

Workers

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International



News

*Theoretical
Organ of the
Revolutionary
Communist
Party*

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ARTICLES ON
INDIA • IMPERIALISM IN THE MIDDLE EAST

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WORKERS INTERNATIONAL NEWS

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Manager's Column

An example has just reached us of the way in which W.I.N. sales can be developed. Our West London Branch comrades take copies of the magazine with them on their Sunday morning *Socialist Appeal* canvass. On a previous occasion about thirty copies were sold. But on their last canvass over forty copies of January W.I.N. were sold to readers of *Socialist Appeal*. This is an indication of the way in which sales of our magazine can be developed when Party members set themselves the task of selling our theoretical organ.

A comrade in the Army writes: "As a theoretical organ the W.I.N. is just the job. There is just one point I would like to bring up and it concerns Marxist Study Classes. You are aware that a large number of W.I.N. readers cannot attend the classes because of work, etc, so I suggest that in each issue of W.I.N. one article deals with Marxism and that the article should take the form of a study class and come under the heading: Marx Study Class."

What is suggested here is a series of prepared lectures or educative articles on the fundamentals of Marxism to enable our readers to study on their own when denied access to

study circles. Our soldier comrade's idea is a good one and we will bear it in mind for the future when paper supplies are more liberal and it is possible to have a bigger magazine. Such a series of articles would take up considerable space, and as we are at present placed, we have insufficient room to deal with all the pressing problems and situations which face us from day to day, or to print even a fraction of the discussion articles which are produced in the various international sections of our movement. We do, however welcome the suggestion and hope that more of our readers will let us know what they feel the need of.

Another forces comrade asks for theoretical articles dealing with India. We have quite a lot of material prepared by our Indian comrades waiting to be printed, and one article appears in this issue. We will produce more articles on India in the coming period as the struggle develops.

We thank those other readers whose suggestions are not dealt with here for writing. We welcome your opinions whether they contain praise or criticism. Let us have yet more opinions of the magazine and suggestions for improvement.

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Editorial Notes

U N O AND WORLD PEACE

AS an instrument for the maintenance of world peace the so-called United Nations Organisation is a farce. Nothing, literally nothing, will be achieved by the theatrical performances enacted in the Central Hall, Westminster. Even the capitalist politicians, or at least the more far-sighted of them, have little or no faith in their creation.

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**NEW
THIEVES'
KITCHEN**

What none of the bourgeois or, come to that, Stalinist politicians, dare openly recognise is the **real character** of this organisation. Lenin characterized its predecessor, the League of Nations, as a "thieves' kitchen". History confirmed this. The League never was, and could not be whilst the capitalist system continued, a peace organisation. It was, in the final analysis, an instrument of Anglo-French imperialist policy.

U.N.O. is a similar creation through which the Big Powers will attempt to enforce their policies. Following Lenin, we can, without fear of historical refutation, characterize U.N.O. as "thieves' kitchen number two".

The gathering at Westminster is grey and barren. The speeches, without exception, extremely dull and banal. A true reflection of the unreality of the assembly. Attlee's approach epitomised the bankruptcy of the politicians of world capitalism. The essence of his address was the following:

"After the first world war there was a tendency to regard the League of Nations as something outside the ordinary range of foreign policy. Governments continued on old lines, pursuing individual aims and following the path of power politics, not understanding that the world had passed into a new epoch. In just such a spirit in times past in these islands great nobles and their retainers used to practise private war in disregard of the authority of the central government. The time came when private armies were abolished throughout the length and breadth of this island: What has been done in Britain and in other countries on a small stage has now to be effected throughout the whole world"

Like the French Bourbons, who resisted revolutionary social change when capitalism appeared on the historical arena, Attlee and the reformist opponents of revolutionary socialism, have learned nothing and forgotten nothing!

The statement he makes is at best a half truth. Its sin of omission overwhelms the facts uttered. The truth is that peace **within** national boundaries was established, and the private armies and feuds abolished, **only by a revolutionary change in the economic system; by a revolutionary transformation of the mode of production.**

In the Mediaeval period to which Attlee refers, feudal relationships prevailed. There was no effective central government. Central authority came into being with the nation state which in turn is the product of the era of capitalism. But this did not resolve the contradictions. It lifted them onto a higher plane. It made it inevitable that catastrophic wars such as the one we have just witnessed, would take the place of the smaller wars of the feudal barons with their private armies.

There is an analogy to be drawn, but not the one drawn by Attlee. The "authority" of the "central governments" cited by the Labour Premier, like the "authority" of U.N.O., is a fiction. There is a lesson to be learned from Attlee's excursion into social history, but he has not learned it. The abolition of wars between the national states, the product of capitalism, like the abolition of the wars between the mediaeval armies, is the task of the social revolution. Capitalism in its beginnings destroyed feudal relationships, including "private armies" and it thereby ended the wars fought by them. Socialism will sweep away the nation states, and the internecine wars in which they become involved through the private ownership of the means of production. Nothing less than a social revolution can solve the problems of our epoch.

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STALINISM AND U.N.O.

All this used to be recognised by the Communist International in the past period. Especially in Lenin's day when the original "thieves' kitchen" was being created on the ruins of the first world slaughter. But the "Communist" parties of to-day have a different story to tell. They seek the causes of war no longer in the contradictions of capitalism which make it inevitable, but in the conflict of "peace loving democracies" and "fascist aggressors". Parenthetically we can point out that they see no conflict between this ideology and their insistence on the unity of the Big Three, despite the fact that "the fascist aggressors" have been reduced to dust and only the "peace-loving democracies" are contained in the united nations.

Writing in the *Daily Worker* on January 10, Palme Dutt claims, echoing the bourgeoisie, that "Maintenance of peace against aggression in the present period depends on co-operation of the democratic Powers." In the same article he says: "The League of Nations was conceived in the spirit of hostility toward the Soviet Union and as a bulwark against the rise of revolutionary democracy in Europe. . . ."

"U.N.O. on the contrary is founded on co-operation of the Western Powers and the Soviet Union. It includes the new democratic States which have arisen in the course of liberating Europe from Nazi domination."

This is a gross distortion of history and of things as they are to-day. What actually happened in Europe after World War I, and what is the real position to-day?

There was no question of "a rise of revolutionary democracy in Europe" as Dutt pretends. The issue was the extension across Europe of the proletarian revolution which began in Russia in 1917. Revolutionary insurrections took place in various countries, the most important being those of the German and the Hungarian workers. The Communist International tried to consummate the socialist revolution throughout the Continent, but without success. The capitalist counter revolution triumphed instead. The Social-Democratic agents of European capitalism succeeded in beheading the revolution and diverting the uprisings of the masses into the harmless and futile

channels of bourgeois democracy. This Palme Dutt now tries to label "the rise of revolutionary democracy in Europe"! And to-day a similar process can be observed. But Social-Democracy and Stalinism have now united in order to dupe the masses with chatter about revolutionary democracy. By such methods they seek to behead the European revolution as they are doing in Italy and France and other countries.

U.N.O. AND THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

In the war just ended there was no question of confining the conflict to Europe. It was truly a war for world domination. This was shown, if it wasn't evident before, when Hitler in a few months united almost the whole of Europe under the iron heel of Nazism. But German imperialism found that it was slaking its thirst with brine. The struggle became transformed into a battle between Wall Street and Nazi imperialism for control of the entire planet. From that battle the U.S.A. emerged the victor. But, like German imperialism, U.S. imperialism finds its road to world domination blocked by the Soviet Union.

History has thus decreed a pause in the conflict. A conflict which will be resumed as sure as night follows day unless the proletarian revolution intervenes. Today the "Big Two" are already sparring for positions, recognising that a war between U.S.A. and the Soviet Union in the next ten or fifteen years is "in the cards".

Against this background UNO, like the League which preceded it, can be seen as an empty masquerade. It can decide nothing. It can settle nothing. As the *Times* so sadly comments, UNO can be employed only for "the promotion of practical issues about which all are agreed." Power politics reigns supreme. The real issues are decided behind the scenes: In the secret con-
 claves of the so-called "big three", in reality the "big two", with Britain performing the role of helpless spectator.

The last Moscow Conference left no room for doubt on this point. There the Big Two arranged a horsedeaf which left Britain out in the cold. By arrangement the Pacific has become in effect an "American lake" and by way of recompense Moscow received sanction for her "Eastern European bloc" under the formula of Anglo-American recognition of the governments of her Balkan satellites as "democracies". Such a carve-up did not leave even crumbs for Bevin to collect from the feasting board.

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THE WAY TO WORLD UNITY

The abolition of fascism, unemployment, economic crises and war, calls for the economic and political unification of our planet. This can be achieved only through the common ownership of the means of production; through the ending of capitalism and the establishment of a world communist order. The problem facing mankind is that of world unity, if it is to develop and utilise the world's productive and cultural forces to the full and for the benefit of all, or even to avoid destruction in the era of the atomic bomb.

This is the urgent problem posed by historical development. The ruling classes recognise it. But they cannot offer a solution without pronouncing the death sentence on their own system, on their own position of power and privilege. And they are concerned above all with the preservation of the capitalist world order. The creation of the United Nations Organisation is an empty gesture. UNO is a platform for philistine moralising, that is all. The

issue which now faces humanity and above all its only progressive force, the world working class, is the conflict of ideologies; the conflict of social systems: **Capitalism versus Communism.**

Early in 1940 the Fourth International issued a manifesto which pointed out the following lesson:

"On November 1, 1914, at the beginning of the last imperialist war, Lenin wrote: 'Imperialism has placed the fate of European culture at stake. After this war, if a series of successful revolutions do not occur, more wars will follow—the fairy tale of a war to end all wars is a hollow and pernicious fairy tale.' . . . Workers call this prediction to mind! The present war—the second imperialist war is not an accident; it does not result from the will of this or that dictator. It was predicted long ago. It derived its origin inexorably from the contradictions of international capitalist interests. Contrary to official fables designed to drug the people, the chief cause of war as of all other social evils—unemployment, the high cost of living, fascism, colonial oppression—is the private ownership of the means of production together with the bourgeois state which rests on this foundation.'

Today the new "fable designed to drug the people" is UNO. But again it is a "hollow and pernicious fairy tale". Let us again recall Lenin's prediction. Let it burn into the consciousness of the toiling masses, who hold mankind's destiny in their grasp. Only a series of successful social revolutions, resulting in a world federation of Socialist republics, can resolve the historical crisis and liberate mankind for all time from the shackles of poverty, want and insecurity.

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UNREST IN THE ARMED FORCES

THE older imperialist powers, notably Britain and France, established their rule in foreign lands by the crude methods of military conquest and occupation. Historical development, however, brought about a modification of their rule "by the sword". Gradually a method of dividing the spoils has evolved. The rising indigenous capitalists and the imperialist plunderers have sought, and continue to seek, a basis for joint exploitation of the colonial toilers and—*noblesse oblige*—a division of responsibility in keeping the toilers oppressed. This is clearly evident from the developments in India over the past two or three decades, and from the much more highly condensed process of evolution of the section of the Indonesian bourgeois nationalism led by Dr. Soekarno.

Basically the trend is in the direction of national independence for the colonial peoples. The occupying armies are less able and willing to perform the role of imperialist policemen now than ever before. But it is precisely at this stage of development that history has decreed the appearance of Yankee imperialism as a world military power. Uncle Sam finds the rule of the dollar no longer sufficient. To the power of the dollar has been added the power of the "liberator" and the atom bomb.

For a hundred years after the defeat of Napoleon, British imperialism reigned supreme as the dominant power. "British peace" prevailed over Europe and the East. But two catastrophic wars have changed everything. Uncle Sam has taken over the mantle of John Bull, and finds the necessity to spread military forces over the entire planet in order to establish an era of "American peace". Behind the "century of the common man" is the hard reality of the world domination of U.S. imperialism.

But it is precisely at this stage that the military foundation of American and British imperialism is beginning to crumble under their feet. The American army, politically one of the most backward in the world, because of the relatively high economic standards enjoyed by the American workers, has burst through its political straight-jacket and forced the Yankee brasshats to speed the return home of the soldiers in the occupying forces. Out of the blue the spontaneous demonstrations of the American soldiers developed. The protest movement beginning in Manila spread in a few days across the world to Paris and London.

The British forces are disgusted and ashamed of the conditions they have witnessed in India and the Far East generally. More, they are becoming demoralised by the role they are being called on to play in the colonial countries, particularly in Java. The movement for a speedier return home is taking on the form of open mutiny. This development has come as no surprise to those who employ the Marxian method of analysing social phenomena. Last summer, when the guns had hardly ceased firing in Europe and no-one could predict the length of the Japanese conflict, the National Conference of the Revolutionary Communist Party adopted a resolution which declared:

"It is in Germany that the bourgeoisie will discover the utopian character of their schemes to retain the old system. All attempts to punish fraternisation will collapse with the occupation of Germany for any length of time. The Tommies and Doughboys will consider their mission in Europe completed. They will demand demobilisation and a return home to the better world promised them by the bourgeoisie."

It remains only to bring this up to date by extending the analysis to Asia. The protest demonstrations of the Doughboys and the strike waves now surging through the ranks of the British overseas forces, are a clear confirmation of the correctness of our Conference estimation.

THE AMERICAN STRIKE WAVE

THE American President recently delivered his annual address on "the state of the Union". As a leader writer in the *Times* pointed out, Mr. Truman finds the Union in a "sorry state". Being the mightiest power in the world has drawbacks as well as advantages, as the American bourgeoisie will find to its cost. The discontent of the American soldiers who "wanna go home" to the better world which has been promised, is mild compared with the feeling of the workers at home who are faced with the concrete realities of the better world.

AND WAGE CUTS: The ending of war contracts and the reconversion of **RECONVERSION** industry has meant the ending of bonuses and overtime payments by which the wage packets of the workers have been artificially bolstered up during the war. Faced with the higher cost of living and lower take-home pay, the workers of America are going into battle against the bosses in a determined fashion. The United States is facing the mightiest strike wave in its history. In the only capitalist country to emerge from the war economically strengthened, the class struggle is reaching an unprecedented pitch of ferocity. It is estimated that some 15,000,000 workers will be participating in the strikes in the coming weeks. Add to this the families of the workers and it means that about half the population of the U.S.A. will be involved.

THE STAKES AT ISSUE A general demand for wage increases in the major industries is being raised by the workers. Increases in wage rates up to 30% are the terms for a return to work in most cases. When the situation is examined it can be seen that such demands are not only realisable but are extremely modest.

The late President Roosevelt declared that America would produce in 1945 consumption commodities equal in volume to 1939 production. In addition a similar volume of war weapons would flow from American factories. If we take into account the fact that millions of workers then in uniform are now available for work in industry, it is clear that the standard of life of the American worker should, on this basis, be at least twice what it was before the war. But even the official calculations only claim that the workers' living standards have increased by 16 per cent. If we add the 30% now being demanded by the workers, it still leaves the bosses with vast gains as a result of a higher rate of exploitation of the American workers.

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OPEN THE BOOKS Just how much more the capitalists are extracting from the toil of the masses cannot be ascertained without the workers having access to the accounts of the manufacturers. The union leaders claim, very modestly, that they can prove for example that General Motors can afford to pay 24½% wage increases and still make higher profits than in 1939.

The American workers have terrified the exploiters by raising the transitional demand of the Trotskyists: "Open the Company books to trade union inspection!" So serious has the position become for the capitalists, who realise that such a demand is a major step along the road to workers control of industry, that Truman has set up Government "fact-finding boards" in an attempt to silence the demand for the opening of the books. Such institutions are merely a new feature of the Administration's strike breaking manoeuvres, like Government seizure of the plants. At the same time, the hard-faced industrial barons have embarrassed, their servant by refusing to accept the recommendations of his commissions, and the ironical position is reached where the President is forced to give verbal support to support the strikes by agreeing that the workers should not return without wage increases.

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ROOSEVELT AND TRUMAN History has played a cruel joke on Truman. No one expected that he would be raised to power in such a critical period of America's history by the death of President Roosevelt. Roosevelt was one of the most cunning and able politicians that American capitalism has ever produced. It was to him that Wall Street looked to keep the ship of class harmony afloat during the stormy aftermath of the war. Such a task would undoubtedly have exceeded the capacities of Roosevelt. It has overwhelmed Truman at the beginning of the struggles.

Whereas Roosevelt was able to pose as a friend of Labour to the extent that he had considerable electoral support from the trade unions, his successor has only succeeded in antagonising the workers and the capitalists. Whilst the struggle remains at this stage on the industrial plane, the logic of events will force the American workers along the road of independent class politics in the period immediately ahead. The need for an independent Labour Party grows and becomes more apparent with each stage of the development. By creating their own mass political organisation the American workers will be making a momentous move towards the struggle for power.

THE CRISIS IN FRANCE

FRENCH capitalism is plunging blindly towards the abyss. Social crises are the only consistent feature of the regime. De Gaulle has been succeeded by Gouin, but even the most sober bourgeois commentators here assess the life of the new administration only in terms of weeks. Any attempt to deal with the probable course of events in France is a hazardous enterprise. At best only the broad general trends can be shown.

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THE LEFT SWING The general elections in France revealed with clarity the broad radicalisation of the masses which had taken place during the war. The objective conditions for social revolution have long been rotten ripe. Unfortunately the political development of the toilers has not kept pace with that of the objective factors. The main subjective factor now lacking is the mass revolutionary communist party. The crisis reduces itself to the failure of the leadership of the French workers to solve the historic tasks which confront it.

There can be no doubt of the desire of the French masses for radical social change. That is attested by the large number of votes cast for socialism and communism and the fact that even the right wing party, the M.R.P., has to masquerade as a "socialist" and "progressive" organisation.

Never in the history of France have the conditions been more favourable for the French workers. The danger lies in the passing of time. If the French workers do not prove capable of organising their ranks for the struggle for state power and do not throw up the Bolshevik leadership which can direct the struggle to a successful conclusion in the period which lies ahead then the opportunity will be given for the reaction to regroup. If there is no dictatorship of the proletariat, there will be the naked rule of the bourgeoisie.

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SITUATION THE PRESENT What has emerged from the struggle of the masses against the Nazi oppression and the Vichy quisling regime? The Stalinists claim the French regime is part of the "rise of revolutionary democracy in Europe". This is completely false. True enough there is bourgeois democracy, but not revolutionary democracy. In France there exists the bourgeois counter revolution in democratic form.

Nor is it possible to look to the present social regime in France as a democratic norm, as the epitomisation of Menshevik "pure democracy". In its essentials there is bourgeois democracy in France but at the same time elements of bonapartism also exist. Even the liberal and reformist commentators in the British press recognise in de Gaulle a potential bonaparte, and fear that he will be called upon to fill that role in the period ahead should "democracy" fail to solve the problems of the masses and discredit itself in the process.

But bonapartism and the existence of elements of bonapartism are not one and the same thing. The revelations of de Gaulle's dictatorial ambitions and intentions do not of themselves constitute a bonapartist dictatorship; do not destroy the organisations of bourgeois democracy through which the French capitalists are now maintaining themselves in power. At the present time bourgeois democracy is the only form of rule open to the French ruling class: their only method in the present period of staving off the revolution. The forces of reaction, not only in France but on a world scale, are extremely weak.

And bonapartism is essentially the rule of the sword. Like the regime of bourgeois democracy it serves to preserve the *status quo* so far as the rule of private ownership of the means of production is concerned. Through bonapartist, or any form of dictatorial rule the bourgeoisie pursues the same aim. It changes only its methods. But the change from bourgeois democracy to bonapartism has a qualitative character. De Gaulle is concerned with achieving personal power but his ambitions and the resources available and the conditions do not correspond.

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DE GAULLE OR THE REVOLUTION

This is important to remember. For "the saviour of France" is not lacking in pretensions. The ultimatum is his favourite weapon. But ultimatums not backed by the force necessary to carry through the threatened alternative, are not of much value. Hence de Gaulle's debacles in the field of foreign and domestic policy.

The Referendum which the Provisional Government attached to the elections, was in the nature of an ultimatum from the General. But there was no power to enforce it. Observers have mistaken the Referendum for a plebiscite. But it was not that. A referendum differs from a plebiscite in one vital aspect. A referendum permits of a free vote, yes or no, on the issue involved. In a plebiscite one votes with the pistol in one's neck.

Neither the conditions nor the resources exist for a *coup d'etat* on the part of de Gaulle. Otherwise he would undoubtedly have struck before this. During the recent crisis the Leclerc divisions were stationed near Paris. But the mood of the masses, not only in Paris, but as the voting in the elections showed, in the other centres of France, together with the general leftward development internationally, stayed the hand of the ambitious General. Instead he executed a political manoeuvre designed to discredit not only the present three-party set-up, but bourgeois democracy—"politics"—in general. He calculates that if this can be achieved, the masses will then be receptive to the return of "the strong man"; will not resist the rule of the sword.

In face of the impending crisis the reformist socialists and communists are impotent. They manoeuvre only to escape the consequences of power. They demand that each new combination shall include the bourgeois party, the M.R.P. The French Trotskyists, small in numbers and with their press illegalised, are conducting a valiant struggle to expose these misleaders of the working class and convince the French toilers of the need for a decisive struggle against French capitalism under the leadership of the revolutionary party. They raise the slogan: "A Communist-Socialist-C.G.T. (trade union) Government" Out with the bourgeois party, for a workers government! Only through their experiences will the masses learn the complete bankruptcy of their leaders and see the need for a revolutionary policy and leadership.

Two roads lie before the French masses. The struggle ahead must resolve itself in the workers taking power, or being crushed under the heel of bourgeois reaction. There is no middle way. Conditions favour the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat. It remains but to convert the vanguard Trotskyist party—the Internationalist Communist Party—into a party of the broad masses. The magnitude of the task is matched only by its urgency. The cadre exists. It has invaluable capital in the programme of the Fourth International. The issue now depends on the manner in which the Party conducts its work; on the application of our ideas to the daily needs of the situation.

THE PARIS COMMUNE

By LEON TROTSKY

*Movy Mir, New York, March 17, 1917.
Reprinted, "New Militant," March 21,
1936.*

Revolution has often followed war in history.

In ordinary times the working masses toil from day to day, docilely performing their slave labour, bowing to the great force of habit. Neither overseers, nor police, neither jail-keepers nor executioners could hold the masses in subjection were it not for this habit which does faithful service to capitalism.

The war which tortures and destroys the masses is dangerous to the rulers as well—precisely because with a single blow it tears the people from their habitual condition, awakens with its thunder the most backward and dark elements, and compels them to take stock of themselves, and to look around.

WAR AND REVOLUTION

Impelling millions of toilers into the flames, the rulers are obliged to resort to promises and lies in place of habit. The bourgeoisie paints up its war with all those traits which are dear to the magnanimous soul of the masses: the war is for "Liberty", for "Justice", for a "Better Life"! Stirring the masses to their nethermost depths the war invariably ends by duping them: it brings them nothing except new wounds and chains. For this reason the tense condition of the duped masses produced by the war often leads to an explosion against the rulers; war gives birth to revolution.

This happened twelve years ago during the Russo-Japanese war: it immediately aggravated the dissatisfaction of the people and led to the revolution of 1905.

This happened in France 46 years ago. The Franco-Prussian war of 1870-1871 led to the uprising of the workers and the creation of the Paris Commune.

THE COMMUNE

The Parisian workers were armed by the bourgeois government and organized into a National Guard for the defence of the capital against the German troops. But the French bourgeoisie stood in greater fear of its own proletarians than of the troops of Hohenzollern. After Paris had capitulated, the Republican Government attempted to disarm the workers. But the war had already awakened in them the spirit of rebellion. They did not want to return to their benches the self-same workers they had been prior to the war. The Parisian proletarians refused to let the weapons out of their hands. A clash took place between the armed workers and the regiments of the Government. This occurred on March 18, 1871. The workers were victorious; Paris was in their hands, and on March 28, they established, in the capital, a proletarian government, known as the Commune. The latter did not long maintain itself. After a heroic resistance, on May 28, the last defenders of the Commune fell before the onslaught of bourgeois cohorts. Then ensued weeks and months of bloody reprisals upon the participants of the proletarian revolution. But, despite its brief existence, the Commune has remained the greatest event in the history of the proletarian struggle. For the first time, on the basis of the experience of the Parisian workers, the world proletariat was able to see what the proletarian revolution is, what are its aims, and what paths it must pursue.

THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE COMMUNE

The Commune began by confirming the election of all foreigners to the workers' government. It proclaimed that: "The banner of the Commune is the banner of a World Republic."

It purged the state and the school of religion, abolished capital punishment, pulled down the Column of Vendome (the memorial to chauvinism), transferred all duties and posts to genuine servants of the people, setting their salary at a level not exceeding a working man's wage.

It began a census of factories and mills, closed by frightened capitalists, in order to initiate production on a social basis. This was the first step towards the socialist organization of economic life.

The Commune did not achieve its proposed measures; it was crushed. The French bourgeoisie, with the co-operation of its "national enemy" Bismarck—who immediately became its class ally—drowned in blood the uprising of its real enemy: the working class. The plans and tasks of the Commune did not find their realization. But, instead, they found their way into the hearts of the best sons of the proletariat in the entire world, they became the revolutionary covenants of our struggle.

And today, on March 18, 1917, the image of the Commune appears before us more clearly than ever before; for, after a great lapse of time, we have once again entered into the epoch of great revolutionary battles.

THE WORLD WAR

The world war has torn tens of millions of toilers out of habitual conditions under which they labour and vegetate. Up to now this has been the case only in Europe, tomorrow we shall see the same thing in America as well. Never before have the working masses been given such promises. Never before have

such rainbows been painted for them. Never have they been so flattered as during this war. Never before have the possessing classes dared to demand so much blood from the people in the name of defending the lie which goes by the name of "Defence of the Fatherland". And never before have the toilers been so duped, betrayed, and crucified as today.

In trenches filled with blood and mud, in starving cities and villages, millions of hearts are beating with exasperation, despair and anger. And these emotions, correlated with socialist ideas, are being transformed into revolutionary fervor. Tomorrow the flames will burst into the open in mighty uprisings of working masses.

The proletariat of Russia has already emerged onto the great road of Revolution, and under its onset are tumbling and crumbling the foundations of the most infamous despotism the world has seen. The revolution in Russia, however, is only the precursor of proletarian uprisings in the whole of Europe and in the entire world.

Remember the Commune! — we, Socialists, will say to the insurgent workers' masses. The bourgeoisie has armed you against an external enemy. Refuse to return your weapons, like the Parisian workers refused in 1871! Heed the appeal of Karl Liebknecht and turn these weapons against your real enemy, against capitalism! Tear the State machinery from their hands! Transform it from the instrument of bourgeois oppression into an apparatus of proletarian self-rule. Today, you are infinitely more powerful than were your forefathers in the epoch of the Commune. Tumble all the parasites from their thrones! Seize the land, the mines and the factories for your own use. Fraternity—in labour; equality in enjoying the fruits of Labour!

The banner of the Commune is the banner of the World Republic of Labour

THE I.L.P AND THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

By BILL HUNTER

THE attention given to other parties and tendencies and the interest displayed in their development, programme and policies, are characteristic of Marxist science.

The I.L.P. has always been of importance to Marxists and aroused considerable discussion among them. Its crises, the laws of its development, the character of its leadership, the class basis and pressure which guided it; all have been analysed, dissected and pronounced upon time and again in the Marxist press. Particularly has this been so since 1932, when the I.L.P. disaffiliated from the Labour Party and assumed more of the classical form of a centrist party.

Trotsky devoted a great deal of attention to centrism. Among his other works in "Germany What Next?" he gives invaluable lessons for those who wish to understand centrism in general.

"Speaking formally and descriptively" he writes, "Centrism is composed of all those trends within the proletariat and on its periphery which are distributed between reformism and Marxism and which most often represent various stages of evolution from reformism to Marxism and vice-versa."

Trotskyist literature is a storehouse

of articles plotting, on the basis of a Marxist analysis of the nature of centrism, the direction of the development of the I.L.P., a party which shelters a diversified number of trends, from the anarcho-Marxism of Ridley to the pacifist-reformism of Campbell Stephen. It is true to say that the question "Where is the I.L.P. going?" has been asked and discussed around far more frequently in the Trotskyist movement than in the party which, presumably, should have found it of vital interest—the I.L.P.! Its leadership, while willing to borrow isolated Marxist ideas at the most left phases of its development, learned nothing and understood nothing from them, looked askance at "interminable theorising", abhorred the scientific method of analysing developments. With that disinclination toward theory, which Engels declared to be a characteristic of the general British Labour movement, the I.L.P. has reacted in a purely empirical fashion to the events of the day, following the zig-zags of policy which characterise centrism and place it ever and again "at the crossroads".

Today, the I.L.P. is once again at a decisive point in its history. The Labour Party's refusal of its request for affiliation; the swing to the Labour Party in the General Election; the policy of the I.L.P. leadership in this period drained its vitality. This, in a period when reformism is on test before the workers; when the crisis of British capitalism is laying the basis for titanic class struggles. Yet today

there rage no great discussions inside the I.L.P. around its future. No attempts are being made to assess the mistakes and policies of the past, to draw up a balance sheet and line up the future tasks of the party in accordance with coming events. Such a state of affairs is, of course, quite in line with the nature of centrism. Had it been otherwise, the I.L.P. would not have been buffeted to where it is today.

Had the I.L.P. affiliated to the Labour Party, there is no doubt, as the R.C.P. has pointed out time and again, it would have represented an attractive force for leftward moving labour workers and would have become a crystallising force for the Labour party left wing. The Labour 'lefts' would have flocked into an affiliated I.L.P., and would thus immediately have strengthened the I.L.P. leadership. But as leftward moving workers entered its ranks, the I.L.P. revolutionary wing would have found new and valuable allies in their struggle for a revolutionary party. Affiliation, however, was refused.

The last R.C.P. conference declared that, with the refusal of affiliation, the I.L.P. would tend to disintegrate. In view of the steady development of the I.L.P. leadership to the right in their anxiety to return to the Labour Party fold, it was obvious that the rude shock administered by Transport House would throw the I.L.P. into confusion. When the negotiations with the Labour Party were beginning, some I.L.P. members, seeing a steady drift of the party to the right, expressed an opinion that the refusal of affiliation might be a good thing insofar as it would mean the loss of several right wing elements who were determined to enter the Labour Party with or without the I.L.P. But the sickness which the I.L.P. suffers from is not to be cured by a shock from outside. Who could replace the leadership which has steadily led the party to the right? The so-called

left wing—the anti-affiliationist leadership? History can show they are no more capable of building a revolutionary party than the right wing near-reformists. It is true that the refusal of affiliation loosened right wingers from the I.L.P., but another striking—and to a certain extent amusing—feature of the refusal was that it shook off also some of the 'lefts'. Their sectarian attitude was completely falsified by events. The swing to a Labour Party, which they had declared already dead, completely overbalanced them and swept the most vocal of them (as witness Milne of Birmingham, McGregor of London and Cole of Ashington) into the Labour Party.

The I.L.P.er who studies the leadership of the I.L.P. will quickly find that the 'lefts' are no more capable than the right wing of creating a revolutionary party. The calibre of the left wing leadership is shown up particularly well in the person of Ridley. With superficial, pedantic analogies and a supply of debating wit, Ridley plays the role of the 'theoretician' of the I.L.P., retaining his reputation more on the strength of his involved professorial style than the profundity of his thought. But all his thunderous phrases are as incapable of bulding a revolutionary party as are the tea-time manoeuvres of McNair and Brockway.

Ridley achieved his revolutionary 'education' by sipping from every political dish to the left of Liberalism, satisfying his thirst in the main with a mixture of anarchism and Marxism. A centrist, to the left of most members of the National Council of the I.L.P., yet still a centrist, Ridley is at the mercy of all those pressures which have dictated the zig-zags and opportunism of the right wing leadership. The difference between the right wing leaders and Ridley is a simple one of degree—they set their faces earlier toward the Labour Party and reformism. However, Ridley is fast catching up. We find that the sectarian

who, in the *New Leader* of Feb. 21st, 1942, could declare the Labour Party was finished "despite the efforts of the Trotskyists to revive the fast putrefying corpse", has become the opportunist of Dec. 1st, 1945, who opines:

"... it would obviously be ridiculous to imitate the Trotskyist jargon and accuse the Labour leaders of 'treachery' because they do not try to put through a revolution", he goes on to talk about "good and bad in the Labour Government" and of its "State Capitalist" programme "to be supported as a half-way house to Socialism". He tells of the "commendable energy with which the Labour Government is pushing forward its policy" (*New Leader*, Dec. 1st, 1945). Of course, the keen observer who reads the Ridley of Feb. 1942 and compares it with the Ridley of Dec. 1st, 1945, will find that he has not changed in all things. There remains his anxiety to separate himself from Trotskyism whatever position he occupies!

However, Ridley, who doesn't want to imitate the Trotskyist "jargon" makes no attempt to explain how the Labour leaders have changed from people who—"In the greatest crisis of British history can only act, apparently, as yes men to one of the most consistent and ruthless enemies the working class of these islands have ever known." That was how he described the Labour leaders on Jan. 20th, 1945. But we must remember that this was before the General Election and the Labour Party's overwhelming victory. Can it be that Ridley is following the route already mapped out by another prominent I.L.P.er, Trevor Williams, who, in 1941, urged Labour Party members to join the I.L.P., in 1943-4 was one of the most unprincipled supporters of I.L.P. affiliation, and in 1945 found his way into the Labour Party and finally ended up a hack journalist on the *Daily Mirror* opposing the dockers strike?

To underline the instability of Ridley let us carry forward the not-so-pleasant task of delving into his writings. Four or five weeks before his article on "Good and Bad in the Labour Government", Ridley wrote another article, this time in the Oct.-Nov. issue of *Free Expression*. The article was written under the caption of "Labour to Power—and Now!" Here Ridley gives free vent to his revolutionary sentiments. Here is not talk of the "half way house to Socialism" nor of the "Labour Government probably going as fast as it can and to that extent at least is making a great advance on the Webb-Macdonald theories of gradualism" (*New Leader*, Dec. 1st). Here is Ridley the revolutionary, complete with quotations from Trotsky! We learn that the Labour Party's policy is based on those very theories of Webb-Macdonald gradualness and that the "truth is, that the Labour Party is a relic, the relic of an irrevocably bygone age. And our age has little use for relics, whether in the technical or the political worlds." And Ridley ends, as might any article in *W.I.N.* by saying that the "problem of the revolutionary party becomes all important."

We have spent time on Ridley, not because he is particularly important, either from his present or future role in British politics, but because he typifies the "left wing" I.L.P. leadership, and having a most facile pen his evolution can the more easily be traced.

Those I.L.P. members who still have faith that this "left wing" could form an alternative leadership and build a healthy party should seriously consider the development of the I.L.P. since the General Election. The N.A.C. elected at the last conference was composed, in the majority, of members who had opposed I.L.P. affiliation to the Labour Party, some of whom had stressed their belief in the necessity to keep the I.L.P. pure

and free from any taint of reformism. But this has not meant a revitalising of the I.L.P. nor an end to the past policy of unprincipled manoeuvres and toning down of policy. True, the N.A.C., meeting at Bangor, soon after the General Election, expressed a criticism of Brockway and other right-wingers but in the next breath this truce was declaring a six months truce on the Labour Party question and refusing to put an amendment to the King's Speech on the Labour Government's nationalisation plans! That Brockway, MacNair and Padley should refuse to explain the nature of reformism; that they should give only mild admonitions to the Labour leaders, like kind friends whose painful duty it is to criticise but who wish to make it plain they really believe the Labour leaders are sincere and honest fellows, that is totally in line with their development before the election. But the majority members of the N.A.C. have in the past been sectarian and bitter opponents of the Labour Party, yet they acquiesce in a decision not to put an amendment to the King's Speech, and agree to a truce while they watch which way the Labour Government goes. This means that they have been swept off their feet by the Labour victory and have capitulated to the minority.

The only cure for the I.L.P.'s sickness would have been an operation, a clean break with Brockway and Co., and their policy which has led the I.L.P. into an impasse. To expect Ridley, Eaton or the other "lefts" to make such a break would be to expect them to turn out revolutionaries and not centrists. These people would only be capable of such a break under the pressure of the workers swinging away from the Labour Party and not toward it.

The right wing holds the initiative. And those few left wing rank and file members who have any hope of creat-

ing a revolutionary party out of the I.L.P. should study the speeches of Brockway, McNair, Padley and Edwards. They will find that their leaders' perspectives of the future development of the Labour Party and Labour Government leave no room for the I.L.P. as an independent revolutionary force. Their perspective is one of the Labour Government itself moving to the left under pressure of the workers and changing its composition by the introduction of more and more left wingers. If they see any future for the I.L.P. at all, it is not as an alternative to, but as a literary and propaganda adjunct of, the Labour Party.

That uneasy state of compromise which exists among leading circles of the I.L.P. cannot last for ever, as the leadership well know. Already the attractive force of the Labour Party has pulled out a number of individuals. The crisis in Glasgow, the traditional stronghold of the I.L.P., where a number of prominent members expressed their intention of joining the Labour Party, was smoothed over, but only temporarily. Among their circle of intellectual and journalistic acquaintances the I.L.P. leaders make no secret of this. And the indications are that those who see no hope of I.L.P. affiliation to the Labour Party are preparing to resolve the crisis at the Easter conference, while that section of the leadership which is not yet prepared to enter the Labour Party looks round for alternative accommodation. Already they are negotiating for another home—with the rump of Common Wealth.

Theoretically it was possible to draw the conclusion that, out of the disintegration of Common Wealth, elements—possibly some former I.L.P.ers—would coalesce with the I.L.P. But the actual development is taking place in reverse! At a meeting in Birmingham, C. A. Smith,

Common Wealth Chairman, declared that "certain sections" of the I.L.P. leadership had taken the initiative in approaching Common Wealth! Discussion took place around what was going to happen to those elements of the I.L.P. who won't want to join the Labour Party.

Here again we have an example of how, with politicians such as the I.L.P. leaders, personal tie-ups transcend all party boundaries. C. A. Smith is an ex-I.L.P.er who had a "slight" difference with that party over the question of the nature of the war. (Brookway once declared in the *New Leader* that the war was primarily a military question). The I.L.P. leaders maintain their contact with him and discuss what to do with the party behind the backs of its members! As it was with Laski in the Labour Party discussions, so now it is with C. A. Smith.

In a situation where a middle class party — Common Wealth — is disintegrating, no principled objection could be raised to the I.L.P., if it was a revolutionary party, seeking joint discussions and united activity on specific objects, openly before C.W. and I.L.P. membership in an attempt to win the best of Common Wealth's members for the workers' struggle. But here is something different. The move of "certain sections" of the I.L.P. leadership is a move to the right, and an unprincipled one because it strengthens Common Wealth and because it raises the issues not in the light of day, but behind the back of I.L.P. These leaders discuss the inner life of the party: what possibilities there are of which member and which M.P.s joining the Labour Party? What is the nature of the crisis in the I.L.P. and how can the road be made smooth to Common Wealth? Despite this, no doubt before long, I.L.P. mem-

bers will be told by their leaders that Common Wealth is important because it has that "moral and ethical outlook so important to the socialist struggle"

The next Annual Conference of the I.L.P. will be a fateful one. Those members who are struggling within this party with revolutionary perspectives have the duty to reconsider their position; to re-assess the possibilities of further work in this direction. Events since 1934 have demonstrated the correctness of the position taken by Trotsky: the I.L.P. had no future unless it worked out a revolutionary programme.

The I.L.P. is split in reality from top to bottom. Torn by its inner contradictions, it is in the advanced stages of decay and disintegration. Whether the Easter Conference will consummate the split; whether it will precipitate the complete dissolution of the I.L.P.; or whether afterwards it will continue to decompose along the same lines as at present but at an increased tempo, we cannot predict with accuracy. But one thing is certain, outside the Labour Party, the I.L.P. has no future.

For there is not the remotest chance of this party gravitating in a revolutionary direction in the period directly ahead. The coming Conference will, we believe, establish this beyond any shadow of doubt. Those members of this moribund organisation who are seeking the path of revolutionary struggle can reach their goal only through the tested programme and methods of Trotskyism. And, like those comrades from the North-East Division who joined forces with us organisationally after the Blackpool Conference of last year, they will find a warm welcome in the ranks of the Revolutionary Communist Party.

THE POLITICS OF THE INDIAN BOURGEOISIE

By SUREN MORARJI

EDITOR'S NOTE: This article was published in India by the Bolshevik-Leninist Party of India, the Indian Section of the Fourth International, as a pamphlet the title of which was "Saboteur Strategy of the Constructive Program." It is a very fine analysis of the politics being pursued by Gandhi and the Indian bourgeoisie and completely reveals their role in Indian Nationalist politics. It is invaluable to the British workers as a background to the events now taking place in India.

THE PROGRAMME IN A NUT-SHELL

THE centre of the Constructive Program, says Gandhi, is "always the charkha⁽¹⁾ around which all activities revolve." Inasmuch as politics is in the final analysis governed by economics, Gandhi is undoubtedly correct. The charkha is the centre of the Constructive Program because the charkha (in conjunction with all other implements in the primitive wooden family) constitutes, together with the land and the cow, the main means of production in Gandhian society. Charkha economics determines charkha politics. Hence "all other activities revolve around it." We, however, are reluctant to leave things at that. We perceive certain inconsistencies in the way in which charkha politics has

been formulated. We suspect that this brand of politics has not been entirely spun on the charkha; that better spindles and more powerful looms have had something to do with its creation. While, therefore, we accept that the charkha forms the basis of the Constructive Program, we must pick out two other features of this program (Communal Goodwill and Social Service) which we regard as only of slightly less importance. These latter help us to decipher the real character of charkha politics. The other items in the Thirteen Point Program are not of much significance—prohibition, scavenging, kindergarten literacy, chivalry towards women and rashtra bhasha.⁽²⁾ These are the personal virtues we are adjured to cultivate. We are not much enamoured of them. We think more satisfying canons of conduct are still available for us in the good old homilies of Socrates, the Buddha, Confucius and Christ.

Charkha and Gram Udyog⁽³⁾

It is not possible to foist a program on the masses which does not in some way assuage a fundamental mass urge. If, therefore, the peasantry of our country have in the past extended a welcome to the Constructive Program, the explanation of this must be found in their conditions of existence.

British Imperialism has not only destroyed the balance of their little village economic structures and subjected them to cruel exploitation through rent-exaction and direct and

(1) Spinning wheel.

(2) All-India language.

(3) Village Reconstruction.

indirect taxation. It has dragged the peasantry into the coils of the world market and subordinated them to its vicissitudes. Driving his primitive plough on his shrinking strip of land, the Indian peasant comes directly up against all the mechanised efficiency of the foreign capitalist farm. His prices are governed by world prices. This not only depresses his standard of living, but makes it fluctuate as wildly as a seismograph in an earthquake.

It is on this predicament of the peasantry that Gandhi has closed in with his charkha and gram udyog programme. He seeks to counterpose once more the self-sufficient productive frame-work of the ancient village community to the all-pervasiveness of the world economy. He seeks to balance the instability of primitive agricultural production with the wooden prop of the charkha and other village handicraft.

Unfortunately, it is not imperialism alone that subordinates peasant production to the needs of the world market. Native machine industry has stepped in to consolidate the process. It is true that the native bourgeoisie aspire to shield themselves behind a high tariff wall. But that is essentially a shield—a device to ward off the unfavourable repercussions of production for the world market. Furthermore, it is not imperialism alone that exploits the peasantry. The native bourgeoisie have long ago matured in that act of ravishment. The internal market (i.e. largely the peasant consumer-population) is a great source of hope for the Tatas, Birlas, Kasturbhais and their kin—especially when relieved from the embarrassment of world competition. The charkha and the gram udyog immediately rush up against the electric power-looms of Ahmedabad and the giant blast-furnaces of Tatanagar. In such an encounter there can be no doubt on whose side the odds lie.

Thus not only is the charkha and gram udyog program reactionary in its aspiration to resuscitate the primi-

tive village community with its mediaeval standards of life. It is sterile in that it sets out to match primitive handicraft with machine industry in conditions of capitalist competition. It possesses the rare distinction of being both reactionary and utopian.

The program, however, has deep-going political implications. In the first place it represents a carefully camouflaged endeavour to distract the attention of the middle and lower strata of the peasantry from the lands of the zamindar (4) and rich peasant. This is a preliminary indication of its bourgeois counter-revolutionary character. In the epoch of capitalist ascendancy the necessity to unify and expand the internal market, as well as to release the productive forces from the feudal productive relations which fettered them, drove the bourgeoisie to liberate the peasants from the landlords and thus to convert both land and labour into marketable commodities. Today, in the epoch of imperialism, the epoch of capitalist decline, the bourgeoisie can no longer play this liberationist role. Capital and land, capitalist and landlord, are too closely intertwined for either to entertain homicidal intentions in regard to the other. The Indian bourgeoisie will not interfere with property relations on the land. The Indian peasant must not be encouraged to covet his landlord's land. If he does not have sufficient land to dig even a miserable existence from, he must be taught to look elsewhere for succour. And there, for the bourgeoisie, begins the messianic role of the Mahatma and his charkha.

But the charkha and gram udyog programme plays a more positive role in the service of the bourgeoisie. "Khadi" says the Mahatma in his pamphlet on the Constructive Program, "means a wholesale swadeshi mentality, a determination to find all the necessaries of life in India." The charkha is thus the political emblem

(4) Landlord.

of the Indian bourgeoisie in the same sense that the hammer is the emblem of the working class and the sickle that of the peasantry. Small wonder that it is so boldly emblazoned on the bourgeois "national" flag! The charkha and gram udyog program is a powerful political weapon in the economic struggle of the Indian bourgeoisie against imperialism. It is a *substitute* for the dangerous and incalculable method of the mass struggle. It established the native bourgeoisie on its feet especially after the boycott campaign of the early twenties. Can anyone wonder, that despite the yearly turn-out of hundreds of thousands of yards of the finest spun cloth in their own mills, the textile mill-owning millionaires are the most habitual wearers of the coarsest khadi? We will not of course mention that these devotees of the charkha have even taken to the production of "khadi" in their mills!

What Gandhi calls the centre of his Constructive Programme (the little wooden machine that spins his webs for the imperialists, his sophistries for the intelligentsia and his clap-trap for the masses) is none other than the centre of the bourgeois struggle for control over the internal market and the mass movement; a treacherous, reactionary and utopian device to frustrate a fundamental mass urge in the guise of pandering to it. That urge is the urge of the peasantry to overthrow existing property relations on the land as a means of emancipating themselves from the choking tyranny of the world market.

Communal Goodwill

The masses cannot wait until the Mahatma constructs his pattern of freedom for them on his charkha. Freedom, for them, is neither a mere slogan nor a desirable ideal. Freedom, for them, is an imperative necessity—to do away as speedily as possible with all forms of exaction, exploitation and tyranny. While the charkha spun on, the cauldron of

mass revolt was on the boil.

The communal problem is in essence an expression of this phenomenon. Its very virulence is an index to the turbulence of mass discontent. Its distorted appearance does not negate the fact that, at root, it is an expression of the class struggle.

The land-owning upper classes of India and the more subservient section of the native bourgeoisie had no reason to conceal their alarm at the depth and power of the mass movement which the nationalist bourgeoisie attempted to harness to their class needs. The Muslim upper classes in particular (they were more parasitical in proportion as they lacked a big industrial bourgeoisie) feared the accumulating wrath of the Muslim peasantry in the countryside and the vast mass of unemployed and under-employed petty bourgeoisie in the towns. The powers and privileges they derived from their alliance with British Imperialism were, moreover, endangered by the political aspirations of the nationalist bourgeoisie. It was necessary to attack the mass movement—for an attack on the mass movement would not only disorient the masses but would equally weaken the only sanction of the bourgeoisie against imperialism. That attack took the form of Muslim communalism, drugged with separatist demands, and delivered through the intellectual medium of the job-hunting Muslim intelligentsia.

Muslim communalism was in fact the solution of the Muslim upper classes to the sharpening class antagonisms of Indian society. In form it was a piercing flank attack on the anti-imperialist mass movement. Every betrayal of the mass struggle by its leaders was a signal for a communal counter-offensive, leading to further disorientation and prostration of the masses. Communalism thus became a powerful weapon in the hands of the imperialists. Every defeat, every betrayal, every postponement of the anti-imperialist

struggle widened the communal rift and strengthened the communalists. But inasmuch as the crisis of imperialist society in India cannot be solved under its aegis and every defeat of the masses is an education for the future, the gathering proportions of mass revolt had reduced the communalists to greater and more complete dependence on the imperialists. So complete is this dependence that the liquidation of the communal problem can only ensue on the prior liquidation of imperialism in India.

Muslim communalism also derived an initial impulse and sustained impetus from the reactionary politics of bourgeois nationalism. Rationalism was the philosophy of the bourgeoisie needing to liberate the peasantry from the control of a feudal church in the period of capitalism's rise. In the epoch of the decline of capitalism the bourgeoisie need not to liberate but to harness the peasantry to their yoke. Hindu revivalism is the philosophy of one such bourgeoisie, for Hinduism has had no peer in its ability to inhibit the most fundamental urges of the masses. Hence, under Lokmanya Tilak, the real ancestor of hysterical Hindu communalism, bourgeois nationalism took on a decidedly Hindu coloration. In the hands of Gandhi the process was further extended and deepened. It was a simple sadhu⁽⁵⁾ that bourgeois nationalism dangled before the masses of the peasantry, who flocked in their hundreds and thousands to receive his *dharshan*.⁽⁶⁾ It mattered little to the illiterate, Muslim masses that the sadhu was able to recite the Koran or quote from the Bible. That sort of dope they could get in higher quality and greater quantity within their own mosques.

Himself responsible to a certain extent for the strengthening Muslim communalism, the Mahatma aspires to solve by religious methods what is in

essence an expression of the class struggle and in form a political counter-attack. His method is that of "unbreakable heart unity." The communal problem to him is not a strategical problem in the setting of the anti-imperialist campaign. It is not an imperialist counter-attack on the mass movement. It is a personal problem. The hearts of both Hindus and Muslims are somehow not in the right place. They have first to set their hearts right so that there may no more be "Hindu water or Muslim tea."

As always, the religious formulation conceals a political manoeuvre. The endeavour is to find an agreed formula between the landlords and princes of the Muslim League and the industrial bourgeoisie of the Congress—a formula which will divide the spoils of office under imperialist patronage and thus present a united front of the exploiters, in control of the armed resources of the State, against the accumulating forces of mass revolt below. One failure, or two, to win the Qaid-e-Azam⁽⁷⁾ does not discourage the Mahatma. While the masses keep straining to get their hearts into place he is at least certain that real unity will be prevented—unity of the masses against their exploiters along the lines of the class struggle.

Social Service

Neither the charkha manoeuvre of Gandhi, nor the communal manoeuvre of imperialism can halt for one single moment the process of the class struggle. And though the Mahatma may refuse to recognise the class struggle, the class struggle never fails to recognise the Mahatma. Kind and sensitive man that he is, he cannot ignore that recognition. He winks back at it, in the form of social service. Social service is Gandhi's answer to the class struggle. He continually warns against "violent and bloody revolution." He preaches (to

(5) *Hermit*.

(6) *Revelation*.

(7) *Moslem League*.

the poor masses, to be sure!) "voluntary abdication of riches and the power that riches give." Meantime he advises the masses to live at peace with their masters, i.e., to collaborate with their exploiters. To help the masses to accept his advice he has his program of social service.

We are not here concerned with the motivation of humanitarian social service. The Mahatma's heart may be as bottomless as the caverns of hell—in its sympathy for the poor. We are here concerned to demonstrate the reactionary social orientation of humanitarianism itself. Inasmuch as the class struggle is fundamental to class-society and ineradicable within it, the attempt to moderate its harshness on the exploited classes, and by these means to distract their attention from it, is not only futile but is to enter into the service of the exploiters themselves. If Gandhist society is the same thing as the egalitarian society, the social objective must be not to subject the masses to *less* exploitation, but to free them from exploitation *altogether*. The latter is certainly not the object of the Mahatma. He thereby demonstrates how completely he is in the service of the bourgeoisie. Sweet faces and angel graces are not beyond "riches and the power that riches give."

ROLE OF NON-VIOLENCE

One feature in common all three principles of the Constructive Program contain: in the guise of serving a fundamental urge of the masses, each of them seeks to frustrate it. The charkha pretends to serve the desire of the peasantry to emancipate themselves from the world market but fastens over them the strangle-hold of the native bourgeoisie and ultimately, of the very world market they were seeking to avoid. Communal heart unity pretends to lay down the basis for a united offensive of the masses against British imperialism, whereas in reality it deflects the masses away from the anti-imperialist

struggle and fastens the death-grip of imperialism over them. Social service aspires to elevate the economic and cultural level of the masses but in reality perpetuates the system of semi-feudal exploitation that holds them down. The common feature is not directly attributable to deliberate deceit on the part of the Mahatma. We do not know, nor do we care, whether even indirectly it is so. What is pertinent is that the manifest contradiction between object and result springs from the single unifying factor in the whole distraught philosophy of Gandhism—*non-violence*. For, says the oracle himself "the constructive program may otherwise and more fittingly be called construction of Purna Swaraj or Complete Independence by truthful and non-violent means." The Constructive Program is the non-violent road to swaraj. The basic unifying force of the whole Constructive Program, as of the whole theory and practice of Gandhism, is non-violence.

Force or violence is the final sanction of law. The imperialist state is organised violence. To overthrow the imperialist state is to counterpose to its own violence a superior violence. This superior violence can only come from the intervention of a foreign state or by the intervention of the masses on the political arena. Revolution is the method of the defeat of the violence of the state by the superior violence of the masses. Truly does the Mahatma characterize revolution as "violent and bloody."

Non-violence is defined by the Mahatma as "a process of conversion." In other words, non-violence is concerned with the individuals, not with the system. To the violence of the imperialist state (the Mahatma once called it "leonine") non-violence replies with moral pressure on the state official. It tries to "change the heart" of the state official, i.e., to move him to pity, and thence to *understanding*, by self-suffering. Thus, non-violence does not challenge the authority of the imperialist state, but

seeks to change its manifestations. By denying the right of the masses to counterpose their own violence to the violence of the state (the final sanction of all laws), non-violence subordinates the masses to the authority (i.e., violence) of the imperialist state. The method of non-violence (apart from its political content) is at best *reformist, not revolutionary*. That is to say, it operates *entirely within the imperialist system*. Whatever the phrasology of its advocates, non-violence *cannot* seek to *overthrow* the imperialist system.

The strategy of reformism is pressure strategy. Violence, or overthrow strategy, is the strategy of revolution. Whether for pressure or for overthrow the mass struggle is necessary. But should the mass struggle develop along violent lines (i.e., should it direct itself towards the overthrow of the state), the collapse of the imperialist state will be accompanied by the collapse of the property forms it maintained—the native bourgeoisie being too weak to maintain their property either against imperialism or against the masses. The mass struggle must, therefore, be forced into the straightjacket of non-violence, so that bourgeois property be maintained. Herein lies the basic contradiction, the double faced character of non-violence. It is clothed with revolutionary phrasology and purports to save the masses from imperialism. But it actually serves counter-revolutionary purposes, for it dams and deflects the mass struggle, and saves imperialism from the masses.

SABOTEUR STRATEGY

The mass struggle that began in August '42, despite nearly a quarter of a century of preaching on the part of the Mahatma, was openly and quite unashamedly a *violent* struggle. The masses, at the very outset of the struggle, sloughed off the straight-jacket of non-violence in which the

bourgeoisie had sought to imprison them. They thereby demonstrated to the world the scant esteem in which non-violence was held by them. That was their way of asserting that their road to the overthrow of the imperialist state was the road of violence, of class struggle, of revolution.

Who need wonder at the panic of the native bourgeoisie who quite early deserted the struggle and attempted to stop it, and of the Mahatma who today denounces it and disclaims all responsibility for it? Never again will they attempt to use the mass struggle to browbeat imperialism—not if they can help it. The Mahatma, therefore, puts forward his Constructive Program *not* as a preparation for civil disobedience, but "*as an alternative road to Swaraj.*"⁸ So important is this "alternative road", that he threatened to fast if his disciples did not accept it. So important is it, that behind its immense fire-power has been also brought up the heavy artillery of the Rs 1½ crores Kasturba Fund (more social service!). To sabotage the revolutionary mass movement from *without* by forcing on it once again the straightjacket of non-violence which it had decisively rejected—that is the strategy of the Constructive Program.

But the straightjacket will stay on only so long as the masses do not enter the arena of direct struggle. Hence the Constructive Program seeks also to sabotage the mass struggle from *within*, to destroy the existing class organisations of the masses. The Constructive Program has, therefore, recently been extended. Separate programs have been prescribed for workers, for kisans⁽⁸⁾ and for students, so that each of them may contribute to the "construction of swaraj" It is not necessary here to deal with these in detail. Suffice it to say that "construction of swaraj"

(8) Peasants.

means today, in 1945, for the social uplift, and religious regeneration. At least one previous public performance has history been afforded of this identical stage-trick. Especially after the calling off of the struggle of the earlier thirties did the Mahatma appear to vanish from the political scene, under the pretext of devoting himself entirely to the cause of the Harijans. What he actually achieved every Indian in his 'teens already knows: the thwarting of the mass-struggle and the preparation, step by step, of the Congress for eventual collie-service on behalf of British Imperialism. The objective is no different on this occasion. While the Tatas, Birlas and Kasturbhais employ the aid of imperialist capital and technique in the more intensive exploitation of the masses, while the Munshis and the Rajagopalachariars employ the imperialist police to shoot down striking workers and bludgeon rebellious peasants, and throw militant fighters against imperialism into imperialist jails with the help of the imperialist penal code, the Mahatma will be pacifying the masses and shepherding them along the "constructive" road to swaraj—building "swaraj" within the imperialist system! The vision is almost idyllic. The reality reeks of rank insidious treachery.

- Mahatma :
- (a) the destruction of the class independence of the trade unions, through the "construction" of rival company unions (as at Ahmedabad) and the enticement of functioning unions away from the Trade Union Congress into the openly class-collaborationist Hindustan Mazdoor Sevak Sangh
 - (b) the smashing of the class independence of the kisan sabhas through the "construction" of a Kisan Congress, dominated and controlled by the National Congress, i.e., under the kindly patronage of the upper classes, both bourgeois and landlord.
 - (c) an ideological offensive against Marxism under cover of a drive against Stalinism, and the reduction of student organisations to ideological servility to the bourgeoisie through the "construction" of a Students' Congress which will "keep all politics out"—except Gandhian superstition and utopian revivalism.

More immediately, the Constructive Program is designed to prepare the ground for the coming surrender-settlement with British Imperialism. It is not the first occasion on which the Mahatma fled precipitate before a mass offensive on the imperialist state, to bury himself ostensibly in

The Constructive Program aims to sabotage the anti-imperialist mass struggle now and for good.

* Independence.

† There are those who say they have accepted the Constructive Programme because they regard it as the sole means (within prevalent conditions of imperialist repression) of restoring the brutally battered morale of the masses and thus of preparing for the next wave of mass struggle. It is not for us to point out that to entertain this belief is to doubt the veracity of a leader who proclaims truth as his most important weapon against imperialism. The Mahatma has explicitly

repudiated even the thought of it. It is not merely that we believe him here. It is impossible for us to conceive how an overtly anti-struggle program, demonstrably reactionary in content, can either revive the morale of masses frustrated in open struggle, or prepare them for the struggles of the future. The tasks of reviving the masses for further struggle is the task of leading them along the road of their limited and most immediate demands and thus of helping them in the consolidation of their ranks.

IMPERIALISM IN THE MIDDLE EAST—III

By T. CLIFF

This is the third and concluding section of an article, sections I and II of which have appeared in previous issues of W.I.N.

The rank and file Zionists are misled by their leaders into believing that they are not simply puppets motivated by imperialism for its benefit and their harm. Such things have many precedents in the history of the bloody domination of imperialism over the East. The most characteristic example, miniature but illuminating, of imperialism's technique, is the use that Britain made of the Assyrians. As this teaches much, it warrants recounting in some detail.

The Assyrians are a Semite Christian tribe who speak an Aramaic dialect. Before the first world war they numbered about forty thousand and inhabited the Hakari Mountains in Turkey, north-east of the present Iraqi border. At the outbreak of the first world war the Hakari Mountains acquired great strategic importance being on the border of Turkey, Russia and Persia. Russian officers came to incite the Assyrians to fight against Turkey, promising them an independent state of their own. This promise was affirmed by the British officer, Capt. Gracey, of the Intelligence Service, who came for this special purpose to the Hakari Mountains, and other liberal offers were made to the Assyrians by British and Russian emissaries. The Assyrians were won over into believing in the possibility of the revival of their ancient empire. Their dreams became more and more aggrandized till they were implanted with the hope of

setting up an independent kingdom from their mountains right to Kifri, which is south of Kirkuk—a region mainly inhabited by another people, the Kurds. On May 10, 1915, the Assyrians declared war on Turkey. The League of Nations reports about this: "There is no doubt that this people rose in armed revolt against its lawful government at the instigation of foreigners and without any provocation on the part of the Turkish authorities. It is also established that the conditions of life enjoyed by the Assyrian people within the Ottoman Empire were rather better than those of the other Christians, since they were conceded a fairly wide measure of local autonomy under the authority of the patriarchal house." (League Report, p.83, from Toynbee, "The Islamic World Since the Peace Conference," 1927, pp.483-4). Malek, an Assyrian who wrote a damning book against the English called "The Betrayal of the Assyrians," (1935) writes: "They (the Assyrians) were welcomed also in Turkey for the last two thousand years and were able to preserve their church and people as a national entity, until they were used by the British authorities as a military force" (p.61).

From this point begins the chapter of their wanderings and terrible sufferings. For years the Assyrians fought an unequal fight against the Turkish army, were cast out of their homeland in the course of the fighting, but continued to fight side by side with the British army. With the conquest of Iraq, the British conscripted military troops from among the Assyrians, as they did not succeed in getting

Arabs. At the close of the war there were tribal uprisings in Iraq which Britain needed much man-power and money to crush. (It cost the British taxpayer about £80 millions to suppress the 1919-20 revolt). In this undertaking the British made excellent use of the services of the Assyrians.

The Assyrians continued to be a plaything in the hands of the British in the latter's struggle against the Turks, Kurds (who inhabit Mosul which is so rich in petroleum) and the Arab inhabitants of Iraq who sought the independence of their country from imperialism. As Dr. W. A. Wigram, who knew the situation of the Assyrians from first hand, said: "By the admission of the then High Commissioner it was the Assyrian force which saved the swamping of our rule in the Arab revolt of 1920 (Sir A. Wilson, "Mesopotamia," p.291) and they who (as the C.O. in the field, Colonel Cameron, declared) rolled back the Turkish invasion of Iraq in 1922-23. . . . But this very fact caused the Iraqis to hate them" (R.C.A.S., Vol. II, Jan., 1934, p.38-41).

Thus British imperialism brought it about that the Assyrians were expelled from Turkey, fulfilled an important task in the cruel suppression of the Kurds and Arabs in Iraq, and were therefore surrounded on all sides by bitter animosity, and in this way caused to be more attached to, and dependent on British imperialism. B.S. Stafford, in "The Tragedy of the Assyrians," could rightly state that the question of the Assyrians was not a religious, but a political question, pure and simple.

The Arabs and Kurds in Iraq believed that Britain's intentions were to set up an armed enclave in the north of the country. Articles and speeches were publicized in the Iraqi parliament saying that it was Britain who had instigated friction in Iraq. Her calling for the defence of the Assyrians had immersed Iraq in complications solely for her own purposes, and she now wished to create an autonomous Assyrian state in the north of

Iraq, i.e. she wanted to create in Iraq a second Zionist problem.

In 1930 the mandate over Iraq ended, this giving independence to Iraq, which, however, was purely formal, as Britain's control over the oilfields, three aerodromes, etc., remained. It nevertheless made the conscription of Assyrians for British needs superfluous, as now, instead of mass land forces Britain based herself mainly on the air force. But Britain still had one use for the Assyrians—to be themselves massacred as scapegoats.

With the declaration of the abolition of the mandate, the Assyrians turned to Britain with a strong request to be discharged from the army in order to annul the doubts and fears of the Iraqis that they might be used to damage the integrity and independence of Iraq. But Sir Francis Humphreys, the British High Commissioner, attempted to postpone the matter by all possible means, saying that the League of Nations had to look into the matter, and so on, and he threatened that if the Assyrians were discharged they would not be used in any government service in the future. Sir Francis succeeded in doing as he wished.

When anti-British articles began appearing in the Iraqi papers, the British Embassy intervened, and some papers were banned. But when propaganda began to appear that the main task of the Iraqis was to fight against the Assyrians, and that Britain was the enemy of Iraq because she defended them, then the British Embassy remained silent, so encouraging all the black elements, the clergy and the feudal reaction, to hasten their preparations for a crusade against the Assyrians, the blind victims of imperialism.

The result of British policy for seventeen years now produced its fruits: there were terrible riots against the Assyrians, under the command of Iraqi authorities and with the participation of the army. British aircraft flew above the region of the massacres and took photographs, but brought no help to the victims.

After the riots Britain brought to mind again her promise to establish a large independent Assyrian state, and decided that the time had come to permit the Assyrians to settle in a continuous stretch of land, however small. Plan after plan sprang up for the settlement of the Assyrians (in Brazil, Guiana, etc.) but were all rejected except one, which was to settle them in Syria, in the region of Latakia. A programme was decided on to settle thirty thousand people, which would cost £1,140,000. Of this sum, according to the agreement, Britain was to pay £250,000, Iraq £250,000, France £380,000 and the League of Nations £80,000. A source of the remaining £180,000 was not found, and so the settlement was held up. When the Archbishop of Canterbury, on February 11, 1936, asked the government in the House of Lords how it intended finally to settle the question of the Assyrians, which in his opinion, lay like a heavy burden on the conscience of the countries who were parties to the agreement in general, and England in particular, and even pledged himself to get part of the sum lacking for the execution of the plan of settlement by an appeal to the British people, Lord Stanhope replied on behalf of the government: "The government hoped for volunteering from other sources after it had contributed £250,000, and had influenced Iraq to make her contribution double her first offer, bringing it up to £250,000. The government could not add to its contribution, and it would support the Archbishop's appeal." (Retranslated from Hebrew). What, after all, do the Assyrians expect of unfortunate British imperialism, which makes millions every year from the oilfields which were defended for it by the Assyrians?

And the final result of all the grand settlement plans was that nine thousand Assyrians succeeded in settling in Syria on the Syria-Iraqi border, in the region of Jezira!

STALINISM SHOWS ITS COLOURS

The present situation in the Middle East with the complication of class and

national antagonisms, with the deepening of the socio-political crisis, can lead to one of two things: either the rise of a great revolutionary proletarian power which will lead the masses of peasants in the national liberatory struggle, or the bloody victory of imperialist reaction and its allies in the upper classes. If the crisis is not solved in a revolutionary manner, it will inevitably be solved in a counter-revolutionary manner. Either revolution or communal slaughter, pogroms, etc. History itself does not give the young proletariat of the Middle East any possibility of evading the great trial. If imperialism intends to use pogroms and chauvinist incitement as a preventative measure against the coming revolution the working class must utilize the accumulated ire of the masses of people for the overthrow of the régime of social and national subjugation. Against chauvinism to pose internationalism. A necessity of life or death in an internationalist revolutionary party. Who can fill this role?

The "Second International" has only one party in the Middle East. This is Mapai, the Zionist Socialist Party of Palestine, which does not differ one iota from other Zionist parties in major issues (alliance with imperialism, the expulsion of Arabs from work in the Jewish economy, eviction of Arab peasants, etc.) The "Second International" has no Arab sections as the grave conditions in the East do not suit the growth of reformist parties which seek kid-glove solutions.

The Stalinists have parties in the Middle East, in Syria, Lebanon, Palestine (one purely Arab party, one purely Jewish party) and in Egypt and Iraq they have a few tiny groups without any influence. In reality the Stalinist leadership is impotent through and through, and far from any thought of the revolutionary class struggle. Thus the secretary of the Syrian Communist Party, Khaled Bakdash, writes: "It is evident that the problem of national liberation is a problem of the nation as a whole, and it is therefore possible without discussion to get

the compliance of the whole nation around this great slogan, to realize full national unity. National liberation is in the interests of all inhabitants, no matter what sect, religion or class they belong to. It is in the interests of the workers, just as it is in the interests of the employers; and it is in the interests of the fellah just as it is in the interests of the national landowners; it is in the interests of small and big merchants alike." ("The Communist Party in the Struggle for Independence and National Sovereignty," Beirut, 1944, p.74). And "our appreciation and honour of the national capitalist who struggles faithfully for national liberation is not less than our appreciation of the national worker who struggles for national liberation." (Ibid. p.75). And without any shame he goes on to say: "He who reads our 'National Programme' (The programme which was adopted by the Congress of the Syrian and Lebanese Communist Parties, 31/12/43-1/1/44-T.C.) will find that it does not mention socialism. There is not one expression or demand which has a socialist colouring." In accordance with this line the C.P. decided to do away with the red flag as the flag of the party and the "Internationale" as its anthem. The flag of the Syrian party is now the Syrian flag and its anthem the Syrian national anthem; and the flag and anthem of the Lebanese party those of Lebanon. And in order to be worthy of sitting together with the "national capitalists and landowners" their form of address changed from "Comrade" to "Mister." Bakdash is a pocket edition of Stalin. His speeches were guides to the Arab Stalinists in all the other Arab countries, who do all they can to prove that their nationalist fervour is not less than that of their teacher.

Thus when the "Arab Party," whose leader is the Mufti, Haj Amin el-Husseini, who acted as the mouthpiece of the Nazis among the Arabs, was revived in June, 1944, the Arab Stalinists, organized in the National Freedom League, hastened to send the following telegram to the leadership of the party: "The National Freedom

League in Palestine congratulates you on your decision to bring your national party into activity, and we believe that this decision will help us all in unifying our efforts in the service of our dear homeland."

From this general approach flows the attitude of the Stalinists to the class interests of the workers and peasants. The clause in the National Programme of the Communist Party in Syria and Lebanon which deals with the fellah is formulated thus: "Attention must be paid to the position of the fellah and his liberation from poverty, illiteracy and backwardness." What do "attention" and "liberation" mean? Khaled Bakdash gave a clear answer to this in his speech of May 1, 1944: "We assure the landowners that we do not demand and will not demand in Parliament the confiscation of their estates and lands, but on the contrary, we want to help them by demanding the construction of large-scale irrigation enterprises, the facilitation of the import of fertilizer and modern machinery! All we demand in exchange for this is pity on the fellah and that he be taken out of his poverty and illiteracy and that knowledge and health be spread in the village! These are our economic, or, if you can say so, social demands. They are democratic and very modest." ("The Communist Party in Syria and Lebanon: its National Policy and its National Programme," Beirut, 1944, pp.24-5). In one point Bakdash is right: the plea for pity is really a very modest "demand"!

The Stalinists in other Arab countries follow the same line and also do not think about division of the feudal estates.

As regards the class struggle of the worker, the line of argument is the same:—We are very modest, very conciliatory, ready with all our hearts to defend your capital, Arab bourgeois. You, too, be modest and conciliatory. Instead of an appeal to the workers to struggle and organize independently for their demands, comes an appeal to the conscience of the bourgeoisie and the bourgeois state. Thus, for example, when the workers in the soap factories

of Tripoli went on strike, "**Saut u-sh-Sha'ab**," Stalinist daily (Beirut, 15/7/44) wrote: "We hope that the employers will agree to the demands of the workers as they do not demand a lot, and that the government will intervene between the employers and the workers and will solve the question in a just way." In August, 1944, the municipal workers of Beirut went on strike. They were savagely beaten by the police, and many were dismissed by the municipality. "**Saut u-sh-Sha'ab**" appealed to the government to intervene in the interests of the workers (2-3/8/44). Apparently the police is not an arm of the government!

On August 11th, 1944, "**Saut u-sh-Sha'ab**" described the terrible conditions of the silk workers. The conclusion? The government must send an investigation committee.

The workers in a steadily increasing number of cases are coming to ask for support in a strike or other economic struggle, and the party always mollifies them in order not to violate "national unity." At a meeting of the Communist Party of Lebanon, Faraj Allah el-Hilu, secretary of the party, severely attacked those who try to lead part of the Lebanese astray and to create a spirit of doubt about the government. And if "**Saut u-sh-Sha'ab**" said that at this meeting (January, 1944) "the workers and the employers, the fellahen and the landowners sat side by side," one wonders whether the lords of el-Hilu weakened the doubts of the workers and peasants about the government, or whether they increased their doubts about the Stalinist leadership which tails behind the employers and landowners and their government.

This tailing is a product of the Stalinists' dependence on the foreign policy of the Kremlin which caused them to lose any backbone they may have possessed, and to change their colours with chameleon rapidity.

A leaflet of October, 1939, of the Central Committee of the Palestine Communist Party (at that time Jews and Arabs combined) said: "The Hitler against whom Chamberlain fights is not the same Hitler who was led by him against the Soviet Union. This Hitler

who cannot make a campaign against the Soviet Union, but must obey (no more nor less!-T.C.) the instructions of Moscow is today no more the gendarme of Chamberlain and Daladier."—Apparently he is the gendarme of world peace!

The Stalinists reached their peak during the time of Rashid Ali's coup d'etat. It could be seen by the very blind that Rashid Ali was a plaything in the hands of Germany, even without knowing the exact connections between him and the Nazis. At this time the Middle East in general was not ready for any mass uprising against British imperialism. The German army was threatening to enter the Middle East. In Syria hundreds of German agents were working hand-in-glove with the Vichy administration. Under such conditions obviously no Iraqi movement could exploit the antagonism between the rival imperialist powers for the liberation of the country, and all that could evolve from the situation was that the weak Iraqi movement headed by Rashid Ali, the butcher of the Assyrians, be exploited by one imperialist power for its advantage over another. The question of who would take advantage of whom, whether the national movement the antagonism between the imperialist powers, or one imperialist power the antagonism between another imperialist power and the oppressed nation, is decided by the relative weight of the three. Any analogy, therefore, between Rashid Ali's "movement" and the mass movement of liberation of the Indian millions, backed up by the Chinese colossus, is entirely out of place. Decisive proof of Rashid Ali's being a German agent without any popular support whatsoever, was given, when, after the effortless overthrow of his government by the British, he fled to Germany. **But the Stalinists at the time could not see all this, as the Russo-German pact was then still in force.** And so, Ra'if Khoury, one of the Stalinist "theoreticians" in Syria, wrote about the Rashid Ali coup: "I think I shall not be exaggerating if I say that this movement is the first strong, serious Arab movement aiming at the liberty and independence

of the Arabs, and the strengthening of their common existence." ("Principles of National Conscience," Beirut, 1941, Arabic, p.91). "We have written out, with pride and satisfaction, the declarations of His Excellency, the Prime Minister, (Rashid Ali), that his government is not in the service of anyone, as the moneygrabbers make out." (Ibid. p.92). "We have for the first time seen an Arab government carrying arms shoulder to shoulder with its people." (Ibid. p.93). And as to Germany, "We are astonished why the grand Axis power did not officially recognize independent Iraq and its government, notwithstanding the power's help, which demands our thanks, as official recognition is of particular value." (Ibid. pp.23-24). And with such sentiments he ended his thoughts on Rashid Ali.

But after a while Stalin gave a hint and the line abruptly changed.

If till now the whole East was the foe of imperialism and "the masses of Indians and Arabs were on the eve of open revolts against imperialist rule" ("Kol Ha'am," Hebrew organ of the Palestine Communist Party, June, 1940), now a decisive change occurred in the situation: "The government must understand that it has an important region of friends in the Middle East" ("Kol Ha'am," December, 1942). Till now, the "British Government in Palestine represented the régime of subjugation, exploitation, repression and black reaction. This régime is the same régime of Hitler and Mussolini with whom British-French imperialism struggle for the monopoly over the exploitation of the proletariat of the capitalist countries and the oppressed nations of the colonies" ("Kol Ha'am," July, 1940). From now on the British High Commissioner is the representative of democracy, and "we keep in our hearts his good personal features . . . the manifestation of his true social characteristics" ("Al-Ittihad," organ of the Arab Stalinists in Palestine, 3/9/44).

And if the British army is sent to suppress the Greek proletariat, then "we consider . . . that the British government will understand that its

behaviour (in Greece) is not free from shortsightedness and it will change it . . . as Mr. Churchill is a man who did a lot for democracy, and it does not stand to reason that he will insist on the suppression of the Greeks. That is the meaning of Mr. Churchill's and Mr. Eden's voyage to Greece. . . The visit of Mr. Churchill and Mr. Eden, whose efforts are directed to the solution of the Greek question, to Greece made a good impression on all circles." ("Al-Ittihad," 31/12/44).

But of course the efforts of Bakdash and his friends were of no avail. The Arab masses who are denied the most elementary democratic rights—freedom of organization, assembly, speech and press—who live in conditions of cruel servitude, cannot believe that the World War, which did not bring any improvement whatsoever in their conditions, was a war for democracy. They understand simply that charity begins at home, and so despite all their efforts the Stalinists did not succeed in infusing any enthusiasm for the war, while instead spontaneous hunger demonstrations, strikes and clashes with imperialism and the local bourgeoisie (not reported in the world press) took place.

The bankruptcy of the Stalinists received its clearest expression in Palestine in connection with Zionism, the relation to the reactionary feudal leadership in the Arab national movement, and the anti-Jewish terror. During the 1936-9 upheaval, which was diverted from its real aims by the feudal leaders who were agents either of British imperialism or of Germany and Italy, and sometimes the two together (as, for instance, Haj-Amin el-Husseini, Mufti of Jerusalem, who from 1917 to the second world war was a British agent, and from 1941 lived in Berlin), the Palestine Communist Party not only opposed Zionism—which is correct—but also, wrongly and blindly, supported the anti-Jewish terror without understanding that there is a great difference between communal terror and an anti-Zionist struggle. Thus a leaflet of the P.C.P. of 10/7/36 said: "By destroying the economy of the Zionist conquerors by acts of sabotage and

partisan attacks, the Arab liberatory movement wants to make the continuation of Zionist colonization impossible." In a circular to its branches of 7/7/36, the Central Committee writes: "The bomb thrown on the Workers' House in Haifa (Histadrut House—T.C.) was thrown by members of the P.C.P. by order of the Central Committee of the Party." In the same days the Arab paper of the P.C.P. ("**Nidal ash-Sha'ab**") published without commentary the declarations of the Mufti and supported his propaganda for anti-Jewish terror openly.

With the 180 degrees swing in the policy of the Stalinists, when becoming enthusiastic supporters of the "**War for Democracy**," the Jewish Stalinists began, with a few reservations, to support Zionism, servant of imperialism. Obviously the Arab Stalinists could not stomach this, and so the party split into two; the Jewish one (which has no single Arab member) continues to bear the name Palestine Communist Party, the Arab one, which according to its statutes may include only Arabs, is called National Freedom League. A race of patriotism between the two began. On V-Day the P.C.P. went under the blue-white Zionist flag, their slogans being "**Free Immigration**," "**Extension of Colonization**," "**Development of the Jewish National Home**," "**Down with the White Paper**."* The National Freedom League participates in the Arab National Front, which includes feudal and bourgeois parties, and it fights "**Against Zionist Immigration**," "**Against Transfer of Land to Zionists**," "**For the White Paper**."

Are such nonentities as Bakdash and his Arab friends, or the Jewish Stalinists, capable of leading an inter-

nationalist revolutionary struggle against imperialism, against the British, French, American, Arab and Jewish exploiters and thus putting an end to the bloody provocations of the reaction?

THE TASKS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT

There is a tremendous disproportion between the ripening of the objective conditions in the world and the Middle East driving towards a revolutionary struggle, and between the building of the revolutionary party in the Middle East. If this disproportion is not overcome in time, a terrible catastrophe will threaten the masses in this region. But there is no place for pessimism or defeatism. The revolution is not one battle, but a series of battles which gives even small revolutionary nuclei great possibilities of development.

In the Arab East the first nuclei of class organizations exist. The Trades Unions in Egypt have about 200,000 members; in Syria and Lebanon about 40,000; in Palestine (excluding the Histadrut, which is mainly a Zionist, and not a trade unionist organization) 10,000-12,000. There are thus about a quarter of a million workers organized in trades unions. This is a small, but by no means insignificant, minority. The Russian Revolution of 1905, and even more the Chinese Revolution of 1925-27, proved clearly that the idea that strong organizations are a precondition for the class struggle, is the product of a mechanistic, undialectical approach. Sometimes, and especially where the masses are deprived of the most elementary rights, organizations are forged in the fire of the struggle. Thus during the Chinese Revolution the Trade Union movement increased from 200,000 to 2,000,000, and tens of millions of peasants followed it. Furthermore, the trade union movement had hardly been born, but the creation of soviets was put on the order of the day. If in the conditions of cruel servitude, only a small minority is organized in trade unions, and of this minority, very tiny nuclei dare to

*In January, 1940, "**Kol Ha'am**" wrote: "The stopping of Zionist immigration—which breaks through into the country, which lowers the standard of living of the masses, and which complicates the political and economic affairs of the country and its regulation according to the White Paper—that in general must be the path along which a devoted and honest people must go.

struggle for the class independence of the trade unions from the employers, their parties and state, then in conditions of tumult, of the shaking of the domination and prestige of the ruling classes by national and social uprisings, the workers organized in trade unions become self-confident, straighten their bowed backs, and struggle courageously for the independent class action of their organizations, and hundreds of thousands who knew nothing of organization stir from their deep torpor, and dare to organize and struggle. The electricity in the air turns every minor economic conflict into a large-scale political explosion, and every political explosion, increasing the general tension, in turn begets widespread economic struggles.

In such conditions the revolutionary political organization, no matter how weak during the former "peaceful" days, can increase swiftly, and become the decisive factor. The first nuclei of Fourth Internationalists exists in Egypt and Palestine. The primary task at the moment is to strengthen and unite them into one party of the Arab East.

As against the imperialist policy of divide and rule, the proletariat of the Arab East must build up an **internationalist** front of the class struggle. The main tasks before it are: the agrarian revolution and achievement of national independence, and the unity of the Arab countries divided by imperialist and dynastic interests. These tasks are very closely connected. They are combined with the task of overcoming the inner partition between communities and the abolition of all national privileges, with the struggle against discrimination against minori-

ties, and for their full equality of rights. It is clear that any national inequality will be wholly uprooted by the agrarian revolution and the nationalization of the enterprises of imperialist capital which will open wide the path for the economic and cultural rise of **all** the masses without distinction of community and nation.

In order to frustrate the efforts of the reaction and to exploit all revolutionary possibilities in the Arab East, the working class of the Middle East needs the help of the English worker. The English worker must understand what happens in the East, the role of the different powers acting in it, and the real interests of big finance capital which motivates imperialist policy in the East; he must understand that any communal clashes in the East are only the product of imperialism, that the imperialist policy of alternately supporting and limiting Zionist activity has as its real aim the incitement of national hatred, and that Zionism is the real enemy of the Arab and Jewish masses alike; and he must understand that only the taking of the British occupation army out of the East will enable the artificial differences and clashes between the different communities (from differences in the standard of living and national competition to bloody clashes and pogroms) to be abolished. Only the overthrow of imperialism will enable the masses of the East to free themselves from economic and political subjugation and will free the English masses from the necessity of being cannon-fodder for finance capital.

Jerusalem, 12th November, 1945.

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