

# SOCIALIST REVIEW •

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HERBERT ZAM: Editor

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## May Day, 1938

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# SOCIALIST REVIEW

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HERBERT ZAM, Editor

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## May Day and International Labor

by Herbert Zam

MAY DAY has always been an *international* proletarian celebration, a day for the renewal and strengthening of the bonds tying the workers of all countries together in the common struggle against the common foe. May Day has therefore reflected the character of the international labor movement. When labor was really imbued with the spirit of internationalism, the world's May Day celebrations assumed an aspect of international labor unity. On the other hand, on the occasions when labor was broken up into nationalist groups, in each country in alliance with the capitalists of that country, May Day was a demonstration of the division in labor's ranks.

Twenty-three years ago the world was at war. It was a war for "democracy". Millions of workers, with no stake on either side in that war, had been led into it by this slogan and were slaughtering each other. To carry on effective war against their brothers, the workers in each country had found it necessary to make peace with their enemies. The "union sacre", the civil peace which prohibited the class struggle was in force. And how could there be a union sacre if the workers were to be permitted to demonstrate on May Day—for what? Someone might shout for peace! Someone might shout for international solidarity! Out of habit, the demonstration might become a demonstration for the class struggle. This could not be permitted. And so the official leadership of the labor movement in the war countries *forbade* any celebration of May Day on the first May Day of the war. The workers were to celebrate by *working*, turning out more guns and ammunition, planes and bombs, submarines and grenades, so that the workers from other countries might be slaughtered more effectively in the war for "democracy".

May Day 1938 will be celebrated not in the midst of a war, but on the eve of one. Again it will be a war for "democracy". May Day celebrations are not yet prohibited, but the "union sacre" is already in prepa-

ration. A few days before this is written, Blum went out as premier and Daladier stepped in. This was a symbolic change. Blum represented the People's Front. But Daladier no longer has a people's front government. He is the representative of national unity. Blum typified the final flame of the desire for a rapprochement between the working class and the "left" bourgeoisie as a savior of democracy. But Daladier insists on unity not only with the left bourgeoisie, but with the whole nation—with the capitalist class as a whole. When Daladier obtained an almost unanimous vote in the Chamber, it was possible to declare—union sacre lives again! When the New York Times, hailing the "good news from France" declares that "at last a united front swallowed up the Popular Front," it is merely voicing its satisfaction at what was an inevitable result. When the working class starts out to embrace the "democratic" capitalists, it usually ends up tightly in the embrace of—fascist capitalists. The German workers stampeded for Hindenburg in order to run from Hitler. They got Hindenburg, then Hitler. The French workers moving from Popular Front through national front to national defense in war are likely to end up with a fascist regime at their throat—unless they reverse this process in time.

Two years ago on May Day, revolutionary socialists everywhere warned against the siren tones of class peace through people's front. Last year on May Day, in spite of the fact that the people's front was at the height of its glory, revolutionary socialists again warned of pitfalls on the road. This May Day it is possible to judge whether or not the road of people's frontism has promoted even the most elementary interests of the workers. Shall we turn to Spain for an answer? Ironically, at each moment of crisis for the courageous and self-sacrificing anti-fascist fighters in Spain, not their enemies were in power in Paris, but their "friends", the people's front. And each time the Spanish fighters turned in vain for help. The treatment of Spain by its



friends resembles a gigantic dramatization of a scene from the New Testament: "Twice shall ye embrace me and twice shall ye betray me." But the source for this betrayal cannot be found in the character of Leon Blum or any of his ministers. It is interwoven with the class relations in capitalist society. Any alliance between workers and capitalists will betray an even remotely revolutionary cause—and since it is easier to betray such a cause abroad, that is where it will begin. It will end by the betrayal of the working class at home, together with all its causes and aspirations. Austria lies prostrate under Hitler's foot today, a victim of an alliance between the workers and "good" capitalists, organized to preserve democracy, perpetuated to keep Hitler out. This alliance first lulled the workers to sleep, slaughtered them when they half understood what was going on, then threw the gates open to Hitler. The capitalists in Czechoslovakia will not follow another policy. They may throw the gates open to a different Hitler—they will not risk their lives and property in fighting one. Already the "union sacre" in that country has outlawed May Day, with the acquiescence of the leaders of the labor movement. Militancy on May Day and "national defense" do not go well together.

In France, union sacre is already beginning to manifest itself in industry, as in politics. The strikers in the aviation industries—at any rate their leaders—agreed to return to work as a "patriotic" duty, and agreed, also, to accept a longer working week to assure the carrying out of the national defense plans. This process is a bit more difficult in England, where a national front has not yet been established, and where, therefore, the unions are willing to cooperate in the national defense program only on the basis of concessions, not of a political nature, but of an economic nature. Under this arrangement, if the workers in the munition plants are paid slightly more than previously, presumably their leaders will put the union label on the products, and the workers dying from them in other countries will at least have the satisfaction of a union-made death. Thus chauvinism is passing over from phrases to concrete demonstration. And this is also in accord with tradition. There is not, and cannot be, a middle ground between pro-war and anti-war. One starts out supporting war with reservations and ends up as the most rabid of all its advocates. In this respect also, today's trend in the peoples front labor movement is against the best traditions of May Day. May Day always had an international and anti-chauvinist character. The struggle against the last war, in the midst of that war, really began with the May Day Manifesto of the revolutionary Socialists of Germany, led by Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg. In a manifesto which did not see the light of day until May 31, and which had to be smuggled out of the country and printed in a Socialist paper in Switzerland—these heroic anti-war figures

dared maintain what previously everybody had paid lip service to "Der Hauptfeind steht in Eigenen Land"—the main enemy is at home. And the first mass struggle against the war in the midst of the war was the monster May Day meeting in Berlin, when Liebknecht, within hearing distance of the Chancellory and War Ministry, called upon the 200,000 workers who assembled to hear him to take up the struggle against the war and against Kaiserism and capitalism. If the Communists of today still cling to the glorious name of Liebknecht, it is only in order to cover up the fact that they stand today where Liebknecht's enemies stood in 1915 and 1916—on the side of the war makers and the chauvinists. Their unity with the capitalists in all countries, their opposition to the Ludlow amendment, their support of the O'Connell bill, their support of the Big Navy Bill show that in the coming war they will play the roles played in 1914 by Mussolini, Noske, Smeral, Cachin, Spargo.

In the 1936 election campaign, the Communists issued the slogan "Keep America out of war by keeping war out of the world." Many pacifists, not seeing the reality of this slogan, joined with the Communists in the founding of all sorts of leagues and societies, all of which, in the course of the last two years, have become pro-war organizations. This did not happen through chance. The slogan is a pro-war slogan. It is a counter weight to what the Communists dub "isolationism". For this slogan means that so long as war cannot be kept out of the world—and it cannot short of the Socialist revolution—then the workers of America and, of course, of other countries, should favor and support pushing their countries into war. When it is further considered that the Communists believe that all war danger stems from the fascist nations, that a war against such nations would be beneficial to "democracy", then it is obvious that the Communists, far from wanting to keep America out of war, would strain every effort to get this country into a war if it broke out—on the side of "democracy", of course, in the good old Wilson manner.

It is the unmasking of this slogan of the Communists which led to the launching of the "Keep America Out of War" Movement, a movement which includes labor and pacifists, Socialists and non-socialists, proletarian internationalists and "isolationists"—but, nevertheless, a movement made up of elements who are opposed to American participation in any war, no matter what its origin. These elements may have, and do have, different reasons for their beliefs, but so long as they agree on the immediate program, it is possible for them to work together. Of course, Socialists are not isolationists, either in the sense in which it is used by the proponents or the opponents of this theory. Socialists do *not* believe that America, an imperialist country tied by a million bonds to world imperialism, can remain aloof from the world struggle; Socialists do not believe



that the capitalist class which rules this country is willing to remain aloof from the world struggle; nor do they believe that, in the last analysis, it will be possible to keep this country out of war if it remains a capitalist country. Socialists are *not* isolationists, because they believe in international proletarian action, in the world-wide class struggle, and in world-wide class organization. But Socialists see no reason why they should promote international capitalist solidarity, which will not only be a stimulant toward war, but will also be a weapon against the proletarians of all countries, just as the League of Nations in the post-war years was an organization for the suppression of social revolution in the defeated nations. When Socialists fight *against* alliances with other countries, therefore, they are fighting for peace, for alliances under a system of world imperialism must be imperialist alliances, alliances for the promotion of war and the oppression of the workers and toiling masses everywhere.

War cannot be prevented under capitalism, but the struggle against war is for Socialists one of their *raison d'être*. For the struggle against war, more than any other single phase of working class activity, can expose the system of capitalism and prepare the workers and large sections of the middle class for social revolution. And the struggle against war must assume two essential forms—international unity of the workers against world imperialism, and the fight of the workers in each individual country to keep *their own country out of war*. Unless this latter task is carried out, the struggle against war loses all meaning and content. Like the social revolution itself, the struggle against war is international in content, but national in form, and in each country must be the task of the workers of that country. This was the meaning of Debs' long prison sentences and his declaration: "For a capitalist war, I will not shed a single drop of blood of a single worker anywhere. For the workers cause I will give my all."

The Soviet Union this May Day will again turn out millions in an official May Day celebration. Will these millions remember that they are marching over the bodies of the very ones who made their revolution possible? Will they think back to the last war and remember the roles of Lenin and other Bolsheviks who refused to succumb to the fever of war hysteria, and who fought thru from isolation and exile to leadership and a great revolution which began as a mass anti-war movement of an entire nation? And thinking back, will they contrast that situation with the present policies of their "beloved leaders" who, hand in glove with "democratic" imperialists, are if not preparing the new war to save the world for democracy, certainly not doing anything to prevent it, to expose it? Will they contrast the advice Stalin gives his followers in the capitalist countries of "national defense" with Lenin's advice in 1914 of "revolutionary defeatism"? The Soviet Union this May Day is at the crossroads of historic development. Stalin's

recent admission that there is not yet socialism in the Soviet Union, after having declared for five years that socialism had already been achieved, must in itself be a complete condemnation of his course. Can the badly distorted "proletarian dictatorship" be restored somewhat to its normal shape? Or is it already beyond repair? Do the killings of the cream of the Old Bolshevik revolutionists represent the last flare-up of a dying system of terror and assassination or do they indicate the final and irrevocable departure of the Russian revolution from the path of proletarian to neo-capitalist, passing first thru a transition system neither proletarian nor bourgeois? These questions require answers—speedily, categorically. But not answers in the *Daily Worker*; not answers from the platform; not answers through argument. Answers through speedy and thoroughgoing changes in the Soviet Union to convince the workers of the world that it is still on the proletarian path.

May Day 1938 finds the capitalist world "celebrating" the ninth successive year of its current crisis. On May Day 1937 the United States was enjoying Roosevelt New Deal prosperity, but the U. S. is again in the throes of a "recession" which has added millions of new unemployed to the previous ten million. Can this ten-year old crisis, of such tremendous dimensions, be attributed to anything else except the death throes of the capitalist system of production? And when it is remembered that a large portion of the employed population is working only because of the war preparations of the entire world, it becomes obvious that the capitalist system can no longer keep the slaves at their task. The frenzied war preparations, the ten-year crisis, the rapid growth of fascism thruout the world, are all symptoms of the same disease of capitalism—a disease of old age. The old saying that "capitalism has outlived its usefulness" is today not a mere generalization on the course of history, but a statement of the actual, current condition of society. Capitalism in its decadent stage tries to prolong its life by forceful suppression of the class struggle, an objective which "democratic" capitalism endeavors to accomplish by guile in the union sacre. The obliteration of the class struggle makes it possible for capitalism to maintain the rate of profit, which under "free" capitalism always tends to decline. It is therefore no more possible to prevent fascism under capitalism than to prevent war. The struggle against these two twin evils of capitalism can be carried through to a successful conclusion only on a thoroughly socialist program, a struggle which can be led only by the revolutionary working class and its party.

The ten-year decline of capitalism provides an incentive for Socialists to redouble their efforts. Let May Day 1938 become an occasion for the rededication of the forces of the working class for the international struggle for Socialism as the one means to eliminate capitalism and its accompanying evils—crises, exploitation, fascism and wars.



# COLLECTIVE SECURITY AND SOCIALISM

by Norman Thomas

IT IS now twenty one years since the United States entered a great war allegedly to end war and to make the world safe for democracy. The United States and the allied nations won that war. But today the United States and the world stand at the threshold of a greater war.

As for "democracy", the world is so far from safe for it that in country after country even the ideal has given way to the totalitarian state. South of Scandinavia and east of the French and Swiss borders, save for Czechoslovakia, Europe is occupied by a crazy quilt of authoritarian states. In none of them is dictatorship more absolute or more red handed than in the Soviet Union despite Stalin's boast that in that great land socialism has been established. But the U.S.S.R., concerned with its own problems and relatively satisfied with its own vast territories and resources, has followed an eminently peaceful foreign policy. It is Germany and Italy, the fascist states, and Japan, which may fairly be called quasi fascist, which are the aggressors. All these are pledged to opposition to "communism", and Germany and Italy have established the so-called Rome-Berlin axis. Together they have waged undeclared war in alliance with the Spanish fascists against the legitimate—and democratic—government of Spain. Hitler has torn up paragraph after paragraph of the Versailles treaty and, by military force, though without battle, united his homeland, Austria, to the German Reich.

Under these circumstances, not unnaturally, the cry again is raised: "democracies to the rescue; fascism must be stopped." Here in the United States there is a growing demand that the United States "do something" to establish a collective security for mankind. (I have yet to hear any agreement among the preachers of "collective security" concerning just what the United States should do or what the chances of war are in the doing of it!) Before we turn to an examination of this nation's duty, let us look at the issue. Is it basically democracy versus fascism? If so, what happened to the triumphant democracies of 1918? What now endangers democracy? How can it be saved? The answers to these and similar questions will appear from a plain statement of fact.

The principal combatants among the victors in the first World War, Great Britain, France and the United States, were, and still are, bourgeois democracies, capitalist in their economy, imperialist in foreign relations. The war itself was not a war for democracy, but a clash of rival imperialisms. The Peace of Versailles was a peace of vengeance. It set up an impossible Europe mostly in the interest of French military hege-

mony. It intensified capitalist nationalism. Fascism of some sort might have been a stage in the breakdown of capitalism without the war or the peace of Versailles, but its peculiarly aggressive form, especially in Germany, was a direct consequence of the war and the peace. Austria's doom was decreed in the peace of St. Germain; it was made more certain when France and Britain refused to permit even a customs union with Germany; it was sealed when the "democracies" did not so much as protest while Dolfuss at Mussolini's bidding violently destroyed the socialist movement. After that it was only a question of time until his party's impotent dictatorship would fall before Mussolini or far more probably Hitler. The successful rise of the dissatisfied nations in the House of Haves—Not, Italy, Turkey, Germany, against the terms of the treaties of 1919, was not proof of the weakness, excessive good nature, or indecision of real democracy. It was proof in large part of the unworkability of those treaties and of the League which rested upon and was supposed to maintain so precarious a status quo. It is true that the peoples of Great Britain and France had enough revulsion against war, enough unrest of conscience over Versailles, to hesitate to use military might against Turkey, Italy or Germany. But the outstanding reason for the failure of the so-called democracies "to curb the aggressors" in the decade of the thirties is the fact that their "democracy" is so imperfect; that it is ridden by the class conflict at home and while opposed to new aggressors is still concerned with hanging on to what its ancestors took by aggression.

Today there is a growing unity of dislike of Mussolini and Hitler in the democracies and the U.S.S.R. But that is all the unity there is, and that is recent and not too strong. Mussolini in his first years of power was greatly aided by British and American loans. Even today most of the British Tories and the French bourgeoisie greatly prefer Mussolini and Hitler to any kind of genuine social revolution. They have hesitated to act against the dictators in Abyssinia or Spain or even to give a fair deal to the victims of aggression because they were afraid of what might happen should these tyrants fall. The upper classes in the powerful "democracies" recognize that it has become impossible to make over Central Europe—to say nothing of China—in the pattern of the 19th century bourgeois democracy. And they do not want the genuine democracy of socialism. Indeed they took pains to crush that wherever they could, after the first World War. It is only romantics like the *New York Times*, the *Nation*, the *Daily Worker* and Dorothy Thompson who will not



see—or admit—that any successful democracy must be characterized by something more than the negative fear and hatred of Hitler and Mussolini. Perhaps a common hate, fear and interest may again unite the “democracies” against the fascist totalitarian states. They will unite because of common, national or imperial interest, not for an ideal end. And if they win they will make a worse peace than at Versailles because they will have no philosophy save national interest on which to act. Democracy will be the thing for which young idealists again may think they die; it will not be the animating principle of generals and statesmen.

These facts are so obvious that they need only to be stated. But men who will grudgingly admit them will refuse to face the logical consequence. That consequence is that fascism will not be overcome by a new war of democratic nations. This is not because of the overwhelming military strength of the Rome-Berlin-Tokyo triangle. The nations comprising it have very strong armies and have made military gains, but they are fatally weak in natural resources as compared with Great Britain, France, the U.S.S.R. and China, even without the United States. If Hitler pushes his dominion over non-Germanic peoples in Central Europe he will add to his internal enemies. Already the Rome-Berlin axis has been weakened by Hitler's march to the Brenner Pass. Mussolini's recent bombastic speech was part whistling to keep up his courage, part warning to France to stay out of Spain, part warning to his German ally whose good faith he has reason to measure by his own. The present strength of fascism is derived most of all from (1) fascist sympathies or tendencies within the bourgeois democracies; and (2) the extraordinary blow dealt to the working class solidarity and revolutionary idealism by Stalin's brutal dictatorship, his purges, and his betrayal of socialist democracy.

Nevertheless, despite all difficulties, it is still true that the answer to fascism must come from the workers, and that it must be revolutionary in the most constructive sense of the word. The agents of victory cannot be the armies of capitalism and nationalism from which fascism itself has sprung. Already Hitler by two purges in Germany has destroyed two hopes: the first, that somehow Nazism might be made socialist from within—always an unsound hope; and the other, that the army could and would carry out a polite conservative revolution or, at least, hold Hitler in check. The remaining alternative is a revitalized socialism. In China today, after years of civil strife—which will be remembered—the middle classes, the nationalists, the peasants and the new class of industrial workers are temporarily making common cause against the Japanese exploiters. They might temporarily welcome American help against Japan, but victorious American armies could solve nothing and might simply take the place of the Japanese in the effort to exploit the Chinese. It is the masses

of workers and peasants in the Far East who must achieve their own destiny with such help as their comrades in other lands—not capitalist governments—can give them.

In saying this I am far from affirming that there is no difference between bourgeois democracy and fascism. I greatly prefer the former and believe that in some countries it may give way to socialism without a dreadful fascist interlude. Of course I do not want to see the Czechs pass under Hitler's yoke. But bourgeois democracy will never successfully play the role of a crusading Sir Galahad. And here the record of what it has not done is overwhelming evidence. American participation in “collective security” would not change any of the essentials of the European scene or give the bourgeois democracy of Chamberlain, Eden or the French general staff the qualities that it lacks. Roosevelt's war certainly would not cure what Wilson's war so largely caused. Another thing that I am not doing is to affirm that war is to be welcomed or tolerated because *inevitably* it will give way to constructive revolution. Socialists in every land should do what circumstances permit, to use the dreadful occasion of war for the advancement of international socialism. But modern war by its nature is all too likely to lead to chaos. It destroys the qualities successful socialism needs. The immediate result of war in America would be a military totalitarian state, the practical equivalent of fascism. And if American arms were victorious there would be small chance of a desirable social revolution. The immediate victor, should we escape chaos, would probably be an American imperialism.

Indeed it is American imperialism, made more urgent and aggressive by the failure of Roosevelt's New Deal, which is likely to carry us into a new war. Collective security or defense against fascism will be only the rationalization which the war makers need. The Communists may play a great role in popularizing the war. They will not control it or guide it unless they go completely over to the imperialists. Stalin may or may not win something from American participation in war. Socialism will not. Hence it is our business to struggle incessantly to keep America out of war. The price of war is fascism and brutalization at home with no corresponding benefit abroad. We judge all policies by their bearing on Keeping America out of War. We are not primarily isolationists; not primarily advocates of any kind of neutrality. We judge all policies on the basis of their relation to our entry into a war which will make conscripts out of us all. We believe in the maximum possible co-operation for peace, the maximum possible isolation from war. Collective security might have been possible without war at various times in the past. (However the failure of the nations to use it suggests that capitalist nationalism cannot apply true collective

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# THOUGHTS IN SEASON

by Sidney Hook

*"Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."*

—Santayana

THOSE for whom Marx's writings are sacred texts are usually baffled when confronted by specific problems. For it is always possible, when eyes read with faith instead of critical understanding, to find passages to justify policies completely opposed to each other. Marx and Engels supported some wars and opposed others. It is therefore simple when fresh occasions arise, to seize on one or another of these past situations, generalize to the present on the basis of a real or fancied similarity between them, and parade some solution which usually has been reached on some other ground, under the mantle of Marx's authority.

Quite different is the approach of those for whom Marxism is a tool for understanding the social world and not an opium for the orthodox. After all, Marx reached his conclusions without referring to sacred texts and without resorting to easy absolutes which provided answers to all questions in advance. It should be possible, then, to state the Marxist position on war today so that its validity, from the point of view of those who accept the ideals of socialism, is apparent in the analysis of the relevant evidence.

It used to be a commonplace of socialist thought—and it is now a tested leading principle of modern scientific history—that the basic cause of war in the present era is economic conflict within nations and between nations. But like many other commonplaces of socialist thought, the fact that it has been often mouthed is no guarantee that it has been understood. Were it understood, it would be impossible for people who imagine they are socialists to support a policy of collective security, by which one group of capitalist powers seeks to impose its will on another. Many of these socialists usually accept this commonplace and believe they understand it, until some actual war situation arises. Then they either discard it as obviously false in *this* case, or hold on to it verbally with the qualification that it must not be taken too literally or one-sidedly.

One of the most important reasons for failure to grasp the relevance of this "commonplace" to actual war situations, where fully developed capitalist nations are involved, lies in an initial misunderstanding of it. It is assumed that when socialists assert that the basic cause of war is economic antagonisms they mean that these are the *sole* cause. But on any specific occasion when war is *imminent*, everybody is aware of the fact that there are other causes operating—political, psychological and ethical. Indeed, it is usually about these that people get excited. In 1917, it was submarines,

the fear of Kaiserism, kinship with the Anglo-Saxon tradition, violation of Belgium's neutrality, etc. In 1938, it is the Panay incident, the Ethiopian outrage, the Austrian coup, etc. In fact people can not be rallied by an appeal to fight for economic interests, for this invites the simple retort, "Whose?" Even where there is talk about the "Empire", the appeal is psychological rather than economic. But after the war is over, and it is viewed retrospectively, even the war-socialists are compelled to admit that the basic factor was economic. The chain of causation becomes clear including why, when and where the non-economic factors entered as contributing, and often necessary, elements. The overwhelming majority of the war-socialists of 1914-8 lived to revise their evaluation of the causes of the last war. In the light of the consequences of that war not a single rationalization for supporting it retained its validity.

When socialists say, then, that the basic cause of war is economic they do not mean that this is the only cause; they admit that there are other kinds of opposition between people and nations; they even predict that when war does come every one of these other oppositions will be exploited as the "real" reason for going to war. In broad outline, the same analysis holds for anti-Semitism and race wars when they assume virulent form. At such times, it is always some latent psychological or religious opposition which is seized upon to justify overt attack. Subsequent analysis shows that these, although genuine enough, were not primary and that when *both* groups are economically prosperous, they do not lead to general violence or repression.

Further, socialists can admit that rarely, if ever, do nations go to war willingly. People may like glory but they usually prefer to remain alive to enjoy it. But war between modern capitalist nations flows from the inability of their economy to sustain the rate of profit, the level of employment and the standard of living of the working masses, and from the domestic tensions resulting from that inability. War is as natural *between* capitalist nations as strikes are *within* capitalist nations. No one likes to go on strike. If the workers could get what they want without striking and if the employers could keep their rate of profit no matter what the workers received, there would be no strikes. But the upshot of the Marxian critique of capitalism is that neither strikes nor wars can be avoided for long. On the socialist position, the only way which the economic conflicts which rend society—national and international—can be avoided is by a fundamental change in the social order, i.e., by the introduction of socialism. At the very least, this is a necessary condition. Wars may ease the tension between and within capitalist societies until they

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mount once more. In view of what modern science is capable of, neither God nor the *Natur-Dialektik* can guarantee that civilization will survive another holocaust. The only genuine alternative to war is socialism, and the only effective struggle in the long run against war is a struggle against the economic conditions which breed wars.

Before 1914 these statements were part of the common tradition of the socialist movement. After 1918, the socialists who denied them when the war broke out had additional evidence, even if of an indirect kind, of their validity. But in 1938 a new crop of war-socialists is challenging them again. Today they are calling for collective security to be implemented, if necessary, by military sanctions. Tomorrow, the slogan may be different but the logic of their position does not differ very much from that of the war-socialists of 1914. Where it does differ, as in the case of the Stalinists, their position, as we shall see, is much worse. But since all groups who have abandoned the Marxist position, call today for collective security, we must direct our analysis primarily against this slogan.

1. It must be stressed that any support of collective security by socialists is a trap for the socialist movement. If the country is part of the collective security bloc, it must raise its war potential to the highest power. Every interruption of industry, every attempt on the part of the working class to assert itself *militantly* for better conditions, interferes with the mobilization of sentiment and resources. How can socialists support the collective security program for their own country and lead the struggle for better conditions which objectively imperils that program? France is a case in point. If they are sincere in one, they cannot be sincere in the other.

2. Suppose that in one of the countries which is part of the collective security bloc, a social revolution occurs. Since this would reduce the war-potential of the collective security bloc, the latter would have every inducement to intervene, presumably to put down the strife, actually to restore the class which had originally committed the country to the collective security policy. Further, on the assumption that the collective security bloc would secure peace by making all nations join it, it would have to follow the principle that "peace is indivisible". Since profound social change in any country might inspire similar conflagrations in other countries where objective conditions are bad, and since this would involve the danger of war, the collective security bloc would function as a 20th century Holy Alliance to put down social revolution everywhere. In either case, socialists who support a collective security bloc would be functioning as the hangmen of militant labor movements everywhere.

3. Who would constitute the "collective security bloc"? Would any division of powers today differ substantially from the line-up in 1914? Would their reasons for going to war be substantially different from

those in 1914? England is interested in her life line to India—so interested that as late as February of this year she was bombing the villages in Waziristan and reporting casualties of more than a thousand in the last few months. What figures would the tribesmen report? France is interested in her life line to Northern Africa—so interested that she is compelled to repress colonial independence movements there as well as in her other dependencies. Both have come to terms with Fascist Italy. Both have abetted Italian and German intervention in Spain with the mockery of the Non-Intervention Commission of which Russia is also an honored member. The invasion of Austria by Germany was a violent breach of international law, almost as violent as the invasion of Belgium in 1914. But would war preserve Austrian independence? It was an independent Austria which massacred the Socialist workers in Vienna in 1934. Basically there is no greater political difference between Dollfuss and Seyss-Inquart than between Hindenburg and Hitler.

4. If Italy joins the collective security bloc with her democratic friends, England and France, shall socialists make a distinction between "good Fascist powers" and "bad Fascist powers"? And if the Italian workers arise against Mussolini will collective security socialists call them off, or justify their repression, if their revolt weakens the collective security bloc?

5. What would the workers in democratic countries gain in a war waged by the collective security bloc of capitalist nations? If they escape death and mutilation they will return to a country which in the interests of waging an effective totalitarian war has gone Fascist. The leaders of democratic countries, in discussing what must be done when war comes, make no bones about this. Collective security means war and war means Fascism. Capitalist countries are not opposed to Fascism but to the Fascism of their commercial rivals. And when the economic conflicts are acute, to the democracy of their commercial rivals. All of them are for "culture" and against socialism.

6. Does Russia make a difference to the above analysis? If any socialist believes Russia is a workers' state, then it is fantastic for him to support "collective security". Does he believe that England and France who stood idly by when Fascist powers invaded republican Spain—nay, who abetted them—will fight to defend Russia if she is attacked by Fascist powers? But Stalin believes it. So he does. That does not make it right. Stalin also believed he was strengthening Russia by the Moscow frame-ups which Mussolini hailed as "a commendable service to Fascism". Is it not more likely on a realistic analysis that if Russia is a workers' state—or is even regarded as one by capitalist powers—France and England will join Germany and Italy in a 4-power pact *against* her?

But is Russia a workers' state? Aside from a host

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# UNITED CAPITAL AND DIVIDED LABOR

by Gus Tyler

THE working class has much to learn from the capitalist class on May Day, 1938. And the first lesson is: international solidarity.

The way in which the capitalist class, regardless of national interest, unites internationally in defense of its system is one of the most remarkable phenomena in all social development. In every great crisis, the capitalists have displayed an internationalism of which the working class might well be envious, an internationalism which has always been successful in crushing the workers—except where counter-acted by the international action of the workers.

The first significant conquest of power by what approximated a proletarian revolution was embodied in the Paris Commune of 1871. Against the Communards, the bourgeois republicans of France were helpless. The armies were destroyed in the Franco-Prussian War; the peasants were war weary and disinterested; the Moorish troops and royalist guards were insufficient. France was in the hands of the "mob".

Bourgeois France was saved by its bitter enemy of yesterday, by the German Junkers. It was Bismarck of Prussia who gave his aid to Louis Thiers in crushing the Paris Commune. Against the masses, Bismarck of Prussia and Thiers of Marseilles could unite. They were national enemies, but—class brothers.

In 1917, Finland declared itself a free republic. Elections revealed strong working class sentiment for a Red Republic after 1918, which would orientate itself toward the Soviet Union. The Finnish bourgeoisie was powerless, in the face of the strong working class organization.

So—General Mannerheim turned to—Germany, for aid in crushing the Finnish Revolution. In the spring of 1918, German swords ran red with the blood of fifteen thousand Finnish Socialists and Communists.

The new Finnish Government, which for years had demanded independence, suddenly forgot all about its national desires in the face of a threatening working class upheaval and offered the crown to a German prince, the brother-in-law of the Kaiser. Finn or Teuton, they stood—class against class.

With the end of the World War, the governments of the Central powers collapsed: the empires of the Hohenzollerns and Hapsburgs went up in the flames of revolution.

But when the Arbeiter and Soldaten-Ratten of Berlin met to consider the form of government they were to create, they were presented an ultimatum—from the Allies. They were told bluntly that any attempt to set up a revolutionary government would mean the starva-

tion of Germany by a renewal of the blockade, and that Berlin would be occupied within twenty-four hours.

Whether or not, the German workers should have heeded this threat is a matter for serious debate. Perhaps, a united international action of labor could have turned the threat of the Allies into hollow mockery. The fact remains that the ready bayonets of France, England and America saved Prussian Junkerdom; the cold historical record declares that the voice of Wilson, Lloyd George and Clemenceau preserved the capitalist system which put Hitler into power.

The Revolution in Austria suffered a similar fate.

The Revolution in Hungary ran a slightly different, but not much happier, course. The collapse of the Dual Monarchy was followed in Hungary by the liberal government of Count Karolyi and by the social-democratic government of Dr. Kunfi. As in Russia, however, the revolution could find no stable basis: continued momentums of the revolution placed power in the hands of the Hungarian Soviets, headed by Bela Kun.

The Hungarian ruling classes were powerless, most of the leading individuals having fled the country. Feudal Hungary was saved—by the military and financial efforts of "democratic" England and France. They lent funds, soldiers and ammunitions to Roumanian troops, headed by the Magyar General Horthy to put a White Dictatorship into power in Budapest.

Yesterday—all enemies: France, Britain, Roumania, Hungary. Today—all friends against the masses.

Of course, Point 10 of Wilson's Fourteen Points did read: "The peoples of Austria-Hungary . . . to be accorded the freest opportunity for autonomous development." But then—that point was drawn up to get people to fight in 1917. The smoke of actual battle sort of befogged the issue in 1918.

Point 6 of the Fourteen Points was even more explicit than Point 10. It called for "The Evacuation of all Russian Territory . . . Russia to be given unhampered and unembarrassed opportunity for the independent determination of her own political development and national policy." Russia was to be welcome and "more than welcome" in the League of Nations "under institutions of her own choosing" and was to be given every form of assistance.

In short, the Allies were ready to embrace any kind of Russian Government. That is, any kind except a workers' government. For when the Soviet Regime was established the Red army had to fight off its soil the separate and combined armies of Poland, the Czechs, Germany, Austria, Hungary, France, and the U. S., Mr. Wilson's U. S., if you please.

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For years, the Soviet Union was continually harassed by the armies of the world's democracies. The great democracies told the USSR that it was "more than welcome" to feel the imprint of the "democratic" toe on the seat of its pantaloons.

The international capitalist invasion of Russia was stopped by the international action of the working class. Transport and general strikes, actual and threatened, in England, France, Italy and Belgium saved the USSR. United working class action rescued the Soviet Union.

When in 1934, the workers of Vienna took up guns in defense of their homes and their liberties, it was not Dollfuss alone who crushed them. Behind Dollfuss stood the monies and the troops of Italy.

Historians who try to explain the behavior of nations only in terms of their "national" interests without consideration of the class interests of the ruling group must be at a complete loss to understand not only the aforementioned historical events but also the post-world-war diplomacy of the great empires.

How, for instance, can one explain Britain's constant tolerance for Mussolini's continued encroachments upon the British Empire, especially in the Mediterranean? How explain the Lion's posed nonchalance while Il Duce twists its African tail?

In terms of "national" interest—there is no explanation. In terms of Britain's ruling class interests—it is clear.

Had Britain given such aid to Abyssinia as would have driven the armies of Mussolini back into the Mediterranean, the consequences might have shaken the British as well as the Italian Empire. A victorious Ethiopia would have been the signal for an uprising of all the black and brown races against their oppressors, including their British oppressors. A defeat, moreover, for Mussolini in Addis Abbaba would mean his collapse in Rome, followed by a possible working class revolution in Italy.

Britain's policy had to be a compromise between its class interests and its "narrow" imperialist interests. Britain had to seek a deal with Mussolini, a deal—it is true—made under the best circumstances, after threats, after sabre-rattling, after a popular election to arm "democracy" for a war against "fascism", after a proposed application of oil sanctions, after a speech at Geneva that was so hot it blistered the paint off the dignified walls. But a deal, nevertheless!

In the show-down—Britain and Italy, "democrat" and "fascist", were brothers under the skin, united in their defense of an imperialist system which would keep the oppressed in continued oppression.

How, too, shall we explain the betrayal of Spain?

In terms of purely national interest, France and Britain should have come to the aid of those who wished to drive Italy and Germany from the Iberian Peninsula. But by doing that, Britain and France—better, British and French capital,—were unleashing

forces that would not have halted with the halt of Fascism but would have swept on to make Spain a workers' state, a Socialist society. An early defeat of Franco and a quick victory of the Loyalists would have left the workers with the energy to finish the job they had begun. This British and French—and American—capital, as in 1918, would not permit.

So, they pursued a compromise policy, a policy of benevolent "non-intervention"; i.e. "benevolent" for Franco.

The record of history is clear, without a single exception. Wherever and whenever the capitalists could, they united on an international scale against the revolutionary proletariat.

This does not mean that the capitalists are always united. The economic character of the capitalist world is such that the capitalist nations are pitted against one another in constant competition. As the world market narrows, these struggles become ever more bitter; the competitors grow more and more desperate; and in their desperation they fancy themselves to be far mightier than they are, they conjure up notions of quick victories and brief wars, they permit their megalomania to lead them into a happy suicide.

The capitalist chain will break at its weakest link—perhaps Japan, perhaps Italy or Germany. But history has given us enough examples of the fluidity of that capitalist chain for the workers to realize that while capitalism will break at its weakest link, capitalism can not be overthrown anywhere unless the workers can break or weaken its strongest link.

As in the past, the "strong" armies of the world—the victorious armies after a new world war—will be used to keep the capitalists in power everywhere in the world. The guns for which French communists are voting today will be turned against the USSR; the tanks which British labor is turning out will be used against the workers of Germany, during and after Hitler's rule; the gunpowder which American workers are piling up in the Du Pont plants will be used to blow to pieces the governments that workers are setting up in other lands.

Workers can fight capitalism effectively only if they see the battle as the capitalists see it: in the show-down it is class against class.

The really great struggle in the world is between the oppressed and the oppressors, not between nation and nation; the true battle is international, across all lines and boundaries and colors; the true war is the war of the workers for their liberation.

The issue is not "Collective Security or Isolation"; the capitalist world is too intertwined for any one nation to remain "isolated"; and the capitalist nations are too dependent upon their empires to make anything "collectively secure", except their investments. The issue is workers' internationalism against capitalist ultra-nationalism.



# THE C.I.O. SKIRMISHES WITH DEPRESSION

by Arthur G. McDowell

THE Committee for Industrial Organization movement has for nine months skirmished with the impersonal forces of returning major economic depression and the social forces led to the attack by its open enemy, the militant industrial sections of the employing class and their allies.

The C.I.O. has held its ground better than could be expected against the first, and has definitely improved its position as against the second. This is not to disguise the fact that any main engagement to test drastically and fundamentally the staying powers of the C.I.O. has yet to occur.

The return of depression conditions which was substantially evident by the end of August, 1937, without question caught the C.I.O. leadership and movement by surprise as it did most of the experts of all shades of opinion. The first cruel swathe was cut in textile production and clothing. This hit heavily both the important Textile Workers Organizing Committee and the Amalgamated Clothing Workers and to a much lesser extent the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Unions which were the shock troops and the source of supply in the textile organization drive. The blight immediately affected the promising Shoe Workers Organizing Drive, slowed down the United Electrical and Radio Workers and then settled over the basic areas of Auto, Steel, Glass, Rubber and Aluminum Workers drives with deadly effect.

Coal miners were fortunately not caught so unexpectedly and sharply as the clothing workers but they were also affected and staggering sums had been advanced from the miners' treasury. When the C.I.O. leadership met in Atlantic City at the same time as the Denver A.F. of L. Convention was in session, the subject matter which occupied the closed business sessions was the "slump". The main superiority of the C.I.O. over the old Executive Council of the A.F. of L. not only in terms of leadership and personnel but in superior flexibility and centralization can be clearly seen in the months since the Atlantic City gathering.

A strategic retreat was ordered and carried through. Elements pressing for return to the A.F. of L. were conciliated by the exchanges leading to the launching of negotiations in Washington. This prevented a demoralizing break-up of the C.I.O. front at a strategic moment which would have meant turning a retreat into a rout. The move did not and probably was not intended by either side to really advance a program of reunification. That is a separate question on which So-

cialists find themselves in energetic disagreement with procedure and perspective so far, but this requires another statement. The specific result was that the International Ladies' Garment Workers with some grievances and under terrific pressure from A.F. of L. attack in widespread localities where it has followed run-away shops delayed the probable secession from a permanent C.I.O. until C.I.O. forces had a chance to consolidate and dig in for a defense of organization gains.

The over extended lines of the C.I.O. organization drive and salaried staff were drawn in. The Mine Workers and Amalgamated Clothing Workers set out by drastic measures to refill their depleted treasuries. Responsibility for their own financial and organizational matters was passed over to the miscellaneous organizations as fast as possible. The expense and drain of organizing central bodies was postponed. Support was concentrated in the main related lines, steel, textiles, glass, auto.

Calculated efforts were made not only to relieve the pressure of unemployment upon the new members of the C.I.O. but to tie up the unemployed member with the union: 1) by channelling unemployed activity and grievances through local union committees, which every C.I.O. union was instructed to organize, 2) by placing the C.I.O. in the van of those demanding federal government action to relieve the situation and particularly to increase W.P.A. employment. The official C.I.O. demand for appropriations actually exceeded the amount which the national official set-up of the unemployed, the Workers Alliance, requested. This unemployment relief action was the keenest stroke of the lot since Gompers in the A.F. of L. in 1886 devised the reform of union benefit systems to tie members to the old craft unions when depression made them, the unions, useless for immediate bargaining purposes in the trade.

Political activity was intensified and the C.I.O. went on the offensive with some imagination with a demand launched through Phil Murray and the Steel Workers Organizing Committee for a five billion dollar Federal public housing program for workers' homes. The national wage and hour bill was kept to the fore although losing on test votes as was almost certain in view of the division between C.I.O. and A.F. of L. over the terms of the bill.

The results justified the policy. A clean up of work already undertaken as well as pushing of the legal advantage won under the National Labor Relations Act brought at least election victory in that old anti-union



nest, the International Harvester, McCormick Reaper Workers of May Day and Haymarket Riot fame since Chicago of 1886. Election was secured in the plant of the previously unyielding American Roller Mills Co. 436 out of 516 contracts, including the U. S. Steel, were renewed by the S.W.O.C. In auto both General Motors and Chrysler signed again and Ford, badgered in his outlying plants, lost heavily in prestige and public opinion as a result of vigorous Labor Board decisions against him. Akron Rubber Workers, faced with a major crisis in decentralization and permanent decline of employment, tided themselves over with setting up of an auxiliary unemployed group of some thousands in cooperation with the Workers Alliance and getting them on W.P.A.

The Textile Workers Organizing Committee, in the South particularly, pulled themselves together to win one after another of the Labor Board elections. There should be no illusions about these victories. They did not mean dues paying members for the mills in these three great divisions were substantially idle. The elections did mean evidence of foundation work laid and support of a certain important amount of legal and public opinion which in the Southern United States is of vital importance to the continuing Textile Workers Organization for future work and certainly is a factor in production for consumers as Ford is finding in the case of autos. Workers have not bought and will not buy many new cars but they buy used cars and Fords now clutter the used car market in all important industrial sections where there is organized labor sentiment.

Limited financial support was extended to the second line of C.I.O. organization including Maritime Workers, Shoes, Electrical and Radio, Aluminum and Glass. The National Maritime Union made steady progress on the East Coast under Joe Curran, winning one election after another from company unions and the decrepit A.F. of L. unions in the field. The black mark on this important marine transport workers advance was almost entirely an internal political matter relating to the West Coast where the reckless factionalism and personal dictatorship of Bridges and his Communist Party adherents has spelled disunity and the alienation of the militant seamen under Lundberg from the C.I.O. The Shipyard Workers Industrial Union more than equals this record of steady and solid growth. The Aluminum Workers Union pursuing a Fabian policy of finishing up the establishment of their base in the Aluminum Company of America, the key to the industry, has achieved a relatively stable and highly democratic organization in the midst of the depression. The Shoe Workers won and are holding a surprising number of good contracts and were able to hold real advances in the most exploited sections such as the stitch down or cheap shoe section. Electrical and radio workers, faced with an im-

mense territory, have to spread themselves very thin and have to pay the price of youth and lack of experienced people which is balanced by the vigor and enthusiasm of the large number of younger workers in the industry and in the union. They face stiff A.F. of L. Electrical Workers Brotherhood opposition in several places and have been the victims of some typical Communist Party concentration and "control" drives.

The most uncertain sectors of the C.I.O. front include those sections where there is warfare with a legitimate established organization of the A.F. of L. of some strength. This includes the Bridges Longshoremens and the International Wood Workers as against the teamsters and Lumber and Saw Mill Council of the Carpenters on the West Coast; the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers versus some Federal unions in Brass and Copper industries, in Connecticut and Wisconsin, both strong A.F. of L. centers; the A.F. of L. Upholstery Workers versus the Furniture Workers of the C.I.O.; the Cannery Agricultural and Packing Workers faced with the agricultural and Packing House Workers Council of the A.F. of L. which is solidly entrenched in California. This sector is the one where C.I.O. leadership as a whole shines the least and where there is indecision and confusion worse confounded by the mischievous politics of two regional sections of the C.I.O. California and Wisconsin, where Communist Party elements openly dominate and have been guilty of definite policies of needless and provocative dual unionism, bureaucracy and artificial and dictatorial political control. Here the C.I.O. has actually, as far as its national strategy is concerned, been at the mercy of entrenched elements which go along in general but like the Teamsters in the A.F. of L. will play their own game and insist on being treated like the governors of more or less autonomous provinces in a mighty empire.

One field has not been mentioned. That is the Service trades and White Collar groups. Left considerably on their own the C.I.O. White Collar groups and service trades have made considerable progress and in the case of the Retail Employees in the department store field have actually opened up new fields in the midst of deepening depression. The United Office and Professional Workers, the two Government Employees unions and above all the Newspaper Guild have to an amazing degree managed to make progress in spite of the supposed prejudice of white collar elements against the "radical C.I.O." and some rather stupid monopoly and bureaucratic control of leading positions by the Communist Party elements in the Office Workers and the two government unions.

In two fields the C.I.O. nationally has risked setting up two new national committees, one the Utility Workers Organizing Committee which is really a redivision and combination of certain parts of the jurisdictions of the Electrical and Radio Workers and of Gas, Coke and

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# "THE FARMER IS STILL DOOMED"

by Frank N. Trager

## PART II

**A**N examination of the current Roosevelt-Wallace farm act indicated that its program of modified scarcity and "sales-tax" subsidy to the producing farmers (in order to preserve the present ratio of industrial prices and profits) may *temporarily* prevent a complete collapse of the farming industry in America but essentially it but *staves off* the impending doom of capitalist farming in America.

The weakness—to use a mild term—of the Roosevelt-Wallace Farm Act becomes accentuated when an analysis is made of what the program *omits*. No amount of study of the Act will reveal what the administration intends to do for the farm tenancy, share-croppers, migratory farm labor, surplus farm population and the existing shortage of farm and fiber commodities on the basis of need. For the Act, long and cumbersome as it is, maintains silence on these essential parts of the farm problem.

### 1. *The Myth of the Family-sized and owned American Farm:*

Wallace writes: "The family sized farm is most in keeping with the traditional American system." It is the objective of the Administration to maintain it. What are the facts? In 1880 General Francis Walker completed the first national census of rented, as distinct from owned, farmer-operator farms. He established the fact that 25%, one quarter of all farms within a generation after the Homestead Act of 1862 was enacted, were rented. By steady progression from then until 1935 this figure increased to 45%. In 1890 more than half of the non-rented farms were unencumbered by mortgage debt. By 1935 almost 75% of all "family owned" farms were mortgaged! The amount of the mortgage indebtedness tripled from 1910 to 1930. Foreclosures in the ten year period from 1926 to 1936 amounted to 1,500,000. In short the independent debtless, family-owned, family-size farm, still the goal of the National Administration is a disappearing phenomenon in American life; the mortgaged farmer who regards himself as an "owner" has long since lost a controlling equity in his plant.

This leads to one inescapable conclusion which capitalistic thinking and government administration refuse to acknowledge: Family-size and owned farms are no longer possible within the capitalistic system; that production control schemes to maintain prices and profits necessarily and absolutely decrease the number of practicing farmers and the amount of farm produce (fewer farms and farmers needed to produce reduced totals of production); that this in turn accentuates the decline of capitalist farming; it creates a larger "surplus" farm

population adding to the problems of tenancy and migratory labor; it declasses its farm population by simultaneously proletarianizing the "surplus" and creating a peasantry.

### 2. *Sharecropping and Tenancy.*

A special aspect of the tenancy problem in America is that of the sharecropper. The eleven cotton states in America have produced an economy peculiar to the plantation system. As part of that system some two million families (60 - 40 white and black respectively) are known as sharecroppers whose plight has been made known to America in no small measure by Norman Thomas and the socialist led Southern Tenant Farmers Union. Under the A.A.A. in 1933-4 the southern sharecropper was not only *not* aided but actually suffered increased economic deprivation by virtue of the acreage control features and existing contracts. Either his acreage was "plowed up" or his plantation boss managed thru the local A.A.A. committees to exclude the cropper from sharing in the benefits.

The Roosevelt-Wallace administration first denied this; later suppressed documents demonstrating this and finally had to conduct its own investigation by Prof. Calvin B. Hoover: This investigation made clear that

- a) Reduction in agricultural production produces similar problems as reduction in industrial production, *i.e.* unemployment.
- b) Sharecroppers though called tenant farmers are in effect agricultural laborers.
- c) These croppers even where eligible seldom received the benefits specified in the cotton contract.
- d) The total number of croppers was reduced *i.e.* deprived of any "land" out of which to earn a livelihood.
- e) The standard of living of these croppers could not be improved by the program of acreage reduction.

The essentially modest conclusions established by Dr. Hoover are applicable today only more so! No provision in the current act offers protection to the sharecropper. It still leaves the "control" features in the same "class" hands in 1938 as it did in 1933-4. It again contemplates an approximately 45% reduction in cotton plantings without *any* alteration in the methods of reduction to correct the exposed evils. Undoubtedly the tragic effects of the old Program will again occur. Only this time these effects will reap a more devastating harvest because the croppers haven't yet "recovered" from the first attempt of the Roosevelt-Wallace Administration to preserve profits.



### 3. *Farm, including Migratory, Labor:*

Farm labor which includes hired hands and migratory labor adds about 2,000,000 workers to the equal number of croppers. This part of the total farm population received an average annual wage income, as Secretary Wallace points out, which "ranged between \$125 and \$327 for the crop year 1935-1936." Hardly a living standard! In the decade 1927-1937 these workers, the least organized, most depressed section of the American working class have struck about 165 (reported) times.

All farm labor was expressly excluded from any of the Administration "protecting" agencies. The N.R.A., the A.A.A., the Social Security Act kept them out—despite repeated pious phrases from Wallace and Roosevelt about their known wretched conditions.

They are again excluded from the current Agricultural Act; all attempts to introduce some protection for them have again failed. This Administration has given ample lip service to its humanitarian purposes but its efforts by law and deed have invariably been to carry out what Roosevelt has recently reiterated to be his purpose: "to save the profit system" after its "collapse in the spring of 1933". This purpose in the field of agriculture has meant three things: To bolster and "save" the banking, mortgage investment; to subsidize a smaller producing farm group at the consumer expense; to further depress the standards of farm labor by increasing prices and increasing the supply of labor in the farm labor market.

Part of the problem of farm labor is the question of organization. These workers have been difficult to organize into trade unions because of several factors: racial separation (Mexicans, Filipinos, Japanese, native Negroes and Whites); mobility and seasonality in work; dilatory A. F. of L. organizational tactics; and above all in oppressive boss-class action instanced in southern lynchings and organized vigilante tactics in such states as California!\* To-day the United Cannery, Agricultural, Packing and Shed Workers Union (C.I.O.) is making some headway despite notorious blunders committed by some of its Stalinist leaders and organizers. But the hub of the question rests upon the fact that Wallace is vigorously opposing the trade union organization of these farm workers as he is also opposing any attempt on the part of the U. S. Dept. of Labor of treating with and regarding these workers and their unions as part of the organized trade union movement in America. Not only then are farm workers

\*The following is a quotation from the confidential Report of the Director of Research of the California E.R.A. It was forwarded to Secretary Wallace on Jan. 14, 1935 by Wm. M. Leiserson, then chairman of the National Mediation Board. The report—one among many—was conveniently ignored. "In the course of our conversation the question was raised whether or not the vigilante movement (in Calif.) grew spontaneously. I can now answer this question definitely. The agricultural section of the State Chamber of Commerce was definitely behind the movement and the secretary of this section has organized such vigilante committees in 40 California Counties."

in a highly competitive industry deprived of any consideration under the Act governing their industry but the Administrator of the Act sets out to discourage the union organization of these workers, speciously argues against their inclusion in the general problem of workers (see his *Report* 1937, pp. 36-41) and uses the influence of the U.S.D.A. to prevent even the slight protection which might be afforded them by the legitimate government agency, the Department of Labor!

### 4. *Surplus Farm Population:*

Three major factors combine to form a surplus farm population. These are over and above the long-time agricultural depression factors arising in the "Six Rural Problem Areas. The latter are the results of ruthless, unchecked exploitation in farming, foresting and mining. The present "surplus" in farm population comes from decreased production which includes loss of land tenure, mechanization and speed-up in harvesting and an urban-to-rural, including rural farm to rural depression movement of population. Let me illustrate this with the obvious: The cotton and tobacco farmers have already completed their balloting on the new Act. The results will decrease acreage in cotton from a norm of 42 million planted acres to 11 million *less* than last year's 34 million; in tobacco a total drop in flue-cured and dark varieties amounting to 150 million pounds (about 1 billion pounds per year is our average production). This decreased acreage will "free" a number of croppers from production and will require fewer hands to harvest. They can't all become employed migratory farm laborers or hired hands because by 1935—and today the situation has not improved—there were 140 applicants for every 100 jobs in the California branch of the industry.

Mechanization of agriculture is usually thought of in terms of the dramatic cotton picker which will again "free" a million men and women from the back breaking toil of picking the white bolls—try singing Negro spirituals from sun-up to sun-down during the job! But the cotton picker is still a "future" story. Actually agriculture as an industry displays the same tendencies as do other industries: It exhibits a steady growth of concentration of land ownership and a consequent polarity between small and large scale farms. In this process farm equipment, purchasable mainly by large scale farmers, becomes the agricultural prototype of the belt line and mass production factory. In some agricultural sections the average value per acre of farm implements and machinery increased during 1910 to 1930 100% to 300%. This makes for large scale farming (both extensive and intensive) and decreased farm employment.

The polarization above referred to may be indicated by brief examination of the census figures. In 1935 40% of the farms operated less than 6% of all farm land whereas 4% operated over 40% of all farm land. The net story of the 1930-35 census period accentuates



the trend of the previous 30 years: The middle farmer is being slowly but surely ground out. Farms are larger and fewer, with higher capitalization, owned by absentee landlords and banks. There is during the depression an actual increase in the number of farms, 8% in 1935 over 1930, but 70% of the increase represents the lower end of the scale in part time farmers operating holdings between 3-9 acres. These are the industrial refugees who will find the dignity of labor and the hope for security on a holding incapable of providing for an American family.

There is no farm produce surplus in America with the possible exception of wheat. In good times as well as in bad times we produce too little if we were to supply every American family what the U. S. Dept. of Agriculture calls an adequate, not luxurious diet:

Items	Present Production	Required for adequate diet	Percentage of increase required
Dairy Cattle	23,100,000	40,800,000	76
Hogs, Annual-Slaughter	69,400,000	84,900,000	22
Beef Cattle, Annual-Slaughter	11,200,000	16,100,000	43
Veal Calves, Annual-Slaughter	8,800,000	14,800,000	68
Sheep & Lambs, Annual-Slaughter	21,000,000	29,900,000	42
Poultry Stock	458,900,000	627,300,000	36
(Corresponding increases in acreage for feed crops and pasturage)			
Vegetable & Truck Crops Acreage	2,320,000	7,091,000	204
Citrus Fruits, Acreage	565,000	854,000	51
Other Tree Crops, Acreage	4,605,000	9,799,000	112

These figures are of 1933-34 but they apply with slight modification today.

The only conclusion to which one can come is that the Roosevelt-Wallace Administration has completely falsified the farm problem. There is not too much farm production, there is no real surplus. These fictions are sold to a people to conceal the truth which is, that production for a profit-price system necessarily cheats the population of its living in the interests of maintaining both the system and the rate of profits within it. No "You Have Seen Their Faces", no account of 300 migratory worker families using a camp site with one broken hand-pump well and two out-houses, no word picture of a "starving, cropper's child sucking at the teats of a mongrel bitch", no tale of peonage and slavery, of annual *family* incomes of \$200-300 will deflect this or any other capitalist administration from its chosen path honestly stated by Mr. Roosevelt: to rescue the profit system from its collapse and to preserve it. So long as that system endures it entails its "long string of abuses". Organization for Socialism is its only threat, as Socialism is its only substitute.

### PART III

#### *The Socialist Party and the Farm Problem:*

Socialism has been—and with some important exceptions—still is being articulated in terms of a metropolitan, industrial economy. As Socialists we think and act in the frame of reference created by the factory worker, product of the commercial and industrial revolutions, destined to become a member of the class-conscious proletariat. Socialist writers and propagandists including Marx and Lenin usually have approached the problem of agriculture not as an "industrial" problem but as a "peasant" problem—posing the question of how to reconcile comparatively small-holding landowners (or land heirs after great estates are broken up), highly individualistic, with the cooperative collectivism of socialist industry and mining.

The socialist movement in the U. S.—partly because it has been "urban", partly because it has not thrown off the inadequate and to a large extent inapplicable heritage—has produced no outstanding socialist interpretation of native agricultural problems and little of value even in the field of propaganda literature. One could compress the total socialist agricultural bibliography on a very short page. A glance at the Detroit (1934) Convention Farm Program does nothing so much as to reveal a state of confusion and poverty of thought. Vague references to the totally impossible concept of "guaranteed cost of production", to family size farms, to the plantation system are included in its contents. There is silence if not avoidance of the basic problems created, and the socialist position on farming as an industry. It is essentially a petty bourgeois approach ignoring the increasing nature of the farm proletariat. Reading that program one would hardly suspect that some 50 farm strikes and an undetermined number of foreclosure riots had occurred within the period just preceding that Convention. Two years later the Party at Cleveland was too occupied to give any serious thought to a basic farm program. Its attention, however, was sharply directed toward the plight of the share cropper and his neglect by the administration's program of planned scarcity.

At Chicago, 1937, a resolution finally emerged which while vastly improving upon its predecessors failed in its central direction. The improvements are worth noting, for the Party more and more realized that the "agricultural economy" displays contradiction, evidences of the class struggle as sharp and clearly defined as in the industrial field"; also the Party cited the growth of tenancy and the loss of tenure as results of the growing concentration of land ownership and corporation management. For the first time, in public resolution, it clearly recognized the diverse nature and the attendant special problems of farming in America—Cotton South, the Middle and Northwest Dairy and Grain, the intensified California variety, etc. It definitely supported the S.T.F.U. and called for the formation of a national



farm workers union as part of the labor movement. It repeated its immediate demands for tax and other relief, for social and crop insurance and for the formation of cooperative marketing and credit agencies.

But this resolution failed once again to make clear whether it would support a nation of small, petty bourgeois, family sized farms or, by recognizing the industrial nature of agriculture, *i.e.* its corporate financial structure, its concentration of control, its inexorable exclusion of the middle farmer, its proletarianization of tenant farmer, share cropper and farm worker, it would stand for the socialization of the agricultural industry as it does for all other industry.

This issue can no longer be dodged by Socialists. The farm problem in America is not a peasant problem; any attempt to perpetuate the demands of a "peasantry"—easy cheap land, individually maintained under "use and occupancy" titles or other ownership devices—is running counter to sound analysis and socialist sense. This is not to say that we ignore "immediate demands" for the rapidly disappearing middle and small farmer; on the contrary we put forward those immediate, farm demands as we do for other sections of the petty bourgeois population but always pointing out that essentially this is but ameliorative action, a prelude to the basic program of the road to power and the establishment of Socialism. We must not convert a symptom of the decline of capitalism in agriculture, namely tenancy and farm surplus population, into a reason for reestablishing the preconditions of agricultural capitalism, namely, individual land ownings which, subject to the profit price market, would soon start the cycle over again.

A satisfactory Socialist program for the Party would unmistakably indicate the industrial nature of agriculture and its employees; the wastes and poverty and contradictions of the system; the elimination of the small business man (farmer) who should be invited to make common cause (and should be shown why) with the working class against capitalism; this struggle should be given organizational form by aiding the growth of farm labor unions; immediate social and other legislation should be supported to provide relief, insurance, cooperative facilities for the depressed farm population; *all predicated on the need for applying the principles of the social revolution to agriculture as well as to other industry and credit as the only ultimate solution capable of bringing about planned plenty.* The form of socialization in agriculture and its democratic control offers no greater difficulty than the form of socialization and its democratic control in any other field of production.. The main task rests in either case on the ability of the Socialist Party to carry out its historic role: A democratic revolutionary vanguard of the working class capable of rendering decisive if not exclusive aid in the elimination of the capitalist system and the establishment of Socialism.

## THOMAS ON COLLECTIVE SECURITY

(Concluded from Page 5)

security.) It may be possible in and through a league of cooperative commonwealths. It is today, under present conditions, a form of collective suicide; it will be a rationalization of an Anglo-American imperial alliance.

Of course it is not enough to keep America out of war. Indeed we may not succeed in keeping America out of war. The basis of true and lasting peace is a reorganization of the world as a federation of cooperative commonwealths in which the profit system and the absolute national state will no longer rule over us. But there is no fatalistic inevitability that the United States must enter every war. We can keep out if we do certain things: fight unemployment at home; build houses, not battleships; plan a peace trade, not a war trade; accumulate reserves against the day when war may interfere with access to certain foreign raw materials; bring back American gunboats from the Yangtze where they never belonged; oppose the jingoistic super navy; demand the democratic right of the people to vote on war; defeat the May bill or any advance plan for universal military conscription for men and industry—in short, cooperate with the Keep America Out of War Committee in its plans. We ought to learn from 1917 to keep out of war by putting pressure on the government to avoid the things that lead to war. Every year of grace will give us time to build the positive forces of socialism and peace. Even should we fail to keep America out of war we shall have won for the Socialist Party the right to speak with integrity and conviction to the workers, and above ground or underground, to organize them for socialism in which alone is the basis for the good society from which war and poverty shall have been banished.

The sanctions in which we must trust against war and fascism are workers' sanctions. They cannot be applied merely by wishing. First we must educate and organize the workers. For that we desperately need in America, years of peace, not fresh participation in war. Indeed for every human value we need peace, not war. Year by year modern science makes war so "totalitarian" in all its destructive effects that to find substitutes for it in our struggle for emancipation becomes steadily more urgent. At the least, we must insist that a new American imperialist war will be infinitely more hurtful than our participation in the first World War. If the professed followers of Lenin now want to espouse the policies of Wilson, after their failure has been demonstrated, let them bear the responsibility. We socialists remember Gene Debs. We remember the logic of our own position. And we seek by the quality of our service a new leadership, first in keeping America out of war and then making America fit for leadership in establishing the glorious security of a federation of socialist cooperative commonwealths.



## HOOK'S THOUGHTS IN SEASON

(Continued from Page 6)

of other factors to be found in the character of her economy and culture which suggest doubts, consider the following aspects of her foreign policy. Russia has not joined the workers' boycott against Japan and in fact is still selling her oil which is being used in China. She supplied Italy during her Ethiopian campaign not only with oil for her bombers and coal tar for military roads but with wheat, lumber and coal. The *New York Times* of January 17, 1936, reported that the Communist Seamen's Union of Greece struck two Russian vessels carrying supplies to the Italians in Africa. Until a few months ago she supplied Italy with materials that were promptly shipped to Franco in Spain, and ceased only when Italy refused payment. Her aid for cold cash to the loyalist cause in Spain was delayed and half-hearted, controlled by considerations of her *own* foreign policy, and given only after exacting freedom of action in Spain for the G.P.U. Her joining the farce of the Non-Intervention committee was criminal. Most significant of all, from the day that Hitler took power Russia has refused to join the Labor and Socialist International boycott of German goods and has traded steadily with Germany. In more than one European capital, belief prevails that Stalin would throw Russia's lot in with Hitler and Mussolini if only they would accept his outstretched hand.

7. But what alternative is there? How can the Fascist powers be stopped? They cannot be stopped by war on the part of *capitalist* powers. They can be stopped by internal opposition and by *socialist* powers. It may take long to establish socialist states elsewhere. The most powerful weapon in the meantime is the weapon of the international working class boycott and agitation within the Fascist countries. This has not yet been properly organized. The failure of the Russian government to permit the Russian workers to join these campaigns is a handicap; the illusion that collective security can prevent war or stop fascism is another handicap because it misdirects energy. Direct aid by the international working class to Spain almost saved it. If it had been sooner and better organized, Franco would have been defeated by the fall of 1936. In the unremitting struggle for a socialist government in all countries of the world, remains, however, the basic strategy in the fight against war and fascism. This is the socialist alternative to both isolation and collective security. Socialists *may* not win in this way; but they are sure to lose by every other way. Wholesale optimism and pessimism are both cheap. Faith and enthusiasm are necessary, but not enough. They can never substitute for intelligence. Socialists who put their faith in Chamberlain, in Daladier, in Roosevelt will have the same rude awakening as those who put their faith in Lloyd George, in Poincaré, in Wilson. *"Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."*

## THE C.I.O. SKIRMISHES WITH DEPRESSION

(Continued from Page 11)

Chemical Workers, better known as District No. 50 of the United Mine Workers. The Glass Workers Organizing Committee actually is an organization receivership to meet a situation unrelated to any crisis in the labor movement or country at large. Also a loose organization set up for workers in the agricultural implement manufacturing industry has been created with support of Auto Workers and Steel Workers Organizing Committee both of which are in the field.

The sum and substance of this survey indicates that after the sensational advance of its first 800 days of existence in which the C.I.O. organized over three million workers never previously organized into the trade union movement, it has been able in the teeth of an unexpected and rigorous return of depression conditions to hold the main outlines of its territory and, in spite of an inevitable drastic fall in dues payments in the large unions affected by mass layoffs, to consolidate and reorganize its forces after an orderly retreat to the new financial base required by dues payments and possible resources. The C.I.O. general staff expected to have enough political influence to bring about construction inflation thru government spending and give themselves a longer breathing space, much sooner than Roosevelt was finally brought to the launching of his second spending program. Given this spending program and providing Roosevelt's drift to war and giant war appropriations do not wreck or sidetrack the domestic construction program which is now conceded to labor and Roosevelt's political necessities in the coming elections, the C.I.O. can postpone the day of trial when it must face a prolonged period of depression which will test every rivet of its vast machine. Unless by that time it has developed in its membership something approaching a genuine class consciousness and has as a result launched upon an independent political program moving in the direction of collectivization of the big industries and finance structure and the resulting destruction of the economic basis of its opponents (i.e. the struggle for workers power and socialism) it will have to fight for its very life with doubtful chance of success.

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*A second article emphasizing the importance of industrial unionism and dealing with the need and importance of unity between the A.F. of L. and C.I.O. will appear in the next issue.*



# ON LABOR UNITY IN SPAIN

by Luis Araquistain

EDITOR'S NOTE: (Translated by James Loeb) *Because of the fact that the Left Socialists and the P.O.U.M. have been the only political forces in Loyalist Spain to be denied a press, the following article takes on a special significance. It is reprinted from the Syndicalist newspaper of Barcelona, Solidaridad Obrera, where it recently appeared in the form of an interview in reference to the proposals offered by the Syndicalist National Confederation of Labor (CNT) for Unity of action with the Socialist General Workers' Union (UGT).*

These proposals (of the CNT) have two aspects which I should like to consider separately. The first aspect concerns the "intentions" of the CNT, its desire to reach an understanding and, at a later date, perhaps a complete fusion with the UGT. The second concerns the bases of discussion themselves between the two trade union organizations.

As for the first aspect, the desire to reach an understanding, obviously I must welcome now what I have always favored. In this connection, I should like to take advantage of this opportunity to correct an untruth which I find among many others—which will be answered at another time and place—in the pamphlet "The War in Spain" by the American journalist Louis Fischer, a good friend of our anti-fascist cause, but not always a friend of truth when truth does not coincide with his interest in, or sympathy for, a particular political party. Fischer says (page 84 of the French edition of the pamphlet): "Caballero and Araquistain, eminent member of his brain trust, have always been among the most violent in their attacks against the anarchists. Nevertheless, politics sometimes makes peace—if it can be called peace—among the strangest bed-fellows."

As far as this concerns me—Caballero has already answered by his works and his speeches, particularly in the last one in the Pardini Theatre in Madrid (See *Socialist Review*, Vol. 6, No. 4) and will answer this gratuitous imputation again when he so desires — Fischer speaks from memory and a bad memory, as do those who disfigure truth to the point of complete falsification. Many years ago—about 1920—I published a book entitled "España en el Crisol" (Spain in the Crucible) where the following can be read in connection with the struggles of anarchist syndicalism (page 159 and following):

"Are we Spaniards generally aware of the very profound transformation which has been taking place in the conscience and the methods of the most exploited working classes? The Revolution is moving away from the problem of the form of Government. While the dynastic parties exert their efforts exclusively to holding at bay the wild beast of republican Revolution, and while the republican parties seek to besiege and to rout the Jericho of the Monarchy with the sonorous trumpets of their speeches, and while the whole thing has been a loud farce and a torrent of super-

ficial words, from the depths of Spanish society there is rising an enormous swell which threatens to sweep all before it: monarchists, republicans, and all those who oppose the overthrow of the very foundations of present society. . . .

"Catalonian syndicalism will not disappear, even if the separatist conflicts of Catalonia are solved. . . Does this mean that syndicalism, in its sharpest form, is the main Spanish problem of the immediate future? . . . What attitude can we take in the face of it? . . . The most difficult position is that of the socialists. The strength of the Socialist Party, numerically weak as is well known, does not depend so much on itself as on its influence upon the General Union of Workers (UGT).

"But this latter organization is trade union or syndical, and it is probable that in the face of a victory of syndicalism in Catalonia it will attempt to imitate its methods and to deviate from a political orientation which, although given by socialists, has recently been almost exclusively republican, that is, in form, in attitude, and not in content. Will the National Confederation of Labor (CNT) of Catalonia and the General Union of Workers (UGT) of the rest of Spain reach an understanding? And if they succeed in eliminating their old mutual distrust and agree upon a common tactic, would the Socialist Party be able to adapt itself to the new orientations of the Workers' Organizations, or would it persist, in suicidal fashion, in being the left wing of a senile republicanism?"

I wrote this almost twenty years ago. I could hardly express my thoughts more clearly today. I continue to be an enthusiastic partisan, as much so today as I was then, of the mutual understanding and later of the unity of the two great trade union organizations.

According to a revolutionary logic, that is, an historical dialectic, nothing seems to oppose a concrete and practical unity. The social conditions and the political ideology of the trade unions have been radically changed by virtue of the class war with which we are faced, and it is not only a war of independence. This class war must not be forgotten, as some do either through forgetfulness or deliberately. A social Revolution has been accomplished almost automatically because of the war, and it will be difficult, not to say impossible, to go back to the situation of July 18, 1936, in spite of the counter-revolutionary tendencies, already very visible, which are operative in every revolution, and in spite of some concessions which must perhaps be made so that the capitalism of the surrounding countries may not crush us completely. On this point we are in agreement with the recent letter of Stalin to the young communist Ivanov: That socialism is possible in one country,—and with our country there would be two—, but that preparation for defense is necessary, by diplomacy or by arms, as Russia does and as we must do, so that the capitalist countries of the world may not strangle us as they are already trying to do.

The Socialist Party has become more radical, as is proved by the plan to reform the old program which was advanced by the Socialist Group of Madrid in March of 1936. The UGT has already become more



radical, both in political and trade union questions. The majority of the unions have adopted revolutionary socialism and have accepted the revolutionary mission which, according to Marx and Lenin, should be that of the trade unions in the period of transition from capitalism to socialism.

The CNT has become socialistic in the sense of recognizing the necessity of the state as an instrument of struggle and as a means of consolidating the revolutionary conquests in the internal and external affairs of the country. What a pleasure for a socialist to read the program of nationalization, collectivization and municipalization contained in the proposals of the CNT! These measures seem to have been taken from our own Socialist program and, above all, from the program of the Socialist Group of Madrid, which I have already mentioned. Bakunin and Marx would embrace over this document of the CNT.

Who could be opposed to the acceptance of these proposals, with certain modifications in detail? Certainly no revolutionary Socialist. Nor could anyone be opposed to the participation of the trade unions in the Government of the country, in both the administrative and executive branches of the Government. To insist that this privilege of political parties—and of parties which were formed and constituted to accord with the necessities of the bourgeois parliamentary regime—is to forget completely the social Revolution which has taken place in our country. To assign to the trade unions an exclusively productive function—when even in France, in an ultra bourgeois Republic, they have tried to bring the CGT into the Government—is to have, consciously or unconsciously, a fascist conception of trade unions.

The fascist State has converted the role of modern trade unions into what the workers' corporations were at the time of the Roman Empire (and Mussolini has attempted to restore that Empire even in this respect): a type of association in which the worker was a slave of his occupation, in the service of the State. But this conception is incompatible with the existence of trade unions into what the workers' corporations were throw the Monarchy, to create the Revolution in 1934, to win the elections in 1936, and shortly thereafter to rise up in arms against the Fascists. But now these same trade unions, in the opinion of some, are of no use in governing and administering a Republic which is still standing principally through their efforts.

I hate to admit the possibility that no unity shall be achieved. In any case, if an agreement is not reached, it will be useful to know by whom, and for what motives, obstacles will have been put in the way of that unity. At that time, the publication of the whole affair will be very necessary so that the entire proletariat may know who wants the Revolution and who does not. This knowledge will in itself be an accomplishment.

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## DISCUSSION

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### Mexico in Crisis

by S. Fanny Simon

One would hardly guess from Clarence Senior's Mexico's Road to Social Revolution that Mexico is facing a most severe crisis. The optimism which pervades Senior's account of what has been and is happening in Mexico is hardly justified by the facts. A true evaluation of events in Mexico would require at least as much space as Senior had. Since that is out of the question, I shall confine myself to a few illustrations. These will, I believe, throw unfortunately a somewhat less roseate light.

Undoubtedly, the land question is the most important one. Senior implies that the question is on the way to being solved. For him the Laguna experiment is "definitely a success" Still, after a 5 hour demonstration at Torreon, the center of the Laguna cotton region, Senior's happy collective farmers adopted this resolution to Cardenas:

The undersigned Communities, assembled in the Torreón Stadium, have resolved to ask you respectfully to find an immediate solution to the acute economic situation resulting from the lack of work and to authorize the Ejidal Bank to undertake labor which is not immediately productive, but which is nevertheless necessary for the preparation of fields for next season's sowing, in order to provide occupation for the thousands of peasants now in critical circumstances. We also ask the weeding out of the personnel of the Bank and the lowering of their salaries, as well as amendments to the Law of Agrarian Credit to permit the Bank to lend more than 70 per cent of the probable value of the crops. This resolution is taken as a result of the difficult situation in which we find ourselves, but we once again assure you of our absolute support of your government.

Ten thousand peasants threatened a hunger strike such was their plight. As a result of the lack of rain, much smaller acreage had to be planted to cotton in 1938. The 1936-1937 crop has not yet been sold and if sold, the money for it has not been collected. (see Mexican Labor News, Feb. 17, 1938, published under the direction of Toledano, general secretary of the Confederation of Workers of Mexico, the C.T.M.)

During the Cárdenas regime, land distribution has proceeded at a very great pace, but that does not mean that Mexican agriculture has been completely socialized. Unless drastic changes are made in the Agrarian Laws, there will still remain more than a million landless peasants after all lands subject to division have been distributed. Even now land distribution is not proceeding with any clear cut program. Often it is the result of pressure brought to bear by the peasants, as in the case of the Laguna. Not infrequently, it is due to political expediency, as in Sonora where the governor has presumably been hostile to the Cárdenas government.

How revolutionary is the National Revolutionary Party, the P.N.R.? In this connection, Senior accepts unquestioningly the story of the P.N.R. as given by itself. The truth of the matter is that the P.N.R. has, from its very beginning been a bureaucratic machine, the instrument of Calles and his henchmen and now the instrument of Cárdenas. Its income has come from the government employees, each of whom has to contribute seven days wages a year for the P.N.R. But, we are told, Cárdenas cleaned house. How? By keeping Padilla, the Calles mouthpiece whenever the



latter had some specially reactionary pronouncement to make, as senator? To Senior, Portes Gil is "a reactionary who hated all trade unions", but Senior evidently does not know that Portes Gil's henchmen, Marte Gomez is governor of the state of Tamaulipas and Cantú Estrada, president of the National Chamber of Deputies. It must be emphasized that nobody can obtain political power in Mexico against the wishes of the P. N. R.

Everybody in Mexico knows that seldom was there as much trading in credentials for deputies as for the present Congress. It was openly charged before the Credentials Certification Committee of the Chamber that presumably duly elected deputies were made to "cough up" in order to be assured a seat. In the last election, the P. N. R. invited the workers to participate in the primaries. The C. T. M. elected 33 deputies on the P. N. R. ticket. Are they subject to labor's control and discipline? Certainly not. The C. T. M. candidates promised to abide by P. N. R. discipline.

Recently the P. N. R. has announced its intention to dissolve and to be replaced by a party of soldiers, peasants, and workers. Does this not indicate the revolutionary nature of the present government? Again, no. The new party will be the instrument whereby Cárdenas will more effectively control the next presidential election. Labor spokesmen are already worried by the fact that the real power will rest with the army. This smacks more of a military dictatorship than it does of socialism. Moreover, the C. T. M. is as much a creation of the Cárdenas government as the CROM was of the Obregón and Calles regimes. How much real independence it has is quite problematical. Even the railroad workers are supposed to have returned to the C. T. M. after the split in May as a result of orders by Cárdenas.

And finally, what sort of a socialist system is being built by a regime engaging in anti-Semitism? Although the bill is directed against all foreigners, it is, in reality an anti-semitic measure. This measure has the unanimous support of the P. N. R., including the members of the C. T. M.

The Cárdenas government is and has been essentially a petty bourgeois government. Like all petty-bourgeois governments it has no independent program. Instead of gravitating to the right, as has been the tendency in Mexico since 1928, the Cárdenas government has been leaning to the left. If Cárdenas wished to replace Calles as the strong man of Mexico, he had to have peasant and labor support. He needs them to continue and to consolidate his power.

One word of caution, however—I do not mean by the above observations in any way to discredit Cárdenas for his many progressive measures. His regime has pursued more consistently than any government since 1917 a leftist course. It was the first to announce its support of the Spanish Loyalists. It has in four years distributed more land to the peasants than was distributed in all the years between 1915 and his inauguration in December 1934. Cárdenas has sided with labor against capital and has just dared to come to grips with the keystone of imperialism in Mexico, the foreign oil companies. On March 17, Cárdenas nationalized the oil industry. When the American and British companies refused to accept the decision of the Mexican Supreme Court upholding the award of the Federal Board of Conciliation and Arbitration given in favor of the workers, Cárdenas expropriated the properties of the 18 companies involved, thereby precipitating a storm in imperialist quarters here and in Britain. Already our State Department has come to the aid of the companies, but Socialists and liberal sympathizers must make themselves heard in support of the Mexican government.

# BOOKS

## SOVIET MEDICINE AND STALINISM

"Socialized Medicine in the Soviet Union", by Henry E. Sigerist, M.D. 378 pp. W. W. Norton. N. Y. \$3.50.

The most important aspect of the book here reviewed is its authorship. For Dr. Sigerist is one of the world's outstanding scholars in the field of Medical History.

This book is the product of five years work, many months of which were spent in the Soviet Union. However it will become relatively insignificant when Dr. Sigerist completes and publishes his monumental history of medicine which from all reports will be a documented, Marxist history of man's effort to conquer dread disease.

To return to the book, by intent and accomplishment it is an essay in "Socialist medicine" examined and interpreted in the making. "The Soviet system of protection of the people's health is basically different from all other public health systems. It is a socialist system. The weapons used in the war against disease are very similar to those used in other countries but the whole strategy and tactics are different."

What Sigerist means and what he makes clear in his book is that Soviet or Socialist medicine, proceeding out of Marxist philosophy necessarily plans and executes in terms of men, material research and application, an ever more successful war against disease. Necessarily, that is, so long as it remains a socialist system!

The soviet medical system is based upon a combination of social insurance and state subsidy. It has four main characteristically socialist features: "1. Medical service is free and therefore available to all. 2. The prevention of disease (over and above cure and care) is in the foreground of all health activities. 3. All health activities (including training of personnel) are directed by central bodies, the People's Commissariats of Health, with the result that 4. health can be planned on a large scale." That this system is proving its worth is amply demonstrated in the text of the book.

Despite its many excellencies the book and author cannot escape criticism. For Sigerist:

1. Does not take pains to distinguish between a potentially socialist medical system and the present state of affairs in the U.S.S.R.
2. Accepts uncritically the present soviet constitution as a document which in fact establishes full democracy; which signifies that "the dictatorship of the proletariat has come to an end, the class division of society has disappeared, the new social order is firmly established."
3. He thus ignores the Stalinist dictatorship over the Party as well as the proletariat; he is silent about the ominous soviet trials, purges and executions.
4. He and the book suffer from an unwillingness to cast up the Stalin accounts. If it should be remarked that this is beyond the author's province it must at once be made clear that the author assumes or accepts those accounts almost wholly on Stalin's own terms.

A physician and medical historian such as Sigerist cannot keep his standing in the world of social judgment if he condones, by silence or otherwise, the Stalinist attack on his profession and his science. Sigerist must either admit that his professional and personal estimates of the Soviet Commissariat of Health were completely in the wrong or that Stalin's purge of Kaminsky and others is completely unjustified! He cannot continue as he does in this book to lavish praise on the "superhuman powers of labor of Health Commissar Kaminsky and the progress and success of his regime" and at the same time participate in Stalinist meetings which justify the purge of Kaminsky and the hundreds of others on the grounds of wrecking, counter-revolutionary, fascist Trotskyism!

—FRANK TRAGER



## WORLD POLITICS AT A GLANCE

"Political Handbook of the World, 1938", edited by Walter H. Mallory. 210 pp. Published by Harper & Bros. for Council on Foreign Relations, NYC. \$2.50.

Anyone who desires to follow international events intelligently and have a ready and authoritative reference to them should possess a copy of this book. It provides in compact and readable form essential information regarding all the countries of the world: the composition of the governments; the programs and leaders of the political parties; the political affiliations and editors of leading newspapers and periodicals; the political make-up of the various democratic legislatures. It also describes the organization and functions of the League of Nations, the World Court and the International Labor Office.

The fact that the book, only recently published, is already outdated in parts, does not detract from its value. It is further proof of the speed of development of the international situation. The Austrian "anschluss", the Polish march on Lithuania, the rapid changes of government in Rumania and France, the resignation of Eden, have all been recorded since the appearance of the 1938 edition of the Handbook.

The existence in one compact volume of all the worlds political appearance helps bring attention to the undemocratic democracy in which we live. We speak of the dictatorships in Germany, Italy and Japan. Actually there are 19 countries (not counting colonies or dependencies, like India, Egypt, etc.) where dictatorships are in the saddle or where the existing governments came into being through coups d'etat. And this does not include Japan, where formally, there is still a parliament, nor Poland, where political parties are still legal, nor the South and Central American countries, whose "democracy" is too notorious to require description. Many people will probably be surprised to learn that during 1936 and 1937, five countries withdrew from the League of Nations, in addition to five which had previously withdrawn.

Of course, a person mainly concerned with the labor and radical movements will find much to criticize in the Handbook. The tendency to write about parties and movements in proportion to their parliamentary strength, and to ignore them unless they have much strength does not help to present a true picture of the contending political forces. The author, for instance, manages to devote ten pages to the United States without mentioning the Socialist or Communist parties, the A.L.P. of New York or the F.L.P. of Minnesota, the Labor Non-Partisan League or the political activities of the A. F. of L. Only the Progressive Party of Wisconsin of the minor parties receives mention. Surely this is a distorted picture of the political scene in the U. S. It is to be hoped that this weakness is corrected in future editions.

—H. S. TORIAN

## MAINTAINING CAPITALISM BY DEFINITION

"The Revolution In Economics", by Robert S. Hale. 192 pp. Bruce Humphries, Inc. Boston. \$2.00.

The meaning of the title is that a revolution in social practice may follow if social, particularly economic, thinking would "think". In this instance thinking is confined to a preliminary level of securing and abiding by clear definitions. The author, avowedly influenced by some of the physicists and philosophers (Ogden, Richards, Bridgeman, Ayer) who have expounded the "operational theory of meaning", seeks to apply this theory of meaning to prices, profits, monopolies,

competition and the system which they constitute.

The reader of this review is recommended to all the critical things said by David P. Berenberg in his review last month of Chase's "Tyranny of Words". Obviously this is an example of the same "new fad".

Despite Mr. Hale's "heavy" reading he regards Henry Ford as a "high" in economic practice, the aim of which *ought to be* "to allow each person the maximum of individual freedom to cooperate with other persons for the benefit of all." This restatement of Adam Smith's "enlightened self-interest" will lead, so expects the author, to a Bethamite society of the greatest good for the greatest number.

The book is a pretentious effort to restate the obvious: words have various meanings in different contexts—even the same words. To this, confusion is added by the unwarranted assumption that the disentangling of the separate meanings in various contexts will lead to correct practice. It is curious but understandable that the "practice" which emerges from the author's linguistic efforts "happens" to coincide with the notion of a "free capitalism"—albeit the author quickly disclaims any intention of naming his product.

In view of the currency of this present "semantic" fad it should be clearly understood by the reader that despite the cloak of great names which covers the present crop of popularizers (Chase, Hale, to some extent Arnold) no amount of word refinement apart from social forces and social action will alter the "objects" or "referents" of the refined words and meanings. In practice this means that we may be willing to use a new language (Ogden and Richards have been hawking this "basic English" for a decade or more) but we persist in the fact that the language used is merely a compilation of conventional signs which in no way alter the facts to which they point.

In the social sciences, refinement of concept and meaning will be appreciated but this central fact remains regardless of its verbal dress: No alterations, no tinkering with the current versions of the capitalist system will prevent its periodic collapse; its repeated collapse leads to extinction. A new system must be substituted for it. We call this new system Socialism.

## BOOKS RECEIVED

**The Plough and the Sword**, by Carl T. Schmidt. Columbia University Press, \$2.50. An examination of labor, land and property in Fascist Italy.

**The Jews**, by Hilaire Belloc. 12mo. Boston, Mass; Houghton Mifflin Company. \$2.50. Third edition with a new introductory chapter.

**Problems of the Pacific, 1936**. Edited by W. L. Holland and Kate L. Mitchell. 8vo. Chicago, Ill.; The University of Chicago Press. \$5.

**European Beginnings in West Africa. 1454-1578**, J. W. Blake. Pp. XI+212. \$4.20. Longmans-Green & Co., N.Y.C.

**The Synthetic Wealth of Nations**, by Malcolm K. Graham. Pp. 328. Parthenon Press, Nashville, Tenn.

**The Collapse of the Confederacy**, by Charles H. Wesley. 12mo. Washington D. C.; The Associated Publishers, 1,538 Ninth Street, N. W. \$2.15.

**The Income Structure of the United States**, by Maurice Leven. Pp. X+177. \$1.50. The Brookings Institution. Washington, D. C.

**Utopia in Uruguay**, by S. G. Hanson. Pp. IX+262. \$3.50. Oxford University Press, N. Y. C.

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