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The Economic Policies of Roosevelt

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THE ballyhoo of NRA, utilizing every avenue of propaganda and exploiting phrases of social justice like higher wages, shorter hours, the abolition of child labor, etc., has succeeded in casting temporarily a hypnotic spell over large sections of the American people. It has created a mass feeling of buoyancy and optimism hardly warranted by the facts. When the pretty bubble breaks, as break it must, the opportunity for effective radical action will be greater than at any time since the birth of the Socialist movement—if we are alert.

Despite the rose water sprinkled very liberally over American capitalism by General Johnson and his cohorts, it still smells as badly as ever.

The evidence multiplies that capitalism has not reformed. The widely heralded economic recovery enjoyed since March has paved the way for a worse crash. The business man in anticipation of inflation has been stocking up the warehouses at the present low level of costs. He figured that inflation will increase the spread between the selling price and production costs, thus increasing his profits in terms of money. The consequence is that production has far oustripped payrolls. Because of this further disparity between commodities and buying power goods have piled up without moving into the hands of the ultimate consumer so that the curve of business activity has been taking a nose dive since the middle of July. Here are the figures: from March till the end of June, 1933, the Federal Reserve Board's index of factory production jumped from 56 to 91 — an increase of 63%. In the same period factory payrolls rose from 37 to 46—an increase of only 25%. Factory employment increased from 57 to 65—a rise of only

15%. In other words, production increased 2½ times and 4 times as rapidly as payrolls and employment. This means that the employers have kept down unit labor costs by speeding up the workers and getting more production per man. Evidently, the individual capitalist has learned nothing in the past four years of depression. He still looks upon the worker only as a factor of production to be obtained as cheaply as possible rather than as a consumer whose ability to buy determines the size of the market.

Is it any wonder that the New York Times business index has lost more than half of its gains? Like the Federal Reserve index, it rose from 60 to 99 only to fall back in the latter part of September to 78. Employment, despite unfavorable business has continued to increase through the month of September. The A. F. of L. estimates that 3,600,000 workers have gone back on the job again. This would indicate that N R A through shorter hours has by spreading work reduced the army of jobless despite the continuing collapse of business. The process of reemployment cannot, however, continue in the face of adverse business conditions.

The fact is that under capitalism a decrease in the work week and a rise in the minimum wage do not necessarily mean a substantial increase in employment or purchasing power. The employer will reduce hours without adding a corresponding number of men to the payroll by speeding up his workers. He will nullify the increase in payrolls resulting from raising the minimum wage by cutting those getting more than the minimum. Everybody knows that employer after employer has done just that while flying the Blue Eagle. The administrative task of preventing such chiseling is insuperable.

In fact, these practices are inevitable for the bulk of employers in the United States unless the banks are willing to finance the costs of higher wages and expanding employment. This, they refuse to do. Of course, the huge organizations like Ford and New York Telephone are independent of the banks because of their huge liquid reserves running into the hundreds of millions. But these are the exceptions which prove the rule.

Take the case of the typical clothing manufacturer. Let us assume that he wants to take on more men without cutting the salaries of his regular employees. That means increased payrolls; but it may be a matter of six months before he collects cash on the merchandise which the additional workers produce. During this period he has to pay them. He has no reserves of his own large enough to carry the added burden. Of necessity, he must depend upon his bank for credit to tide him over. If the bank refuses to finance him, he must forego the employment of additional men. That is exactly what bankers all over the country have refused to do. Without a substantial increase in bank credit, there can be no re-employment worth talking about. In the last twelve months commercial loans by the member banks of the Federal Reserve System in the 90 largest cities has declined about $800,000,000. While productive industry is denied credit, the bankers pump money into Wall Street to finance a new wave of gambling. Brokers' loans on the New York Stock Exchange increased a half billion dollars from April until July, 1933.

The Federal Administration, conscious of this problem, has pleaded with the bankers to finance the payment of increased payrolls. Jesse Jones, Chairman of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, in an address at the Annual Bankers' Convention threatened government reprisals unless credit was loosened up. The bankers promptly turned around and thumbed their noses at the government in a statement declaring that good borrowers are being accommodated so that greater liberality is impossible.

Are the bankers to be criticized for refusing to lend other people's money except on the best of security? The answer is yes. If bank credit is enormously expanded as part of a program to raise wages simultaneously in every industry and in every part of the country, the resulting growth of the domestic market would increase sales to such an extent that businessmen who do not now have gilt-edged security would, nevertheless, become good credit risks and would find no difficulty in repaying loans.

In other words, the banking system is the foundation

upon which the house of economic recovery must be built. The irony of the situation is that the government having saved the private bankers from the consequences of their own folly and incompetence now finds its recovery program blocked by their lack of vision.

No really civilized society would tolerate for a moment a condition in which society must follow the deflationary lead of the private bankers. I analyze the banking situation at considerable length because it is one more illustration of the impossibility of economic planning for the social good as long as key economic institutions remain in the hands of irresponsible business men who dare thwart the will of the people.

The seeming difficulty is that the average banker is completely out of step with advanced economic thought. He tends to believe that the deflation of wages is the way out of the depression. This conviction is a rationalization of his own economic prejudices.

The banker is a merchant of debt. He lives by collecting interest on bonds, mortgages and bank loans. When a crash comes, he insists upon his pound of flesh regardless of how the debtor's income has shrunk. In every depression, therefore, the banker is in the forefront of the movement for the deflation of wages. He acts on the theory that in a period of declining income, interest payments can be maintained by the economy of slashing operating expenses, that is, cutting wages.

It will be remembered that at the beginning of the depression Herbert Hoover preached the philosophy of high wages. During 1930 the great business interests of the country did not openly challenge this doctrine. In January, 1931, Albert Wiggin, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Chase National Bank, in his annual report to the stockholders urged a reduction of wages. His pronouncement received national publicity. Then, began a perfect avalanche of wage cuts all over the country. At the same time his own salary was raised to $250,000 and upon his recent retirement he was voted an annual pension of $100,000. The banks pursued the consistent policy of refusing to extend credit save as payrolls were cut. The results are known to everybody. Sweatshop

wages of $5 and $6 a week came back and the depression went to lower and lower levels with the velocity of a snowball going downhill.

It is absurd to expect the bankers to change their point of view, particularly since the Roosevelt economic program has done practically nothing to lighten the burden of debt. The creditor class enjoys the same legal claims to the national income that it did in 1929. Reliable estimates indicate that the bondholders and mortgage owners of the country have doubled their share of the national income. Debt service took 12½% of the national income in 1929 and by 1932 this had increased to 25%. The percentage rose because debt remained constant while the national income was cut in half. In figures, debt service was approximately $11,000,000,000 of a $90,000,000,000 income in 1929 whereas at present it is $10,000,000,000 of a $40,000,000,000 income.

There is no doubt that the failure to sharply cut the debt service is one of the principal causes for the depth of the present depression. Wages, that is, buying power is reduced to pay interest, most of which is not purchasing power. The individual creditor tends to be a wealthy individual whose income is in excess of his needs. The savings banks and the life insurance companies, which have a tremendous stake in the debt of the country, use the bulk of their income to pay dividends on policies and accounts. This money is not paid out and spent. It is credited to the owner of the account and the policy, thus increasing the face value of his savings. The fact that the volume of savings and insurance have increased during the depression supports this theory. Normally, these savings would flow back into circulation through the process of new capital investment. In a depression that process virtually stops as is evidenced by the tremendous unemployment among building trades workers.

The President has done a great deal of talking about lightening the debt burden but the legislation enacted thus far has been like using a mustard plaster to cure cancer when what is needed is a major surgical operation such as a graduated capital levy.

Take, for example, the widely publicized scheme for refinancing home and farm mortgages. This legislation provides $4,000,000,000 of government guaranteed interest bonds in exchange for mortgages. The government takes the mortgage and gives the mortgagee the bonds. The latter accepts 4% interest while the government collects 5% from the homeowner and 4½% from the farmer. Total farm and home indebtedness is $33,000,000,000. It is obviously a physical impossibility to refinance that huge volume of mortgages with $4,000,000,000 of bonds. Almost 90% of the farmers and homeowners will get no relief from the crushing burden of debt. As for the rest, the relief is negligible for two reasons. First, the reduction of interest from 6% to 5% and 4½% is too small in a country where the national income has been cut in half. Three per cent should be a top figure. Secondly, the success of the plan depends upon the consent of the creditors to make the exchange. Thus far little enthusiasm for the trade has been revealed by the mortgagees because there is no government guarantee of principal. Evidently, the creditors have still greater faith in the right of foreclosure to protect their investments.

Let me not create the impression that the bankers are the only villains in the piece. The owners of industry sabotage the expansion of consuming power, by boosting prices faster than wages. Increased payrolls are used as an argument to justify excessive price rises in spite of the fact that most of the codes set ridiculously low minimum wages of $12 to $15 a week. Much of the enthusiasm of employers for N R A is that they visualize increased profits by trade association price agreements now that the restraints of the anti-trust laws have been lifted. The evidence multiplies that this is the trend. The prices of cotton towels for example have been raised 87% and children's hosiery 94%. These increases are obviously unwarranted by the low standards of the textile code.

Some increases in prices are necessary if wages are to be adequately raised. The ridiculously low prices for women's clothing in the past two years were unquestionably built upon sweatshop labor. Increased labor costs necessarily mean

increased prices. But prices should not be allowed to run away as they are doing for so many commodities. The federal government has set up an agency to study price changes with a view towards coping with this problem. The task, however, is administratively impossible. It will result in endless litigation that gets nowhere. The corporations will bring in elaborate exhibits to prove that they are barely earning "a fair return on the fair value of their investment" on the prices charged.

Don't forget that the Supreme Court's interpretation of the fourteenth amendment holds that when the government regulates prices, it must fix these at a point which will allow a fair return on the fair value of the property used in the business, whatever that may mean. Otherwise, property is confiscated without due process of law in violation of the Constitution of the United States.

It is a physical impossibility for any government regulatory body, without the knowledge that comes from actual operation of a business, to satisfactorily establish the fraud in valuations deliberately inflated to conceal profits.

The United States has had 30 years of sad experience with regulating the public utilities and we now know that regulation is a failure. Years are consumed in endless litigation between Public Service Commissions, supposedly protecting the public, and high priced company experts whose fees are paid from the consumer's dollar. The battle rages but as everybody knows monthly telephone, gas and electric bills stay up. It has been aptly called "public futility regulation". Imagine what will happen when the same technique is applied to every industry in the land. The human waste in setting one group of men to work watching another group doing the actual work is staggering. As long as the profit motive remains in industry, the owner will seek to get all that the traffic will bear. Which means that he will keep prices as high and wages as low as possible.

The papers have recently carried headlines about a $650,000,000 program to buy up food surpluses and distribute them to the unemployed. Investigation discloses that the

money is to come from the $325,000,000 remains of the $500,000,000 federal relief appropriation plus an equal sum from local sources. In other words, no more money is to be spent although it is evident that relief is tragically inadequate everywhere. The figures show that the average relief per family in the United States is only 50¢ a day. Buying food in bulk instead of giving the recipient of relief a food ticket cashable at the corner grocery means that more food can be provided for the same expenditure. It will result in perhaps a 100% increase in the food allowance. The family of four will now get the equivalent of $1.00 a day instead of 50¢ a day. Any one who thinks that that is enough to provide adequate nourishment should try it for a while. It will prove an excellent weight reducer.

While the masses starve in the cities, the farmer is to be made rich by plowing under his wheat, destroying his pigs and spilling his milk. To encourage the farmer to reduce production, the consumer is taxed to provide a cash subsidy for those farmers who prove themselves most efficient in destroying wealth. The theory is that farm prices must go up to end the disparity between agricultural and industrial prices. Thus, the farmer will be enabled to pay his debts. I agree that the farmer has been getting a raw deal. However, someone ought to tell the President that the law of supply and demand works both ways. Prices can be raised by increasing demand. As long as men go without bread and children without milk, how can sensible men believe that the destruction of these commodities is the road to prosperity. A really adequate relief program would take up the surplus, increase farm prices and end starvation and malnutrition.

Here again one sees the unwillingness of the Roosevelt administration to grapple with the fundamental abuses of capitalist society. The system of distribution is wrong, not the system of production. How can there be overproduction in a country where even in the boom days of 1929, 85% of the people of the United States lived in families with incomes of less than $2,000 a year. The destruction of wealth is the road to poverty not the road to prosperity. When everybody

in the United States enjoys a full rich life with ample satisfaction of all his physical wants, then is the time to call a halt on new production not before. Meanwhile, the problem is to provide the purchasing power to insure the consumption of what we have got.

The obvious way to do that is to put money into the pockets of those who have nothing. Instead the government pumps money into the banks in the hope that it will flow down to the masses. Actually, because of the unwillingness of the banks to extend credit, it is locked up in the vaults where it does no good.

That is precisely what the government credit inflation policy is doing. The Federal Reserve Board is authorized to buy $3,000,000,000 of government bonds held by the banks and exchange them for new bank notes issued with these bonds as security. It has been making these purchases at the rate of $100,000,000 a week but to no avail.

Suppose the government issued the same amount of notes secured by the government's promise to pay but gave them to the unemployed instead of to the banks. The essential procedure would be the same except that the money would be spent and put into circulation. According to the Herald Tribune the former is sensible credit expansion, the latter is ruinous currency expansion. Presumably New Deal statesmen accept this point of view, otherwise, how can one account for their action. Why this mental astigmatism! The answer is that the bankers get no interest rake-off when new money is pumped directly into circulation while the currency and credit system is rigged for their profit.

By this time, I hope that I have made it plain that regulated capitalism of the Roosevelt brand suffers from the same defects of laissez faire capitalism. The partnership between government and industry does not work.

The only good feature of the New Deal is that it stimulates unionism by recognizing collective bargaining. The organized labor movement probably will grow enormously in the years ahead. The daily struggles of the workers through their organizations will teach them the limitations of capital-

ism. When that day comes, organized labor will build a party dedicated to the overthrow of the capitalist system and the establishment of a planned socialist economy. Socialists, if they are wise, will find key positions in the labor movement that is arising. When the hour has struck for this mighty labor party, they will be in strategic positions to guide it along the proper socialist paths.

AMONG NOTEWORTHY BOOKS RECEIVED

Germany Enters the Third Reich
Calvin B. Hoover, The Macmillan Co. N. Y. $2.50.

The American Federation of Labor
Lewis L. Lorwin, The Brookings Institute, Washington, D. C.

The History of the Russian Revolution
Leon Trotsky, Simon and Schuster, N. Y. Volumes 2 and 3. $3.50 each volume.

Sidney and Beatrice Webb
Mary Agnes Hamilton, Houghton, Mifflin Co., Boston $3.50.

World Revolution and the U.S.S.R.
Michael T. Florinsky, The Macmillan Co., N. Y. $2.00.

A Guide to Modern Thought
C. E. M. Joad, F. A. Stokes & Co., N. Y. $1.75.

Socialist League Pamphlets, Great Britain.
Series contain pamphlets by G. D. H. Cole, Harold J. Laski, Winnifred and J. F. Horrabin, Charles Trevelyan, G. R. Mitchison, Stafford Cripps. On sale in the United States at the Rand Book Store, 7 E. 15th St., New York. Price 10 and 15 cents.

Issues of Today Series: Taxes and Tax Dodgers
Daniel W. Hoan, Socialist Party of America, Chicago, Price 5 cents.

Towards Reorientation

HAIM KANTOROVITCH

I

THE victory of Hitlerism in Germany, and the growth of fascism in other countries has raised anew the problem of democracy in the socialist movement. For a meager few years it seemed that this problem had been settled once for all. The proletarian movement all over the world seemed to have accepted, as final, the division of socialism into democratic and dictatorial. Of course there was no absolute unanimity, either among democratic socialists, or among dictatorial socialists on all points. Democracy, as well as dictatorship, is amenable to wide and varied interpretations. Nevertheless, in broad outlines, the problem seemed to have been settled.

We are democratic socialists. The victory of Hitler has not changed our views in this regard. We can not imagine socialism without democracy. Democracy for us is the most essential part of socialism. While it is true that the aim of socialism is to reorganize society on a new economic basis, the hope of socialism, its source of inspiration, is the human liberty, equality and universal happiness that will result from this economic reorganization. With the exception of a handful of socialists, the democratic socialists never confused socialist democracy with bourgeois democracy. We all know, very well, that real democracy is incompatible with capitalism. No socialist has ever believed that what is now called democracy is **really** democracy. We know and realize all its defects and limitations, but, since the time of Marx and Engels, we have come to look upon bourgeois democracy as the best and most important weapon in our fight for real socialist democracy. Together with Engels we can still say, even now after the victory of Hitlerism, "with the successful utilization of the general franchise, an entirely new method of the pro-

letarian struggle has come into being." And this "new method" is still one of the most valuable of assets for us.

The advent of Hitlerism has changed nothing in our ideal of social democracy, but it has revealed a serious defect in our reasoning on bourgeois democracy. It has revealed to us that we have for long years put the entire problem of democracy on a wrong and non-Marxian basis. Instead of being objective our premises were really subjective. We asked **ourselves**: do we want democracy? and answered: of course we do! We asked ourselves: do **we** want to achieve socialism by democratic means? And we answered: certainly we do. We asked ourselves: do **we** want to travel the democratic road? and answered: yes we do! And it seemed to many of us that everything was settled, because all we had to do was to determine what **we** wanted. Ask any German or Italian socialist whether he would prefer to get socialism by democratic means only, and he will surely answer in the affirmative even now. But, of what avail is his preference for democracy if he is not even given a chance to voice his preference freely for the democratic way?

The question must be put objectively instead of subjectively. Instead of asking ourselves what we want, we ought to ask, what will our enemy compel us to do. The question is not whether we prefer the democratic way; the question should be, whether our enemy will give us a chance to travel the preferred way. Will not our enemy block the desirable way? We are not the only party in the class-struggle, and we are not the only party to decide what forms the class-struggle shall take. Socialist tactics are more often forced upon socialists by their enemies than chosen by themselves.

This mistaken emphasis on the subjective aspects of the problem of democracy is directly responsible for the development of the tendency to make a fetish of democracy. a tendency that has brought great harm to the socialist movement. This tendency took root more firmly in our German party than anywhere else, and it is now paying the penalty for it.

What is this socialist fetishism of democracy? It consists

in overlooking two cardinal facts. It overlooks the fact that bourgeois democracy neither abolishes the class-struggle nor softens the class-distinction in capitalist society. It overlooks the fact that bourgeois democratic governments never hesitate to use any undemocratic, extra-parliamentary and illegal means in the protection of capitalist interests. It overlooks the fact that democracy does not make the use of force obsolete, but is itself a constant clash of forces. It simply confuses force with violence which, of course, are not the same, though bourgeois democratic governments use both. It seems to these fetishists that once we had democracy all our troubles would be over, all our problems solved, if only we had sufficient patience. They confuse bourgeois democracy with social democracy. Instead of accepting democracy as a means in the fight for socialism, they accept it as a substitute for the fight. Once we had democracy, no real fighting would ever be necessary. It never occurred to them that a time might come when the democratic way would be blocked, when they would be fought against and would have to fight back by resorting to undemocratic means. Bourgeois democracy is a valuable weapon in the hands of the working class, but it is also an instrument of class domination for the bourgeoisie. As yet the power is in the hands of the capitalist class. They can use democracy for their purposes, or abolish it if it becomes dangerous for them.

We do not agree with communists that fascism is a necessary, unavoidable stage through which every capitalist society must pass on its way to socialism. We deny the inevitability of fascism, but if it is not inevitable, it surely is probable, and for this probability every socialist party must prepare. Those socialists who would try to localize the "German tragedy" are not only wrong, they are also dangerous to the movement. The German tragedy is the tragedy of social reformism all over the world.

II

If not social reformism then what? Revolution? Insurrection? Barricades? Is that what we are to prepare for,

we are asked? Our reformist comrades think that there are only two ways out, either reformism, or artificial revolutions. But, we are reminded that "revolutions are not made at will", and to make the argument stronger Lenin is cited to this effect. But these arguments are really not necessary. We know, and would not dream of denying, that "revolutions are not made at will". Neither are fascist counter-revolutions made at will. Both grow out of an impasse in which capitalism finds itself, and both may take on different aspects under different circumstances. We know very well that artificial revolutions, the armed uprisings about which the communists love to talk, are in advance doomed to failure. No proletarian party, no matter how strong and well organized it may be, can be successful in an armed uprising against a modern state with its modern military technique. Long ago Engels wrote in his preface to Marx's "Civil War in France" that "the rebellion of the old style, the street fight behind barricades which up to 1848 had prevailed, has become antiquated." He even warned his readers that "the ruling class, by some means or another, would get us where the rifle pops and the saber slashes." The tragic experiences of the "revolutionary uprisings" which were artificially engineered by the communists have proved the truth of Engels' words. The Bolshevik revolution in Russia is no proof to the contrary. The Bolsheviks fought, not a capitalist state, but a shadow. Besides, the Bolshevik revolution in Russia was the result of such unique, specifically Russian circumstances that they can not and will not be repeated elsewhere. To say, as did the international conference of the communist opposition parties, that now when social reformism is dead the only way to socialism is "the Russian way" is either to reveal a gross ignorance of the forces that made the Russian revolution possible, or simply to play with words which at present are fashionable. The Russian way is purely Russian, so specifically Russian, that it can not be imitated.

Our criticism of social reformism is not because it made no revolutions; because it did not organize armed uprising. That would not have been revolutionary socialism but pure

adventurism. Our criticism is that it did not use the opportunities that revolutions afforded it, to fight for socialism. The German socialists did not **make** the German revolution, but they could have utilized it. The revolution thrust power into their hands. They could have deepened the revolution; instead they hastened to liquidate it. Instead of using their power to demolish whatever capitalist forces were left, they used their power to build up and strengthen capitalism. The business of a socialist party is to be so prepared that it will take advantage of every difficulty in capitalism to further the interests of socialism.

There is no **one** way in which the proletariat may get political power. It may get political power as a result of the utter collapse of the existing state power as in Russia; as a result of a revolution brought about by a defeat in war as in Germany; as a result of a successful revolution as in Spain; or as a result of an electoral victory as in Great Britain. The way to political power in democratic countries will, in all probability, be the way of an electoral victory, if fascism will not intervene and make an end to democracy. The problem is not so much how to get power as how to hold it, and how to use it. Social reformism has shown that it is afraid of power; but whoever is not ready to use power, can not make a bid for it.

What was in the way of the parties which had power and refused to use it? It was a false conception of democracy. A socialist party in power can begin its socialist work only when it has an absolute majority behind it. Not less than 51 per cent of the votes are necessary for it. This was really a subterfuge. It is impossible to imagine that any socialist could take this "51 per cent" philosophy seriously! We can, of course, very well imagine a situation in which a socialist party should be called upon to take over the reigns of a capitalist state without having the slightest chance of even beginning to realize its socialist program. What should a socialist party do under such circumstances? It is clear that under such circumstances it can do only one thing. It can help capitalism out of its difficulties, but in so doing it betrays

socialism. The resolution submitted by the minority at the International Socialist Conference at Paris held in August of this year declares: " . . . It is not the task of the socialist parties to attempt to straighten out the capitalist world or even to collaborate in such attempts." There is nothing either new or original in this declaration. It is simply a return to the fundamental principles of socialism, which the tragic experiences of the last years have proved to be more true than ever.

III.

When a German social democratic leader is asked: Why did not you strengthen the position of the working class in Germany so that the reactionary forces could not rise again, the usual answer is: But that would have been dictatorship! The fear of dictatorship has become so strong in some parts of our movement that it has led them to abandon all thought of revolutionary transformation of society of any sort. But what is the dictatorship of the proletariat? Why it is communism; the best example of it is Russia! Is Russia really the "best example" or an example of any kind of proletarian dictatorship? No socialist will admit that. Due to the specific and unique circumstances under which the Bolshevik party acquired state power, the proletarian dictatorship there has taken on a form and content that is especially adapted to Russian conditions. The Bolshevik party has acquired power in a country that had neither a well organized working class nor a well organized bourgeoisie, a country which had no democratic traditions, a country that was economically undeveloped and culturally backward. It is natural that a dictatorship in such a country should be quite different from what a "proletarian dictatorship" would be in any other country. What we have in Russia at present is not a dictatorship of the proletariat, but a dictatorship **over** the proletariat, not even a dictatorship of the communists over the proletariat, but rather a dictatorship of a bureaucratic clique over the communist party as well as over every one else. Is this the ideal of proletarian dictatorship? Decidedly not. No socialist

will accept this ideal of dictatorship and the numbers are growing even among the communists who refuse to take Stalinism as anything even near the ideal of proletarian dictatorship.

Any socialist party which will, in one way or another, acquire state power, and will proceed to use it for the building of socialism, will inevitably meet with opposition from the die-hard supporters of the present order. It will have to defend itself against open and concealed warfare and sabotage. It will then either suppress these oppositions through its state power, or submit to them. If it will suppress, it will use dictatorial measures (which in reality every bourgeois democratic state uses). If it will submit, it will simply give up its fight for socialism. A socialist government that will proceed to use the state for the building of socialism will meet many obstacles in its way, such as obsolete capitalist institutions, reactionary officials and outlived but nevertheless powerful traditions. It will have to abolish these institutions, replace these officials, break these traditions, or submit to them. If it submits, it is giving up its fight for socialism. Some one has once said, that what socialists must be prepared for is not a revolution but a counter-revolution. Once socialists will gain power, even in the most legal and democratic manner, if they will try to use this power to abolish capitalism they will be faced wih a bourgeois (or fascist) counter-revolution. They will have either to suppress this counter-revolution, or be suppressed by it. In the former case, they will use dictatorial measures to clear the way for the upbuilding and growth of a real social democracy; in the latter they will prepare the way for fascism. This is the choice before the socialist movement. On this choice depends the further development, the future successes or failures of the movement.

The International Socialist Conference

CLARENCE SENIOR

THE special conference called by the Labor and Socialist International met in Paris August 21—25 as the lighted match of nationalism could be seen coming nearer and nearer to the fuse that will set off the world's dynamite stores. The decadence of capitalism, the increased rivalry of imperialist governments, the racial and political disappointments of the Versailles treaty, the insanely self-defeating war debts and reparations policies, the rise of fascism and the bitter need of the masses for bread—all increase the possibility of another world war which must bring universal chaos and a return to barbarism in the entire "civilized" world.

The generation now directing the policies of the major socialist parties had seen the collapse of the Russian socialists after they had polled twenty-three million out of thirty-six million votes, before the onslaught of the bolsheviks, who wanted an immediate realization of some of the demands of workers and peasants.

They had seen the Finnish and Hungarian socialists overwhelmed by "White" armies. The Italian and Polish movements had given way before fascist corps, receiving middle class moral and financial support, marshalled by renegade socialists turned nationalistic. The British Labor party had suffered a set-back at the hands of its former leaders, who fatuously claimed to place the interests of the "community" above that of their class.

To the socialist world, the German Social-Democratic party was the Rock of Gibraltar. Among their comrades at the Fourth Congress of the Labor and Socialist International

in Vienna, 1931, the Germans had radiated self-confidence in their policies of "toleration". When Heinrich Ehrlich, scholarly leader of the Polish "Bund", pointed out the inevitable danger in a policy of compromise with capitalism, Otto Wels, chairman of the German Party, drew a laugh from some delegates by his retort that the Bund had been back in the International only five months and was now attempting to act as schoolmaster for the Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschland. Then, as unfortunately now in some quarters, one's principles were judged solely on the number of votes received for them.

Alarmed by the strengthening wave of fascist reaction and the increased danger of war, the executives of the Labor and Socialist International a year ago called for January, 1933, a special conference on "The Strategy and Tactics of the International Labor Movement in a Period of Fascist Reaction." After months of delay, during which the once-powerful S.P.D. was swept out of existence, the conference met in closed session for a full and frank discussion of the situation. In order that a wide variety of opinions might be expressed, the executive requested that all delegates speak on their own responsibility instead of confining their remarks to the policies accepted by their parties. The agenda included three subheads:

1. The methods by which the workers are to carry on their struggle for power under the present political and economic conditions.
2. The way to working class unity, and
3. The tasks of the workers in case of an outbreak of war.

One hundred and forty-two delegates from thirty-six parties in thirty countries attended. Much too obvious was the fact that it was almost exclusively a western European conference. No important organization from Asia or Africa was represented. The Western Hemisphere has many parties which should have been present. That scarcely any communication exists with possible affiliates on other than the European continent is an outstanding weakness of the Labor and Socialist International. The lack of ability to undertake the

solution of the ticklish but urgent problem of aid to non-European movements arises partly from this lack of contacts, partly from an underestimation of its necessity, partly because each of the stronger member parties has been preoccupied with its own national problems.

For two days before the conference opened, the Executive met to map out procedure. It decided that most of the discussion of the German situation should be confined to the executive meeting, attended only by the forty members, and that the lessons to be drawn should be the subject of the conference.

A report of the criticisms made would add nothing new to the analysis of the German catastrophe by Kantorovitch, "The German Tragedy" in the summer issue Volume II, Number 3, 1933, of the American Socialist Quarterly. The German representatives largely responded to criticism by taking the fatalistic attitude that they were the victims of conditions that made their actions unavoidable. The most important contribution to the discussion during the executive meeting was from Victor Tchernoff, who pointed out that the mistakes made by the Germans were the outcome of policies that are accepted by all the socialist and labor parties. His suggestion that all the parties need a period of constructive self-criticism was ignored by the conference.

Unquestionably the discussion on the first item of the agenda carried most of the delegates further in their thinking than ever before, even further than the majority resolution records. Surprisingly enough, this conference represented the first attempt in ten years to outline a program for international socialism. When the Second International united with the Vienna Union at Hamburg, in 1923, no program nor declaration of principles was adopted. It was the hope of those who had brought the two organizations together that action on common ground would crystalize into an acceptable international program. This program was never developed. Day-to-day activities left no time for theoretical clarification. The result has been that the socialist movements of the various contries have been caught unprepared by the rise of new

phenomena not predicted by the prophets to whom a slavish lip service is rendered.

Through many years of concentration upon purely parliamentary activities, the German Social-Democrats had hypnotized themselves into an absurd belief that democracy was the only possible path to power for the workers. Insofar as there was an official international doctrine, this was it. The Vienna Union, formed to propagate a realistic theory of adapting socialist methods to the different social conditions in various countries, had attempted for several years to bring together the pure and simple parliamentarians of the Second International and the apocryphal bolsheviks who were trying to pour the social revolution of all countries into the Russian mold.

The majority resolution comes closer to the Vienna Union's position than any yet adopted by the L.S.I. "The events in Germany," says the resolution, "have strengthened the socialist workers in their conviction that where the bourgeoisie has renounced democracy in order to throw itself into the arms of fascism and has deprived the working class of the democratic means of struggle, the only means of emancipation left is that of the revolutionary struggle."

The real lesson that most of the speakers developed and which is recognized in the majority resolution is that democracy is meaningless for the workers who will have to defend it, unless it protects them against capitalism, against unemployment and poverty, and against war.

The majority resolution on war is not an advance in socialist thinking but actually retreats from the stand taken at Stuttgart and Copenhagen by the Second International. Reliance has again been placed on the league of capitalist nations and the Disarmament Conference, in spite of the fact that two and a half years ago at the Fourth Congress in Vienna scarcely anything was done on the question of war and disarmament but to launch an international petition campaign to try to secure disarmament through the conference. Warnings from Anderson, the secretary of the Danish party, Schmid of the Swiss socialists and the American delegation

at Vienna, that faith could not be placed in the League of Nations and Disarmament Conference, were disregarded.

One ray of hope in the actions of war is contained in a definite agreement with the International Federation of Trade Unions on the organization of a general strike in the "aggressor" country and a boycott of the aggressor nation in all other countries. This is vitiated by the agreement to leave the determination of the "aggeressor" country to the League of Nations, although there is a loophole left for the L.S.I. and the I.F.T.U., through their joint anti-war committee, to call for this action irrespective of the attitude of the League.

The minority resolution called upon affiliated parties to make definite plans to rally against every threat of war, without awaiting the outbreak of the conflict. It ended with, "The Congress declares that the final guarantee of the efficacy of the working class struggle against capitalist wars is the determination of the working class to transform the war into a workers' revolution." In addition to the eighteen votes which were given the minority resolution on all three subjects, twenty-two other delegates abstained from voting for the majority resolution on war.

Some advance was marked by the conference in its thinking on working class unity. The majority resolution says:

"Today, in view of the bloody torture and the slavery inflicted on the German working class, the communist workers are obliged to recognize that it is the duty of the working class in all countries to defend the democratic institutions as a guarantee of their freedom and a basis for their struggle. On the other hand the events in Germany have strengthened the socialist workers in their conviction that where the bourgeoisie has renounced democracy in order to throw itself into the arms of fascism and has deprived the working class of the democratic means of struggle, the only means of emancipation left is that of the revolutionary struggle. The division in the working class cannot be justified in the light of the lessons of history. Whilst rejecting all the manoeuvres connected wtih the united front, the objective of which is not to unite the working class internationally but to accentuate

its national divisions, the L.S.I. proclaims anew that it will spare no effort in trying to reunite the scattered forces of the working class."

Action on this resolution was left to the executive. The fact that the next regular meeting of the executive is in January leads one to question whether the good words of the resolution are not merely a diplomatic evasion.

The minority resolution demanded immediate summoning of a joint conference to investigate the possibilities for action on the part of a united working class. It believed that unity is "not only necessary but possible, providing the working class parties discard on the one hand a policy of systematic compromise which has been condemned by bitter experience, and on the other hand a sectarian policy which has equally broken down."

As was foreseen by the Executive of the International when it issued the call, the conference raised more questions than it answered. The debate on the mistakes of the German socialists only opened up the question. Much more must be known about German socialist postwar history before adequate decisions can be reached to guide other parties.

If we in America are to build a strong, revolutionary movement which will avoid the same fate, we must draw more on the revolutionary background of the American workers, we must use increasing energy in explaining international affairs and in building up anti-war machinery, we must make it impossible for any party member to lack a knowledge of socialist fundamentals, and we must see that these fundamentals are alive—changing to meet changing conditions and not allowed to degenerate into shibboleths. We must have an active fighting movement, intent on arousing the will to power among the workers. We can accept neither the fatalism of those social-democrats who believe that socialism will come inevitably, nor the fatalism of the communists who believe we must go through a fascist hell in order to reach a socialist paradise. We must have a greater amount of communication from the rank and file of the party to the state and national organizations. We must be able to criticize

ourselves in order that our increased activity will be pointed in the right direction.

The report of the American delegation to the Labor and Socialist International may be secured at the national headquarters of the Socialist Party, 549 W. Randolph Street, Chicago, Ill. This report includes the minority and majority reports, Comrade Krueger's speech at the conference as well as the resolutions adopted at the conference and the resolutions presented by the conference minority. 25 *pages,* 25 *cents.*

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Populism, Socialism and Labor

DAVID J. SAPOSS

DURING the present disorganized and distressing economic period the interest in radicalism and labor has increased. From all sides one hears the question: "Will labor go radical, and will there be a labor party?" Perhaps a review of the historical and social background of the American worker would help to understand the perplexing question, why we have a weak labor movement and a non-radical working class.

Middle Class Outlook of American Workers

Because of the newness of the country, the American workers of the 1820's and 1830's acquired a different cultural background from their confreres in Europe. The native workers acquired a middle-class outlook, and as long as they dominated the labor movement they gave it a populist instead of a socialist coloring. Up and through the Knights of Labor the movement was anti-capitalist, but not in the socialist sense. It was anti-capitalist from the middle-class point of view in that it fought concentration of economic life and wealth. It tried to perpetuate a system of economy wherein the average individual could accumulate enough to go into business for himself.

It is no mystery why the indigenous workers are middle-class in their philosophy. Their background was different from that of the European workers, as well as the immigrant workers who came to these shores. The native worker came from a stock of freemen who enjoyed liberty in its economic and political sense without having had to struggle for it as assiduously as did his European brother. He did not have the tradition of the peasant who was exploited by a landed nobility, which was sustained by the government and the church.

Neither did he have the tradition of the handicraftsman, confined to his living quarters and distinctly segregated economically and socially. The European handicraftsman was at the mercy of the merchant-capitalist who controlled credits and markets, and who was sustained by the government and the church. In his struggle for the ballot the European worker also received lessons in solidarity. Hence the indigenous American worker lacked the solidarity of the peasant, engendered by his communal living, economic exploitation and political oppression. Likewise the American worker lacked the solidarity of the European handicraftsman, induced by his segregated living and need to band together in guilds in order to protect himself against the masters and merchants who controlled his job and his market.

This historical difference in background explains why the American worker in his early history, and to a large extent, even to the present time, supported a populist instead of a socialist ideology. It also explains why the American worker failed to build a cohesive and lasting labor movement. Instead he sought panaceas during depression and participated in feverish strikes during prosperity. In all these activities he was too impatient to build for the future on a basis of stability. His attitude of go-getterism was further accentuated by the rapidly changing conditions on an expanding continent. During depression he tried through political action or producers' cooperation to change conditions so that he could attain his ideal of self-employment. During prosperity he was eager to garner, through high wages, as much as he could in order to save enough so as to become self-employed. In both periods he regarded the labor organizations as vehicles that would emancipate him from his temporary status as wage earner. In other words, he did not regard his wage earner status as of a permanent nature in the sense that the European worker did.

The European workers also passed through their stage of middle classism. But with them it was of short duration. In France it manifested itself in Utopian Socialism, in Britain in non-conformist religionism, and in the teutonic and other

countries in various forms of cooperation. But the great mass of European workers, with an oppressed class tradition, having felt the direct discrimination of the state and the opposition of the church, and influenced by the new spirit of science, turned to Marxian and scientific socialism, with its doctrines of class consciousness, class struggle and the messianic mission of the working class to abolish capitalism and to replace it by the cooperative commonwealth. Indeed, large numbers of continental European workers have been kept from socialism by their cultural, and particularly religious background. When the Catholic Church realized that it was alienating the workers in siding with the capitalists exclusively, it began to revise its attitude. As a result there developed social catholic movements, which, with the sanction of the Encyclical of Pope Leo XIII in 1892, began to organize the Catholic workers into separate unions and other types of labor organizations. In Britain where the non-conformist sects sided with the workers, the latter have retained their religious sentiments up to the present. Similarly, because of this religious influence, reinforced by high wages, the British workers retained their middle class ideology much longer than did the continental European workers. The British labor movement came under the influence and domination of socialism only recently. The first wave came about 1886, followed by a relatively complete conversion about 1905. Even up to the present it is neither anti-religious nor Marxian.

War and Prosperity Scotch Socialism

By the time of the Spanish-American War large blocks of American workers, influenced by changing economic conditions and the propaganda of the European immigrant workers, showed an interest in socialism. A realization was developing that with the growth of industry and concentration of wealth the ideal of self-employment was unattainable. But the Spanish-American war diverted the American workers from fundamental economic and social questions. The war gave them an outlet for their humanitarianism in the liberation of monarchically oppressed Cuba. Those who did not go to

war were compensated by steady work and high wages. In addition they enjoyed a vicarious heroism in our victories. Those who went to the war were compensated by the direct but not overly hazardous adventure. Instead of following in the footsteps of their fathers, who conquered nature on the frontier, they were conquering an enemy nation in the remote Atlantic and Pacific. Following the war, the hysteria of patriotism and inflated egoism of victory, reinforced by high wages, which assured relative economic security, reconciled workers to being wage earners. This gave Samuel Gompers and his associates their opportunity to build the American Federation of Labor on non-socialist lines. And the American workers became temporary devotees of capitalism.

However, there is no doubt but that the American worker, particularly when in economic distress, is still intuitively anti-capitalist. Prosperity and patriotism have confused him and diverted his assertiveness to other channels. He is, therefore, only passively anti-capitalist. Actively he indulges in activities which, under the guise of patriotism, are definitely capitalistic. But even since the Spanish-American war, whenever organized labor became deeply interested in fundamental social problems it invariably revived its affinity for populism. The most recent positive manifestation was an alliance of organized labor with other groups in the 1924 LaFollette presidential campaign on a specifically populist program. At present there are other symptoms which tend to indicate that when in economic distress the bulk of organized labor as well as the unorganized workers are still populist in sympathy.

Chaotic Economic Conditions Lay Ground for Radical Revival

Will organized labor repeat its experience of 1924? And will populism be but another flash in the pan? It may be said with as much certainty as is feasible when posthumously analyzing social movements, that had not prosperity returned in 1923, the new populist movement would undoubtedly have perpetuated itself. Now the tide is turning. The present economic distress has so upset the old conditions that they

can no longer be restored. If catastrophe does not overtake us, the best that can be hoped for under the present system is a complete readjustment on reduced living standards. What were once considered necessities will again be considered luxuries. High wages and relative economic security for the masses are things of the past. Only a new war can divert the minds of the workers from their new predicament of poverty and anxiety that they are bound permanently to remain workers with low living standards. Even the conservative American Federation of Labor is wavering. It no longer condemns the dole. First it brought itself to favor federal unemployment relief legislation, and now it has belatedly come out for compulsory insurance. The railroad unions have even gone further by demanding that loans be made by the government to unemployed workers on the same terms that they are now made to business men. The railroad unions and the A. F. of L. are also cautiously talking of the inadequacies of capitalism. The A. F. of L. has even completely discarded its hoary philosophy of voluntarism and has declared itself for government intervention. This is usually the first step towards a more radical procedure.

Notwithstanding that there are already definite symptoms of unusual unrest nothing more than a revolt against the party in power was to have been expected in the last presidential campaign. The previous fall and spring elections indicated a drift towards the Democratic party. With Roosevelt championing the "forgotten man", in mild populist phraseology, it was inevitable that he should have coralled most of the dissatisfied voters, for there is no doubt that the bulk of the people still have faith that one or the other of the two old parties will save them from the present chaos through populist measures. And so far none of the anti-capitalist parties have polled a large enough vote to warrant being considered a mass party, that is, an effective opposition to the two old parties.

Although not much of a distinctively radical revolt could have been expected during the last election since economic conditions failed to improve, a real drift towards radicalism

may soon be anticipated. When that disillusionment arrives the present unrest will inevitably assume the form of a sudden upheaval. How will the American workers align themselves then? As has already been explained, traditionally the American worker is populist in sentiment. This is true of the organized as well as the unorganized. Hence, when these workers become rebellious they first embrace populism, despite the fact that such a procedure is an economic anachronism. And there is no doubt but that they will pursue a similar course in their next rebellious mood. Because they are populistically minded, and because they have been disciplined and even cowed by modern capitalism, the American workers are more frightened at being accused of radicalism, than they are frightened by the specter of economic insecurity. Thus, we find such powerful unions as the railroad brotherhoods when appealing to president Hoover for unemployment relief, protesting that they are neither socialists nor communists. Similarly Father Cox's hunger marchers attacked communists who came to spread propaganda among them. And the Bonus Expeditionary Forces and their offshoot, the "Khaki Shirts", proclaimed from the house tops that they were not radicals. Even the inhabitants of the shanty towns or "Hoovervilles" that have sprung up throughout the country protest that they are not socialists, communists or radicals. And notwithstanding the suffering and privation to which these elements are subjected they have shown remarkable submission to tradition. There are also instances on record where workers, particularly in the south, have gone on strike but have equally rejected the leadership of the conservative Federation of Labor unions, as well as that of the more radical labor groups.

Problem of Weaning Away Masses from Old Parties.

According to past events, when unrest and disillusionment gripped these workers they turned towards one or another of the moderate protestant elements. This would mean that unless a catastrophe occurs the less obstreperous among the populist and socialists probably would have the inside

track. The task of the radicals and the progressives is, however, not a simple one. *If they want to build permanently, they must first wean the masses away from the two old parties. Then they must re-educate them so that they will realize that their primitive populist beliefs and sentiments of merely disgorging or punishing the rich are puerile. They will have to bring them to realize that they must cope fundamentally with modern economic and social problems.* But masses are not re-educated through a purely intellectual process. They must be exposed in a proper ideological environment while they are gradually indoctrinated. It is in this manner that mores and traditions are both simultaneously destroyed and developed. This process presupposes a tedious and painstaking transition during favorable economic conditions. It also presupposes effective organization and capable leadership. The progressives and radicals have, therefore, a gigantic task confronting them. The economic conditions are unoubtedly favorable. Have they the organizational acumen?

As between the progressives and radicals the task of the former is a simpler one. Since the masses are already predisposed towards populism, the progressives need merely win them over to independent political action, or a third party. In their case it means not only winning the workers away from the two old parties, but also weaning them away from their middle class beliefs and notions. Strategically speaking, the immediate task is winning the masses away from the two old parties. In this manner the masses would be dislodged from their old moorings and be thereby transformed to a different intellectual and emotional environment. Winning the masses away from the two old parties is certainly an easier task than converting them to a new ideology. It so happens that the progressives and radicals agree on the first objective. But are their ideological differences insurmountable?

Bridging an Ideological Gap

The progressives are populist in philosophy. The radicals are socialist in philosophy. Those who advocate a third party are really advocating a revival of populism on modern lines.

Those who advocate a socialist or a labor party desire to further socialism, or at least to emphasize socialization as against the social control program of the progressives. Among the radicals there are two points of view. One group would strengthen the Socialist party and try to win over to it all elements that believe in independent political action. Another group believes that most of the elements in favor of independent political action cannot be won over to the Socialist party. They, therefore, advocate a labor or a farmer-labor party. They believe that since both the socialists and populists are anti-capitalist and favor a new political deal, a labor party might reconcile their ideologic differences. The more left elements among the progressives also hold this view. *A labor party, as distinguished from a third party or a socialist party might be described as the twilight zone between populism and socialism. It is an attempt to bridge an ideological gap.* It would declare for socialization but would emphasize immediate social problems upon which all elements can more or less agree. In such a combination the populists are likely to be a majority, but the radicals would be the more assertive. They might also be the more influential intellectually, and in the long run even ideologically. This situation would undoubtedly create friction and might prove to be the rock upon which the twain would split.

It is certain that because of the cultural background of the American masses—workers as well as middle class—they are likely to shun an out and out socialist party. Prejudice and reaction will serve as the tremendous stumbling block. Likewise most of the unions that are interested in independent political action will not join the socialist party. On the other hand they will join a third party or even a labor party. This attitude is explained by their past predilictions towards the progressives and their past differences with the socialists. Of course, this fact is even more true of the farmers' organizations and small merchants' organizations, as well as other middle class organizations. It would seem, therefore, that if, and when, the ground swell for a new party emerges, it will favor a third party. If a third party comes on the scene it is

bound to reduce the radical elements to a comparatively small minority. The radicals will then be confronted with a difficult tactical decision. Should they join a third party and work within it or should they maintain an independent existence. They could join the third party and guard it against developing fascist tendencies, as well as becoming a prey of capitalistic interests and adventurers, because third parties are usually unduly opportunistic. Simultaneously they might try to win the followers to socialism or socialization so as to direct the third party towards their ideology. In other words, can the radicals best achieve their objective by joining the third party and working therein for stability, democracy and socialization?

On the other hand the socialists and those elements favoring a labor party might forestall a third party movement by inducing all the anti-capitalist groups that favor independent political action to join in forming a labor party on broad lines. While a labor party may not have an out and out socialist program and preamble, it is inevitable that it should be socialistic rather than populistic. Unless the radicals can forestall a third party they will find themselves at a great disadvantage. But it is quite possible that if a labor party were functioning that most of the unions would join it. It is highly probable that the more left of the populists would join a labor party. They might also carry with them farmer, small merchant and other middle class organizations. The Minnesota - Farmer Labor Party and the Farmers' Non - Partisan Leaguers might also affiliate. If such a national labor party were in existence, before the upheaval came, it is not at all improbable that the masses, when ready to discard the two old parties, would turn towards this new political organization rather than towards the creation of a third party. The decision of the radicals will be a difficult one. They will have to decide whether they will accomplish more by remaining a cohesive and independent group or a boring-from-within group.

It would seem that their best tactic would be to join in forming a farmer-labor party in order to forestall the formation

of a purely reformistic third party with an out and out middle class program and philosophy.

One eventuality is certain. The future of communism in America is not bright. The impulsive and volatile methods of the Communist Party, with its exotic terminology, esoteric pronunciamentos, and indiscriminate attacks on all mores, will not appeal to the populistically and capitalistically minded American masses. The communists have little prospect of winning over a large following unless the country should verge on ruin, and a moderate mass labor movement in the meantime has kept the masses out of the clutches of the fascists. As the situation stands now the communists can at best get the most desperate elements on the fringe of radicalism. The most desperate elements on the fringe of populism will go towards fascism. Thus the moderate populist and radical elements have the advantage, provided they do not dissipate their energies in mutual recriminations and competitive bouts. For a considerable distance and time they can work together without violently prejudicing their ideologies. Then impelling economic conditions may remove their differences so that they will naturally fuse.

The American Socialist Quarterly becomes with its next issue, the official theoretical organ of the Socialist Party of America. Its editorial staff will consist of Devere Allen, Anna Bercowitz, David P. Berenberg, Andrew J. Biemiller, Roy Burt, Haim Kantorovitch, Harry W. Laidler. The new status of the magazine considerably widens its opportunities for service to Socialism.

There will be no change in the policy or in the character of the A S Q. Hereafter, as in the past, it will be a paper devoted to the dissemination of the theories of a living Marxism.

The Struggle for Power in Spain

VINCENZO VACIRCA

AFTER having been in power for twenty-eight months, that is since the proclamation of the Republic, the left coalition cabinet headed by Azana, and supported by the socialists, fell last September. A political crisis of first magnitude ensued. The Constituent Assembly was dissolved and general elections for the new Cortes will take place November 18. The Republic is at a turning point. The crisis is not purely political: under an apparent conflict of parliamentary groups lies a deeper social conflict, a bitter struggle of class interests, which for over two years has been smothered and hidden behind the banner of republican unity and anti-monarchist feeling.

Signs of the approaching crisis became daily more evident after the passage of the Agrarian Reform, of the law regulating religious orders, and the labor legislation that put Spain in the forefront of the most progressive nations.

This new legislation, sponsored by socialists, or passed because of socialist pressure and influence, has severely hit those who constituted the ruling class under the old regime, land-owners, church, and employers in general. But class divisions are never so sharp that they dovetail perfectly in the political parties. There are, in Spain, many people who, although belonging to the propertied class, call themselves republican and helped to overthrow the monarchy. They were disgusted with its rottenness and inefficiency and were anxious to have a clean government. Like all classes in revolt against an established regime, they were rather liberal, and considered themselves revolutionist. And in a certain sense they were.

But they were not strong enough to bring about a successful revolt by themselves. They needed help. They found that help in the intellectual middle class and the workers. The

Spanish revolution was the outcome of an alliance of socialist workers, middle-class intellectuals and liberal bourgeoisie. Such a compound brought them, necessarily, to a compromise. None of these groups being powerful enough to dominate the situation—the first coalition government, formed April 14, 1931, the day the king abdicated and flew from Spain—reflected the three social forces which comprised eight-tenths of the Spanish population.

The socialists were represented in the cabinet by three members out of nine. The bourgeois element was represented by Zamora (a former minister of the Monarchy) who stepped out of prison to become provisional President; Maura, the son of a famous former premier and leader of the Conservative Party, and Lerroux, the head of a so-called radical party, once a really revolutionary organization, now the **refugium peccatorum** of all former monarchists who deserted a lost cause and rallied under the banner of the Republic as the only way to defend their menaced class interests. The rest of the Cabinet consisted of intellectuals, representing middle class and professional interests, with a French Revolution ideology, sympathetic to the socialist movement, but non-Marxian and opposed to class-struggle and to any conception of class consciousness. The strong man of this group was and still is Manual Azaña.

The coalition went, united, to the polls on June 28, 1931, and won. The old Catholic and Monarchist parties elected less than 10% of the members to the Constituent Assembly. The Socialists, with 110 deputies, formed the strongest group in the Parliament. In addition, the socialists were generous enough to help elect some outstanding intellectuals who are affiliated with no political party, like Unamuno, Gasset Y Ortega, Sanchez Roman and others. This mistake they repented soon enough. The second strongest parliamentary group was the Radical led by Lerroux, with 96 deputies. The Left Republican was divided into half a dozen separate parties, with 170 deputies.

The coalition had the first set-back on October 24, 1931, when Zamora resigned his presidency after article 26 of the

Constitution was approved. That article was aimed at the Jesuits, whose dissolution as a religious order it contemplated. Zamora, an honest old man, a sincere republican, is profoundly catholic and instinctively a conservative. Azaña, then minister of war, replaced him.

On December of the same year another crisis ripped apart the Cabinet. After five months of passionate debate, the new Constitution was drafted and approved. In consequence of it, the first president of the Republic was elected by the Constituent Assembly. Zamora was the choice of the majority. The Assembly wanted to indicate that it was not its intention to persecute religion. To break the political and economic power of the Church did not mean to destroy religion. As proof of that, the only prominent republican whose religious zeal was well known, was exalted to the presidency of the Republic. In this manner they intended to allay the fears of the Catholics, still an overwhelming majority in Spain.

The Zamora election was the greatest blunder that Left Republicans and Socialists ever made. In political life, and especially in troubled times, there is no such thing as a good man. Men of principles and courage are the only ones in whom one may trust. This the parties of the Left now realize, but a bit too late.

With the election of a regular president the first constitutional Cabinet was formed. Zamora, following the indication of a great majority of the Assembly, reappointed Azaña as premier. But the second Azaña Cabinet was different from the preceding one. Lerroux, who was minister of Foreign Affairs, refused to join the new Cabinet, and Maura, minister of Interior, was ousted. Thus, their groups, the Radical and the Conservative-republican, passed into the opposition.

It was the first real crisis of the Republic. The split among the republican forces followed according to class lines. The new Cabinet was more homogeneous. The socialist influence increased. The laws passed between December 1931 and August 1933 reshaped the Spanish State radically, against the allied opposition of bourgeois republicans and the remnants of the Monarchist parties.

The socialists now became an essential part of the Republic. No law could be passed without their vote. In a certain way they lost their tactical freedom. They were compelled to support the Azaña government in order to avoid a Lerroux-Maura Cabinet or, worse, a paralysis in the machinery of the parliamentary government. They were forced to compromise. In order to impose part of their program in defense of the rights of the working class they had to accept a general policy which was often not at all to their taste.

Two currents developed inside the party. One, headed by Juan Besteiro, who is president of the Spanish Federation of Labor and president of the Constituent Assembly, which is against socialist participation in any coalition government no matter how left it might be. The other, headed by Prieto and Caballero ministers together with comrade De los Rios since the first revolutionary government up to the end of last August, which thinks that in the formative stage of the new State, the socialists, who contributed so powerfully to the success of the revolution, could not sit aloof, but had to be an active drawing force inside the machinery of the government, and to leave it only when they realized that they could accomplish nothing more.

The intransigent faction argued that participation in a coalition government would saddle the party with responsibility for everything the government did, and would give the extreme left groups (communist, syndicalist and anarchist) material for their propaganda in order to alienate the workers' sympathies from Socialism.

The practical results of those first twenty-eight months of socialist participation in the government have proved how groundless those fears were.

The Spanish workers have shown more good sense than could have been supposed. They have discriminated in the government activities between the good accomplished as a result of socialist pressure and the shortcomings of a general policy of a government of compromise. Figures speak eloquently; at the beginning of the revolution the Socialist Party had only twenty-five thousand members. Now there

are eighty thousand. The federation of farm-hands in 1931 had 32,000 members. Now there are about 700,000. The Union General de Trabajadores (National Federation of Labor) two years ago had only 200,000; it now has 1,500,000 members, and is expanding continually at a rate of 1,500 new members a day.

The communists are a non-entity. Here and there they have a few propaganda groups which, as everywhere else, make much noise, but they do not control any industry or section of workers.

Syndicalists and anarchists who, only a few years ago, had a very strong labor movement, superior to the socialist, have been losing ground rapidly and now are centered in a few cities and towns of Catalana and Andalusia.

Summing up, the participation in the coalition government has not been prejudicial to the socialist movement; rather it has helped it to build a strong labor movement which is considered, by objective observers, the most disciplined, compact and decisive force in the Republic.

The labor movement is so imbued with socialist sentiment and ideas that it almost forms a unified whole with the strictly party organization.

Most of the provincial socialist newspapers are at the same time official organs of the socialist locals and the Central Labor Councils. In every city, town and village of Spain there is a Casa del Pueblo (People's House) which shelters all the local labor unions, as well as the local of the Socialist Party. All leaders of the labor unions are members of the Party.

Spain is extremely individualistic. Every man is almost a party by himself. That explains the subdivisions of all political forces into a dozen different organizations, most of which could be amalgamated into a single party.

In such atomization of the other political bodies, the unity of the socialist movement is an object of envy and a reason for fear among the bourgeois groups. That envy

and that fear are responsible for the intense campaign that has been waged in order to oust the socialists from the government

The campaign was waged principally in the press and at public meetings. Old monarchists, catholics, republicans of the Right and Center and some even of the Left, united in describing the socialists as the cause for the general ruin, as a danger for the future, as a menace to Spanish liberty—and so on.

It must be said that the Left republican groups in the Parliament have not given heed to that campaign, and the coalition stood the repeated assaults from the Center, the Right and the Extreme Right. Azaña, who is a real statesman, understands that without the socialists, the Second Spanish Republic could easily end like the first short-lived one of 1871. He sticks to them, taking on himself the flush of hatred that his attitude has aroused.

But Zamora has offered a benevolent ear to those angry anti-socialist voices. After the law on the Religious Congregation was passed last May, his religious scruples began to trouble him. He did not dare refuse his signature to the bill, which if sent back to the Assembly would have been passed for a second time and become a law even without presidential assent. So he signed at the eleventh hour but provoked the resignation of the Azaña Cabinet by withdrawing his confidence in it.

(Here it is necessary to explain that under the Spanish Constitution a Cabinet to legally function must enjoy the confidence of both Parliament and the President of the Republic. The failure of one of these two confidences makes compulsory the resignation of the Cabinet.) Azaña and his colleagues resigned. One week of political manoeuvre followed at the end of which President Zamora was compelled to ask Azaña to form again a new Cabinet which practically was the same as the old one. It was a victory for the coalition of the Left parliamentary groups, which refused to support any other Cabinet that the President could have tried to form without the socialists.

Three months after, at the end of last August, a new crisis broke out again through a presidential action. Lerroux, head of the republican opposition in the Chamber, launched a fierce attack upon Azaña telling him that his government was no longer representative of Spanish opinion. Azaña answered that public opinion had a true and legal expression in the Parliament and so far as the Cabinet was supported by a parliamentary majority and enjoyed the confidence of the President its duty was to stand by its guns. It was a very heated session. A vote of confidence was taken immediately after the Azaña speech and was approved by an overwhelming majority. Directly Azaña went to see the President to put before him the question of confidence. Zamora tried to dodge the issue asking Azaña to remain at his place at least for a couple of months more until certain urgent bills before the House could be discussed and passed. Azaña refused to stand for such conditional confidence, and handed in his resignation on the spot, which was followed soon by the entire Cabinet.

A new phase, which marked an open conflict between the Constituent Assembly and the President, ensued in the life of the young Republic. Zamora, against every parliamentary indication, called Lerroux to form a Cabinet. The old politician announced that he would form a Cabinet of "personalities" ignoring political parties. But all those "personalities" answered to his request that they could not accept as minister without the consent of the respective political parties to which they belonged.

Lerroux was compelled to retract. He applied to the parliamentary groups of the Left to allow some of their members to join his Cabinet. The groups consented but conditioned their attitude towards the entire Cabinet after they had heard a declaration of policy from the new government. The Socialists were left out of the combination.

Lerroux presented himself before the Assembly about a month after, exactly on October 2, 1933. A heated debate ensued. From the outset it was evident that the groups which had supported the previous coalition were hostile to the new Cabinet. The rumor that Lerroux had the authorization from

the President to dissolve the Assembly had aroused the ire of the Left. Prieto for the Socialists, and Azaña for the Left groups, spoke vehemently against the Lerroux Cabinet. Azaña delivered the strongest blow, warning the President that a decree of dissolution given to a government which has been defeated in the Chamber was near a coup d'état. When the vote of confidence was taken Lerroux was defeated by 91 votes in favor, 189 against. He resigned immediately.

Zamora then tried to form a new government headed by some prominent citizen outside all political parties with the task of dissolving the Chamber and calling for a new election. Three successive attempts in that direction failed.

Then Martinez Barrio, a lieutenant of Lerroux, was asked to form a government in which all parties, with the exception of the socialists, should have been represented and to dissolve the Constituent Assembly without risking an adverse vote. It was the most critical moment for the Republic. Demonstrations of students and workers took place in the streets of Madrid. The Left groups announced that they would sit in the House and refuse to acknowledge the decree of dissolution. The Socialist Party and the Labor Unions gave notice that within twenty-four hours of the official announcement of the formation of the new Presidential Cabinet a general strike would be proclaimed. A revolutionary situation developed all of a sudden.

At this moment Azaña intervention prevented for the time being what might have been a bloody civil war. He went to see Lerroux and persuaded him to advise Barrio to invite the socialists to sit in the Cabinet. That was done. The socialists refused the offer but were satisfied with the invitation. The general strike was called off. The tension was allayed. Barrio formed his all-parties Cabinet and the Assembly was dissolved.

The Spanish people are called upon now to pass judgment on the actions of the political forces which have been wrestling in the first two years and a half of the Republic for the conquest of power. They will indicate at the polls whether the Republic shall continue its march toward a socialistic

society or whether the interests of the property class must prevail.

This will be the kernel of the struggle, which may be moderate and even polite in its formal and external aspect, but which will be fought by all the belligerents with such dramatic pathos as never before in the history of the Spanish people.

The republican regime has contributed enormously to sharpen, in every class, the consciousness of their economic interests. The pure political strife about forms of government is over. Now the problem is the social substance these forms shall contain.

A WORD ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTORS

Henry J. Rosner
Research Secretary, Socialist Party of New York; Research Secretary City Affairs Committee.

Clarence Senior
National Secretary, Socialist Party of America; delegate to International Socialist Conference at Paris, August 1933.

David J. Saposs
Instructor Brookwood Labor College; author "Left Wing Unionism."

Vincenzo Vacirca
Former Socialist member of the Italian Parliament; one time editor of "Il Nuovo Mondo"; recently returned from Spain.

Ernest Sutherland Bates
Associate editor, "Modern Monthly". Author of "This Land of Liberty".

Picture of American Literature in 1933

ERNEST SUTHERLAND BATES

THE SILLY SEASON" someone has well called the the current year of literature. There has been such a disproportionate number of trivial books compared with those of any significance that one might cite as the chief gain of the year the fact that publishers are bringing out so much less than formerly. When most of the output is so bad, it could be argued that further limitation is desirable and that if the failure of publishing houses should continue until there are none left the American mind, free from the daily debauchery of reading, might in due time become a real mind. On the principle that a dumb man is less of a nuisance than a noisy fool.

This argument, however, though plausible and attractive, is probably unsound. The reading of cheap literature is not the only vice of the times; the radio and cinema would also need to be abolished in order to attain the desired end. In fact, as with so many revolutionary ideas, it would be necessary to begin by abolishing human nature.

The only thing for Americans to do, apparently, is, being all of us more or less noisy fools, to follow Blake's hopeful dictum that if the fool would express his folly he would become wise. On that basis, a great deal of wisdom must be brewing in this country at the present time.

Sinclair Lewis opened the year 1933 promisingly enough with "Ann Vickers", in January, published simultaneously in twenty-three languages. It was generally hailed by the critics as constituting Lewis's definite comeback after the eight years of decadence since "Arrowsmith". On the whole, it probably deserved the praise. It remains still, at the time of writing, the one outstanding American novel of the year. And

Lewis is the only one of our older group of novelists who seems to be still alive and capable of further development. Yet the book has appalling defects. All the earlier chapters, dealing with the heroines' childhood and college life, are not only unworthy of Lewis, they are unworthy of even a third-class writer. At the same time brittle and dull, they have not even Lewis's hitherto unfailing merit of adequate documentation, words and ideas being given to the characters which did not come in until a decade later. Not until the prison scenes does the story look up, but then it suddenly becomes another book. Lewis's besetting sin — we might say the American besetting sin—of exaggerating the obvious disappears, he holds his satire in leash, and writes about a hundred pages that are almost as fine as anything in our literature, deeply moving, intense, powerful. The death of Lil Hezekiah in itself excuses all the lapses in the book. It shows what Lewis could do as a genuine realist if he would be willing to abandon his cleverness in ridiculing the outside of men.

Unfortunately, "Ann Vickers" also shows a limitation from which not only Lewis suffers but all American writers of the present day as well, including the proletarian group of whom I shall speak later. What we call the defeatism of the twenties roots in something much deeper than mere post-war disillusionment. It consists in an utter lack of faith in humanity, fostered by the war but by modern science also, and ultimately based on our machine economics which has reduced the individual as such to impotence without holding out to him, at least in ways that the unrevolutionary Lewises would accept, any hope of enlarging his personality through class struggles. So Lewis, wisely cynical of reforms but unable to see beyond them, sends his reformist heroine at the end into the arms of a corrupt judge (who is much less alluring than the author intends, not being even as attractive a crook as Jimmy Walker), and the book, which promised so much better things, ends on the familiar note of frustration.

Next to "Ann Vicker", the most touted work of the year is Gertrude Stein's "The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas", which ran in the Atlantic Monthly, of all places, and is now

available in book form. Miss Stein's appearance in the Atlantic may be taken to indicate either of two things, the increasing literary radicalism of the Atlantic, or the increasing respectability of Miss Stein. The author, who must be original at all costs, chose to write her autobiography through the mouth of a female satellite who has been with her for many years, thus enabling Miss Stein to be her own Boswell. The method seems a rather obvious insult to the shadowy personality of Toklas, as even the sycophantic Boswell would not have permitted Johnson to write his book for him, but when princes and presidents have their ghosts, it probably seemed to Toklas an unusual distinction to have such a ghost as Gertrude Stein. Certainly it must have seemed so to the author, who has a royal manner of distributing favors, and regards herself quite frankly as the greatest writer of our period. She makes her mouthpiece say that she has known only three geniuses—Pablo Picasso, Alfred North Whitehead, and Gertrude Stein. Pablo, Alfred, and Gertrude, and the greatest of these is Gertrude. One might have believed it until this book appeared, but no longer.

"The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas" is simply an amusing volume, witty and malicious, descriptive of Miss Stein's career in Paris since 1903. In it her mannerisms of style are toned down to be intelligible to the average reader. She has, of course, known personally nearly every artist and painter of note during these years, and her accounts of them are salty. The comments are often shrewd as when she accuses her whilom disciple Hemingway of being "yellow", the same criticism offered, in more courteous language, by Max Eastman in a definitively devastating review of "Death in the Afternoon", in the New Republic, in which he attributed Hemingway's bull-fight "bull" to over-compensation for organic weakness. One wonders whether the same explanation would apply to Gertrude Stein herself or to our liberal ambassador to Spain, Claude Bowers, both of whom are also eulogists of the bull-fight. In the case of Mr. Bowers one may suspect more prudential considerations, but there seems no reason for Gertrude Stein's matadorian sympathies unless

they arise from the same adolescent yearning for greatness as with Mr. Hemingway.

It may seem strange to use "adolescent" with so old a woman as Gertrude Stein, but adolescence, of course, is not really a matter of years or ability. Cecil Rhodes and Theodore Roosevelt, for example, surely possessed no little ability, of a kind, but they carried their adolescence with them to the grave. Henry Ford is another who may be counted upon to do the same. And Gertrude Stein, unquestionably original, a master of style, who has exercised probably a more potent influence on contemporary literature, for both good and ill, than any other writer, has nevertheless failed to reach full intellectual maturity. She was ruined at the outset by the injudicious pampering of William James at Radcliffe, who, confusing cleverness wtih profundity in his own work, easily made the same mistake with his brilliant pupil. Thus Miss Stein, confident of her own genius, made no effort to avoid the literary subjectivity that came upon her as an expatriate in America. After the hard excellence of "Three Lives", which she perhaps rightly claims, "introduced the twentieth century into literature" in the story of Melanctha, she sought an easier greatness in developing her personal style in "The Making of Americans", a book with endless discussions of "independent dependent being" and "feelings inside of one"; a book which, whatever else it does, tells us nothing about Americans or their making. She undoubtedly helped to give modern literature its freer and more direct approach, but her influence has also tended to confirm its disdain for ideas. The outside world does not exist for Miss Stein except as it happens to touch her personal life. She is unconcerned with politics, economics, or science, and seems quite indifferent to the happiness or misery of nine tenths of mankind. She prefers rhythm to ideas, which is an adolescent preference, and she also prefers rhythm to passion, which is a preference of adolescent inferiority.

As a book of literary gossip, "The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas" is inferior to Vance Thompson's now forgotten "French Portraits". In comparison with Frances Winwar's

recent volume on the Pre-Raphaelites, "Poor Splendid Wings", Miss Stein's work shows how much less a contemporary may really know about his own period than may a successor of studious and re-creative mind. But as a kind of valedictory to expatriatism, "The Autobiography" has more significance. It ends the period that Vance Thompson began. The gay escape to Europe from American dullness, the delight in French food, liquor, and love, the intellectual snobbishness of the expatriate, these matters, which now belong to history, are here set down without any of the self-criticism which, belonging to a later period, would falsify the record. It is fitting that Miss Stein who led in the invasion of France thirty years ago should now be writing of it when return from France is the order of the day.

Of the year's best seller, Hervey Allen's ponderous novel of seventeenth century France, "Anthony Adverse", the book itself is less interesting than its popularity. It is a literary jeux d'esprit of twelve hundred pages, a mingling of historical novel and picaresque romance, competently done,—just the sort of thing to delight the heart of our professors of literature in the colleges. But why a work completely devoid of contemporary significance should have such a popular appeal might be a puzzle unless one saw that the absence of significance was itself the appeal. The perennial romantic escape to far lands and far times and dim heroic figures, seen already in the work of Cabell, Cather, and Wilder, has particular attractions for weak minds in an era such as the present when outlooks and standards are confused. Then, too, it must be remembered, the American reading public is essentially bourgeois-minded, constitutionally unable to resist the recommendations of college professors, and capable of infinite boredom in the pursuit of anything supposed to be cultural.

Defeatists, expatriates, and escapists, still belatedly dominate the literary scene in the year of grace 1933. What of our new "proletarian literature" of which there was so much talk last winter. Frankly, it is momentarily on the rocks, in some danger of being talked to death—a danger that Lenin foresaw in the beginning before the Revolution. The

case is a new illustration of the old truth that the genesis of literature is not chiefly volitional; that, like other forms of art, literature arises from experience and cannot be created out of hand in response to a need, no matter how imperative the need may be. Furthermore, among most of the users of the term there was considerable vagueness as to the meaning of the term "proletarian literature". Obviously it could not mean literature written by proletarians, in the sense of manual workers, or Marx, Lenin, Trotsky, and Gorky would all be excluded. Nor literature about proletarians, or "Oliver Twist" would be a shining example. Nor yet literature expressive of the actual attitude predominant in the American Federation of Labor, for example, as that is clearly a bourgeois attitude. On the other hand, the communists, following Russian leadership as always, virtually defined proletarian literature as anything written by members of the Communist party provided only that the fiction, drama, or what not, be "dialectical" in its approach. Perhaps it was this requirement of writing dialectical fiction that reduced the once promising Michael Gold to silence; at any rate, one can imagine no bit of literary legislation more calculated to reduce to silence any artist. Now that the dialectic edict has been removed, perhaps communist literature may brighten up a bit.

The only united front discernible in literature, as in politics, has seen a united front with one's self or one's own group. Even the latter is difficult when the grouping is not clear. Edward Dahlberg, usually considered a proletarian writer, denounces two others, Erskine Caldwell and John Dos Passos, as neither literary nor proletarian. They are both, incidentally, better writers than Dahlberg. Albert Halper's "Union Square" was severely criticized because the radicals in it amounted to so little. More recently, with the first signs of returning prosperity, a rush away from radicalism has begun. Dreiser has slipped back into the safe fold of the Democratic party and even the veteran Upton Sinclair has moved right, besides sullying his honored name by his questionable attitude in the affair of the Eisenstein films. Altogether, it has been a bad year for radicals.

Under these circumstances, it would be false modesty in the writer, merely because he happens to be on the board of editors, not to mention the appearance during the year of "The Modern Monthly", which, under the leadership of V. F. Calverton, now seems safely established as the one independent radical magazine in the country. Whatever its defects, radicals can no longer say that there is no organ for which they can write without suffering from the restraints of bourgeois prejudice or party loyalty. It is also a pleasure, in the general dearth of good literature of any kind, to be able to mention two excellent radical works which have just appeared, "The Great Tradition" by Granville Hicks, a study of American literature since the Civil War and Mauritz Hallgren's "Seeds of Revolt".

Just as one swallow does not make a summer, so a single lean year need not be discouraging. Bourgeois literature is the product of many centuries. Proletarian literature, by which surely ought to be meant all work of literary value written from a socialistic standpoint, regardless of party, need not be disheartened if it does not produce every year work of such outstanding quality as the two volumes of the John Dos Passos trilogy already published. In bourgeois countries this literature will inevitably continue to partake of the general character of the literature of social protest, while emphasizing class activities. But it is to be hoped that it will free itself from the exaggerated sexology and defeatism, hang-overs from the immediate past, that mar even some of the work of Dos Passos. Without echoing the romantic outcry for great men and leaders, one may point out mildly that to show human beings as consistently worthless is not the best way to inspire revolutionary efforts in their behalf. Marxists, above all, claim to have confidence in the future. Then why not show a little of this confidence in their pictures of a present which, at worst, is still the potentiality of the future, —yes, why not?

Book Reviews

INSURRECTION!

Seeds of Revolt by Mauritz A. Hallgren Alfred A. Knopf, $2.50

This book purports to be a study of "American life and the temper of the American people during the depression". It is, in fact, a record of the author's bias and prejudices, an exhibition of his petty bourgeois inability to get to the roots of his problem, a parlor bolshevist's romantic longing for drama, for insurrection that will be paid for, not with his blood but with that of the workers.

There is much valuable factual material in the book. There is enough evidence here of capitalist exploitation, of capitalist brutality, miserliness, corruption, egotism, in fact of all the capitalist vices, to blow the capitalist system sky high—provided only the masses of the workers could be made to grasp the significance of the facts here presented. No radical, socialist, communist, will quarrel with the evidence here given that we live in a class society and that this society, in time of prosperity and in time of depression alike, is governed by and in the interests of the capitalist groups.

His study of the effects of the depression on the workers of various classes, on the farmers, on the once prosperous middle classes, on the professions here assembled for the first time between the covers of a single book creates a tremendous impression. Mr. Hallgren is a good reporter. He has an eye for dramatic effect. Even the most optimistic defender of things as they are must be moved by the picture of disintegration that he paints.

He is not so happy when he attacks the problem he sets for himself, when he attempts to analyze the "seeds of revolt". Here he starts with the assumption that a popular rising might have been expected as the result of the depression. He tells us that fear of this popular uprising existed among the capitalist rulers of society; that in fact, what little crumbs of relief were offered the workers were given chiefly for fear of mass revolution. He paints vividly the cases of labor

and middle-class unrest that did develop between 1929 and 1933,—the mine troubles in Kentucky, Illinois and West Virginia, the textile disturbances in the South, the food and race riots that occurred here and there, the Dearborn massacre, the farmers rebellions, etc. All these did not total revolution. Hence Mr. Hallgren concludes that there will not be, cannot be a popular uprising. His alternative? Insurrection! "A popular revolution will not take place, moreover, because the workers will have been organized by and for capitalism instead of on a class basis, and their organizations will be mostly in the hands of the enemy. Only an aggressive, competently led insurrectionary movement can take advantage of the crisis". (p. 349).

Like the communists and the parlor bolshevists generally, Mr. Hallgren rejects democracy as a weapon that the workers can use. Democracy once served the purposes of the capitalists. To-day it is of value only to those social groups that need a continuance of the policy of **laissez faire.** All the rest, great capitalists, fascists and workers alike find it a contradiction in terms. Only authority, only dictatorship,—whether fascist or communist,—can be effective. This is familiar enough. Whether you accept it, or not, depends in the first place on your definition of democracy, and in the second on your egotism. If you are willing to take the position that you know what is good for others better than they know it themselves, you will be in the same camp with Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin and Mr. Hallgren. If not, if you realize that democracy has not failed, but has merely never been tried; if you understand that the failure of political democracy results from its lack of a sound base in economic and social democracy, you will see the fallacy of Mr. Hallgren's learned argument. You will also be less ready to call for insurrection.

It is quite evident that Mr. Hallgren does not like the Socialist Party. He does not like it because it will not follow the lines that he, who apparently knows how to bring on the co-operative commonwealth, would lay down for it. His book is filled with unkind, and mainly untrue remarks about

the Socialist Party, but the nub of his complaint is to be found on page 329 where he says "Although the socialists sought to overcome this defeatism by resorting to revolutionary phrases during the crisis, **at no time did a responsible leader of the party advocate revolution by insurrection.**" (Bold mine).

The Socialist Party is far from perfect. In fact many of the weaknesses that Mr. Hallgren points out,—its reformism, its weak leadership, its theoretical confusion,—are precisely the weaknesses that the A.S.Q. has set itself to combat. But far better these weaknesses than the cool, brutal treason to the working class that Mr. Hallgren advocates. He knows very well what insurrection means. He states himself that "the State could very quickly put an end to the whole revolutionary movement". (Page 165). He shows how the insurrectionists "must be intimately acquainted with every inch of the ground. They must know, not only how to capture capitalism's system of communications, but precisely where and when to do this. In the United States this would be no mean problem. It would not simply be a matter of cutting New York City off from the rest of the country, or of seizing the government buildings in Washington. Even if the conspirators could also isolate all of New England, capture the Pennsylvania-Ohio coal fields and take over the telephone exchanges and power plants in a few industrial centers such as Chicago and Birmingham, they would still be far from having accomplished their purpose. Every one of the major geographical areas of the United States is so highly developed and integrated that it is, or quickly could be made, self sufficient, at least for the purpose of holding out, so long as that may be necessary, against a small revolutionary party in control of some other section of the country. Moreover, such areas in the hands of the counter-revolutionists could and would be used as bases for military operations against the insurrectionists. It is obvious that the insurrection would have to be timed so that every strategic center, every necessary line of communication, every important telegraph office, telephone exchange, railroad yard, highway and railroad bridge, power plant and so forth, be taken over simultane-

ously throughout the country." (p. 350).

I have quoted this at length because it proves that Mr. Hallgren, who so ardently longs for an insurrection knows precisely what military problems an insurrection involves. He knows, too, that an insurrection of the sort he wants will surely fail unless it comes as part of precisely that popular uprising that he says is impossbile; he knows that without this popular uprising the insurrection will be drowned in the blood of the workers. He must know, too, that the forec and sweep of a popular rising, whether it expresses itself at the polls or in direct action, will make the conspiratorial insurrection unnecessary. In other words, Mr. Hallgren, in setting aside all other methods of working class activity except those leading to insurrection, proclaims himself either a romantic, or a dangerous enemy of the working class. Blanquism, and whether Mr. Hallgren knows it or not, his theories descend from Blanqui, has often enough been the cover of the agent-provocateur.

I have pointed out Mr. Hallgren's dislike for the Socialist Party. He has rather more love for the communists, but it is doubtful if after they read this book, they will have much use for him. For the communists, too, are too timid for the belligerent Mr. Hallgren. "The communists were revolutionists who lacked courage to discuss revolution in straightforward realistic terms". (p. 337). And again "it is evident that at no time were the communists actively preparing for insurrection. All that they aspired to apparently, was to awaken the class consciousness of the more advanced proletarians. They believed that an 'objective situation' had to arise before they could even think of striking". (p. 338). This is enough to condemn them in the eyes of Mr. Hallgren, who alone knows, apparently, that the insurrection can be organized at any time, **without the need of an objective situation.**

This book illustrates more than clearly the current tendency on the part of literary men to imagine that they are revolutionists because they have read a pamphlet or two by Marx, and have attended a few communist meetings. Without historic knowledge, without an understanding of the stream

of history, without personal experience in the working class, they neverthless presume to tell the workers, and the world, what to do. Fortunately for the workers and for the world, nobody takes them nearly so seriously as they take themselves.

The History of the Russian Revolution

by Leon Trotzky

Simon and Schuster, N. Y. Volumes II and III, $3.50 a volume.

The second and third volumes of Trotzky's History of the Russian Revolution contain nothing to cause me to change the opinion I expressed in my review of the first volume, that this work, invaluable as it is, is vitiated as history by the persistent intrusion of the author as protagonist. Granted that it is an extraordinary and happy coincidence that a major participant in the Russian Revolution is also a brilliant historian; granted, too, that any recorder of these events would be compelled to assign to Trotzky as great a role as he attributes to himself, or even a greater; granted again, that history may validly be written with the warm enthusiasm of the partisan and may have great polemic value; when the protagonist-historian is an avowed enemy of another figure in the same drama, when he aligns in his defense an arsenal of material whose interpretation depends on the author's memory of personalities, of moods and of his own reactions to specific situations, when he falls back upon analysis of literary style, psychological interpretations, upon personal estimates of tendencies and probabilities to make his case, the reader must be forgiven if he doubts his historic objectivity.

Trotzky devotes many pages of his third volume (Volume III, pages 353-418) to his post-revolutionary struggle with Stalin. He is particularly bitter about what he conceives of as Stalin's effort to reduce Lenin so that the figure of Stalin may be magnified, and about Stalin's attempt to minimize the significance of Trotzky's role in the revolution, and more particularly in the October insurrection (Volume III, appendix 1). Trotzky's loyalty to Lenin and his indignation

at the treatment accorded himself are human and understandable. That they somewhat lessen the objective reliability of his account, must be evident. There is every reason to believe that on the whole Trotzky and not Stalin is right, but the student interested in fact and not in faction, must wait until the evidence is sifted and presented by writers less involved in the story. In passing it is amusing to note that Trotzky is compelled to admit that "Lenin was no automaton of infallible decisions". "Lenin proposed that the struggle (the October insurrection) begin in Moscow, assuming that there it would be resolved without a fight. As a matter of fact the insurrection in Moscow, notwithstanding the preceding insurrection in Petrograd, lasted eight days and cost many victims". He now bitterly complains that "the present epigones demand that Lenin be acknowledged infallible in order the more easily to extend the same dogma to themselves" (Volume III, page 355).

Trotzky's treatment of Kerensky and of the February Regime is even more open to the charge that here speaks the partisan and not the historian. This is the more unfortunate, in that the mere record of the Kerensky Regime adds up to a terrific indictment for muddle-headedness, stupidity, political ineptness and theoretical unsoundness. It is enough to arraign Kerensky and the various coalition governments for failure to understand the masses, particularly to their reaction to the war, for their deep-rooted class fear, for their fetishism of democracy, without resorting, as does Trotzky in consonance to the communist tradition, to scurrilous charges of betrayal of the revolution, counter-revolution, Bonapartism and Kornilovism (Volume II, chapters 8-9). It is at this distance clear enough what sort of man Kerensky was, and what forces brought him to the fore in the February Revolution. The social-democratic parties everywhere produce men of his type, flamboyant sentimentalists who hate to make a decision, men enchanted by words, who mistake rotund oratory for revolutionary accomplishments. Coming from the middle classes, and imposing themselves as leaders upon the proletariat, they fail in crises to fulfill their func-

tions as leaders. There are moments that make such men important; there are situations that reject them. It is inevitable that their opponents should use as weapons against them in the heat of conflict accusations that would not hold upon reflection. The charge that Kerensky conspired with Kornilov in the August putsch is a case in point.

After all the evidence is in, Trotzky has not made this part of his case against Kerensky. The material he presents is intricate and involved; it is in large measure based on conversations reported long after the event, on inferential interpretations of acts and words and of amplifications of documentary evidence which to say the least is hardly a fair method of writing history.

There is hardly a move, a phrase, or a line that he adduces as evidence of Kerensky's criminal alliance with Kornilov, that is not susceptible to another interpretation than the one he wishes to impose on us. He amply proves that Kerensky was a blunderer, that he was gullible and weak. He does not prove that he was a traitor.

It is necessary in order to understand the failure of Kerensky, to grasp the fatal folly of the Kerensky war policy. The allied powers, and in particular Lloyd George and Wilson must share with Kerensky the responsibility for the ill-starred July offensive, which was born of Kerensky's determination to show his allied democracies that the Russian Revolution was as eager as they "to make the world safe for democracy". Instead it made the world the haunt of dictatorship.

While the charge that Trotzky has weighted the evidence against Kerensky could easily be maintained, enough of the factual structure remains to condemn the February Regime as one of the most pathetic failures in history. Here was a government that from February to July had the masses overwhelmingly on its side. Through one disappointment after another, with almost naive faith the masses remained faithful to it, yet it committed blunder after blunder and because of its colossal errors it fell, and bequeathed to us that era of dictators that proceeds with grim logic from Lenin through Mussolini and Stalin to Hitler. If there is lack of faith in

democracy today, if the nations everywhere, and particularly the youth in all nations, assert their faith in dictatorship, the responsibility rests in the first instance on the Kerensky Regime. For that Regime mistook the forms of democracy for its substance.

It continued the war, although it must have known that the masses were weary of war and would have followed the devil himself had he promised peace.

It failed to ratify the peasants' seizure of the land, although for this it had the sanction of the French Revolution which it pretended to venerate, and although the distribution of the land was the time-honored program of the Social-Revolutionary party of which Kerensky was a member.

It refused to use the power that the masses gave it, prefering to have the approval of the Allied statesmen and of the Russian bourgeoisie for its moderation and good sense.

It spoke the language of democracy but shrank from the reality; it could not imagine power resting with the great unwashed.

It is not necessary to accept the communist mythology to recognize these truths. One of the penalties the Social Democratic movement the world over has paid for the Kerensky debacle (and I am tempted to add for the fall of MacDonald and the collapse of the German Republic) has been the gradual loss of the "socialist" content of its ideology while emphasis on the verbal worship of "democracy" has grown. We tend to forget that we are democrats because we are socialists and that we are socialists because we want state power to rest in the hands of the workers.

Trotzky's story of the October insurrection, insofar as it is not a polemic in his battle with Stalin, is of interest mainly to the military revolutionary tactician. Trotzky indignantly rejects the charge that Lenin and his associates were Blanquists, although he is careful (Volume III, pages 169-170) to qualify this with the statement that it is not insurrection as a method that he rejects so much as Blanqui's insistence on the barricades as a specific tactic. While Trotzky himself disowns Blanquism and would consequently disavow the fet-

ishism of the October insurrection that has become an integral part of communist tactics, the communists themselves are actively at work spreading a Blanquist version of the revolution. The current communist argument that a war is necessary for the creation of a revolutionary situation is pure Blanquism. The argument is that for insurrections the proletariat needs the cooperation of the army; that only a defeated citizen army is in a revolutionary mood; that only in a war and presumably in a long and bloody war can the will to revolution develop either among the people or in the army. Hence, let us have war.

It is a communist myth that the October revolution was on the whole bloodless. This is true if we limit our attention to the events that directly accompanied the seizure of power in Petrograd. Few major revolutions have been accomplished with so little bloodshed. But a revolution must maintain the power that it seizes, and the cost of revolutions in terms of blood and life must take into account those slain in the civil war, by the cheka, in the Polish War and by the dislocation of industry. Trotzky implies that the civil wars might in part have been avoided had the new Soviet power in 1917 arrested the members of the constituent assembly instead of allowing them to disburse. This, for Trotzky, is excessively naive.

Trotzy offers the only justification that can possibly be advanced for Lenin's policy toward the national minorities in Russia. On the theory that a revolution requires all the aid that it can garner, and that to sacrifice a possible source of strength for a quixotic adherence to a theory, it was according to Trotzky justifiable to draw the national minorities into the revolution by promising them concessions which in the end must prove illusory. The danger that lies in their consequent disillusionment he prefers not to mention. Or perhaps he assumes that when the national minorities in Russia awaken to the fact that they will after all be assimilated by a larger ethnical group and that their beloved national customs and languages are doomed to die out, they will no longer be in a position to resist.

The American reader of this book will note with some

interest how frequently Trotzky quotes John Reed, whom he praises as a man who can see and hear and who can report what he sees and hears. I recall an article written in 1915 or 1916 by Reed in which Pancho Villa is made to appear the romantic hero of the Mexican revolution, and that recollection makes me doubt Reed's capacity either as observer or as reporter. I recall Reed very vividly as a romantic playboy of the revolution, a restless, volatile enthusiast whose emotional outbursts had an intensely poetic quality. A Kerensky sort of man. A strange person for Trotzky to choose as his model of the accurate reporter.

These three volumes are not a history of the Russian Revolution. They are a great historic document. They present the picture of a man who in the pride of his achievements is not afraid to betray himself a hopeless adolescent. This is a piece of special pleading, a vigorous plea for what? Vain as Kerensky, oratorical as Kerensky, an exile like Kerensky, Trotzky dreams of a return from Elba,—or is it Saint Helena? This book is his bid for power. I do not think it will accomplish its purpose.

Germany Enters the Third Reich

by Calvin B. Hoover, The Macmillan Co. N. Y. $2.50.

This book contains a tragic record. It is possible to quarrel with the author on any number of details, but in the end even the most passionate defender of the German Social Democracy will be compelled to grant his contention that if Hitler is in power to-day the Social Democrats paved the way to a certain degree for him. Their fetishism of democracy, their fatuity in allowing armed forces like the Stahlhelm, the Storm Troopers, etc.—forces independent of and hostile to the government—to exist, their illogical reliance on monarchist officers in the Reichswehr and in the diplomatic service, their failure to seize the judicial power, and above all, their failure to carry through to its logical end the Revolution they began in November 1918,—these made Hitler and fascism possible. Professor Hoover does not fail to give due weight to the economic collapse of 1929, to the irritation resulting from the

Versailles Treaty, to the criminal stupidity, or worse, of the communists in splitting the proletarian forces, to the mood of desperation that seized the middle classes when small business went to the wall in the inflation, and when the professions and the government offices became overcrowded. When all this evidence is in, it is still clear that had the Social Democrats dared to use the power that twice was theirs—in 1918, and again in 1920 after the Kapp "putsch", they might have made Hitler impossible. He strangely hints that had Hitler been dealt with in 1923, after his own "putsch", as Hitler now deals with the slightest hint of opposition, the history of Germany would have been different.

Professor Hoover ascribes the weakness of the German Social Democrats to their slave-psychology, to their fear of communism, to their petty-bourgeois outlook, and above all to their failure to think to the logical conclusion of their Marxian principles. This indictment, too, must stand.

Professor Hoover attempts to state the philosophical bases, the political theories and the economic doctrines of the German fascists. He is hampered here by the confusion in Nazi thinking. In so far as there is a Nazi philosophy, it is simply the nationalism of the **Sturm und Drang** era, made acute and embittered by the consciousness of defeat. A feeling of impotence in the face of hostile forces compels them to find a scape-goat. What better victim than the Jew? The incredibly fierce flame of hatred for the Jew that is still burning in Germany flows not from reason, but from a sick chauvinism. It will not so soon die down.

The political theories of the Nazis are those of the Italian fascists. The state is above all. Democracy is not so much a sham, as a hateful fallacy. There is no freedom except in so far as the state grants freedom. The subject has duties, not rights. All forms of life—literature, the arts, religion must be subordinate to the state.

In presenting the economic theories of Nazism, Professor Hoover rather emphatically asserts that it is a mistake to imagine that the fascists are nationalists rather than socialists. If he is right they take their "Socialism" such as it is, very

seriously. It is, to be sure, Socialism only in name. The Nazis will not nationalize or socialize industry. Instead they intend to "co-ordinate" it. This seems to mean that the government intends to appoint the directors and managers of all important business enterprises. By this means it plans to regulate wages, prices, conditions of labor, competition and production. No attack on property is intended. Professor Hoover is quite right in insisting that this form of control is hardly old-fashioned **laissez faire** capitalism. That it even distantly approaches Socialism no one will assert. It is clear from the record that the Nazi regime intends to be a government of, by and for the middle classes. I do not share Professor Hoover's feeling that they can succeed in this. Sooner or later the great capitalists will fall heir to the middle class revolution, and use its child, the Nazi state, as their instrument of oppression.

Professor Hoover thinks the Nazi regime, humanly speaking, is permanent, and that the world must reckon with it for some time to come. It plans no wars now. But it does plan to expand into the Slavic East, and hence become a danger to the peace of the world. It will repudiate its war debts and fully intends to re-arm. This, in Professor Hoover's opinion, makes a war, sooner or later, inevitable.

We are warned in this book not to take Hitler's words at face value. When he speaks of peace, he means war. His promises are without meaning. He has developed to perfection the art of lulling an opponent to sleep by fine words. Professor Hoover quotes an amazing record of fine promises that Hitler made—and broke. The number of otherwise sane men taken in by him is legion. As a last standing example, Professor Hoover points out that nearly the whole world was deceived by Hitler's speech on peace in the Reichstag in May, 1933. Peace, to the Nazis, means only a peace on their terms.

There are many facets of this remarkable story to which more attention ought to be given. The book is the more valuable because, while the author betrays no love for the Nazis or Hitler, it is written restrainedly and without undue heat.

David P. Berenberg.