” progressive against his will, and declared: the Stalin bureaucracy has become *exclusively* reactionary and counter-revolutionary; the Russian arms deliveries are the smuggling of the armed enemy into the camp of the Spanish revolution. Let us add: L. Trotsky never contradicted us *politically* in this or in other questions.

Let us assume, however, purely for the sake of argument that the critics were able to read and understand “their” Trotsky only in such a way as to produce the caricature analyzed by comrade A. Roland. Let us even assume that there were serious differences among us, Trotsky and the rest of the Fourth on the appraisal of the Stalin régime. It is clear that a different appraisal of the “régime of the iron heel” does not yet touch on the questions of the *program* and the *theory* of the Fourth, and for example, gives no decision on the character of the U.S.S.R. (“workers’ state” or not). From this, you can measure the level of a “criticism” which, right on the heels of the suspicion, serves up the finished amalgam:

Shachtman thought it superfluous to distinguish between an annexation in the interest of imperialism and an annexation for the *defense of the Soviet Union against imperialism*. The renegade Burnham later developed on this basis his theory of the “managerial society”—he could just as well have called it the “Iron Heel.”

In other words: You see, dear reader, what dangerous rascals this Held and his friends are. They stand on the same ground as the *renegade* Burnham, whose “managerial society” is only a different designation for the régime of the “Iron Heel” in Held’s sense.

Are we right in calling this miserable calumny (what is

more, of the dead, whose contributions to the press of the SWP lent it lustre), so long as it is not withdrawn? Are we right in saying that the consciousness of the movement is poisoned with such things, and that the same thing is done as the forger, Stalin, who is the master of "amalgams"? Isn't it spiritual devastation and disorientation of followers when the apologetic "managerial revolution" (which is supposed to be a "higher" stage of development) is thrown into one pot, with sordid purpose, with the "Iron Heel" (which is the symbol of the deepest depravity of bourgeois society)? The SWP leadership evidently thinks that it is enough for a "leadership" to apply the yardstick of the illiterate to the whole world. And the fact is that it has "trained" its members in such a way as to render them incapable of recognizing crude theoretical and political mistakes by themselves and to reject them fittingly.

Put aside the coarse calumnies: did the 1939 debate revolve around making a distinction between two different annexations? On the contrary! Trotsky emphasized explicitly that we do not want to take on so much as the slightest responsibility for the domestic and foreign political crimes of Stalin (annexation included). The nub of the debate came to a point on the question of whether the latest crime of Stalin had finally destroyed the character of the Soviet Union as a "workers' state" and whether in the given concrete situation this crime sufficed to give up the defense of the basic achievements of the October revolution. Shachtman held, as the discussion progressed, that the "workers' state" was dead (whether for the preceding reason or any other is beside the point here) and—experience showed that he nevertheless remained a revolutionist. Burnham likewise said No to the "workers' state." He evolved in his own way, became a renegade and traitor. Held, on the other hand, believed, *also in the then situation*, that resistance should be offered Stalin's crime, but in the question of the workers' state and defense of the Soviet Union, he remained on Trotsky's standpoint. As is known, Trotsky called upon Shachtman to remain in the SWP and, within the framework of unity of action, to propagate his contrary views undisturbed.

Again, measure the baseness of a polemic which adds directly to the amalgam:

The claim of these comrades that they base themselves on the program [!] of the Fourth International loses in our eyes much of its value when they print and solidarize themselves with statements [!] which are exactly the contrary of the position [!] of Trotsky and the Fourth International.

As we have seen, the "statements" thus far consist of *one single* quotation on the question of the Stalin régime, which we, *along with Trotsky, consider fascist in its political essence*. The rest was lies on Held's defeatism for Russia, a despicable amalgam, a false presentation of the standpoints, and a conscienceless misleading of the public. Under such circumstances we must naturally say what it means for us when we lose much "value" or anything else in the eyes of our critics. For us it simply means that we are happy not to have them regard us as brothers in spirit.

The Trap of History

On Held's article, it says further:

For a long time we did not pay special attention to the article of comrade [renegade-comrade?] Held—it is brimming with literary superficialities, it is bare of any scientific exactness.

The second half of this sentence is a new besmirching of Held, murdered by Stalin, and it will be understood why, with regard to him, we do not want to allow a single word to pass without reprimand. Held's article is, in reality, a brilliant lit-

erary and political product of the kind that the SWP leadership once used to love to print when it came from the pen of the same Held. Gone are the fine days when Held's articles still helped make the press of the SWP attractive and useful; whereas today it serves us with a "scientific exactness" from which you would turn with a shudder if it were not for the fact that dealing with it is part of the fulfilling of indispensable revolutionary duty. We have demonstrated here with a few examples with what accuracy the criticism misses its mark by about a few hundred miles. Should we therefore say that these ABC-sharpshooters are, with respect to "scientific exactness," likewise only "their own judge"?

Certainly we should! The only point is that there is a big difference as to whether it is a fool or an untalented bureaucrat, or else a man blessed with sense, who judges himself. Where understanding, knowledge and conscience rule, the experiment will succeed—in the remaining cases, there should be no surprise if the product falls back on the head of the producer. Our critics take mighty good care not to bring any examples of where Held's article is "brimming with literary superficialities." They are goodnatured people, and no sooner is one poisoned arrow sped on its way than the next one comes:

The above quotation is not the only blow which these European comrades aim against our position on the Soviet Union. On page 3 of this bulletin, it is said that the English Tories have understood relatively late "that the Soviet Union has ceased to constitute a danger for the European bourgeoisie" on the grounds of internal transformations within the Soviet Union.

Let us repeat patiently: "the above quotation" consisted of an appraisal of the Stalin régime in agreement with Trotsky. Worked up into an amalgam and trimmed with other ingredients it was in fact a "blow" not against our "position on the Soviet Union," but against all the political and methodological principles of the Fourth and against elementary human decency. Now Held has committed the crime of writing that "the Soviet Union has ceased to constitute a danger for the European bourgeoisie." And this crime is immediately avenged:

As opposed to this, the Manifesto of the Fourth International, "The Imperialist War and the Proletarian Revolution" quotes from the theses on "War and the Fourth International" as follows: "Taken on the historical scale the contradiction between world imperialism and the Soviet Union is infinitely more profound than the antagonisms which set the individual countries in opposition to each other."

It must truly be a relief for the poor in spirit to be able to avoid the effort of thinking for themselves by using an inappropriate quotation. Yet, before we deal with the quotation, let us consider the historical trap which the critics have set here for themselves. The new, extremely terrible "blow" against the Fourth would be of interest "only for the record," if it were not for the *Fourth International* of November, 1944. As we already know, the SWP was forced, by intervention from an influential source, to turn back again to Trotsky's line in the Russian question and to draw closer to the harsh reality. True: so far as *our* view is concerned, we have stood since 1936 on the viewpoint that the Soviet Union under Stalin represents no *danger* for the bourgeoisie. Since that time, we have often set this down in writing without ever encountering the criticism of Trotsky or even of the SWP. Why does it come forward in November, 1944, with its "criticism" when, in the same issue it presents "statements" which are completely identical with our standpoint? Why does it strike itself in the face when at the same time a "resolution" is submitted to the convention in which may be found the confirmation of our views?

This is to be explained, first, by the fact that the correction of the *obviously false line* in the policy toward the Soviet Union, which was established by the influential interventionist, was not carried through with political candor but only as a bureaucratic maneuver. The business is "arranged" in such a way, with the aid of an undated letter, as to make it appear that they reach the "stature of the times" on their own count. Yet, the "heart" does not feel just right in this turn of affairs and the letter in question is a document whose half-ness and dead phrasemongering stands off in painful contrast to the masterfully written letter of the "interventionist." From all this follows, second, the explanation: a bureaucracy guided by purely factional requirements is never capable of checking up on itself and freeing itself of the crudest contradictions.

The Trap of History in the Form of Quotations

We are now in a position to bring "really appropriate" quotations and we begin with the "editorial" which stands next to the "criticism" of us. On pages 325-326 (November, 1944) it says:

The actual fact is that the heaviest reserves of the internal counter-revolution are now to be found among the Soviet peasantry. Prior [!] to the war the class differentiation within the collectives had already produced a strong [!] formation of "millionaire kolkhozniks" who can be scientifically [!] designated as a nascent *rural bourgeoisie*. The processes in wartime, especially the growing scarcity of necessities, have tended to greatly strengthen this rural bourgeoisie. . . .

The Soviet rural bourgeoisie possesses social support in the village in the person of another layer that has grown luxuriously in wartime—the well-to-do peasant, the speculator in the "free market," in short, none other than the kulak whose complete extinction had been fraudulently proclaimed long ago by the Kremlin. . . .

The growth of individualistic tendencies in Soviet agriculture is reflected in Stalin's own press. *The collectives do not even bother to sign agreements with the Machine Tractor Stations*, agreements on which a large portion of grain deliveries to the state depend. A report from a district in Northern Caucasus states that:

"In the course of the last two years the Mamlyutsky regional Soviet has not reviewed nor registered a single agreement." And in conclusion, it is added: "The Mamlyutsky region is, unfortunately, not an exception." (*Pravda*, June 8.)

The collectives do not bother to fulfill the plan. They prefer to raise and harvest those crops which are the most profitable. Hay and other fodder are apparently relatively cheap in the "free market" and are therefore neglected, with the resulting loss of horses and cattle. . . .

Fragmentary as the information is, the conclusion is inescapable. The war has placed a huge question mark over the fate of the entire [!] collective farm system *which is now being pulled powerfully in the direction of capitalist restoration.* This crisis in the collective *directly involves the fate of nationalized industry and planned economy as a whole.* (Our emphasis in this paragraph.—N. T.)

Meanwhile in the political sphere the Stalinist bureaucracy has already accomplished everything in its power to clear the road for capitalist restoration. The capitalist, or more correctly, the restorationist wing of the bureaucracy, has been strengthened by the ascendancy of the military caste, by the restoration of the Greek Orthodox Church, by all the injection of the poison of chauvinism into the Soviet masses, and all the other reactionary measures introduced in recent periods. *The strong agricultural base of the counter-revolution reinforces and is itself reinforced by the restorationist section of the bureaucracy.* The "democratic" Anglo-American imperialists provide the forces moving toward capitalist restoration within the USSR with a powerful ally. (Our emphasis.—N. T.)

Finally, Soviet industry has been undermined not only by the war but also by the bureaucracy, which has remained just as rapacious, arbitrary, wasteful and inefficient in wartime as it was in peace. The war has freed the managers, engineers and specialists *even of the inadequate controls previously exercised.* They remain, of course, completely free from any check or supervision by the

masses. One of the first casualties of the war was the system of cost-accounting in the plants. . . . (Our emphasis.—N. T.)

It is worth stopping here for a moment and noting: in the eyes of our critics, the Soviet Union at the present moment appears to be an all the greater "danger" to imperialism the more what is called "planned economy," "workers' state," "foundations of the October Revolution," etc., is being visibly demolished even for them. As a *workers' state* (for we are discussing here, be it well understood, the *danger* that Russia is supposed to be to imperialism as a *workers' state*), Russia has for a long time been about as dangerous to imperialism as the leadership of the SWP has been to the existence of world capitalism in general. Let us not be misunderstood: *precisely today*, when this kind of argument is pushed into the foreground, both "dangers" are equal to zero. Let us now follow briefly comrade A. Roland, who is represented in the same issue of the *Fourth International* with an article on "Political Economy Under Stalin." Roland writes (pp. 341f):

Deep inroads exist in the nationalized land. The peasants have now used their private plots, separated from the collectivized farms, for many years. They look upon these as private property and secure the larger part of their income from the labor devoted to these plots of land. Then too the produce thus privately raised as well as the supplies of grain, etc., received in kind as their share of the production of the collectives, are sold in the open market existing side by side with the closed government market. The economists cannot help but state that: "Between the organized market, which is in the hands of the Soviet state, and the free market element a struggle goes on." The free market has grown at an enormous rate during the war. The government had to permit this in order to give the incentive for the greatest possible production. Where two markets exist, one for private trading, with much higher prices in the free market, there can be no doubt that speculation and middlemen spring up and grow apace. . . .

One can say with utmost assurance that in the tug-of-war between the socialist and the capitalist sectors of Soviet economy, *the pull is all in the direction of capitalism at the present time.* This despite the fact of war production on the part of the trusts. *For even in this sphere, the individual factories have come more and more into touch with each other directly, instead of through central planning bodies.* This trend has been encouraged by the bureaucracy. *Its tendency is to atomize the economy.* Taken in conjunction with the direct effects of the war, and the pressure of world imperialism, the danger of capitalist restoration in the Soviet Union grows more and more acute. The process is not one that occurs all at once. The example of "Soviet" Esthonia may be taken as an illustration of how the process may spread. There the land has not been nationalized, but has been left in the hands of the peasants. No effort is being made (nor could it be made under present conditions) to collectivize them. But in addition all enterprises employing less than ten people are permitted to continue as private ones. Only the bigger plants are being nationalized.

There is some indication of the future trend also in the Gold Conference. Stalin has undertaken to help buttress world capitalism with the aid of Soviet gold and economy. The capitalist countries, meantime, propose to seek to penetrate Soviet economy by economic pressure through this same channel. Incidentally, by these ties with world capitalism, Stalin has negated the whole theory of "socialism in one country." For it is clear acknowledgment of the dependence of Soviet economy on world economy.

There is only one great force that can save the Soviet Union from this danger. *Without a proletarian revolution in Europe, which will arouse the Soviet masses into action against the reactionary bureaucracy, capitalist restoration is inevitable sooner or later.* Stalin's victories do not at all lessen the danger. They may indeed hasten matters. These are the alternatives facing Russia. (Our emphasis throughout.—N. T.)

Up to this point, the demonstration of how terribly great is the "danger" to imperialism of the existence of the "Soviet" Union, has proceeded mainly along economic lines. That is entirely in the theoretical order of things, for to be able to

estimate the *political* threat (which is being discussed first of all), you must know to what extent, if at all, the economic data, quasi-“independent” of Stalin’s will, by their *mere power*, represent a danger *which has the special character of the danger of “Soviet” economy*. Our critics are indignant over the view that the “Soviet Union has ceased to constitute a danger for the European bourgeoisie,” by which we have struck a terrible “blow” at “our position on the Soviet Union.” In return, they plunge at the same instant into the historical trap which they have themselves set in considering the reality (we are far from saying that their consideration is exhaustive and adequate). Their own view, given with the “utmost assurance,” says: “. . . the pull is all in the direction of capitalism at the present time.” If we follow this line, the ensuing result is the consideration: “Without a proletarian revolution in Europe . . . capitalist restoration is inevitable sooner or later.” Conclusion from the situation as a whole: *even from the economic side* or from the latent power, the Soviet Union is no more “dangerous” for the bourgeoisie at this moment than Stalin’s pipe can be.

We should, however, remain cautious and bear in mind, with Feuerbach: “Bottomless is human ignorance and boundless the force of human fancy; the power of nature, despoiled of its ground by ignorance, of its limits by imagination, is the divine omnipotence.” Possibly, therefore, the fetishizing of the “natural power” of the Soviet Union, provided by the boundless imagination, for example, of comrade Martin,² will prompt our critics to the assertion: The fear and terror of the bourgeoisie before the Soviet Union have grown in the same proportion in which its economic foundations appear to us as a body which now consists only of fragments and which has already lost its whole abdomen. Everything is possible, but that is not reason not to reverse the formula and to say: the bourgeoisie has triumphed—a *danger* exists *exclusively* for the “Soviet” Union, whose internal foes are in complete solidarity with the world bourgeoisie. There is but one single danger for the *bourgeoisie* inside and outside the “Soviet” Union. This danger is the socialist revolution, which, for its own part, imperilled as much by the *existence* of the *present* Soviet Union as it is in general by the world bourgeoisie, *with the greater danger coming out of the Soviet Union itself*. To speak of other dangers, is blank metaphysics, and means depriving the revolution of the bitterly necessary orientation. Let our critics cry out, Murder! and Stop, Thief!—but the demonstration is still far from concluded.

Supplementary

We are still operating on the basis of the materials which the *Fourth International* supplies us with. Its November issue offers us a third article which the editorial board prefaces with the remark: “There are a number of loose and inexact formulations in the article, such as: ‘the workers’ state fell and was replaced by Stalinist despotism’; an improper reference to the October revolution as ‘a happy episode,’ etc.³ We are publishing the article because in its main line it conforms with the Trotskyist position on the Soviet Union.” If we examine the “main line” of the article, we find:

2. See his letter in the material for the SWP convention, where the “divine omnipotence” of the Soviet Union is trotted out before us in exemplary fashion.

3. The “improper reference” refers to the sentences: “The triumph of the Russian proletariat was no more than a happy episode in the world struggle of the proletariat against capitalism. A triumph of the greatest importance, yes, but incapable of consolidating and completing itself without the aid of other revolutions.” We have emphasized the essential passages in order to show once again the type of

The Rothschilds, Krupps, Hitlers, Churchills, etc., need the capitalist system as much as it needs them; but the Stalins, Molotovs, Vishinskys, etc., are unnecessary and harmful to the nationalized and planned economy. They have no other way out than to set the economic system in harmony with themselves; at that point they will be in no way distinguishable from the capitalist class. In other words, if they are not to perish, they will be obliged to reintroduce private property.

But a step of this sort cannot be legally effected before it has first been actually introduced into the social structure of the country. And even so, the bureaucracy will not dare to announce it *openly*. They will say, perhaps, that the revolution has now achieved all its objectives, that from now on it need only rejoice in its triumph and in the marvelous good-nature of the Marshal. It was precisely on the eve of the war that the material privileges of the bureaucracy had reached their zenith. To go further was impossible without an open break with planned economy. Ideologically, everything was then ready for solidifying their illegitimate usurpation of power and privileges into an ownership legitimized by law and sanctified by the gods.

This whole last paragraph is not especially clear. What does an “open break” mean, if on the other hand the bureaucracy “will not dare to announce [!] it *openly*” and, as always, will say something different? It is a fact that the “planned economy,” most particularly since “the eve of the war,” has been broken through and shot through on all sides. It is more of a literary specter than a living, effective reality, where, in the opinion of the writer, it was *impossible* to go any further along the path taken “without an open break with planned economy.” Comrade Roland is entirely correct in saying that even in the outstandingly important industrial branch “of war production on the part of the trusts,” “the individual factories have come more and more into touch with each other directly, instead of through central planned bodies. This trend has been encouraged [!] by the bureaucracy. Its tendency is to atomize the economy.” And the same view is held by the quoted editorial. It appears to us that speculations on “openly” or not only distract attention from the subject under investigation. The analysis must proceed from the fundamental fact that a *definite private-economic and “unplanned” sector* has *always* existed in the economy of the Soviet Union and has grown enormously most especially since the beginning of the war. The changes in the “social structure of the country” correspond by and large to this growth. We have a fairly reliable yardstick for what is taking place in the economic sphere when it is borne in mind that the social, ideological and political changes *are taking place with startling speed* in the Soviet Union. The problem is to ascertain the point where the growth of the private sector, fed from numerous channels, has progressed far enough *to be able to vanquish the whole*, openly or not. On this score, it is not only national, but also international factors of economy and politics, that decide.

Furthermore, we should not stand hypnotized before the word “planned economy.” In the sense of the economic development of the totalitarian states, a certain part of “nationalized” and “planned” economy can remain in existence undisturbed, without contradicting the restoration of capitalism. That would only help hide the whole process, instead of making it “openly” necessary, while the civil war rages for years and appears to be carried on “under cover” only because it is

criticism the *Fourth International* editors pursue. It is miserable quibbling—a malady which befalls especially those comrades who feel themselves politically unsure. The afflicted do not concern themselves with the *spirit* of a formulation or of entire works, but they run around the paper like flies and cling to individual letters of a word. As a result of their somewhat thin-flowing digestive droppings, they leave behind certain dots on the I. These dots are then given “bad” marks and attributed to the brain of the author. And thereupon the “improper” criticism gets under way.

permanent. And finally, the return to capitalism in the Soviet Union must yield the same results economically as in the other imperialist countries which push ahead the capitalist decomposition. Looked at historically, the October Revolution would then have served to make possible the *bourgeois* development, which was blocked by the Czarist system with the aid of a *proletarian* revolution, and to place Russia, at the peak of the whole process, which assumes economically and politically the forms of *capitalism in decay*, before a new proletarian revolution. That is precisely why the Russian development, once the foundations of the October Revolution have been eliminated, necessarily leaves behind only the *fascist system*, and, as Trotsky argued against Bruno R., not "state capitalism" or the "managerial society." How far the thing, "legitimized by law and sanctified by the gods," had developed as early as the outbreak of the war, is shown by the writer with examples that are very interesting for us:

The decisive solution—either toward capitalism or toward socialism—coincides with the social convulsions brought about by the war, to the discomfiture of Stalinism and the bourgeois counter-revolution throughout the world. In 1939 an English economic society, wishing to reassure its government about a possible alliance with the "Bolshevik" Stalin, offered evidence [!] from a study of Soviet economy [!] that the bureaucracy constituted a newly-forming bourgeoisie interested solely in the status quo throughout the world. Independently, a French society of the same sort arrived at the same conclusion....

The war, pushing to their extremes the contradictions existing in the USSR, chiefly the separation between the people and the bureaucracy, has impelled the latter to the very edge [!] of capitalist restoration. Hardly has the external danger been conquered than the internal danger reappears, in gigantic forms. Because the military victories have been achieved under the leadership of the bureaucracy, they have succeeded only in postponing the solution of the dilemma: capitalist restoration or continuance of the revolution—with the term *bureaucracy* now replacing the term *imperialism*.

Held, "brimming with literary superficialities," was therefore well-informed when he declared "that the English Tories have understood relatively late that the Soviet Union has ceased to constitute a danger for the European bourgeoisie on the grounds of internal transformations within the Soviet Union." The two economic societies, however, offered *evidence* of Stalin's harmlessness not out of the air, but "from a study of Soviet economy." Our critics seem to assume that the English Tories shook with fear when they were given the calming reassurance: everything is in the finest order! For us, on the contrary, it is important once more to hold firmly: you cannot be driven "to the very edge of capitalist restoration" if the economic premises ad hoc have not themselves reached "to the very edge." If these premises had not matured, then the problem of the capitalist restoration could naturally not even be posed. If you follow the presentation of the writer, its inner logic reads: on the economic field, the private-economic factors (premises of the restoration) and the Soviet factors (achievements of the October Revolution) must be confronting each other in a strength of about 50-50, and be driving toward a final decision. Evidence of this state of affairs is provided us not only by the writer, but also by the editorial and by comrade Roland. Politically, the writer of the third article, right at the outset, draws the same conclusion as all of us who hold Trotsky's position:

The path of capitalist restoration and the timing of its realization differs from what was forecast by the old leaders of the revolution. But the essence of their prediction cannot fail of fulfillment: *failing new revolutions, capitalism will be restored in the USSR*. (Our emphasis.—N. T.)

The tendency of the development is thus unambiguously ascertained and is being driven forward, precisely today, by distantly visible and weighty facts. On the tempo of the development, comrade Roland says correctly: "Stalin's victories do not at all lessen the danger. They may indeed hasten matters." The so-called Soviet factors are being assailed on all sides (most particularly in consequence of the constantly growing dependence of Soviet economy on world economy) and find themselves in impotent isolation from which they can be liberated only by revolutions outside of Russia. Let us note one thing further: "Capitalist restoration or continuance of the revolution" is the dilemma—"with the term *bureaucracy* now replacing the term *imperialism*." From this whole situation follow certain peculiar consequences, even if our critics believe that the only consequence is the one that makes the bourgeoisie drip blood from the nose out of fear of the colossal "danger."⁴ (To be continued.)

Committee Abroad of the
International Communists of Germany
by N. T.

4. That the bourgeoisie does not worry a damn over the "danger" that comes to them out of the Soviet Union as such and is united with Stalin in its fear of a revolution *outside* of Russia (with Stalin carrying off the prize), is very nicely shown by the writer of the third article:

"Its (the Kremlin's) proposition to the Dumbarton Oaks conference (the creation of an international air corps capable of quickly attacking any regions where disturbances threaten), shows a panicky fear of the revolution greater even than that of the bourgeoisie itself."—It would not be necessary to repeat such by-now banal wisdom if we were not dealing with big critics. Pursuing their "polemical requirements" which lie on the other side of the question, they find it easy to make themselves ridiculous and to ignore their own assertions.

READY NOW:

BOUND VOLUME

LABOR ACTION

for 1944

PRICE \$2.50



COMING SOON:

BOUND VOLUME

THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

for 1944

PRICE \$2.50

Order From:

LABOR ACTION BOOK SERVICE

114 WEST 14th STREET

NEW YORK 11, N. Y.

Revisionism and Planning

The Revolutionary Struggle Against Labor Fakers

The American labor movement is very much stirred by the President's "plan" for sixty million jobs and Wallace's "plan" for implementing the promise of the presidential campaign. In reality, neither the President nor Wallace has any plan at all. However, the idea that some sort of plan is necessary to increase production and guarantee employment is now a settled concept with many American workers. We therefore print an important letter by Leon Trotsky advising the Belgian comrades and the Belgian labor movement on the attitude they should adopt toward a plan for making capitalism work.

The de Man plan dealt with in this letter was nothing so nebulous as the vaporings of Wallace and Roosevelt. De Man was a labor leader who published a complete and well-documented "labor plan" for pulling Belgian industry out of the crisis and restoring permanent prosperity. It created quite a stir at the time but soon disappeared from public notice in the conflict that developed between the working class and the Belgian fascists under Leon de Grelle, who called themselves Rexists.

Revisionist plans cannot solve the capitalist crisis or eliminate the class struggle. Nevertheless, they pose a problem which demands a certain answer. Despite the differences between Belgium and the United States, Trotsky's *method* in dealing with the problem is of the greatest interest and value to the American Marxist movement and the class-conscious workers.

De Man produced this plan for making capitalism work. He was also very active in international conferences and intrigues among "men of good will" to prevent imperialist war. Having failed in both instances this labor leader ended up by joining the Germans as a collaborationist. True to himself, he could never at any time envisage the only solution to capitalist crisis and capitalist war—the revolutionary struggle of the workers, culminating in the seizure of power.—The Editor.

* * *

Dear Comrades:

Needless to say that in the last few days I studied with the greatest attention the newspapers, magazines, minutes and letters sent by you. Thanks to a very fine selection of material, I was able to acquaint myself in a comparatively short time with the question as a whole and with the essence of the differences which arose in your organization. The strictly principled character of your discussion, free from any personal exaggerations, gives a most favorable impression of the whole spirit of your organization and of its moral-political level. It remains only to express the hearty wish that this spirit be preserved and strengthened not only in the Belgian section but that it should become the prevalent one in all our sections without exception.

The considerations which I wish to express further on the question in dispute itself cannot pretend either to fullness or completion. I am removed from the theater of action. Such important factors as the *mood of the masses* cannot be grasped through newspaper reports and documents only: it is necessary to feel the pulse of workers' meetings, which, alas, is beyond my reach. However, inasmuch as it is a question of general

suggestions on principles, the position of an outside observer has perhaps certain advantages as it enables detachment from details and concentration on the main thing.

I shall go over now to the matter itself.

First of all—and I consider this the central point—I do not see any reason that would impel us to withdraw the slogan: "Let the Belgian workers' party take power!" When we first advanced this slogan we were all, of course, fully aware of the character of the Belgian social-democracy, which does not want to struggle and does not know how to struggle, which for a number of decades had been used to playing the rôle of a bourgeois brake on the proletarian locomotive, which fears power outside of a coalition, as it needs bourgeois allies to be able to reject the demands of the workers.

We know all this. But we also know that not only the capitalist régime as a whole but also its parliamentary state machinery entered into a stage of an acute crisis which bears in itself the possibility of quick (relatively) changes of mood of the masses, as well as quick successions of parliamentary and government combinations. If it should be taken into consideration that the Belgian social-democracy together with the reformist trade unions dominate absolutely the proletariat, that the Belgian section of the Comintern is utterly insignificant and the revolutionary wing extremely weak, it would become clear that the whole political situation must suggest to the proletariat the thought of a social-democratic government.

We considered beforehand that the setting up of such a government would be undoubtedly a step forward. Of course, not in the sense that the government of Vandervelde, de Man & Co. would be capable of playing any progressive rôle in the replacement of capitalism by socialism, but in the sense that under the given conditions the experiment of a social-democratic government would be of progressive importance in the revolutionary development of the proletariat. The slogan of a social-democratic government is thus calculated not on some exceptional conjuncture but on a more or less lengthy political period. We could give up this slogan only in case that the social-democracy—*before its coming to power*—should begin greatly to weaken, ceding its influence to a revolutionary party; but, alas, today such a perspective is purely theoretical. Neither the general political situation, nor the relation of forces within the proletariat permit the withdrawal of the slogan: power to the social-democracy!

Labor Plan to Deceive Labor

Certainly not the plan of de Man, bombastically called the "Labor Plan" (it would be more correct to call it: the plan to deceive the toilers) can make us abandon the central political slogan of this period. The "labor plan" will be a new, or a renovated instrument of bourgeois-democratic (or even semi-democratic) conservatism. But the whole point of the matter lies in the fact that the extreme intensity of the situation, the imminence of dangers, threatening the very existence of the social-democracy itself, *force* it against its will to seize the double-edged weapon, very unsafe though it is from the point of view of democratic conservatism.

The dynamic equilibrium of capitalism is gone forever, the equilibrium of the parliamentary system is cracking and

crumbling. And finally—this is a link of the same chain—the conservative equilibrium of reformism which is forced to denounce the bourgeois régime publicly in order to save it, is beginning to shake. Such a situation is replete with great revolutionary possibilities (together with dangers). We must not retract the slogan power to the social-democracy, but, on the contrary, give this slogan an all the more militant and sharp character.

In our midst there is no need to say that this slogan must not contain even a shadow of hypocrisy, pretense, softening of contradictions, diplomatizing, pretended or qualified trust. Let the left social-democrats use butter and honey (in the spirit of Spaak). We will use as heretofore vinegar and pepper.

In the material sent to me there is expressed the opinion that the working masses are absolutely indifferent to the Labor Plan and are in general in a state of depression, and that under such conditions the slogan "power to the social-democrats" can only create illusions and produce disappointment later on. Unable from here to get a clear idea of the moods of the different layers and groups of the Belgian proletariat, I fully allow, however, for the possibility of a certain nervous exhaustion and passivity of the workers. But, in the first place, this mood itself is not final: it must be rather of an *expectant* than of a *hopeless* nature. No one of us thinks, of course, that the Belgian proletariat is already incapable of struggle for years to come. Within the proletariat there are plenty of moods of bitterness, hatred and resentment and they are seeking a way out. To save itself from ruin, the social-democracy needs a *certain* movement of the workers. It must frighten the bourgeoisie to make it more agreeable. It is certainly mortally afraid that this movement should go over its head. But with the absolute insignificance of the Comintern, the weakness of the revolutionary groups and under the fresh impression of the German experience, the social-democracy expects immediate danger from the right and not from the left. Without these prerequisites the slogan "power to the social-democracy" would in general be meaningless.

Sure to Provoke Illusions

None of us can have any doubts that the plan of de Man and the agitation of the social-democracy connected with it will sow illusions and provoke disappointment. But the social-democracy, its influence on the proletariat and its plan, its Christmas congress, its agitation are objective facts: we can neither remove them, nor skip over them. Our task is twofold: first, to explain to the advanced workers the political meaning of the "plan," that is, decipher the maneuvers of the social-democracy at all stages; secondly, to show in practice to possibly wider circles of workers that insofar as the bourgeoisie tries to put obstacles to the realization of the plan we fight hand in hand with the workers to help them make this experiment. We share the difficulties of the struggle but not the illusions. Our criticism of the illusions must, however, not increase the passivity of the workers and give it a pseudo-theoretic justification but on the contrary push the workers forward. Under these conditions, the inevitable disappointment with the "Labor Plan" will not spell the deepening of passivity but, on the contrary, the going over of the workers to the revolutionary road.

To the plan itself I shall devote in the next few days a special article. Because of the extremely urgent character of this letter I am forced to limit myself here to just a few words. First

of all, I consider it incorrect to liken the Plan to the economic policy of fascism. Insofar as fascism advances (before the conquest of power!) the slogan of nationalization as a means of struggle with "super-capitalism," it simply steals the phraseology of the socialist program. In de Man's plan we have—under the bourgeois character of the social-democracy—a program of *state capitalism* which the social-democracy itself passes off, however, for the beginning of socialism and which may actually become the beginning of socialism—*against* the social-democracy.

A Concrete Bolshevik Program

Within the limits of the economic program ("Labor Plan") we must, in my opinion, advance the following three points:

1. *On repurchase.* Considered abstractly, the socialist revolution does not exclude any and all sorts of repurchase of capitalist property. There was a time when Marx expressed himself in the sense that it would be good to "pay off that gang" (the capitalists). Prior to the World War this was still more or less possible. But taking into consideration the present disruption of the national and world economic system and the impoverishment of the masses, we see that compensation is a ruinous operation which would create for the new régime from the very start utterly unbearable hardships. We must and can bring this fact home to every worker with figures in hand.

2. Simultaneously with expropriation without compensation we must advance the slogan of *workers' control*. Despite de Man (see *Le Mouvement Syndical Belge*, 1933, No. 11, page 297), nationalization and workers' control do not exclude each other at all. Even if the government were an extremely left one and full of the best intentions, we would stand for the control of workers over industry and circulation: we do not want a bureaucratic management of nationalized industry; we demand direct participation of the workers themselves in control and administration through shop committees, trade unions, etc. Only in this way can we lay the supporting bases for proletarian dictatorship in economy.

3. The Plan says nothing concerning *landed property* as such. Here we need a slogan adapted to agricultural workers and the poorest peasants. I shall endeavor to take up separately this involved question.

It is necessary now to take up the political side of the Plan. Two questions come here naturally to the fore: (1) the method of struggle for the realization of the plan (in particular the question of legality and illegality) and (2) the attitude toward the *petty bourgeoisie* of the city and village.

In his programmatic speech published in the trade union organ, de Man rejects categorically the revolutionary struggle (general strike and insurrection). Can anything else be expected of these people? No matter what the individual reservations and changes intended mainly for the consolation of left simpletons may be, the official position of the party remains that of *parliamentary cretinism*. The main blows of our criticism should be aimed along this line—not only against the party as a whole, but also against its left wing (see below). This side of the question—of the methods of struggle for nationalization—are pointed out with equal precision and correctness by both sides in your discussion so there is no need for me to dwell on it much longer.

The Parliamentary Deception

I wish to bring out only one "small" point. Can these people earnestly think of revolutionary struggle when in their hearts they are . . . monarchists? It is a great mistake to think that the king's power in Belgium is a fiction. First of all this fiction costs money and should be eliminated if only out of economic considerations. But this is not the principal side of the matter. In time of social crisis ghosts frequently take on flesh and blood. The same rôle that Hindenburg, Hitler's ostler, played in Germany before our very eyes, the king may play in Belgium—following the example of his Italian colleague. A series of gestures made by the Belgian king in the last period clearly indicate this road. Whoever wants to struggle against fascism must begin with the struggle for the *liquidation of the monarchy*. We must not permit the social-democracy to hide itself in this question behind all sorts of tricks and reservations.

Revolutionary posing of questions of strategy and tactics does not mean at all, however, that our criticism should not follow the social-democracy also to its parliamentary hide-away. New elections will take place only in 1936; until that time capitalist reaction in alliance with hunger can break the neck of the working class three times over. We must pose this question in all its sharpness to the social-democratic workers. There is only one way to speed up new elections: to make the functioning of the present Parliament impossible by sharp opposition to it, which merges into parliamentary *obstruction*. Vandervelde, de Man & Co. must be branded not merely because they do not develop the revolutionary extra-parliamentary struggle, but also because their *parliamentary activity serves not at all to prepare and bring nearer and realize their own "Labor Plan."* Contradictions and hypocrisy in this sphere will be clearly understood even by the average social-democratic worker who has not yet grown to the understanding of the methods of proletarian revolution.

The Way to Win the Petty Bourgeoisie

The question of the attitude to the *intermediary classes* is of no less importance. It would be foolish to accuse the reformists of placing themselves on "the road of fascism" because they want to win over the petty bourgeoisie. We too want to win over the petty bourgeoisie. This is one of the essential conditions for the full success of the proletarian revolution. But there are fagots and there are fagots, as Molière says. A street peddler, or a poor peasant is a petty bourgeois, but also a professor, an average official bearing a distinction badge, an average engineer—is also a petty bourgeois. We must choose between them. Capitalist parliamentarism (and no different parliamentarism exists) leads to Messrs. lawyers, officials, journalists coming out as the licensed representatives of the starving artisans, street peddlers, small clerks and semi-proletarian peasants. And finance capital leads by the nose or simply bribes the parliamentaries from the sphere of petty bourgeois lawyers, officials and journalists.

When Vandervelde, de Man and Co. talk of attracting to the "Plan" the petty-bourgeoisie they have in mind not the masses, but their licensed "representatives," that is the corrupted agents of finance capital. When *we* speak of winning over the petty bourgeoisie, we have in mind the liberation of the exploited submerged masses from their diplomaticized political representatives. In view of the desperate position of the petty-bourgeois masses of the population, the old petty bourgeois parties (democratic, catholic and others) burst along all

seams. Fascism understood it. It did not seek and does not seek any coalitions with the bankrupt "leaders" of the petty bourgeoisie but tears from under their influence the masses, that is, it performs in *its way* and in the interests of reaction that work, which the Bolsheviks performed in Russia in the interests of the revolution. Precisely in this way presents itself the question now also in Belgium. The petty bourgeois parties, or the petty bourgeois flanks of big capitalist parties are doomed to disappearance together with parliamentarism, which sets up for them the necessary stage. The whole question lies in who will lead the oppressed and deceived petty bourgeois masses, the proletariat under revolutionary leadership, or the fascist agency of finance capital.

Just as de Man does not want a revolutionary struggle of the proletariat and fears a courageous opposition policy in parliament that could lead to a revolutionary struggle, just so he does not want and fears a real struggle for the petty bourgeois masses. He understands that in its depths are hidden stores of protest, bitterness and hatred which may turn into revolutionary passions and dangerous "excesses," that is into revolution. Instead of this, de Man seeks parliamentary allies, shabby democrats, catholics, blood relations from the right who are needed by him as bulwark against possible revolutionary excesses of the proletariat. We must know how to make this side of the question clear to the reformist workers in the daily experience of facts. *For a close revolutionary union of the proletariat with the oppressed petty bourgeois masses of the city and village but against government coalition with political representatives and traitors of the petty bourgeoisie!*

The Fascist Danger

Some comrades express the opinion that the very fact that the social-democracy comes out with the "labor plan" must shake up the intermediary classes and, with the passivity of the proletariat, ease the work of fascism. Of course, if the proletariat will not fight, fascism will be victorious. But this danger follows not from the "Plan" but from the great influence of the social-democracy and the weakness of the revolutionary party. The protracted participation of the German social-democracy in the bourgeois government paved the way for Hitler. Blum's purely passive abstention from all participation in the government will also create the prerequisites for the growth of fascism. Finally, the announcement of the attack on finance capital, without a corresponding mass revolutionary struggle will inevitably speed up the work of Belgian fascism. It is, therefore, not a question of the "Plan," but of the treacherous function of the social-democracy and of the fatal rôle of the Comintern. Insofar as the general situation and in particular the fate of the German social-democracy force upon its younger Belgian sister the policy of "nationalization," this together with the old dangers, opens up new revolutionary possibilities. It would be the greatest error not to see them. We must learn to strike the enemy with his own weapons.

The new possibilities can be utilized only under the condition that we continue tirelessly to stress to the workers the fascist danger. For the realization of no matter what plan workers organizations must be preserved and strengthened. It is necessary, therefore, first of all to defend them from fascist gangs. It would be the worst stupidity to hope that a democratic government, even headed by the social-democracy, could save the workers from fascism by a decree prohibiting the fascists to organize, to arm, etc. No police measures will help if the workers themselves will not learn to deal with fascists. *The organi-*

zation of proletarian defense, the creation of workers militia is the first, unpostponable task. Whoever fails to support this slogan and does not carry it out in practice does not deserve the name of a proletarian revolutionist.

How to Deal with the Left Wing

There remains only to say something on *our attitude towards the left social-democracy*. Least of all here do I want to say something final as until now I was unable to follow the evolution of this grouping. But what I read in the last few days (series of articles by Spaak, his speech at the congress of the party, etc.) did not produce a favorable impression.

When Spaak wants to characterize the interrelation between the legal and illegal struggle, he quotes . . . Otto Bauer as an authority, that is, the theoretician of legal and illegal impotence. "Tell me who your masters are and I will tell you who you are." But let us leave the sphere of theory and turn to actual political questions.

Spaak took de Man's plan as the basis of the campaign and voted for it without any reservations. It may be said that Spaak did not want to give Vandervelde & Co. the opportunity to bring the matter to a split, that is to eject the weak and still unorganized left wing from the party; Spaak retreated the better to jump. Perhaps such were Spaak's intentions but in politics we judge not by intentions but by actions. The careful attitude of Spaak at the conference, his pledge to struggle with all determination for the carrying-out of the Plan, his statement on discipline, would have in themselves been comprehensible considering the position of the left opposition in the party. But Spaak did something else: he expressed *moral confidence in Vandervelde and political solidarity with de Man* not only on the abstract aims of the Plan but also with regard to the concrete methods of struggle.

The words of Spaak to the effect that we cannot demand from the leaders of the party that they tell us openly of their plan of action, of their forces, etc., had an especially inadmissible character. Why cannot we? For confidential reasons? But even if Vandervelde and de Man have confidential matters it is not with the revolutionary workers against the bourgeoisie but with the bourgeois politicians against the workers. And no one demands that confidential matters be made public at the congress! It is necessary to give the general plan of the mobilization of the workers and the perspective of struggle. By his declaration Spaak really helped Vandervelde and de Man to evade the answer to the most important questions of strategy. We can legitimately speak here of secrets between the leaders of the opposition and the leaders of the majority against the revolutionary workers. The fact that Spaak carried away also the "Socialist Guard of Youth" to the road of centrist trustfulness only aggravates his guilt.

The Brussels federation introduced at the congress a "left" resolution on constitutional and revolutionary struggle. The resolution is very weak, has a legalistic and not a political character, is written by a lawyer and not by a revolutionary ("if the bourgeoisie will violate the constitution, then we also . . .").

Instead of posing earnestly the question of the preparation of revolutionary struggle, the "left" resolution makes a literary threat in the direction of the bourgeoisie. But what happened at the congress? After the most inane declarations of de Man who as we know considers the revolutionary struggle a harmful myth, the Brussels federation meekly retracted its resolution. People who are so easily satisfied with empty and lying phrases cannot be considered earnest revolutionists. Punishment was not late in coming. At the very next day the "People" commented on the congress resolution in the sense that the party will stay strictly within constitutional lines, that is, it will "struggle" within the limits indicated to it by finance capital aided by the king, judges and police. The organ of the lefts "Socialist Action" actually wept bitter tears: Why, yesterday, just yesterday, "all" were unanimous with regard to the Brussels resolution, why then today? . . . Ridiculous lamentations! "Yesterday" the lefts were fooled to make them retract the resolution. And "today" the experienced bureaucratic dodgers gave the ill-fated opposition a little fillip on the nose. Serves them right! These matters are always handled so. But these are only the buds, the fruit will come later.

It occurred more than once that the social-democratic opposition was developing an extremely left criticism as long as it did not obligate itself to anything. But when the decisive hours came (mass strike movement, menace of war, danger of a government overthrowal, etc.) the opposition lowered its banner immediately, opening up to the besmirched leaders of the party a new credit of confidence and proving by this that it is itself only flesh of the flesh of reformism. The socialist opposition of Belgium is now going through its first serious test. We are forced to say that it slipped up badly right away. We must follow attentively and without prejudice its further steps, without exaggerating in criticism, without losing ourselves in senseless rattle on "social-fascism" but also without making any illusions on the real theoretic and fighting temper of this grouping. To help the better elements of the left opposition to move forward, it is necessary to say what is.

I hurry greatly with this letter so that it might reach you yet before the conference of January 14th; therefore, its incompleteness and possibly a certain lack of systematic exposition. In conclusion I allow myself to express the hearty conviction that your discussion will end in a *harmonious decision that will insure complete unity of action*. The whole situation predetermines a serious growth of your organization in the next period. If the leaders of the social-democratic opposition should capitulate completely, the direction of the revolutionary wing of the proletariat will rest entirely on you. If, on the contrary, the left wing of the reformist party should advance to the side of Marxism, you will find in them a militant ally and a bridge to the masses. With a clear and unanimous policy your success is fully assured. Long live the Belgian section of the Bolsheviks-Leninists!

G. G.

January 9, 1934

BOOKS IN REVIEW

Wechsler on John L. Lewis

James Wechsler of *PM* begins his book on John L. Lewis with an apology. "This book does not purport to be a definitive biography of John L. Lewis." It is, rather, an interim study whose purpose can best be judged by a reading, according to the author. The reading reveals that this book is simply a smear job, carrying everything the traffic will bear. Of course, the many blunders and tragic errors of John L. Lewis during the past three decades provide ample material for this type of criticism. But sometimes an indictment speaks more eloquently of the prosecutor than of the defendant. In this case, the axiom holds true. Wechsler, looking at John L. Lewis, is a sight to behold.

Outside of Boake Carter or Fulton Lewis, Jr., has anyone else spoken with quite this contempt for the labor movement: "In his relations to outside society, the miner's self-pity and martyr feeling are his dominant traits"? This is Wechsler's presentation of the coal miner. Complaints about long hours, underpayment, occupational hazards, inflation! The coal miner who makes these complaints is obviously suffering from self-pity, especially in contrast to the tremendous sacrifices Mr. Wechsler, aged 29, living in Washington, D. C., is making.

If the coal miner receives such treatment from Wechsler, you can well imagine what is reserved for John L. Lewis. However, let us be fair. Wechsler does not go so far as to accuse Lewis, among other crimes, of beating his wife. Not quite. But think of the mentality which could produce the following sentence: "Many people wondered, however, whether she (Mrs. Lewis) had not been happier during the simple Iowa years than she ever was in the turbulence of Washington. She talked often and nostalgically of how she used to wash John L.'s back when he came out of the mines." Journalistic cowards always quote "many people" when they are afraid to take responsibility for their own statement. (This is a favorite trick of the Hearst Press.) Since this statement climaxes Mr. Wechsler's dissertation on the Lewis family life, one is left with no recourse but to accept the obvious implication that Lewis made his wife miserable and unhappy by advancing in the labor movement! The petty bourgeois snobbery indicated in the crack about Mrs. Lewis' domestic activity was obviously intended for the gossip circles of Washington society. The sneering attitude toward a custom that thousands of miners' families have (since they can't afford showers like Mr. Wechsler) emphasizes Wechsler's real feelings toward the labor movement.

Perhaps one can understand Wechsler's venom toward Lewis by means of an analogy. Suppose our reader heard someone discuss President Roosevelt, a class enemy, in terms of his physical incapacity. Then suppose Mrs. Roosevelt's travels were discussed in relation to Mr. Roosevelt on that basis! The results would be nauseating. Nazi propaganda has used just those foul tactics. Wechsler, an adept imitator, it must be said, uses exactly that technique. Through Wechsler's eye you see this picture of the Lewis family: Father, a brute; mother, unhappy and exploited; daughter, fat and with a father complex; brother, stupid. Yet the gullible reader is supposed to believe that such a macabre relationship ema-

nating from Wechsler's head is largely responsible for making John L. Lewis "tick."

The entire history of the United Mine Workers and its struggles, especially during the last three years, is presented through this distorted view of Wechsler. One becomes convinced after a while that Wechsler lives in holy fear of John L. Lewis, for Lewis certainly becomes the devil incarnate. The entire labor bureaucracy is shown as quaking in its boots every time the name Lewis is mentioned. No doubt many of them fear his potentialities, and many of them are somewhat uneasy over the way he stood up against the attack to smash all labor standards, while they licked boots in Washington. But the relationship of forces within the labor movement is such as to preclude the nightmarish fear that all the rest of the labor movement has for Lewis, as portrayed by Wechsler. As a matter of fact, the one thing for which union militants everywhere admire John L. Lewis, namely his successful fight against the coal operators and the squeeze of inflation on the miners, is precisely the crime of Lewis, in Wechsler's eyes!

Wechsler wrote this book to smear John L. Lewis because, as he openly admits, he fears Lewis in the post-war period. Lewis is pictured as something of an ogre, taking advantage of unemployment, misery and the resultant unrest, to become some kind of dictator, perhaps of fascist inclination. This is an interesting theory, worth perhaps a line or two. In the first place, does Wechsler, a profound admirer of President Roosevelt, dare tell us that a vote for the fourth term means unemployment and misery? Heresy! Wechsler would say. Trotskyism, pure and simple! If John L. Lewis is the match to set the flame for the explosion, why not remove the powder of unemployment and misery, Mr. Wechsler? Then we would have nothing to worry about from any would-be dictator, would we? But such an approach would mean a discussion of program. And Wechsler isn't interested, for he has none. So . . . smear John L. Lewis. It will certainly deceive some people!

In reality, John L. Lewis has been a powerful factor in American life only during those occasions when he represented the interests of either the 400,000 coal miners or the CIO. In his days as a strong-armed bureaucrat smashing all opposition in the UMWA, he was distinctly a secondary figure in the American labor movement, and his own union shrank to less than 60,000 members. As the leader of the CIO, the greatest upsurge of American labor, he was naturally the most influential labor figure in America. In politics, Lewis, like the labor movement itself, is in a blind alley. His influence is negligible, just as the real influence of the labor movement is at present negligible, because labor is tied to the boss parties in the same way a company union is tied to management! Only insofar as Lewis defends the interests of the labor movement does he have influence of a weighty character. That was true in the past, and holds for tomorrow as well.

Books like Wechsler's should serve to remind the union movement that there is a basic difference between criticism from within the labor movement over policy and leaders, and criticisms made by class enemies for the purpose of smashing the union movement. Most debate in the labor press falls under the first category. Westbrook Pegler is the classic example of the second category. Wechsler, one must admit, shows promise of becoming an apt pupil!

W. J.

LABOR ACTION BOOK SERVICE

114 West 14th Street, New York 11 N. Y.

The following books and pamphlets may be ordered from the Book Service prepaid. Prices include postage. Make checks payable to Labor Action.

KARL MARX

| | |
|---|--------|
| Capital—three volumes, per volume | \$2.50 |
| Selected Works, two volumes, per volume | 3.00 |
| Poverty of Philosophy | 1.25 |
| Letters to Kugelmann | 1.00 |
| Critique of Gotha Program | 1.00 |
| Critique of Political Economy | 1.50 |
| Value, Price and Profit | .25 |
| Wage Labor and Capital | .10 |
| Communist Manifesto | .10 |
| Civil War in France | .25 |
| Eighteenth Brumaire | .60 |
| Revolution and Counter-Revolution | .60 |
| Founding of the First International | .50 |

F. ENGELS

| | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------|
| On Capital | 1.25 |
| Socialism, Utopian and Scientific | Paper .25 Cloth .60 |
| Origin of the Family | .75 |
| Housing Question | .75 |
| Anti-Duhring | 2.50 |
| Dialectics of Nature | 2.50 |
| British Labour Movement | .15 |

MARX AND ENGELS

| | |
|-----------------------------------|------|
| Correspondence of Marx and Engels | 3.25 |
| Civil War in the United States | 3.00 |
| Revolution in Spain | 1.75 |
| Reactionary Prussianism | .20 |

N. LENIN

| | |
|--|------|
| Selected Works—12 volumes (\$2.75 per vol.) | |
| Vol. 1—The Prerequisites of the First Russian Revolution | |
| Vol. 2—The Struggle for the Bolshevik Party | |
| Vol. 3—The Revolution of 1905-07 | |
| Vol. 4—The Years of Reaction and of the New Revival | |
| Vol. 5—Imperialism and the Imperialist War | |
| Vol. 6—From the Bourgeois to the Proletarian Revolution | |
| Vol. 7—After the Seizure of Power | |
| Vol. 8—The Period of War Communism | |
| Vol. 9—New Economic Policy: Socialist Construction | |
| Vol. 10—The Communist International | |
| Vol. 11—The Theoretical Principles of Marxism | |
| Vol. 12—Theory of the Agrarian Question | |
| Collected Works—Vol. 19—Writings on the National Question and the Labor Movement | 2.50 |
| What Is to Be Done? | .50 |
| State and Revolution | .30 |
| Proletarian Revolution and Renegade Kautsky | .30 |
| Religion | .15 |
| Teachings of Karl Marx | .15 |
| Imperialism | .30 |
| Left-Wing Communism | .25 |
| War and the Second International | .20 |
| War and the Workers | .10 |
| Two Tactics | .30 |
| Paris Commune | .20 |
| Threatening Catastrophe | .20 |
| Will Bolsheviks Retain Power? | .15 |
| Foundation of the Communist International | .10 |
| Letter to American Workers | .03 |

LEON TROTSKY

| | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| The New Course | Paper \$1.50 Cloth 2.00 |
| Third International After Lenin | 2.00 |
| Case of Leon Trotsky | 2.00 |
| Lessons of October | 1.00 |
| Whither France? | 1.00 |
| Their Morals and Ours | .20 |
| Stalinism and Bolshevism | .10 |
| Leon Sedoff | .10 |
| I Stake My Life | .05 |
| Fascism—Compilation | .15 |

DIETZGEN

| | |
|--------------------------------|------|
| Positive Outcome of Philosophy | 2.00 |
| Philosophical Essays | 1.50 |

| | |
|--|------|
| GATES—Incentive Pay | .05 |
| GORDON—Workers Before and After Lenin | 1.50 |
| GUERIN—Fascism and Big Business | 1.00 |
| HUBERMAN—Labor Spy Racket | .25 |
| JUDD—India in Revolt | .25 |
| KAUTSKY—Social Revolution | .60 |
| LIEBKNECHT—Memoirs of Karl Marx | .60 |
| LUND—Plenty for All | .10 |
| LUXEMBURG—Reform or Revolution | .25 |
| MORROW—Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Spain | .50 |
| NEARING—The American Empire | .35 |
| NORTHRUP—Organized Labor and the Negro | 1.75 |
| PANNOKOEK—Marxism and Darwinism | .10 |
| PLEKHANOV | |
| Anarchism and Socialism | .60 |
| Fundamental Problems of Marxism | 1.50 |
| Essays in Historical Materialism | 1.00 |
| Materialist Conception of History | .15 |
| Role of the Individual in History | .20 |
| ROCHESTER—Lenin on Agrarian Question | 1.75 |
| SERGE—From Lenin to Stalin | .50 |
| SHACHTMAN | |
| China in World War II | .10 |
| For a Cost-Plus Wage | .05 |
| SIMONS—Class Struggle in America | .10 |
| VARGA & MENDELSON—New Data for Lenin's "Imperialism" | 1.75 |
| OUTLINE OF ECONOMICS (Plebs) | 1.00 |

FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

| | |
|---|-----|
| Founding Conference (Program) | .25 |
| War and the Fourth International | .10 |
| Manifesto to Workers & Peasants (India) | .05 |

NEW INTERNATIONAL

| | |
|--------------------|------|
| Bound Volume, 1942 | 2.50 |
| Bound Volume, 1943 | 2.50 |
| Bound Volume, 1944 | 2.50 |

LABOR ACTION

| | |
|--------------------|------|
| Bound Volume, 1942 | 2.50 |
| Bound Volume, 1943 | 2.50 |
| Bound Volume, 1944 | 2.50 |

The Book Service will also obtain for you at list price all current books in print. Orders should be prepaid.