

# WORKERS INTERNATIONAL NEWS

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## News from Indian Fourth Internationalists

— From the "Fourth International" — U.S.A.

Good news from India—the Bolshevik-Leninist Party, Indian section of the Fourth International, lives and fights on despite the bestial repressions of British imperialism.

The totalitarian censorship and blockade seeks to cut off the Indian fighters for independence from communicating from one province to another, not to speak of reaching the outside world. Nevertheless, we have received the most precious kind of news from our Indian comrades—ten leaflets and a pamphlet published by them during the past year. The latest of them issued appears to be the leaflet issued for the January 26, 1943 Indian Independence Day celebration. From this it is clear that the organisation was still able to function after six months of the worst white terror of British imperialism, during which tens of thousands of Indian revolutionists have been herded in prisons and concentration camps.

The leaflets and pamphlet are printed, and excellently so, which in itself is a testimonial to the efficiency of the Trotskyists of India, for nothing is more difficult under such conditions of illegality and

military dictatorship than to maintain a good printing press establishment underground.

The pamphlet is a substantial 64-page publication of the Programme of the party, dated 1942. It is a document of which the whole Fourth International may well be proud and testifies to the political maturity of the leadership of the Indian party.

### THEIR VIEW OF THE STRUGGLE

Through the leaflets one can follow the response of the party to the revolutionary developments in India. One is a rounded political statement issued August 9, 1942, when the All-India Congress Committee ratified the resolution of its Working Committee to launch a mass civil-disobedience struggle. Several paragraphs from it will indicate the Trotskyist policy, on the one hand completely free from sectarianism, on the other hand firm and precise on principles:

"The decision of the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress to embark on a programme of struggle will be welcomed by the Indian masses . . .

"Only the flunkeys of 'democratic' British Imperialism, like the Royists or the agents of Stalin, the so-called Communists—Stalinists—can oppose mass struggle against imperialism . . .

"The Bolshevik-Leninist Party of India welcomes the decision of the Congress to embark on some form of mass struggle but deems it necessary to point out that nearly three years of fruitless vacillations and gestures were required before this decision . . . In the coming struggle there must be no vacillation, no compromise. Ghandi has said that the struggle will be 'short and swift.' We do not wish the life of Imperialism to be prolonged by a single day. But we do not underestimate the forces of imperialism. In order to overthrow imperialism it is necessary to prepare for an exceedingly bitter and even protracted struggle.

" . . . But if British Imperialism is to be overthrown, the masses in their millions must be drawn into the struggle . . . Swaraj means little to the peasants if it does not mean the abolition of the curse of landlordism. For not only are the landlords among the most solid supporters of British rule in India, but

their criminal record of oppression, extortion, and unbridled gangsterism over the unarmed peasantry has made them the most hated exploiters of India. The slogans of 'Abolition of Landlordism without Compensation' and 'Cancellation of Peasant Debt' must be leading slogans of the struggle. Not only no-tax campaigns against the government, but also no-rent campaigns against all landlords, must be commenced on the widest possible scale, leading to the seizure of land by the peasants through Peasants' Committees.

"Manning the nerve centres of the economy, the workers are in the position to deal the most devastating blows against imperialism. A mass general political strike against British imperialism will paralyse and bring to a stop the whole carefully built up machinery of imperialist administration. The imperialists have been fully alive to the danger presented to them by the movement of the workers, and the heaviest and most savage blows of the repression have fallen on the workers and their leaders.

"With the mobilisation of a majority of the nation in this way, the position within the Army, which imperialism depends on as a last resort, will change in a matter of days. The Indian soldiers, who are peasants in uniform, cannot fail to be affected by the agrarian struggle against landlordism and imperialism.

### THE WORKERS MUST LEAD

"We cannot, however, expect the Congress to lead a struggle of this nature. With regard to the peasantry in the 1930-33 movement Ghandi openly stated that he had no intention of endangering Indian landlord interests. With regard to the workers, the Congress has studiously avoided the use of the strike weapon as a method of struggle against imperialism. Tied to the doctrine of non-violence, the Congress will never call upon the Indian Army to turn their arms against the imperialist exploiters. For the Congress, which is dominated by Indian bourgeois interests, in all critical situations acts as the instrument of the Indian bourgeoisie. And the Indian bourgeoisie—even the most nationalist sections of it, because they fear their interests will be in danger when the masses led by the workers take to revolutionary action—will strongly oppose the methods of struggle outlined above."

The leaflet concludes with a section which warns the masses to be on guard against compromise, pledges support to "any mass action that the Congress may take against

British imperialism," and confidently predicts:

"The movement started under the leadership of the Congress is bound to develop into channels other than those laid down for it. The revolutionary masses who are the main victims of imperialism are also its most virulent and uncompromising opponents, and will intervene to wage the struggle on the widest scale."

### A BALANCE SHEET

Six months later, in its Independence Day leaflet, the Bolshevik-Leninist Party draws a balance sheet of the struggle, which says in part:

"The party supports the present mass struggle against British Imperialism although it is led by Congress did not prepare for the struggle, did not give the masses a programme, and did not make the meaning of independence clear in terms of the live problems of the workers, peasants and middle classes. Last but not least Congress did not adopt revolutionary methods of struggle.

"These failures are not accidental. They unmistakably point to the inherent nature of the Congress. Dominated as it is by the propertied classes, it cannot but serve their interests. . . . Revolutionary struggle of the masses cannot develop without the struggle for the demands of the masses. But such a struggle will be directly against the interests of the capitalists. Hence it is that compromise with imperialism is the very anchor of the Indian capitalist class. . . . Nevertheless the struggle launched by the Congress against British rule has the potentiality of rousing the long pent up revolutionary energies of the masses. Hence the party supports the struggle. In order to raise the struggle to a full-fledged revolution, the working class must participate in and lead the struggle, with its own programme, banner and methods."

This leaflet, like practically all, emphasises over and over again the central task of rousing the great masses of the peasantry by calling upon them to seize the land: "**Independence can mean nothing to the peasantry if it does not mean land to the peasantry and the liquidation of their indebtedness.**"

Summarising the results of six months of struggle it records that the bestial repressions, "far from leading to demoralisation, increases the volume of desperate discontent. The masses are reaching out for new methods of struggle. Ahimsa non-violence) and the negative concept of paralysing the government is giv-

ing way to mass violence and the concept of direct overthrow of the government." And it warns: "In the face of this situation the bourgeois are openly revealing their compromiser tendencies. They find in the mass movement merely an excellent counter to drive a bargain with British imperialism."

### FOR DEFENCE OF THE U.S.S.R.

Almost all the leaflets deal with the Soviet Union and Stalinism, for the advanced workers and peasants in this predominantly agrarian country understand their kinship with the agrarian country where the first successful proletarian revolution was achieved. This intense sympathy with and interest in the Soviet Union has enabled the Stalinists, masquerading as followers of Lenin, to be of considerable aid to British imperialism in opposing the struggle for independence.

One leaflet, headed "Defend the Soviet Union," explains why the only way to defend it is by revolutionary struggle against all the capitalists. Another, "25th Anniversary of the October Revolution," explains how the Stalinist bureaucracy rose to power on the cobb of the revolutionary wave, but that "Despite the distortions the main social conquests of October remain" and must be defended. Other leaflets—"Peoples War"—Charlatanism or Stupidity," "Stalinist Traitors Unmasked"—expose the counter-revolutionary and chauvinist line of the Communist Party of India as "pimps and procurers" for British imperialism.

### APPEALS TO TROOPS

Three of the leaflets are written for distribution to American and British soldiers in India. One of these, "The Real Nature of the Anti-Fascist Peoples' War," in explaining the imperialist character of the war on both sides, points out the significance of the events in Burma:

"The hide-bound conservative British were prepared to lose Burma to the fascists rather than give arms to the people. The British imperialist masters were more afraid of the independent action of colonial people than of the prospect of defeat at the hands of the imperialist rivals. What is more the Chinese soldiers, who offered their services for defending Burma, were not allowed to enter the country. It was only at the fag end of the battle of Burma that only one Chinese division was allowed to fight on Burmese soil and that too under an American General. Stillwell, who was foisted upon the Chinese army

by the British imperialists. The obtuse British slave-owners could not brook the idea of the Asiatic peoples fighting under their own staff, side by side with the British, thus setting an example before the Burmese, who might emulate them and rise up and take advantage of the opportunity to gain their independence."

The same leaflet, and another, bring to the American and British soldiers the news of the Nazi-U.S. patent pools of Standard Oil, du Pont, General Motors, etc. They

"are still doing business with Hitler" while "trying to place the full burden of the war upon the masses both in America and in Britain," the leaflets explain.

Understanding how the anti-fascist sentiments of British and American workers are being perverted to serve the imperialists, one leaflet to American and British soldiers is headed: "What is to be Done? Revolution the Only Way of Defeating Fascism."

Another leaflet, "An Appeal to the Fighting Forces," tells the

American and British soldiers why the Indian masses are revolting and urges them: "Do not be party to wholesale flogging and large scale lynching . . . Join hands with the Indian comrades in their struggle against the common enemy—the imperialist exploiters."

Apparently referring to events well-known to the soldiers themselves, one of these leaflets refers to the fact that "The American soldiers are already fraternising with the Indian revolutionaries in Behar and Bombay."

# W.I.L. Theses on Indian Revolution

With the spreading of the war to the Pacific, the complete bankruptcy of British Imperialism became apparent to the masses of the East. Workers and peasants of Malaya and Burma, filled with hatred against the imperialist domination of Britain, which had reduced millions to a terrible plight of poverty and misery, refused to fight against Japan. The crushing and rapid defeat sustained by Britain brought home to the masses of India, that their day of liberation was not far off. They were conscious of the rotten and out-worn structure of British imperialism; all the myths and symbols of power built up in two hundred years, vanished and the masses of India were ready to launch a struggle to overthrow imperialism.

The rising tide of mass pressure found final expression in the Congress resolution of August 8th. The Indian bourgeoisie, faced with the alternative of the struggle passing under the domination of a proletarian leadership, decided to head the struggle, leaving the doors wide open to negotiations with British Imperialism. The resolution dropped the original July demand for the withdrawal of foreign troops and declared support for the Anglo-American bloc. Simultaneously, they deceived the masses by asserting that the real power must be in their hands. Basically the resolution contained all the contradictions in the position of the Indian bourgeoisie in relation to British imperialism. On the one hand, they were sounding the bugle for struggle, and on the other, they

were imploring the imperialists to retain their armies in India.

This was followed by the arrest of Congress leaders and the remarkable events of August and November, from which the revolutionaries must draw the necessary lessons for the future.

## II.

That the struggle was spontaneous and took the character of opposition to British Imperialism and native landlordism, could be seen from the characteristic features of the movement. Included in the programme were the demands of no-tax, no-rent, no-grain.

From the start, it was not confined to the petty bourgeois pacifist orbit, but grappled boldly with the problem of administrative and police forces, responding to the violence of British Imperialism with counter violence. The situation was at one period extremely serious for the rulers in the whole of Bihar (except its most Southern districts) and in the Eastern part of the United Provinces. In these areas the movement soon spread from the big towns to the outlying areas. Whole districts, with their small defending forces of Government officials and police, were isolated for days on end. A very large part of the East India, and practically the whole of the British and Mid West railway systems were put out of action. For a considerable period, Bengal was almost completely cut off from Northern India, while communications with Madras were also interrupted by the damage done to the railways in the Guntur district and around Bezwada.

In the second phase of the struggle the peasantry played a dominant role, easily shaking themselves from the leadership which followed the Stalinists. The final stages were marked by bold slogans and manifestoes, raising the class nature of the struggle.

The troops used to crush the movement consisted entirely of British troops. This is an indication of the profound mistrust of the Imperialists in the loyalty of the Indian troops.

The administrative machinery of British imperialism broke down in several parts of the country. Virtually the power was in the hands of the masses, though alternative instruments of power did not appear on the scene. This is attributable to two reasons: it indicates the political immaturity of the working class; the movement remained under the ideological leadership of the bourgeoisie.

## III.

In spite of the heroism of the masses and the initial success, particularly on the countryside where the police force is weakest, the movement was drowned in blood of the masses and temporarily driven underground. To draw the lessons of the struggle and the reasons for the defeats is the primary task of the Indian revolutionaries.

1. The first and most fundamental cause of the defeat is the lack of a mass revolutionary proletarian party. As a consequence, there was no central direction to the struggle. Boundless energy and

opportunities were wasted on uncoordinated skirmishes; the struggles of the peasantry received no leadership from the proletariat and therefore, could not break from the leadership of the bourgeoisie.

2. There were no theoretical and practical preparation to set up Soviets, prior to, and immediately following, the breakdown of the administration.

3. To the very end, the true role of the Congress was not exposed to the masses. This was a direct corollary of the first cause. The Stalinists (apart from the ultra-left Third period) and the Congress Socialist Party, had always propagated the idea that the leadership of the Indian revolution should remain with Congress. Even after the initial defeats the Secretary of the Congress Socialist Party, in his letters to the Indian workers, did not draw the lessons of the failure. He reduced the whole question of non-violence and pacifism to the level of an ordinary tactic. He still acknowledged the leadership of the Congress and would not propose the alternative proletarian leadership.

4. The ignominious failure of the two working class political parties. The Indian Communist Party, following the Kremlin leadership, allied itself with the Imperialists and opposed any kind of struggle in India. With the Congress Socialist Party, the causes went much deeper. No doubt by its active participation in many areas, the leadership gained tremendous influence among the workers and peasants. But ideologically it never advanced beyond Menshevism. It believed that the Indian Revolution would have to remain within the bourgeois democratic orbit, and so provided no programme of action to the masses. As a result, it left the leadership of the struggle to the Congress. Because of its social roots and composition, when the actual struggle was defeated, the failure was attributed to organisational weakness only and not to political weakness.

#### IV.

The present position in India is a period of lull. But beneath this superficial quietness a storm is brewing, and the second phase of the Indian Revolution will break out on a higher plane. The objective conditions in the country are preparing the way for such an outburst. The Indian bourgeoisie, in co-operation with the British imperialists, is gathering a rich harvest of profits. Speculation and racketeering are rampant. Daily new companies are floated and profits are soaring high. Correspond-

ingly, the economic distress of the masses is deepening. Food shortage, resulting from export of foodstuffs, and hoarding, is gripping the country and millions of workers and peasants are dying of starvation. For the first time the masses are becoming conscious that there is no other road to solve their problems except by a violent seizure of power. Ghandism is on the decline.

Within the ranks of the Congress, a distinct rank and file movement towards a revolutionary position is taking place. Under the impact of the mass struggle, a realisation is dawning upon the rank and file, that the days of passive resistance are over. More and more they are looking for a revolutionary leadership.

The working class of India is attaining a status where it is in a position to assume the leadership of the Indian Revolution. Their numbers are swelled by the accelerated pace of Indian industrialisation. By the very logic of this development, most modern methods of production are being introduced. Development of munition factories is bringing home to them a knowledge of modern weapons. Recent struggles in the line of fire they have been through, have created a hard core of fighters. The leading role they played in the first phase of the Revolution has increased their confidence. Steeled by the fire of struggle they are preparing to settle accounts with the exploiters.

The radical petty bourgeois elements are coming under the influence of socialist ideas. The debacle of the Congress, the failure of Pacifism, the betrayal of Stalinism, are bringing them closer to a revolutionary position. With the deepening economic chaos, their misery has increased. Lacking the defensive organisations of the proletariat, they have failed to maintain their standard of living. This developing discontent is reflected in the increased strength of the Congress Socialist Party.

The Indian army is 3,000,000 strong and its numbers are increasing day by day. The distinction between martial and non-martial races is removed, and peasants from all parts of the country are being recruited. They are being trained in the use of the most modern weapons. British imperialism, faced with a challenge to its might from the German and Japanese imperialists is creating a mighty instrument that will be torn from its hands by the Indian revolution. With the war reaching further heights of

savagery, the strain of battles and the disillusionment will drive the armed forces to the ranks of the Indian revolutionaries. This will be strengthened by the agrarian crisis and the seizure of the land by the peasantry. Armed soldiers, who are mainly peasants, will gravitate towards the peasantry.

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Whilst the conditions in India are inexorably leading towards a second phase of the revolution, it is not completely divorced from international factors. The collapse of the German military machine and consequent revolutions on the Continent of Europe, may give an impulse to the next step in the Indian revolution. Another flare-up in the Pacific battle, with a nationalist uprising in the Japanese occupied territories, can set the whole of Asia ablaze. As the world war reaches a new peak of savagery, with millions of lives destroyed; famine, pestilence and hunger stalking the world, an elemental revolt of the masses is inevitable. The imperialistic world war has indissolubly united the cause of the Indian Revolution with that of the growing revolutionary proletarian movement of the West.

In such a struggle, the Congress Socialist Party, because of the complete bankruptcy of Stalinism, will gain tremendous strength. But in composition, ideology, and programme, it is essentially a petty bourgeois party. Refusing to base itself on the independence of a proletarian party from bourgeois influence, from the outset, it is leading the Indian masses through channels of Kuomintangism. Repeating the familiar Menshevik theory that the democratic tasks of the Indian revolution will be carried out under the bourgeois leadership, it is not organisationally separated from the Congress. Pitiless exposure of this false course will bring the revolutionary elements of the Congress Socialist Party under the banner of the revolutionary party.

This is the task of the Indian Bolshevik Leninists. Tiny minority as they are today, they are heroically fighting to create a revolutionary party in India. It can be said with confidence that the ultimate success of the Indian revolution will depend upon their role in the revolution. Re-affirming the permanent character of the Indian revolution, they have inscribed upon their banner the independent character of the proletarian party in order to free it from bourgeois influence and provide a working class leadership for the peasantry.

It will be their task to place the solution to the agrarian question as the main pivot of the struggle. To that end it is necessary to expose the class character of the Congress and the direct link between the landlords, and amindars, and the bourgeoisie. Along with the agrarian programme, it is necessary to raise the democratic demands and the slogan of a Constituent Assembly with full powers, elected by universal suffrage. It should be explained however, to the masses that such an assembly may never be convened, and even if convened, it would not carry out the agrarian revolution as long as the bourgeoisie remained in power. In the struggle for the Constituent Assembly, an independent programme, including the land to the peasants and the demands of the workers and soldiers must be provided.

Side by side with the agitation for the Constituent Assembly the Indian Bolshevik Leninists will prepare systematically for the creation of Soviets among the workers and peasants, as organs of struggle in the next great upsurge. These Soviets will provide the basis for the taking of power into the hands of the workers and peasants when the revolution develops towards its next stage with the inevitable betrayal and sell-out on the part of the bourgeois leadership.

V.

Whilst the Indian masses are seeking to end British imperialism in the East, the British bourgeoisie is faced with a crisis in their international position. More and more they are leaning on American capitalism to pull them out of the impasse. With this dependence is involved the loss of their precious foreign investments to the American capitalists. With the gigantic productive powers of America, accelerated by the war, all the old and potential markets of Britain are monopolised by American industry. Corresponding to this weakness, the Indian bourgeoisie is increasing its share of control in India. The sterling debt of India is practically wiped out and a considerable proportion of the industry and plantations have passed into Indian hands. Conscious of this weakened economic position, the British bourgeoisie is using savage methods of repression to hold India as the main bastion of British Imperialism.

The British Labour Party, in the hour of crisis of British imperialism, has come to the aid of the capitalist masters. Attlee supports the policy of savage repression in India with as much vehemence as Churchill or

Amery. Rotten through and through with opportunism, the leadership has given up even the pretence of socialist principles. But at the same time the rank and file of the Labour Party have expressed their solidarity with the Indian masses. Though they have been mainly influenced by the false course adopted by the British Communist Party, they exhibit a genuine concern of the British workers regarding the Indian revolution. As the war reaches a climax, this differentiation will become clearer and a mighty workers' movement in Britain will develop, demanding immediate and unconditional independence for India. This will be one of the cardinal issues on which the struggle for Labour to Power will be fought.

The Communist Party of Great Britain, while professing sympathy for Indian freedom, is completely supporting Churchill. It condemns the mass struggles in India and is advancing a false conception that by negotiations Churchill can be compelled to grant a National Government of "All interests" in India. It is necessary to expose the false character of this and to emphasise the independent struggle of the British workers in support of the Indian masses.

The I.L.P. instead of explaining the class character of the Indian struggle to the British workers and soldiers, is raising the problem from a pacifist, humanitarian basis. From its platform the I.L.P. champions the Indian National Congress and from its press it supports the Congress Socialist Party. This uncritical acceptance of the Congress Socialist Party and its programme

which seeks to confine the Indian revolution under bourgeois leadership, is a betrayal of the Indian revolution.

But the mass of the British workers are beginning to stir. Thousands of them, conscripted and sent to India are beginning to realise that the struggle of the Indian masses is to end exploitation, starvation, dirt and disease. This finds expression in the letters written home. With the increasing hardness of the blows struck by the Indian masses, they will realise that this struggle for freedom will facilitate their own fight for freedom in Britain. Ultimately, the class solidarity will break through the barriers of army discipline and the worker-soldiers will go over to the Indian masses; they will turn their arms against the exploiters.

The Indian Revolution is inextricably bound up with the emancipation of the British working class. By destroying the roots of the British bourgeoisie, the very basis of their economic strength in the world, the Indian workers will assist the British workers to win power in England. The recent industrial struggles, and the storm that is gathering in Britain are omens of the tremendous conflicts that will arise. British workers, conscious of the opportunism, will seek and alternative revolutionary leadership. This in its turn, will again ignite the Indian revolution. With the example of the British workers before them, the Indian masses will push aside the bourgeois leadership and their lackeys, and advance towards the seizure of power.

## Pamphlets every Worker Should Have By TROTSKY

WAR AND WORLD REVOLUTION - - -	2d.
TRANSITIONAL PROGRAMME OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL - - -	6d.
TRADE UNIONS, Trotsky " - - -	2d.
I.L.P. AND THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL	2d.
DOES RUSSIA'S ENTRY ALTER BRITAIN'S WAR? By A. Scott - - -	2d.
PREPARING FOR POWER (Thesis of British Trotskyists) - - -	3d.
A.B.C. OF TROTSKYISM Cannon's Testimony in U.S. Labour Trial	6d.
THE ROAD TO INDIA'S FREEDOM by A. Scott and E. Grant - - -	3d.
THE C.P. AND THE WAR - - -	1d.
Look at their Record!	

# Tasks of the Industrial Militants

*Resolution Adopted at W.I.L. Conference, Oct. 1943.*

The favourable turn for British imperialism in the field of military struggle is accompanied by the beginning of a crisis in the field of arms production. The influx of American munitions has resulted in contraction in certain aspects of the British arms industry. In some of the large munition plants a slackening up of production is already taking place. The transfer of workers from one branch of production to another is accompanied with widespread redundancy. The ability of the capitalists to make profits out of war is hampered and they are no longer able easily to grant concessions, being forced to clamp down more definitely on the wages and conditions of the workers.

The first serious attempt to tighten up on wages, was indicated in the National Arbitration Award (No. 326) for engineering workers. Behind the legalistic phraseology of the terms of this twice interpreted Award, the gains from which affected only a very small section of the workers (those working in establishments paying the 'bare' minimum), and which for the vast majority of the workers, meant no increase at all, can be seen an attempt to fix a "ceiling" on wages.

Faced with attacks on wage standards and the intensified exploitation through piece-work conditions; the added burden of income tax; the failure of Joint Production Committees to solve the problems of production except at the expense of the workers; the use of the reactionary Essential Works Order and the victimisation of trade union militants—a sharp discontent and radicalisation is transforming the outlook of the British working class.

This discontent has already manifested itself in sporadic and ever-increasing disputes throughout the length and breadth of the country. Following the Betteshanger dispute

in Kent at the beginning of 1941, a series of strikes swept the coalfields. These were followed by small strikes on the part of dockers, of railwaymen, and of engineers. These later struggles, however, took place in relatively backward and unorganised areas. A contradiction existed in the fact, that despite the deep feeling of dissatisfaction among the workers in areas such as the Clyde and South Wales, the workers in these parts had not yet participated in any major industrial disputes.

The Stalinists, who had entrenched themselves among the militant workers in these areas, used their stranglehold on the traditional centres of working class militancy to push their anti-working class and strike-breaking policy and put a brake on the working class struggle. Nevertheless, the Communist Party, which has become the most vicious, strike-breaking force in British working class politics, cannot quell the rising tide of militancy among the working class. Nor, with the continuation of its present policy, will it be able to place itself at the head of any mass movement to divert it into harmless channels. It is already apparent that the hold of the Stalinists over the advanced workers is loosening.

The local nature of the early disputes resulted in the almost complete isolation of the strikers. But the third year of the war, 1942, witnessed the workers participating in more strikes than in any single year since the General Strike of 1926. By far the most important dispute of that year had taken place on the Tyneside, which, though traditionally a backward area, was the scene of a strike involving more than 20,000 ship-building workers. This strike marked the end of a year in which the engineering workers participated in almost half the total number of disputes, whereas previously the miners had borne the brunt of the struggle.

Despite the fact that more Labour days were lost in several of the "peace" years from 1926 to 1932 than in 1942, the increased number

of disputes and the manner in which the workers are tending to spread the struggle, serves to remind the employers of the eruptions they will have to face in the coming days.

In 1943 the Transport Workers, especially in the Midlands areas, joined with their brothers in the coalmining and engineering industries in showing fight against the employers. But it is now possible to perceive, not only a broadening out, but a general transformation in the nature of the struggle. Whereas previously the workers who were involved in disputes were isolated, the nation-wide support given to the Neptune Engine Works on the Tyne; the solidarity of the miners in the South Yorkshire and South Wales Coalfields over recent disputes affecting single galleries in the given areas; or the strike of 23,000 Nottinghamshire miners over the imprisonment of a lad—these are demonstrations that the workers are closing their ranks in solidarity. But the latter strike, in particular, is an indication of the political character that the struggle is assuming.

Already the workers are realising the necessity of linking up with, and gaining support of workers in other parts. The Committees that were established as the directing centres in all these disputes, are not as yet Soviets, but they point to the manner in which the workers, through the efforts of their local leaders, will create fighting Committees or Soviets on a regional and national scale in the future. More significant, however, is the fact that instead of the struggles being confined to the more backward areas as in the past, the recent disputes among the miners and engineers in South Wales and the Clyde, point to the fact that the more advanced workers are on the move. All these factors demonstrate that the main strategy of the revolutionary socialists in the field of industry must be to raise consciously in the minds of the industrial workers, the necessity to end the industrial truce.

The effects of the industrial truce with the Government and the em-

ployers, which places the trade union movement in the clutches of the state machine, and gives the employers a free hand, are becoming obvious to the broad mass of the working class. Under the control of the present administration, the trade unions are rapidly becoming appendages of the capitalist state, with large numbers of trade union functionaries (starting with Bevin) in official government positions as labour officers, etc.

The foregoing is clear indication that all the objective and even the subjective conditions for tremendous explosions are maturing in the factories, mines and transport of Britain.

Arising out of the struggles that have already taken place, the question of leadership is being raised more and more sharply in the minds of the working class. The workers have learned, whenever they have been forced to stand and fight, that the Labour and Trade Union leadership, together with the Communist Party and the National Council of Shop Stewards, have deserted them, and indeed, sabotaged their struggles at every turn.

But whilst the servile attitude of the trade union bureaucracy to Churchill and the capitalist class and their sell-out of trade union rights has aroused the anger of the rank and file, only a small section is expressing its disgust by a conscious struggle for the removal of the leadership. Generally, the workers in the trade unions are apathetic, the branches being poorly attended. This is assisted in no small degree by the Stalinists, who, more skilful at putting forward their strike-breaking policy, are acting as props of the bureaucracy. Nevertheless, this apathetic mood can only be a temporary one, and will be overcome by the workers on the morrow. The attitude of the A.E.U. members on the recent wage award which forced the bureaucrats to make hasty pious gestures to the rank and file, is an indication of what the leadership will have to face as the struggle develops. Our duty is to assist these workers, the vast majority of whom are hostile to the strike-breaking policy of the leadership, by providing them with the consciousness that will take them the next step forward in the struggle. The bureaucratisation of the trade unions and their class integration with sections of the ruling class dictates the strategy of fighting to democratise the unions and replace the top strata with fresh elements; it dictates the need for an active policy of regular elections of officials every two years

at most, as well as the need to pay the union officials no more than the average wage for the trade or industry.

The Barrow strike was remarkable for the magnificent co-ordination of legal and "illegal" activity, co-ordination between the local legal machinery of the unions, as evidenced in the A.E.U.—the Branches and District Committee, and the "illegal" machinery: the "Council of Action, the Shop Stewards Committee and the Strike Committee. Backed by the high morale of the Barrow workers, it was the co-ordination of the legal and "illegal" activity which gave the "vigorous push" to the Barrow workers' struggle.

The experience of the Barrow strike destroys completely the theory of ultra left sectarians who wish to turn their backs on the mass industrial organisations of the working class (the unions) and concentrate the whole energy of industrial militants on the building of ad hoc and factory organisations. This experience underlines the need to carry the fighting spirit of the factory organisations into the branches: into the District Committee, and into the regional organisations of the unions. It emphasises the tremendous strength of the workers organisations.

The struggle in the workshops cannot be separated from the struggle in the unions, but inevitably it takes on a faster tempo and consequently assumes a more direct form. The actions of the bureaucrats in sabotaging the attempts of the working class to defend themselves from the attacks of the capitalists, force the workers in the direction of seeking an alternative leadership. Once again they are setting up Committees more directly representative of the rank and file, and while it is not possible to foresee the exact form the movement will take, some indication can be obtained by the recently formed Glasgow Committee, which adopted the historic name of the "Clyde Workers Committee." Initiated by militants in that area, directly representative of the workers in their factories, this Committee adopted a fighting programme which included as the central point, the struggle for the independence of the trade union movement from the capitalist state machine.

More important, however, is the fact that these militants, recognising the need to link up with other militants, not only locally, but nationally, established a national federation of trade union militants now

known as the "Militant Workers' Federation."

This Federation is not a paper organisation characteristic of Stalinism from 1925 to 1935, but already has a certain backing among influential workers' committees, and genuinely reflects a tendency now developing in Britain. Whatever the form of the struggle in the various industries (the possible establishment of "co-operative" committees in single industries or groups of factories), this national Federation has every possibility of becoming the focal point around which the workers will organise, when the coming storm, which will inevitably witness the most terrific industrial clashes in the history of British capitalism, breaks out. The Militant Workers' Federation may not receive a mass response immediately, but it is already attracting the cream of the industrial militants who are aware of the false policies and corruption of the trade union leadership and of the Stalinists. Even if the stormy days of industrial strife engulf this Federation before it has had the possibility to harden its national connections, there is no doubt that it will play an important role in the future national struggles of the industrial workers.

The trade union leaders and Stalinists in particular are aware of this. That is the reason for Bevin's recent outburst and his threat of new repressive legislation. It was a reflection not so much of the fear of the ruling class as of the misleaders of the working class in the field of industry. But whilst repressive measures, both through the state machine and by expulsions from the unions, may temporarily halt the forward march of the Militant Workers' Federation, history demands this form of organisation. Repression can succeed only in consolidating the working class and establishing the role of the trade union fakery in the eyes of the organised workers.

The decision of the industrial militants to establish the Federation on a broad basis to include all industries, is fundamentally correct. In the present stage of development of monopoly capitalism and the closely knit character of British industry, when all the major problems that confront the workers in the engineering trade, also confront the workers in other industries. When the miners, transport workers, railwaymen, are all crying out for a clear lead, the sectional policy advocated by the I.L.P. of confining the organisation to the engineering industry, would doom it to the fate

of the unofficial movement at the end of World War I. Moreover, in the final analysis, the correctness of broadening out the basis of the Committee will be demonstrated with the inevitable transformation of the industrial struggle into the challenge for power. To assist in this process, by waging a struggle against and ultra-left, syndicalist, or sectarian tendencies, is the duty of the revolutionary socialists.

Towards the end of World War I, despite the low level of consciousness, and despite the lack of a conscious leadership, the workers were striving in the direction of a political solution to their problems. Since that period, however, the workers have experienced two decades of sell-outs on the part of the labour bureaucracy and the Stalinists. Consequently, we have the contradiction where today the workers are far in advance of their predecessors in the last war, with a higher level of political consciousness, but are tending to express their militancy on the industrial field with a distrust of all the established political tendencies of the working class. The effect has been the revival of a semi-syndicalist trend among the industrial militants.

**But the integration of the trade union bureaucracy with the state machine, and the complete control of the state over Labour through the medium of the Essential Works Order and other legislation, creates the objective conditions whereby any militant industrial movement must inevitably come into conflict with the state machine.**

At such a stage, the whole struggle, which is at present centred mainly on the wages question, will be raised to a political plane. The struggle against the strike-breaking policy of the trade union bureaucracy and their new-found appendages, the C.P., will coincide with the struggle for the ending of the industrial and political truce.

**The organisation of this National Federation marks the turning point in the Labour and Trade Union movement: it is an earnest of the fact that for the third time, in an effort to release themselves from the stranglehold of the bureaucracy, the workers are attempting to create a movement with a national link-up.**

The struggles of the engineers towards the end of the last war, saw the transformation of Card Stewards who merely acted as collectors and reporters for their respective unions, into a fighting shop stewards movement organised on a factory basis irrespective of trade union, in order to carry on the struggle abandoned

by the union leaders. Nevertheless, after the glorious struggles on the Clyde and elsewhere, seeing in this movement a threat to their positions, the union leadership were able, through the lack of conscious leadership on the part of the Shop Stewards movement, to absorb the movement within the legal framework of the Unions. This was followed, with the exception of 1926 and 1931, by a period of almost 20 years of relative stability for British capitalism, which witnessed a slow, day to day process of struggle on the part of the rank and file in a second attempt to build up an alternative leadership to the trade union bureaucracy.

This period was a favourable one for British capitalism in its attacks upon militant workers. It saw many of the finest types of militant workers crushed through isolation, victimisation, and subsequent unemployment, becoming disillusioned and dropping out of the struggle. When the National Council of Shop Stewards was formed in 1936, the most advanced elements of the working class gathered around it in the belief that at last they had found a solution to their strivings for a fighting alternative leadership.

The hold this body gained over the industrial workers has been utilised, since the political turn of the Communist Party in 1941, to put forward an anti-working class, strike breaking policy. It now serves merely to implement the policy of the union leaders in the factory committees. The significance of this situation is that for the first time, the trade union bureaucracy has large numbers of **direct agents** in the factory committees; and where the C.P. is the strongest, the result is demoralisation and despair among the workers. But even this cannot last for long.

For 25 years the Shop Steward and Factory Committee form of organisation has been steadily extended throughout the length and breadth of Britain. From a few advanced, but isolated factories in World War I, the factory committee has extended to almost every factory throughout the country in World War II. Large and small, heavy industry and light industry, the factory and shop stewards committees have been built and extended to all fields of production. **In essence these committees are embryonic soviets and a reflection of dual power inside the factories.**

Due to the strength of the capitalist class and the relative stability of their rule, and as a reflection

of the low tempo of the revolutionary movement, these committees play an essentially **defensive** role at the present period. But with the turn in the situation, the deepening of the crisis and the sharpening of the class struggle, these committees will inevitably assume an aggressive character and seek a dominating position, **challenging the capitalist class for the control of the plants, for the control of industry.**

It is necessary consciously to extend these committees from one plant to another, from area to area, and establish a firm national tie. But our primary task in this field is to make the workers conscious of the real possibilities of these committees, **not as defensive organisations of this or that group of workers, but as organs of control, as organs of power.** The more deeply we entrench these ideas among the industrial workers, the easier the task in the future struggle, the surer the victory in the coming battle for proletarian power.

The increasing radicalisation of the organised workers is particularly underlined by the recent turn of the Postal Workers and the Civil Servants Unions and their struggle for affiliation to the T.U.C.; the challenge to the state which is contained in their recent actions. With the mass industrial conscription, the working class has been united on an unprecedented scale. The women and the youth, inexorably drawn into the struggle side by side with the men, become an important factor in the struggle. In particular the women are fast losing the psychology of domestic drudgery, and are rapidly developing all the characteristics of class conscious proletarian fighters. The number of organised workers has reached its highest peak, having exceeded the year 1920 which was 8,000,000 workers in the unions.

These factors impose on the revolutionary movement all the more sharply, the necessity of orientating itself towards the trade unions and industrial movement. Just as Britain is the key to the international situation, so is industry the key to the situation in Britain. The success of our work in this direction, will be the yardstick by which we will measure the building of the party. As the movement finds expression in the industrial field, fresh elements will be pushed to the fore. Constituting the cream of the working class, unspoiled and uncorrupted, they will be among the best fighters in the front line of the struggle. This strata will provide the new cadres for Bolshevism and

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# ITALY: First Phase of the Revolution

By Felix Morrow

Military catastrophe, one of the classical conditions of revolution, has brought the Italian proletariat to its feet after 21 years of prostration under fascist repression. In this sense the Italian workers have been galvanized by an external event. But defeats in war are one of the acid tests of a social order and of the attitude of the masses toward it. Fascism claimed to demonstrate its superiority above all in war. But superiority is evidenced not only in times of success but in adversity as well. The decisive element in war, when the contending powers are at all comparable in fighting forces, is the morale of the common soldier; especially is this true after initial defeats. Even crushing defeats such as the French Army sustained in the first week of the *blitzkrieg* need not have meant final defeat; now, said Trotsky in those days, the question of French morale will be decisive; the lack of that morale was a sufficient indictment of the decomposing bourgeois democracy

of France. The fascists then did not fail to underline the connection between the military collapse and the character of French society. Now that connection is to be seen in Italy where the very first defeats in North Africa sufficed to destroy even the semblance of morale.

Contrast this with the magnificent morale of the Red Army after the terrible defeats of 1941-1942. The test of war has proven the superiority of the social order established by the October revolution, and proven it under the adverse conditions of the stifling regime of Stalin. The collapse of morale of the "democratic" French Army and the fascist Italian Army is an index to the lack of inner resources of capitalism both in its democratic and fascist forms. What is happening in Italy is the mirror of the future of Hitler's Army.

## THE FIRST WEEK'S EVENTS

We should fail to understand the real course of events if we should assume that the dismissal of Mussolini was part of a comprehensive plan of Italy's ruling summits. On the contrary, their conduct has been marked by panicky improvisation. No doubt they had thought of throwing Mussolini overboard in the future in the event of final defeat, both to facilitate negotiations with the Allies and as a sop to the masses of Italy. But it is clear that the moment of dismissal came suddenly, as a negative reaction to a Hitler-Mussolini proposal for the next military steps (apparently abandonment of southern Italy). While rejecting this plan, the ruling summits had not arrived at one of their own, either for resistance or for capitulation. Nor did they have a plan for utilizing the dismissal as a sop to the masses. On the contrary, they presented it as a mere change of Prime Ministers and cabinets: a laconic announcement stated that "His

Excellency Cavaliere Benito Mussolini" had "tendered" his "resignation," and short proclamations by the King and Badoglio said nothing about Mussolini and fascism.

When this news Sunday was followed by gigantic mass demonstrations in Rome and the principal cities, lasting through the night, with rejoicing at Mussolini's fall already coupled with demands for peace, Badoglio could think of nothing more to do Monday than issue a manifesto devoted entirely to detailed instructions for repressing the demonstrations. It is characterized by the provision that "It is absolutely forbidden to hold any meeting in public of more than three persons..." Obviously those who issued such an order had no inkling that it could not be enforced; any administrator knows that an order which is successfully disobeyed is infinitely worse than silence in the face of disorders. Tuesday and Wednesday there were mass demonstrations of workers singing the Internationale and carrying red flags, strikes, killings of fascists, storming of fascist headquarters and houses, meetings of outlawed political parties, and at least one assault on a prison (in Milan) to release political prisoners. Only after all this came the announcement, Wednesday night, of the dissolution of the Fascist party. Thursday there were demonstrations in Milan and Turin (at least) with placards demanding peace; and the first reported order to demonstrators (in Milan) to disperse under threat of soldiers armed with submachine guns—but with the order to "are never given in the face of the fact that "demonstrators had allowed it to be understood from their attitude that they wanted this test of power." Friday thousands of workers successfully stormed the Cellari jail in Milan and released 200 political prisoners, soldiers refusing to obey an order to fire upon them; and the movement spread to

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will become the recruiting ground for our party.

In spite of the numerical weakness of the forces of revolutionary socialism, our ideas are the most powerful ideas yet forged by the working class movement. We can play a decisive part in the coming struggles, by giving conscious expression to the movement of the workers. This has already been shown in practice. With a correct policy on the issues which face the working class, we can raise the struggle to a higher level, simultaneously drawing the best workers into our ranks to build the party of the Fourth International in Britain. But we will only succeed in this task of building mass party and challenging the capitalist class for power to the extent that we succeed in converting the mass industrial organs of the working class into instruments of the socialist revolution.

Genoa where port workers were marching under red flags. In the face of all this the Badoglio régime could only think of sitting tight at home and broadcasting to other countries that the demonstrations were "entirely misunderstood" abroad: "They are merely expressions of patriotic enthusiasm, loyalty to the House of Savoy and confidence in the new government." This is the muttering of people overwhelmed by events.

### THE CLASS NATURE OF FASCISM

This faltering planlessness of the Italian bourgeoisie deprived it of its one opportunity to confuse the picture of its real relations with fascism. The King and the army hierarchy could have staged a palace revolution "overthrowing" Mussolini and immediately issued a manifesto outlawing the Fascist party, freeing political prisoners voiding anti-Jewish laws, legalising political parties and trade unions, newspapers, meetings, etc. This manoeuvre would have made it possible for Roosevelt and Churchill and the labour leaders to support the Italian capitalist regime with some show of plausibility.

As it actually transpired, however, the circumstances of Mussolini's departure have provided the international working class with an irrefutable proof of the nakedly capitalist nature of fascism. The transition from fascism to "anti-fascism" took the form of a mere change of cabinets. That is, a change within the existing framework of the state. According to a law adopted December 19, 1928, the power to name a new Prime Minister was vested exclusively in the Fascist Grand Council, with the Crown merely approving its choice. Yet the Crown did not even have to violate this law in order to name Badoglio; instead, the Fascist Grand Council, by overwhelming majority, voted to ask the King to name the new government, i.e., voted to dissolve itself! This arrangement throws the most glaring light on the fact that fascism is an instrumentality of capitalism, to be utilized or dispensed with as the interests of the social order of private property require. The democratic rights which the masses are wresting for themselves in the streets and factories of Italy, and which the Italian bourgeoisie will tomorrow formally recognize, are seen to be

the achievement of the masses themselves.

Thus Mussolini's dismissal provides a definitive answer to the debate of over two decades concerning the nature of fascism: It is the answer which Trotsky taught the vanguard workers throughout these dark years: "*For the monopolistic bourgeoisie, the parliamentary and Fascist regimes represent only different vehicles of dominion; it has recourse to one or the other, depending upon the historical conditions.*"

### THE REAL HISTORY OF FASCISM

Class loyalty reaches across the battlefronts: the U.S. press and radio are expending millions of words absolving Italian capitalism of responsibility for fascism, taking their cue from General Eisenhower's July 29 declaration that "We commend" the House of Savoy for ousting Mussolini. Let us take as an example the long editorial in the August 1 *New York Times*, and examine its two principal falsifications of the history of Italian fascism.

1. **Not capitalism but revolution is to blame for fascism:**

"From a historic perspective it represents a nationalistic counter-revolution against the international revolution of Communism, and wherever Communism rears its head Fascism is bound to appear."

It is true that the Italian proletariat was part of the great post-war revolutionary wave; the Socialist Party grew from 50,000 members in 1914 to 216,000 in 1919, the trade unions from 320,000 to 2,250,000, and under pressure of the masses the Socialist Party voted adherence to the Third International and trade union leaders participated in the Congress of the Red International of Labour Unions. Peasants seized land and the workers, climaxing a series of great struggles, occupied the factories in September 1920.

What was the situation of the Fascist party during this revolutionary wave? As yet it had no mass base. Mussolini did not dare as yet to attack workers' headquarters. At this stage the petty-bourgeois masses either followed or sympathized with the advancing workers, and awaited the transformation of society. In a word, fascism was no danger during the stormy rise of the Italian workers' movement.

It was not the fascists who derailed that movement. It was the reformist leadership of the Socialist Party and the trade unions. Instead of going on to seize power, they turned back, evacuated the factories in return for paper concessions, and left the masses without hope of a radical change.

Only then was Mussolini able to recruit masses of petty bourgeoisie and lumpen-proletarians who still wanted a change and were deluded by the pseudo-socialism of the fascists. There was no longer danger of a revolution (the Communist Party was only being formed at this time) but Big Business and the landowners decided to use precisely the opportunity of the retreat of the workers' movement to smash it altogether. They provided the funds, the army provided arms, and the church hierarchy sanctioned collaboration of the Catholic "Popular Party" with the fascists under the slogan "restoration of public order and the suppression of socialism." In November 1920 came the first fascist assault (in Bologna) on the disoriented, disappointed and passive workers, and two years later the "march" on Rome.

At the Fourth World Congress of the Comintern, December 1922 after Mussolini became Prime Minister, Zinoviev put the situation succinctly: "The reformists declare that they wish to spare the workers the unnecessary sufferings of the revolution. Well, the revolution has not taken place, but many of the workers have fallen as victims."

Likewise in Germany the fascists were not a serious force during the revolutionary wave of 1918-1923; not until the world crisis began in 1929 and the Social Democratic and Communist parties again had their chance to lead the masses to overthrow capitalism but failed to do so; not until then did the petty-bourgeois masses turn to the Nazis. This transition is indicated by the votes for the Nazis: 809,000 in 1928, and 6,401,000 in September 1930.

One of Trotsky's greatest contributions to Marxist theory, in the very last article he wrote, formulates this process as a social law: "Both theoretical analysis as well as the rich historical experience of the last quarter of a century have demonstrated with equal force, that fascism is each time the final link of a specific political cycle composed of the

following: the gravest crisis of capitalist society; the growth of the radicalisation of the working class and a yearning for change on the part of the rural and urban petty bourgeoisie; the extreme confusion of the big bourgeoisie; its cowardly and treacherous manoeuvres aimed at avoiding the revolutionary climax; the exhaustion of the proletariat, growing confusion and indifference; the aggravation of the social crisis; the despair of the petty bourgeoisie, its yearning for change, the collective neurosis of the petty bourgeoisie, its readiness to believe in miracles; its readiness for violent measures; the growth of hostility toward the proletariat which has deceived its [the petty bourgeoisie's] expectations. These are the premises for the swift formation of a fascist party and its victory.\*\*

2. Having falsely blamed the revolutionary wave, rather than its decline, for the victory of fascism, the *Times* goes on to concede the fascist connection with Big Business—but concedes it only to convey the thought that the capitalists lived to regret it:

"But though it found support from both the army and Big Business as a means of splitting the revolutionary movement of the Communists, fascism soon declared itself a law unto itself, and proceeded to seize power by means of violence exercised by gangs of thugs tolerated by the authorities. It ended up as a totalitarian party, which took over the whole state, established a one-party, one-man rule and proceeded to take control of the army, the workers and all business."

We can list only a few of the deliberate falsifications of the *Times*. The gangs did not "seize power" by violence. The present King named Mussolini as Prime Minister, a step urged by the heads of the Banking Association and the Federation of Industry. From 1922 until 1926 Mussolini ruled in a coalition with the parties of Big Business and during this period the gangs and the state extirpated the workers' organizations. As he succeeded in this task, Mussolini also rid himself of the plebeian masses of the Fascist party who

were demanding carrying out of his anti-capitalist promises. During 1923 tens of thousands of fascists who had taken part in the march on Rome were expelled; a second purge took place in 1925-26; a third in 1929 when the federation of fascist "unions" was dissolved. The fascist "squadrons of action" were incorporated into the state militia in 1923, and the next year staffed with army officers while plebeian elements were weeded out. The fascist youth organization, the *Opera Balilla*, lost its autonomy and became a military organization controlled by the army and under army regulations. By these means Mussolini subordinated the fascist movement to the capitalist state, and not the other way around as the *Times* pretends. As the years passed the petty-bourgeois masses lost their illusions about what fascism would do for them and dropped away. The original plebeian elements were replaced by the upper classes.

The nature of this process was formulated by Trotsky in 1932: "Fascism, become bureaucratic, approaches very closely to other forms of military and police dictatorship." The dictatorship leans increasingly less on the original plebeian masses and ever more on the traditional repressive forces of the capitalist state, the army and the police, control over which was never lost by Big Business.

Indeed, is not this fact made obvious by Mussolini's dismissal? As an editorial the day afterward in the conservative *New York Sun* of July 26 put it rather indiscreetly: "For who can fire a dictator? Not a weak king. Not a non-existent parliament. Only a stronger dictator can do it. So the Allied world will have searching questions to ask concerning those who have taken charge of Italy." But the *Sun* and the "Allied world" hastily dropped these searching questions, for to answer them would be to confess that the "stronger dictator," the army and police of the capitalist state, were always Mussolini's master. The capitalist nature of fascism, proved by Trotsky over and over again, was never admitted by the labour lackeys of capitalism, nor will they admit it now in spite of the decisive proof of the Italian events.

One can understand their present "theories" about fascism best in the

light of their previous ones. Both the Italian and German Social Democracy and the liberals conjured it away by dismissing it as a "post-war psychosis." In emigration, they did all they could to blind the European proletariat to the danger. Nitti wrote in 1926: "Any fascist enterprise in the countries which have reached a high degree of economic civilization would only be a vain experiment . . . In Germany the democratic parties and the republic are solidly established." Don Luigi Sturzo assured the workers in 1927 that "a March on London, Paris or Berlin" was impossible. The German Social Democrats, through their theoretician Decker, proclaimed in 1929: "Fascism, in its Italian form, corresponds to Italian conditions. The organized strength and highly developed political education of the German working class, as well as the relative weakness of the non-proletarian masses in Germany in comparison with Italy, make such a brutal crushing of democracy impossible in our country . . ." Stalin's theoretician, Martynov, echoed the same theory in July 1929 at the Tenth Plenum of the Comintern: "Fascism of the pure type will be our chief enemy only in backward and semi-agricultural countries." Contradicting this theory but nevertheless coupled with it was the Stalinist designation of the German governments preceding Hitler as "fascist" and of the Social Democracy as "social-fascist."\*

When these theories collapsed, the Social Democrats and Stalinists invented different but equally false theories. They joined in advocating the Popular Front to save democracy. It saved French capitalism from the revolutionary wave of June 1936, while the decomposition of French democracy continued until the "democrat" Reynaud handed over power to Petain. In Spain the Popular Front, repressing the masses in order to save private property, and serving as accomplices to the "non-intervention" maneuvers of Paris and London, made possible the victory of Franco.

Now the Stalinists, Social De-

\* The references for these quotations will be found in the concluding chapter of Daniel Guerin's "Fascism and Big Business."

\* *Fourth International*, October 1940

mocrats and liberals justify support of the war as a "fight against fascism." To do so they must ignore the fact that the same capitalist class, under varying historical conditions, can rule by fascism or by democratic forms. To admit that fact would be to admit that democracy is in no way an issue in the conflict between the imperialist powers.

#### THE NEXT STAGE IN ITALY

The counter-revolutionary consequences of these reformist theories of fascism will soon become visible in Italy (and in Germany). The counter-revolution will be waged under the slogan "Down with fascism." The capitalist and reformist definitions of a fascist will be so formulated as to absolve the pillars of the fascist regime during the past 21 years—the monarchy, the church and army hierarchies, and to absolve, above all, the capitalist class. Only the revolutionary Marxist party will summon the workers and peasants to put an end to the capitalist system which bred fascism and which will again resort to fascism.

The revolutionists will have the truth on their side, confirmed by the living experience of the Italian and German masses. The very first week after Mussolini's dismissal the Italian masses demonstrated that they have recovered their will to struggle and are determined to decide their own destiny in a way that will forever put an end to fascism and capitalist wars. Nevertheless, the revolutionary developments of the first week cannot be taken as indicative of the uninterrupted tempo to come. Nazi armies are inside Italy, U.S.-British forces are about to enter. Military occupation will inevitably slow the revolutionary tempo. But afterward the occupation will become a new source of revolutionary ferment, as it did in Nazi occupied Europe. A foreign yoke is even more intolerable than a domestic one. Nor will it be lightened by the AMGOT policy of ruling through the Italian provincial and local officials. Even Sicily, where the masses had not risen, the August 2 *New York Times* reports: "The real anti-Fascists here do not like that so much. Apparently they had ex-

pected the whole Fascist set-up to be swept away, but that is impossible and will be so throughout Italy." The masses who have been killing Fascist officials will certainly look upon AMGOT as a device for crushing the revolution and perpetuating the hated officialdom. The Italian masses will face occupation just after they have risen to their feet and feel their own strength, in contrast to the discouraged and apathetic condition of the workers in France at the time the Nazis marched in.

At the beginning of the war, Trotsky wrote the Manifesto of the Fourth International on "The Imperialist War and Proletarian Revolution." For four years we have had the imperialist war. Now, the first stage of the proletarian revolution is beginning, as the Italian events demonstrate. Trotsky was murdered by Stalin before he could see his prediction come true. On the third anniversary of his death we are already permitted to see that his revolutionary optimism was based on the most scientific analysis of the course of events.

August 2, 1943.

F.M.

# EGYPT: Trotskyism Grows

The following Extracts from a letter just received from Cairo are of first class importance and demonstrate the growth of the World Communist Movement—The Fourth International:

"Of the Egyptians I have contacted some acknowledge themselves as Trotskyists, others do not, but still take up our position. They number about a dozen, and work in a group in Cairo. The membership of this group is about 50, is dominated by Stalinists and ran a fortnightly review in Arabic (Circulation about 800—not too bad considering the fact that only 1½ millions are literate; this figure including the foreign minorities). The friction in the group came to a head after the dissolution of the Comintern and resulted in the "Trotskyists" controlling the review, from which the Stalinists have withdrawn support. (The press censorship is very strict,

however, with a corresponding effect on the policy of the review).

One of the comrades has been imprisoned twice: his "line" during interrogation was similar to Canon's.\* He has now been released after 10 months' imprisonment—pending trial. Another comrade recently received some material from the Mexican section. It is needless to mention how welcome is any literature to these comrades—and most of them understand English. They have contacts throughout the Middle East

The press censorship here is quite ingenious—no blank spaces must be left, even after having been censored, so that the public will not know that anything has been censored.

About the affair in the Greek armed forces (reference to rank and file movement in Greek army against reactionary Fascist-Monarchist officers) in the Middle East last March—the leaders of the "revolt" were disarmed and are now in concentration camps. Long live democracy!

In today's "Egyptian Gazette" is a report of a speech by Bevin against "Trotskyites . . . who in their circulars and literature were against the war . . ." etc., etc., etc.—but doubtless you have already read it.

The Egyptian comrades send you their greetings."

\* (J. P. Canon's evidence under cross-examination in Minneapolis, U.S., frame-up trials of T.U. leaders and Trotskyists 1941—published under the title "AN A.B.C. OF TROTSKYISM" by W.I.L. at 6d.—Ed.)