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V. Miller, Business Manager.

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# SOCIALIST REVIEW

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## Socialism and the 1940 Campaign

by Norman Thomas

**P**ROBABLY at no important juncture in American history were political alignments more confused and political principles more uncertain. Socialists themselves are not exempt from the confusion. The fate of Socialist Parties in Europe and the development of Leninist Communism into Red Fascism,—a development which cannot adequately be characterized merely as a betrayal of Leninism—these and other considerations which I cannot here develop, give us Socialists imperative reason to re-examine our own position.

They do not, however, give us adequate reason to doubt that in its broad sense democratic Socialism is the answer to our problem. Even without the war, in Europe individualistic capitalism would have reached nearly the end of its rope, the same fate for it was becoming obvious here in America from an examination of the New Deal. It had accomplished many reforms of value. It had expressed the inevitable tendency toward collectivism but it had, by no means, solved even in an elementary sense the problem of poverty and insecurity. What is more significant is that it had no program in reserve upon which there was anything like agreement. Then came the war which of itself is a manifest agent of the breakdown of the social order and its governing principles: the profit system and absolute nationalism.

In the face of these facts, it is the imperative duty of Socialists to clarify their own thinking, to present their own philosophy with new power and persuasive force and to prepare a program based on that philosophy, to deal with immediate issues which cannot be ignored.

In this article I am not concerned with suggesting that program in any detail. I am concerned to consider whether the task I have described will be best fulfilled by running a Socialist ticket in 1940. Let me begin by stating what ought to be a cardinal principle: there is no imperative obligation for Socialists always and every-

where to nominate candidates and run electoral campaigns. In a few places Socialists may be elected to local or even possibly Congressional offices. But the main purpose of nominating candidates and running campaigns is first of all educational, and second, organizational. That is to say, we ought to run a campaign if and when that is the best way to advance Socialist principles and to build a Socialist organization. It is at least conceivable that a poor campaign, or a campaign resulting in a continuing diminution of Socialist votes may be worse for Socialism than no electoral campaign. The same amount of time and energy employed working in labor unions and other mass organizations, and in setting forth our program, might do more to advance Socialism and hasten the coming of the day of its triumph.

Socialists have been unanimously agreed that if and when there is something which can fairly be described as a Labor or Farmer-Labor Party, we should make it our electoral agency, working in it loyally and democratically while maintaining, of course, our identity and organization for the better advancement of Socialism.

The difficulty is that, especially now that the European war has broken out, the prospect for any sort of effective Labor Party in America in 1940 is exceedingly poor. Our Socialist N.E.C. very properly has a subcommittee exploring the possibilities, but we may as well face facts. At best the difficulties of forming a new party in America, by reason of our primary and Election laws and traditional strength of the old parties, are great. They are almost insuperable when labor is as bitterly divided as it is at present and when the Labor Union movement, as a whole, is losing not gaining ground in public confidence.

This latter statement may be challenged. With all my heart I wish it were not true. But if I know anything about the American people, organized labor by reason of its jurisdictional disputes, failure to work out



more active co-operation with farmers, and the persistence of such evils as race discrimination, undemocratic autocracy in the control of many unions and even racketeering, have enormously strengthened, even among workers themselves, a middle class reaction against labor unionism. Many a man will accept a labor union as better than no union for the purpose of collective bargaining who will not dream of letting his Union leader become a high political office holder or the boss of such an office holder.

In the process of building a Labor Party it is absolutely essential that we Socialists should make it clear that we do not contemplate a mere annex to a labor bureaucracy. The Labor Party we want should, of course, have the support of the labor unions but it should not be under the dictatorial control of their chiefs. Its strength should be found in the ranks of all who work with hand and brain and live by working rather than by owning. If it is to be successful for any truly Socialist end, it cannot possibly be the property of John L. Lewis or William Green or even of both of them in a miraculous alliance.

At best it would have been unlikely that such a Party could be developed by 1940 on any extensive scale. The war situation has made it far more unlikely. It is, indeed, possible that the war will be over before the campaign of 1940; in which case, the situation will be far different than if it continues. But assuming a continuance of the war in Europe, and assuming that Roosevelt has not yet put us into the war by June 1940, the all-absorbing immediate issue will be the war; the degree of intensity with which Americans want to keep out and their decision on the way to keep out.

Yet, in all probability that issue will not be clearly expressed in the struggle between the major parties. That is evident from the way in which the embargo issue cuts across the line of both parties. Roosevelt's political skill, his popularity with the masses—at least as compared with any Republican—and above all, the old tradition that we shouldn't swap horses crossing a stream, would give him personally a power far in excess of that of his party. If there had been no war, the electoral chances in 1940 would, I think, have slightly favored the Republicans. Now they favor not so much the Democrats, as Roosevelt, always provided that Roosevelt wants to run.

Today one hears considerable talk that Roosevelt may choose to retire, assured that he has already won a high position in history. Then the political situation would become more chaotic. Personally I have a hunch on which I would not be willing to bet much money, that the most likely Democratic candidate would be Paul V. McNutt, who seems (unaccountably) to have the Rooseveltian blessing. There is, however, I am told, a private war being waged against McNutt in a circle of New Dealers, which may make headway with the

impulsive President. Nevertheless, I consider McNutt a likely bet and a very alarming bet. He is infinitely more dangerous to democracy, to labor and to any sort of Socialist ideals than an old line politician or a more avowed reactionary. I think he will be clever enough, in spite of his record in Indiana, to hold in line a lot of nominal labor support, especially if Roosevelt blesses him. Labor's record in understanding and fighting this "Hoosier Hitler" is not good.

On the other hand, no matter whom the Republicans nominate, their Party will still be the same old party. Possibly profound popular discontent with the race between a McNutt and a Republican would result in a kind of last minute third party revolt. There would be no such third party revolt if Roosevelt should run. If there were such a revolt, we would have to examine very closely its nature and possibilities before we made up our minds, as Socialists, concerning our relation to it. We could not work with it if it should compromise on the vital issue of keeping America out of war.

All this leads to the conclusion that we ought to be prepared to put a Socialist ticket in the field nationally, as well as in certain Congressional districts, and make a vigorous campaign for winning for the ticket such allies as we can. The anti-war issue will give us our opportunity. Certainly it will enormously increase the necessity and the value of a political campaign for the advancement of our cause. Educational work for Socialism won't mean very much if we cannot take advantage of the 1940 campaign much as Socialists took advantage of the municipal 1917 campaign in New York City. The excellence of that campaign and the size of the vote for Morris Hillquit did a great deal to protect Socialists and other workers and critics of the war, not only in New York City, but elsewhere.

It is one thing, however, to agree that we ought to be prepared to run a campaign—a conclusion of which I would by no means have been so certain if it were not for the war situation. It is another thing to be able to do it. Let us face facts. Socialists do not need to be told of our organizational weakness. They scarcely need to be reminded how serious was our loss of official position on the ballot in New York and California in the 1938 campaign. The tendency of legislation to make it ever harder for minority Parties to get on the ballot has continued since 1936. It will be less possible in 1940 than ever before to run the kind of perfunctory campaign the old Socialist Labor Party used to conduct, and such a campaign would have little value. With all the sober realism of a council of war in the presence of a very powerful enemy we must examine ways and means of effective action. The war issue, even if we should be in the war—but with enough liberty left to carry on some sort of campaign—will give us a remarkable opportunity, and win us considerable popular support, but such support under



American political conditions, will not drop in our laps.

These things at least are necessary and necessary at once:

1. The immediate building of the Party, not only in terms of numerical growth but in terms of efficiency of organization.

2. A careful examination of the field to discover what allies we may win in our campaign, on what terms we can afford to accept them, and whether on those terms we can elect a few Congressmen. The condition of the Election Law and other objective facts may make it wise in some states for us to run under some other name than Socialist. This cannot be determined impulsively. Labor alliances, of course, will be welcome, but if the war issue is of major importance,

those alliances must not obscure or confuse our stand on that issue.

3. The work already begun by the National Office must be carried on in every possible locality with the vigorous co-operation of all Socialists. That is the work of ascertaining what can be done under the Election Laws, how to do it, and how to win for ourselves the allies of whom I have spoken.

Not the least difficult part of our task is the possibility that a change in the present outlook with regard to the war, either by the coming of peace or by the extension of war, will change all our calculations. But these very difficulties help to prove the necessity of Socialist work and strengthen the challenge to us to press forward.

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## Socialism and War Resistance

by A. J. Muste

IN its great days the Socialist movement was always vigorously and uncompromisingly anti-militarist and even had large sections of out and out pacifist members. The movement will not recover its vigor and hopefulness save as it becomes more sharply anti-militarist in its policy and learns to use non-violence as its tactic.

We are all familiar with the orthodox Marxist-Leninist argument as to how a new social order is to be achieved—via imperialist war, the transformation of imperialist war into civil war and the setting up of the dictatorship of the proletariat. This generalization is obviously, however, not a “law” in the sense that the law of gravitation is. In the realm of social life we do not yet have such laws. It is really based upon two lines of thought—first, upon tracing uniformities between the past and the present and concluding therefrom that certain phenomena are likely to be followed by certain others; secondly, upon the attempt to estimate the economic and social factors at work in the present world situation and forecast the outcome.

As to the first line of argument, since no controlled experimentation is possible in the field, it amounts to an argument from analogy, always a form of argument to be used with caution. The argument when applied to the problem of war and social change in the modern world, amounts to this: that in the past, basic changes have been accompanied by violence and that they can only be achieved in the same way to-day.

The practice of writing general history in terms of battles and wars is outmoded and is now regarded as superficial. The idea, however, that the history of social revolution must be written mainly in terms of

violence and coup d'etat still lingers in many circles, both conservative and radical. Granted, however, that wars, civil and between states, have been one of the phenomena associated in the past with change from one economy to another.

Over against the analogy thus suggested we may present another—an impressive array of instances in which to my knowledge no exception occurs, of one civilization after another at a certain advanced stage lapsing into a series of wars, after which came not a more advanced economy and a higher stage of civilization, but general disorganization following upon the wastage of economic and human resources, and a return to barbarism.

If at this point the contention is advanced that we now have the machine and science and that consequently we need not expect the same cycle as before, then we are on the ground of the second argument, namely that the best estimate we can make of the forces now operating in the world leads to the conclusion that desired social changes can only be achieved by the Marxist-Leninist method. A few years ago a great number of people, not necessarily in the Communist Party, would have said that the case had indeed been proved in Russia: “There,” they contended, “the job has been done, and nowhere else. It was done according to the Leninist strategy which accepted violence, not indeed as per se desirable, but as forced upon the workers. The same strategy and tactics will produce the same result in other lands.” Alas, it is no longer necessary to spend any time exposing that argument. Let us simply observe at this point that the post-war history of the labor and revolutionary movement as a whole has by no means been



one of steady advance so that the philosophy and strategy with which it has been operating might be considered vindicated. On the contrary, a Revolution of both would seem called for, unless repetition for the one hundredth time of a formula that has ninety-nine times brought disaster is the height of intelligence.

If we then ask, using the best means of analysis and calculation at our disposal what we may expect to be the outcome of another general war, indeed of a series of imperialist wars, fought under modern conditions and with modern weapons, then it seems to me that one must be a romanticist, capable of flying in the face of all the evidence to believe that such a war or wars will open the gateway to Socialism. It seems beyond reasonable doubt that the result is bound to set the clock back for generations, if not for centuries, that war once more undoes the results of centuries of human efforts. Most sections of the Socialist and Communist movement have for some time sensed that this is the case, whether or not they have consciously formulated their prognosis, and make it quite clear that at heart they cherish no hope whatever that Socialism or anything like it will be the outcome of the new war. Even the Trotskyists in the New International for November, in fact Trotsky himself, have had to admit the possibility that they may have to revise their whole "conception of the present epoch and its driving forces". "If the international proletariat, as a result of the experiences of our entire epoch and the current new war proves incapable of becoming the master society, this would signify the foundering of all hope for a socialist revolution, for it is impossible to expect any other more favorable conditions for it!"

If we must depend upon the process of war and dictatorship to bring in a new order, we are condemned to despair. Our hope for the abolition of war and the achievement of a just social order rests in turning the Leninist argument about the inseparable connection between war and imperialism around. If it is impossible effectively to hit at war without striking at an exploiting imperialist economy, then if we did really strike at war, might that not mean striking imperialism at its very heart? Can we imagine how a modern system of exploitation can be kept going if it has no war machine and if it cannot make war? If it can no longer escape facing its basic contradictions by resort to an armament boom, and all the rest?

Not by the road of war, but by the refusal of all labor and progressive elements to give any support to war and the war-system can we move to a sounder economy and a finer civilization. The usual first reaction among Socialists to this proposal to make war-resistance the basic line of Socialist strategy is: "It might be a good trick if it would work, but you can't get the masses, you can't get labor to adopt the policy".

To which, it seems to me, the answer is that labor the workers are not born Marxists-Leninists either. I is only by a terrific amount of organizational and educational activity, accompanied by countless sacrifices and marked by frequent set-backs, that a revolutionary or pioneering group gains influence over the masses in any case. Surely, there is a chance, a chance which men who feel and who can still reason must eagerly seize that if we spent as much time, energy, devotion, sacrifice, in trying to persuade all progressive and labor forces to adopt an uncompromising anti-militarism, rejection of all war, civil and international, we might succeed in winning mass-support to such a course.

The method of complete refusal to support or tolerate a war machine, accompanied of course by economic and political organization of labor and any other progressive elements in the community, is not open to the charge that this is "mere liberalism", an utterly ineffective "gradualism". To the contrary, such war resistance has genuinely revolutionary implications. But it is true that a "pacifist revolution" would not involve the complete scrapping of all liberalism, all democratic process, and all parliamentary machinery. It is precisely the movement for social change which has most to gain by using to the full such, admittedly as yet imperfect, democratic machinery as men have developed. To argue that democracy has only been imperfectly realized, much so-called democracy is camouflaged dictatorship of a class, and therefore we must get rid of democracy and embrace some kind of dictatorship, is neither good logic nor good politics.

Only by the development of a high degree of unity, solidarity, faith, morale, passion, among the workers and all who desire a better world, could thorough-going social changes by non-violent methods be achieved. That would imply that these elements would not have evaded those problems of working-class unity, of personal and group discipline, which as a matter of fact are being constantly evaded by them because in the backs of their minds lurks the idea that violence will cut the really difficult Gordian Knots at the crucial moments. Violence is often an "escape" for the radical and revolutionist, just as it is for the reactionary and counter-revolutionist. The latter does not honestly face himself and the problems of the society in which he lives, because he believes that when things go too far he can put the troublesome Reds in jail or call out the troops to shoot them down or persuade the would-be Reds themselves that their real enemies are the people of another country and that a war must be launched against them. In much the same way social radicals evade puzzling issues by telling themselves in so many words: "One of these days we'll settle all questions by turning the guns on the capitalists; and under the dictatorship we shall initiate, we shall take the bothersome fellows in our own movement who do not agree with



us, and stand them up against the wall and shoot them". Unless the folly of this attitude comes to be realized, progressive forces will repeatedly play into the hands of their enemies, as strikers may play into the hands of hard-boiled and reactionary employers who find it "profitable" to spend millions of dollars on labor spies etc. in order to provoke the workers to violence.

Space does not permit us to carry the argument further at this time. I am convinced, however, that unless European and American peoples are reduced by another large scale war to complete despair which would be the prelude to another Dark Ages, the only leaders

and movements they will trust in the new post-war period will be those who have resolutely opposed the war and who renounce organized violence whether in civil or in international life. We agree with Herman Rauschnig that "the day of fighting on the barricades has certainly passed. But the time in which passive resistance will become the revolutionary weapon of whole peoples, seems, therefore, to have come, and this weapon will be the more effective the more the whole economic apparatus becomes artificial and mechanized, the more massive and the more collectivized the whole mechanism of economic life".

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## SOCIALISM AND THE RUSSO-FINNISH WAR

### THREE CONTRIBUTIONS

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## National Executive Committee Resolution (Summary)

THE struggle for power among the imperialist nations has produced no event more brutal or hypocritical than Stalin's invasion of Finland. It is imperative therefore that we make it clear that Stalinism is as far removed from Socialism as is Fascism.

Socialists cannot approach the problem of the defense of Finland, however, as isolated and apart from the general war and the reshuffling of the imperialist alignments in Europe. In the extension of the war and the re-alignments which may follow, the Scandinavian countries may be drawn into the center of that struggle and may become unfortunate pawns in the hands of the great powers. It is to aid in checking such a development, as well as to prevent the Finnish working class organizations from being crushed under Russian totalitarianism, that American Socialists pledge their aid to the Finnish workers in their present struggle.

We are under no illusion that Finland is a Socialist state or that Finnish independence is a substitute for a United Socialist States of Europe. Unless there are new developments to change the situation, however, we believe that the democracy of Finland differs from that of England and France in degree of workers control. It is this, taken together with the fact that Finland has no imperialist ambitions and is free from any taint of colonial exploitation, that is a determining factor in our attitude.

The problem of aid to the Finnish workers on the part of American workers cannot be separated, however, from the struggle against American involvement in the European war, the struggle to establish a Socialist peace, and to overthrow totalitarianism everywhere. Aid to the Finnish workers by American workers must be of a character which will not militate against the larger struggle for Socialism and against

a fundamental task of the American working class at this time, the task of keeping America out of war. All governmental action as well as appeals and propaganda from capitalist or liberal sources must be examined, not solely as to whether these actions will aid the Finnish workers in their immediate struggle but also as to whether they represent a use of the Finnish situation to involve the United States in war or to further capitalist exploitation of Finland. Such action could make Finland the Belgium of a second World War. With war raging in Europe our desire and efforts to render aid to the Finnish workers cannot be separated from our duty to the international working class and to the Socialist struggle against all imperialist war.

The desperate need of the Finnish workers carries with it grave dangers of Finnish entanglement in the imperialist conflict of Europe and the threat of mounting reactionary influence at home. The struggle of the Finnish workers against these dangers must go hand in hand with their struggle against Russian imperialism. In the face of this situation, American Socialists pledge their aid to the Finnish workers in their efforts to protect their organizations, whether they be threatened by Russia, by democratic or Fascist imperialisms or by Finnish reactionaries.

We ask trade union, cooperative and farm groups to send their aid to similar economic organizations in Finland. We welcome the formation of independent labor committees to aid the Finnish workers with money and supplies—in contrast to committees headed by capitalist politicians.

Above all, we emphasize that our unqualified denunciation of Stalin's aggression and our aid to the Finnish workers must go hand in hand with our struggle to KEEP AMERICA OUT OF WAR.



# The Finnish Problem

by Frank Trager and Lillian Symes

THE Russian invasion of Finland and the possible extension of that aggression to the Scandinavian countries presents the revolutionary movement with a situation which does not easily lend itself to those compact classifications—"imperialist war," "struggle for national liberation," "against colonial exploitation," etc., upon which Socialist attitudes are customarily based. The Finnish, like the Spanish situation (though the elements involved are not identical) is a *mixed* situation requiring careful analysis and a realistic approach, rather than the mechanical application of preconceived slogans. There are situations in which every possible position the workers may take is fraught with the gravest possible dangers to themselves. This is true in Finland today. But because of that fact we cannot fairly offer advice which would result in their collective suicide.

What are the complications in the Finnish situation (at this writing and not at some possible future date) which bear upon the attitude to be taken by Socialists?

*First*, domestic: Finland, like the Scandinavian countries in general, is a capitalist nation, i.e., its productive economy is based largely on private ownership, though much of its distributive economy is in the hands of workers' and farmers' cooperatives. Since 1937, it has had a coalition government of Social Democratic and Agrarian parties, or what might be called here, a farmer-labor government, with the labor forces predominating. The "Rightness" or "Leftness" of the Finnish Social Democrats is beside the point. Any American farmer-labor party—a development which we favor—would probably be far more conservative. A farmer-labor coalition is not equivalent to a Popular Front, because a Popular Front implies the inclusion of a third, capitalist party which holds the balance of power and without whose support the farmer-labor elements could not remain in power. It was a government representative of the Finnish masses in their present stage of political development which decided to resist the Russian invasion. To maintain that this decision was imposed upon the Finns by the imperialist nations or by their own capitalists is to ignore both the expressed sentiment of the Finnish masses and the course of Allied policy since the Stalin-Hitler pact.

An anachronistic element which enters the picture here is the fact that though its government was farmer-labor, its small standing army of 30,000 (which the Finns probably never expected they would need) remained under the leadership of certain reactionary officers, notably Mannerheim. (In Spain, several of the generals who commanded the Loyalist forces were also

"hang-overs" from the old reactionary military machine.) General Mannerheim, however, has had as little political influence in Finland since his White Guardist days, as General Pershing has had in the United States. Nevertheless this type of military leadership in the present struggle constitutes a serious *internal* danger. The existence of "national unity" in itself is not so serious so long as the workers organizations constitute the *dominant* element in and maintain control of the national unity.

*Second*, international: Unlike Poland and Czechoslovakia, Finland was not set up at Versailles as a buffer state wholly dependent upon the support of France and England. It won its independence in 1917. Its political ties were with the Scandinavian countries rather than with the Allies. The sympathies and interests of its reactionaries were almost wholly pro-German. By no stretch of the imagination could it be called an "imperialist" nation. (Spain remained an "imperialist" through its civil and international war, none of its governments, during that period, having freed the Moroccan colony.) The fact that both Germany and the Allies favored the existence of an independent Finland—because of its geographical position—did not make it a pawn of either side. Neither did the fact that there were foreign investments in Finland. There are far larger foreign investments in China, a fact which did not preclude Socialist material aid to the Chinese workers (as symbolized by the Japanese boycott) nor prompt Socialists to urge upon those workers a policy of revolutionary defeatism.

Does the fact that the Allies, as well as Italy are now selling arms to Finland make the Finnish resistance, automatically, an integral part of the general imperialist war? The defeat of the Non-Intervention Agreement under pressure from the English and French workers, would not have turned the Spanish struggle, automatically, into an "imperialist" struggle. Germany both financed and armed the Irish Republican struggle during the last world war. This fact did not alter the nature of that struggle.

The Finnish defense may become a part of the general imperialist conflict, whenever France and England decide to draw all of Scandinavia into that conflict and when they establish military bases and armed forces in Finland, Sweden, etc., with which to pursue the war against Russia and Germany.

A Socialist analysis cannot ignore objective conditions nor can it impose upon one situation the logic applicable to a different one. The Finnish situation is not an *exact* duplicate of the Spanish and for this



reason, the type of aid to the Finnish workers which Socialists advocate must differ from the type of aid they urged for Spain—even under the four bourgeois-liberal governments which preceded Caballero's. In Spain, at least in its earlier phases, the struggle against fascism was accompanied by a high degree of workers' control over that struggle and by certain efforts toward collectivization—though we did not withdraw our *material* support when this condition ceased to exist. In Finland, the workers had *political* control over their government but the movement for economic transformation was being carried on in the gradualist tradition of Scandinavian Social Democracy—a policy which may very well be the one most applicable to the objective conditions existing in Finland at this time. (Even Marx did not rule out the legitimacy of such a policy in certain nations.) Certainly intelligent Marxists do not maintain that there is only one pattern of social transformation applicable to all objective conditions.

But neither is the Finnish situation a duplicate of the struggle of imperialist France and England and their satellites against Germany—whether that imperialism is headed by a Popular Front or any other government. It is not, of course, a struggle for colonial emancipation.

To Socialists, the central question raised by the Finnish invasion is: What shall the Socialist workers of Finland do *now*, in the face of Russia's imperialist invasion? And its corollary, what shall Socialists outside of Finland say and do?

The alternatives offered to the Finnish workers are as follows:

1—Practice "revolutionary defeatism" against their own government and join hands with the Russian invaders. (This advice is offered by both Stalinists and Trotskyists.)

2—Institute a civil war, in the midst of the invasion, set up a Socialist state which will conduct an independent defense against Russia.

3—Conduct the defensive struggle against Russia under a farmer-labor political regime while guarding and extending their own hegemony over that struggle.

The first two alternatives, while differing in inspiration and motivation, would unquestionably lead to identical results—victory for Russia. Granted that this result would be an unmitigated misfortune, both for the Finnish workers movement and for the prospect of a new Russian revolution, it is unrealistic to offer this advice in vacuo. It means to call upon the Finnish workers to institute a civil war—which must include sabotage of the existing military struggle—while that nation is being attacked by the largest—even though not the most efficient—military power in the world, a civil war against a government in which they themselves are the dominant element and which would divide the workers and peasants themselves into two mutually warring camps. It would be, in effect, revo-

lutionary defeatism. To further call upon the Finnish workers to set up a "Socialist State" at this juncture in a predominantly agricultural country with none of the objective pre-requisites for an independent socialist economy in a capitalist world, is equally unrealistic. It is to ignore the historic lessons of Russian Bolshevism. There is no basis for the assumption that such a course would inspire an anti-Stalinist revolution in Russia, for if Stalin can make the Russians (and even Communist sympathizers outside of Russia) believe that Finland invaded Russia, he could as easily make them believe that this Finnish "revolt" was a propaganda trick on the part of the Finnish reactionaries to seduce the loyalty of the Russian army.

The third course of action indicated above also involves serious dangers and difficulties for the Finnish masses. Given the present complicated world situation, there is no perfect or absolutely "safe" solution for the Finnish and Scandinavian workers. They are forced to choose that solution which seems to involve the least danger to their own movement, rather than any theoretical or moral absolute. It seems obvious that they are better equipped to deal with their own comparatively small reactionary and military caste than with the overwhelming state apparatus of a successful Stalinist Russia.

The question then arises: What attitude shall socialists outside of Finland take toward their struggle? This too must be based upon an analysis of the objective situation, rather than upon wishful thinking. It must take into consideration as well the fact that an imperialist war is raging in Europe and that the Finnish defense may become a part of this general war.

A socialist analysis leads to the conclusion that the Finnish workers must defend themselves and their working class institutions against Russian imperialism; that, at the same time, in view of the social-political situation in which that struggle is being conducted, they must vigorously extend and strengthen the basis of their own leadership over that struggle and over the social-political life of the country in general. Socialists do not call for "arms for Finland," because under existing conditions, such a course would increase the dangers of a general conflagration arising out of the Finnish struggle and might even be used to involve this country in that conflict.

In giving material aid—food, medical supplies, money—direct to the Finnish labor movement at this time, Socialists cannot ignore the fact that unless the war is brought to a speedy close, all the Scandinavian countries will be drawn into that general war and become in fact, rather than in propaganda terms, the pawns of Allied imperialism. They warn the Finnish workers against this danger and urge them to wage a vigorous struggle against such involvement and against Allied intervention in Finland's internal affairs. The *type* of aid which Socialists render directly to the Fin-



nish workers is intended to strengthen them in their struggle both with Russian imperialism and with their own reactionaries. It also flows from Socialist determination to avoid American involvement in the European conflict.

The fact that capitalist groups—the Hoover Committee, etc.—are giving “aid to Finland” does not mean that their support is of the same character or flows from the same analysis as our own. Bourgeois Committees have also given aid to China in its struggle with Japan. This does not offer an excuse for the workers of the world to abandon the Chinese workers. Stalinists, Coughlinites, as well as Socialists and pure pacifists raise the slogan: “Keep America Out of War”. We recognize the difference in motivation.

To sum up, it would seem fairly clear that attempts to apply certain fixed political slogans to the present mixed and complicated Finnish situation are vicious in their consequences as well as representative of lazy, and therefore dangerous, Socialist thinking. Thinking socialists must be prepared in every situation for an objective analysis which does justice to all the facts and for the consequences which flow from that analysis.

At this stage in the Russian invasion, Socialists call for *independent* labor aid directly to the Finnish workers and peasants in their struggle to defend themselves against that invasion while urging them, at the same time, to strengthen and extend the area of their political control, both during and after that struggle.

## The Russo-Finnish Struggle: Part of Imperialist War

by Herbert Zam

IN reply to the invitation of the League of Nations to arbitrate the dispute with Finland and in the meantime call an armistice, Molotoff declared that there was nothing to arbitrate, as there was no war. In fact they had just signed a mutual assistance pact with the “recognized” Finnish government, headed by Kuusinen. At the same time, moreover, Molotoff also notified all countries that Finland was being blockaded and warned them against any attempts to help Finland.

As the military events in Finland follow one another in rapid succession, the battle in the American radical movement over what is happening in Finland is also raging. “Defend Finland!” shout the Social Democrats. “Defend the Soviet Union!” answer the Stalinists, and this cry is echoed by the presumably bitter enemies of the Stalinists, the Trotskyists. All sorts of weird interpretations are being given to the Finnish-Russian events and the history of Finland is re-written with every one of these interpretations. Even people who were not fooled by the Czech crisis, by the division of Poland, are now saying “Finland is different”. A united front for the defense of Finland, running from Hoover to Algernon Lee, has already been established and is working overtime. The United States is aroused over the Finnish situation as it was not aroused over Austria, Czechoslovakia or Poland. The conservative bourgeois world tremendously admires Finland for two unparalleled achievements in world economy—it balances its budget and it pays its debts. But these two achievements hardly recommend themselves to Socialists as representative of a proletarian cause.

The war between Finland and Russia is a sector of the imperialist war which is now waging. It is a struggle for complete control of the Baltic, with Russia representing the Stalin-Hitler axis and Finland repre-

senting the allies. The fact that this phase of the war is a particularly crass form of aggression by a big country against a small country must not blind us to its essential character. Of course there are those who say that if one does not side with Finland, he is helping Stalin, just as they said that anyone who did not side with Stalin for a peoples’ front was helping Hitler. But intelligent people cannot be convinced by such blackmailing polemics.

One can be against Russia and not for Finland. Were the revolutionary Socialists correct on the peoples’ front? Were they correct in their opposition to “collective security”? Were they right in refusing to support the Stalin-Laval mutual assistance pact; in fighting the non-intervention agreement against Spain? Yet the maintenance of these positions in the face of a popular wave of sentiment meant swimming against the stream. Every basically correct policy can establish itself only by swimming against the stream. On numerous occasions the Socialist Party of the United States, in common with revolutionary Socialists throughout the world, has taken the position that the defense of small capitalist states against large ones is not the way to promote peace, defeat fascism or secure national self-determination. To adopt a position in normal times is easy. To stand by that position in a crisis is more difficult. In every crisis there are backsliders who for reasons of sentiment or hate, drift into an unsocialist position.

Some people see a parallel between Finland and Spain. We helped Spain, they say, why not help Finland? Is there a parallel? In Spain there was a civil war. In Finland there is “national unity”. In Spain the division was along sharp class lines, even if the issues were not always as clear. In Spain, the old state ap-



paratus broke down and a new one, resting immediately upon the mass organizations of the workers and revolutionary peasants was established. In Finland, not only is the old state apparatus intact, but the most reactionary anti-working class military clique has the conduct of war in its hands. In Spain, the masses spontaneously began the collectivization of industrial establishments and agriculture. In Finland, industry and agriculture are firmly in the hands of native and foreign capitalists. In Spain full self-government of the cities, towns and countryside was established and gave democracy to the broad masses. In Finland, military rule is in the saddle. In Spain, a provisional revolutionary government was established which was potentially capable of being transformed into a proletarian government building socialism. No such claims can be made for Finland. The entire capitalist world, democratic and fascist, united against Spain, while almost the entire capitalist world is united for Finland. The fact that the help which England and France refused Spain is available for Finland, that the United States embargoed Spain but allows naval planes to be shunted to Finland does not make the case of Finland different, but proves that the case *is* different.

By its invasion of Finland, Russia has returned to the old czarist methods of the conquest and subjugation of small nations. The invasion of Finland closes the era which was inaugurated with the November revolution and which raised human hopes so high for so many years. Not socialism, but a new type of oppressive regime exists in Russia, a regime whose external policies are crassly imperialistic. There is no longer a Soviet Union, but only Russia, Stalinist Russia. Regardless of what the masses may believe, the Stalinist movement is a movement of revived Great Russian nationalism. Anyone who still supports Russia in this campaign, even with left criticism, becomes part of this nationalist movement, a "left" nationalist. And this must inevitably be the fate of all movements, groups or sects whose origin is Russian, whose center is the Russian Revolution, whose main goal is to reform

Russia.

Up to the present, the Russian military actions have met with defeat. Undoubtedly, the purges which removed the most competent military figures from the army and replaced them with political sycophants contributed to this result. But what is more important is that the rank and file of the army, and even the officers, appear to have no stomach for this war. They are very unenthusiastic, if not hostile. Unlike the situation in 1921, they do not see this war as a "defense of the Socialist Fatherland" but rather as one of imperialist aggression. They are therefore not interested in a victory. And these feelings are correct. Not a victory, but a defeat for the military and imperialist ambitions of the Stalinist regime can serve the interests of the Russian workers and of the cause of Socialism.

But the Finnish workers can contribute to this defeat for Russian imperialism in only one way—by the establishment of a Finnish Socialist Republic. So long as Stalin can say to his army that the bourgeois government of Finland is an imperialist tool (which it is), that the Finnish workers are exploited (as they are), that Finland is being egged on and supported by French and British imperialism (which cannot be denied), that the Finnish military forces are headed by the traditional enemies of the proletarian revolution and the butchers of the Finnish Socialist Republic (which is also true), he can keep some sort of war going, with ultimate success very probable. But when the Finnish workers can say to the Russian workers that all these charges are no longer true, that it is not a bourgeois Finland, but a workers' Finland which Stalin is assaulting; when they begin fraternizing with the Russian troops; when a Finnish Socialist government breaks off Finland's imperialist relations with France and England—only then will a successful defense against Russia be possible. The Finnish people can defend themselves against Russian imperialism only in one way—the setting up of a Socialist Republic and the transformation of Finland from a puppet of imperialism into a builder of Socialism.

## Roosevelt, Latin America and the War

by S. Fanny Simon

THE War in Europe has given the Roosevelt administration the opportunity to expand its good neighbor policy and particularly its program of hemispheric defense. The latter was brought forward at the time of the Lima Conference and has had its first test at the Conference of the foreign ministers held at Panama last September. Out of this meeting came the declaration of hemispheric neutrality embodied in the proclamation of a neutral zone that extends three

hundred miles from the coasts of the 21 republics on both oceans. In this zone the belligerents were asked to pledge themselves not to commit any warlike acts. The closing of the ports in the Americas to submarines but not to surface vessels of the belligerents was also adopted. Although there was the desire in some quarters to establish joint patrols within the neutral zones, this was abandoned in favor of having each country patrol its own areas.



The ostensible objective of the neutral zones seemed obvious enough. Nevertheless, some critics have been so unkind as to suggest that the Roosevelt administration had in mind the freeing of the English navy from patrol duty in the south Atlantic. There are others who claim that the declaration marks the beginning of a shift toward a military economy as a way of solving the unsolved problem of unemployment. Instead of W.P.A. and P.W.A. projects to help the unemployed, to which the middle class seems to object, the government is going to increase defense expenditures, which on the whole are more readily accepted. The annexing of the two oceans will naturally require larger defense expenditures. Already Roosevelt has informed the country that he will ask for \$500,000,000 more bringing the total defense expenditures for 1940 to the colossal sum of \$2,500,000,000.

Although the Latin American countries were, undoubtedly, interested in keeping the war away from their shores, they were really more concerned with finding means of easing the difficulties that the War in Europe brought to their economies. They wanted to deal with questions that would make it possible for them to readjust themselves to the changed conditions painlessly. As agricultural and raw material supplying countries, they are particularly vulnerable to rapid price fluctuations. Most of them have not yet recovered from the last great fall in raw material prices that set in in 1930. The barter deals that the Latin American countries adopted and which Secretary Hull has so often denounced were products of the great depression. To Chile the War meant the problem of disposing of \$8,000,000 of agricultural products and \$3,000,000 of nitrates and miscellaneous products that used to be sold to Germany. Similar problems were faced by the other countries.

As far as the United States was concerned, the War had removed from Latin America its greatest competitors. How to capture their markets and hold them permanently became the chief problem of the Roosevelt administration. Business felt that it would mean increased trade with Latin America but its optimism was tempered by the knowledge that a country can not buy unless it can sell. This fact was particularly brought home in the speech to the National Foreign Trade Convention by William T. Moran, assistant vice-president of the National City Bank, in which he analyzed the probable foreign exchange position of the Latin American countries as a result of the war. He admitted that the war might ultimately bring increased purchasing power to some of the Latin American countries because of the increased demand for wheat, meat, oil, certain metals and similar products that Latin American countries usually export. At the same time, he pointed out that a number of the Latin American countries, notably those whose chief money crop was coffee,

would suffer a loss. Germany was the second best customer for their coffee. The shutting down of the German market will inevitably depress the price of coffee and cause decreased purchasing power in at least four Central American countries. According to Mr. Moran, the fall of even one cent in the price of Colombian coffee reduces by \$4,000,000 the annual exchange of Colombia.

Business and administration leaders were both aware that in order to increase our share in Latin American trade we would have to take more of their exports. With this in mind, the Under-secretary of Commerce, Edward J. Noble called a meeting of retailers, representatives of the Latin American countries and United States government officials to formulate a trade program whereby the United States might henceforth buy from Latin America consumers' goods amounting to \$250,000,000 formerly imported from Europe. Among the products suggested that we henceforth buy from Latin America were sisal handbags, rayon, glassware, woolen socks, table cloths, rugs and cotton sweaters. From other quarters has come the demand that the United States free itself from dependence upon European countries or their colonies for such vital supplies as rubber, tin, and manganese. The latter products could be developed in Latin America much more easily than the ones mentioned previously. Assuming that such development would be desirable, which might be questioned, since after the war the result will be greater competition in the world markets and the need for still higher tariffs to nurture infant industries, our ability of getting these products from Latin America will depend on the getting of capital from the United States. Latin America possesses little in the way of surplus capital to start or to expand their industries. Any such scheme would, therefore, involve a program of long term credit.

The Roosevelt administration had been for some time anxious to undertake a program of lending to Latin America in order to facilitate trade but found the large indebtedness of the Latin American countries to American investors a stumbling block. In the halcyon days of Coolidge prosperity, the Latin American dictators had money literally thrust at them, so anxious were our bankers to lend our money. One banking house went so far as to bribe the son of the Peruvian dictator in order that he might influence his father to let them float a new bond issue which was later to be in default and which may never be repaid. The banking houses unloaded these securities upon the unsuspecting public.

The dictators used funds to maintain themselves in power or to beautify their capital cities. Little of it was ever invested in useful public works, such as roads to connect the rural population with the cities or for facilities to improve the health or educational standards



of the rural masses. Nor was much of it invested in really productive enterprises with the result that most of the loans have been in default since 1932. According to the annual report of the Foreign Bondholders Protective Council, the total dollar indebtedness guaranteed by Latin American governments was on December 31, 1938 \$1,600,530,070 of which 77% was in partial or total default. The amount of indebtedness ranges from \$342,670,000 owed by Brazil to \$1,331,111 owed by Guatemala. Argentina owes \$234,210,000; Chile \$249,801,543; Colombia \$143,276,754; Cuba \$187,430,000; Mexico \$278,874,500.

Any suggestion of a new lending program will probably arouse opposition in the United States. One can hardly blame the average citizen, if he feels that it would be throwing good money after bad. The Roosevelt administration has, nevertheless, been working upon a scheme for large scale lending. It tried to accomplish this by urging Congress to increase the capital of the Export-Import Bank but failed. The war in Europe has given greater impetus to the administration's desire to undertake a lending program with a view to capturing the South American markets and reducing the influence of European countries in Latin America. Recently Roosevelt announced that the departments of State, Treasury and Commerce as well as the Federal Loan Administrator were working on a formula for the readjustment of the present indebtedness on dollar bonds and for future financial arrangements with Latin American governments. Loans have already been extended to Brazil, Nicaragua and Paraguay. Loans are promised to Bolivia and Colombia and these are expected to initiate a program of loans to practically all Latin American countries.

The wisdom of much of this program is exceedingly dubious. There might be a good deal of virtue in a program involving more effective marketing machinery, including long term rediscounting by the government of exporters' notes and the lending of technicians and capital to develop new productive industries, the products of which we are in need and which can be profitably developed in the countries of Latin America. Naturally, the control of the industries must remain in the hands of Latin Americans and not in the hands of foreigners. A lending program which might have as its objective raising the level of the masses in Latin America so that they might be brought into the market for our goods might have a good deal to recommend it. Such a program would really help the United States obtain a larger market and at the same time would truly qualify us for the term "good neighbor". But, such a program is practically inconceivable as long as Latin America is in the hands of military dictators and a semi-feudal clique of landlords. A program of loans to dictatorial regimes to be used to entrench the dictators in power is no solution at all. In the past such loans

have been responsible for the sending of American marines to Latin America and for the ill will towards Americans.

Unfortunately, in his dealings with Latin America Roosevelt has not shown that he was really interested in the spread and the development of democracy on this continent. One certainly does not help democracy by pretending that it exists on this continent when it does not. A government need not deliberately provoke the overthrow of another government but it does not have to pretend that the government which exiles its intellectuals, muzzles the press, sets aside the constitution when it suits its purpose, prohibits meetings in which the regime is criticised, holds plebiscites in true totalitarian style, as the government of Brazil has done, is actuated by ideals of democracy. How much faith in Roosevelt's democratic professions does an exile from Brazil have when he reads the following: "The less fortunate people who today do not enjoy independence and freedom can take courage from the lesson in tolerance that your people have given to mankind." And again this, "It should be obvious to all that the similarity of our objectives and our cooperation in working for their attainment are not due to any mere accident of fate, but to the common ideals which inspire us." What ideals, President Roosevelt? Those of coups d'etats and of the corporative state of fascism!

Progressives in Latin America may be excused if they appear suspicious of Roosevelt's democratic pronouncements when they see honors showered upon that other great "democrat", the self-confessed assassin of Sandino, President Anastasio Somoza of Nicaragua, who is at present engaged in that great "democratic" process of "amending" the Nicaraguan constitution so that he can continue to be president. The royal reception given him by the Roosevelt administration and the loan granted to his government have been the chief vehicles for entrenching him in power. Somoza in the eyes of liberal Latin American opinion represents the archtype lackey of Pan-Americanism, which still, as much as we may regret it, appears to it a cloak for imperialism. Nor has Somoza's announcement that Nicaragua is ready to fight for its great neighbor of the North increased its respect for him nor trust in Roosevelt.

Nor was Roosevelt's policy toward Republican Spain calculated to increase his prestige with the progressive forces in Latin America. Latin Americans felt that a defeat for Republican Spain, which the Roosevelt arms embargo made almost inevitable, would be a victory for their native dictators. A victory of the loyalists would have meant a heavy hammer blow against fascism and for democracy in South America. It would have given courage to all progressive elements in Latin America and we might have seen these democratic forces girding themselves for a successful



battle with their dictators. The victory of Franco has encouraged reactionary elements in Latin America.

Moreover, the Latin Americans wonder whether our military and naval and aerial missions are any more disinterested than are those of the totalitarian or other imperialist nations. At present the United States has three naval and several aviation instructors in Argentina, military and naval missions in Brazil, a naval mission in Peru, a military instructor in Haiti and a military, aviation and naval mission in Colombia. One tangible result of the "good will" flight of American bombers to Brazil was the fact that a number of Brazilian officers are coming along to study our aerial methods. While the munitions and aeroplane manufacturers have now all the orders they can fill, Latin Americans have not forgotten that our War and Navy departments have in the past always taken a keen interest in the sales promotions of these industries. Generally they have resulted in increased arms expenditures which the nations could ill afford and which were used to terrorize the opposition or in border wars.

Roosevelt's good neighbor policy has not succeeded in eradicating the fear of many Latin Americans against the "creditor of the world" and "the chief buyer" in Latin America. The Pan American Union still represents to them a metropolis with 20 colonies rather than an organization of 21 independent republics. There is a large group in Latin America represented by the Apra movement (American Popular Revolutionary Alliance) that advocates the political and economic unity of the Latin American countries. Only such a union, this group insists, can make Latin America great and able to deal upon terms of equality with the North American neighbor. To the Apristas it is quite clear that the United States' interest in the Latin American countries does not flow from its love of liberty nor its attachment to the principles of freedom; it stems chiefly from the desire to protect its own "living space". The anti-imperialist forces in Latin America do not as yet see eye to eye with the cartoonist who represented Uncle Sam smoking the pipe of peace with Latin America from a mixture labelled Pan-Americanism mellow—no bite.

## U.S.S.R. Proletarian or Capitalist State?

by R. L. Worrall

*(The following article, reprinted from the British Socialist magazine "LEFT", is an interesting contribution to the discussion on Russia which the SOCIALIST REVIEW is initiating. In subsequent issues, we expect to publish articles representing other viewpoints.—Editor.)*

WITH the Socialist Movement at its lowest ebb since 1914 accurate knowledge, analysis and description of Russia is needed to clear away the doubt and uncertainty, the revulsion and disappointment, which Stalin's regime has brought to the working class as a whole.

Ironically enough, one who has been the most outstanding opponent of Stalin has added to the confusion surrounding the nature of the regime. Trotsky persists in regarding Russia as a workers' state, although that state has shattered proletarian democracy, putting the working class of Russia in a straitjacket, and killing or imprisoning tens of thousands of revolutionary internationalists.

In his latest work on the subject—*The Revolution Betrayed*—it is recognized that "of Soviets, there remains only the name." The territorial electorates of Russia's new constitution are "anything you will, but

not soviets," and this has been a matter "of juridically liquidating the dictatorship of the proletariat."\*

The bureaucracy which has destroyed the soviet system is recognized as having "unlimited power," and to be a "ruling and privileged stratum"—"an uncontrolled caste alien to socialism." That this bureaucracy has dealt crushing blows to socialism, and has destroyed workers' democracy in Russia, Trotsky knows, and sees that in that country there must be, "according to all evidences," a second "supplementary revolution—against bureaucratic absolutism."

But side by side with this partial lucidity, half-blind, quixotic sentiments appear, in the guise of either careless phrases or considered opinions. Trotsky writes of Russia as "a workers' state," a "soviet state," and "a

\* The New Constitution of Russia has indeed set a legal seal on the annihilation of the soviets. Two national Chambers, monopolizing legislation, separate the legislative from the executive bodies of the State, thus destroying a basic principle of workers' democracy. The electoral units of the national legislature are not based on the productive units of the working class, but are *territorial* units, i.e., parliamentary—like constituencies, electing one deputy to the legislature for every 300,000 of the population. And in these imitations of parliamentary constituencies, there is not even a choice of candidates at election time. The bureaucracy presents *one* candidate to be elected by each constituency! The so-called soviets are purely *local* executive organs of the bureaucracy. The vital right of recall of a delegate to a governing body is conspicuous by its absence in the new Constitution. There is no longer even a trace of the soviet system in Russia, save the name "soviet."



socialist state." The soviet bureaucracy, we learn, "has expropriated the proletariat politically in order by methods of its own to defend the social conquests"! The proletariat has been "expropriated politically" (in other words, deprived of political power), but the October revolution is "not yet overthrown."

The underlying cause of these contradictory statements lies in a false view of the dynamics of capitalist production, particularly in relation to private property. Contrary to common belief, private property is not a specific feature of capitalist production, having been a basic feature of practically *every* social system of civilization. Private property has indeed been a specific feature of *civilization*, and in one form *has been* a basic principle of capitalism. But it is not a specific feature of capitalist production, *nor is it essential to that mode of production in every phase of its development.*

Nowhere in *Capital* does Marx place private property among the specific features of capitalist production. In volume three, the "three principal facts of capitalist production" are described as follow:—

"(1) Concentration of the means of production in a few hands, whereby they cease to appear as the property of the immediate labourers, and transform themselves into social powers of production. It is true, they first become the private property of capitalists. These are the trustees of bourgeois society, but they pocket the proceeds of their trusteeship.

"(2) Organization of labor itself into socialized labor, by social co-operation, division of labor, and combination of labor with natural sciences.

"In both directions the capitalist mode of production abolishes private property and private labor, even though it does so in contradictory forms.

"(3) Creation of the world market . . ."

Again, in the same volume, so neglected by students of Marx, he points out that capitalist production "is marked from the outset by two peculiar traits," namely:

"(1) It produces its products as commodities . . . Its peculiar mark is that the prevailing and determining character of its products is that of being commodities . . . so that wage-labor is the typical character of labor . . . The principal agents of this mode of production itself, the capitalist and the wage worker, are to that extent merely personifications of capital and wage labor.

"(2) The other specific mark of the capitalist mode of production is the production of surplus-value as the direct aim and determining incentive of production. Capital produces essentially capital, and does so only to the extent that it produces surplus value . . ."

Now the accumulation of capital, the aim and compelling motive of capitalist production, has become more and more a matter for State control and regulation since 1914. In the nineteenth century, this development was foreshadowed by the concentration of capital in the joint-stock companies. Marx showed how capital was even then beginning to shed its garment of purely individual ownership, and was beginning to float on the social medium of public investment. In other

words, the tendency was towards "the abolition of capital as private property, within the boundaries of capitalist production itself." Thereby the employer of an enterprise, the "actually functioning capitalist," was on the way to becoming "a mere manager," an administrator of other people's capital," and the owners of capital, "mere owners, mere money capitalists."

Engels, too, was well aware that the essence of capitalism lay not in private property, but in that drive towards further accumulation of capital whose vehicle *at the time* was private property of a particular kind. Engels foresaw that the further development of capitalism, in the direction of State ownership of the means of production, could lead to the virtual abolition of private property, while the essence of capitalism yet remained. His brilliant forecast of State capitalism—held by Trotsky to be an impossibility in practice—is as follows:—

"Just as at first the capitalist mode of production displaced the workers, so now it displaces the capitalists, relegating them, just as it did the workers, to the superfluous population, even if in the first instance not to the industrial reserve army.

"*But the conversion into either joint-stock companies or State property does not deprive the productive forces of their character as capital.* In the case of joint-stock companies this is obvious. And the modern State, too, is only the organization with which bourgeois society provides itself in order to maintain the general external conditions of the capitalist mode of production against encroachments, either by the workers or by individual capitalists. The modern State, whatever its form, is an essentially capitalist machine; it is the State of the capitalists, the ideal collective body of all capitalists, the more productive forces it takes over, the more it becomes the real collective body of all capitalists, the more citizens it exploits. The workers remain wage-earners, proletarians. The capitalist relationship is not abolished; it is rather pushed to an extreme. But at this extreme it changes into its opposite. State ownership of the productive forces is not the solution of the conflict, but it contains within itself the formal means, the handle to the solution."

"(Anti-Duhring.)"

In the present century, Lenin described the actual development of the tendency towards State Capitalism, terming imperialism "the era of the transformation of monopoly capitalism into State monopoly capitalism." In 1917, before the October revolution, he placed on the order of the day "the expropriation of the capitalists, the conversion of *all* citizens into workers and employees of *one* huge 'syndicate'—the whole State—the complete subordination of the whole of the work of this syndicate to the really democratic State of the Soviets of Workers and Soldiers Deputies." But Lenin did not regard even this step as an escape from the capitalist character of production. He recognized that the power held by soviets would consist (as the first phase of communism) of political power over capitalist economies, especially in the field of distribution.



Referring to the "interesting phenomenon of communism retaining, in its first phase, the narrow horizon of bourgeois rights," Lenin wrote in September, 1917:—

"Bourgeois rights, with respect to articles of *consumption*, inevitably presuppose, of course, the existence of the bourgeois State, for rights are nothing without an apparatus capable of enforcing the observance of the rights. Consequently for a certain time not only bourgeois rights, but even the bourgeois State remains under Communism, without the bourgeoisie!"

This possibility of a "bourgeois State without the bourgeoisie" was realized under Stalin, but in a form exceeding Lenin's anticipation of the temporary survival of bourgeois rights. For under Stalin the bureaucracy set its heel on the growth of communism while continuing to monopolize the socialized means of production.

After the October revolution, Lenin insisted that even State capitalism would be an advance on the system of individual capitalist ownership, scorning those opposed to the concentration of capital in trusts on the grounds that this would create the danger of State capitalism. Lenin welcomed the possibility of concentrating capital to the point of State monopoly, since this would create the essential industrial basis for State socialism, with its control of a technically advanced economy by the workers through soviet democracy. In a speech in May, 1918, he said:—

"Reality says that State Capitalism would be a step forward for us; if we were able to bring about in Russia in a short time State Capitalism it would be a victory for us. How could they be so blind as not to see that our chief enemy is the small capitalist, the small owner? . . . State Capitalism is a step towards State Socialism . . . The domination of the small bourgeoisie by the other classes and by State Capitalism should be welcomed by every class-conscious worker, because State Capitalism under Krensky's democratic regime would mean a step towards Socialism, and under the Soviet Government almost complete socialism."

Lenin is perfectly clear on the vital point that proletarian democracy is an *essential feature* of State socialism (as contrasted with State capitalism, which is merely control of production as a whole by the State). Proletarian democracy, he states, lies not only in exclusion of the bourgeoisie from the franchise, but also in the fact that "all bureaucratic formalism and restriction of elections are abolished; the masses themselves determine the order and time of elections, and every elected person is liable to recall." The masses moreover, are drawn more and more into political life and administrative work.

Throughout Lenin's writings after 1917, there is the same emphasis on workers' democracy as the *specific* feature of State socialism: "By the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the landowners we have only cleared the way; we have not yet erected the structure of socialism." The whole idea of the State creating socialism

through the accumulation of capital,\* *on the basis of workers' democracy*, is embodied in Lenin's rough-hewn phrase: "electricity plus soviets equals socialism . . ."

Now Trotsky is well aware that the absence of workers' democracy in Russia means the absence of Socialism, but at the same time he cannot bring himself to admit that capitalism now reigns in the land of the October revolution. Hence with regard to Russia we "abandon such finished social categories as capitalism . . . and socialism," and define Russian society as "transitional" (capable of developing into socialism, or backwards into private property in the means of production).

To describe Russian society as transitional is certainly correct, but it does not answer the questions: what is the aim and compelling motive of production in Russia? Is the State in Russia a workers' State or a capitalist State?

Trotsky, who has not yet arrived at the first of these questions, answers the second in this way: In Russia the bourgeoisie has been expropriated, and the means of production are owned by the State. The bureaucracy, which controls the machinery of State and rules the country, is not a class. Therefore Russia is not a capitalist State. Therefore nationalization (socialization) of the means of production has made the State a workers' State (distorted by Stalinism).

To deny that Russia is a capitalist State, because the Stalinist bureaucracy is not a class, springs partly from an inability to distinguish structure from function. The *structure* of bureaucracy, including the relative lack of private property relations, differs fundamentally from the structure of a bourgeois class, which in general is based upon the principle of private property. But the *function* of the bureaucracy is that of the bourgeoisie, namely, the accumulation of capital. Aside from the personal ambitions, incomes, extravagances and inefficiency of the bureaucracy, its social aim, objectively speaking, is the accumulation of capital in Russia—the production of commodities, the extraction of surplus-value from the working class, the realization of this surplus-value as profits of the State and the conversion of profits into further State property, especially capital in the form of further means of production; more factories, more machinery, more miners, etc. This primary function of accumulating capital, which a bureaucracy now performs in its entirety for the first time in history, is *not* combined with working-class control of that bureaucracy, through soviets or other forms of industrial organization of the proletariat. And precisely that fact makes the Russian State a capitalist instead of a workers' State. A new type of capitalist State, it is true, since the principle of private property still lies in the dust, but a capitalist State for all that, since the

\* It will of course be realized that the means of production of a country remain capital so long as the system of wage labor and commodity production persists, even though the State be a workers' State.



State, *minus workers' democracy*, pursues the aim and compelling motive of capitalism in general.

This does not mean that Russia is an *imperialist* State, for the bureaucracy has not reached that point of seeking to export capital and seize colonies which characterize the imperialist nations. Nor does it mean that Russia should not be defended against attacks on the part of imperialist nations. As pointed out by Lenin, State capitalism entailing the abolition of private property, is a *step forward* in social evolution, and for this reason alone Russian State capitalism should be defended against the imperialist nations, which uphold the principle of private property. In addition, however, the special revolutionary potentialities of the Russian working class, derived from the experiences and traditions of the October revolution, contribute powerfully to the forces of social change, and demand protection by all socialists. Since those special potentialities of further revolutionary action would be crippled by an imperialist conquest of Russia, socialism requires the defense of Russia, even though workers' democracy has been destroyed by the bureaucracy.

To call Stalin's regime by its correct name—State Capitalism—does not imply the surrender of that regime to the forces of imperialism. The Russian type of State capitalism is *capitalism*, but it is also a transition stage to socialism—a transition stage in which the principle of private property has been abolished, and the means of production are withheld from proletarian control only by a precariously placed bureaucracy. The State's socialization of production has made socialist appropriation the next step in Russia. Unless the forces of reaction succeed in reintroducing private property in capital, that next step will inevitably occur, as a result of the dialectic contradictions of the bureaucratic regime. Sooner or later the Russian proletariat will succeed in establishing socialist appropriation of property in every sphere, as the world revolution proceeds to wreck the existing social system.

Admitting that in Russia there is State capitalism, the further question remains: how could a *proletarian* revolution give rise to a *capitalist* regime, without the occurrence of a violent counter-revolution? But this seemingly innocent question contains a logical fallacy, namely, "begging the question." There *has been* a violent counter-revolution in Russia since October, 1917, but one spread over a decade, from the time of the death of Lenin. By combining revolutionary phraseology up to 1933 with counter-revolutionary action, Stalin succeeded in preventing a mass uprising against the growing power of bureaucracy. By tricking, imprisoning, exiling or killing the revolutionary vanguard of the country, by means of a rigid censorship, and by canalizing the revolutionary energy of the masses into the Five Year Plan, Stalin succeeded in violently suppressing his opponents in comparative secrecy.

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER, 1939

## BOOKS

**Ideas Are Weapons: The History and Uses of Ideas,**  
by Max Lerner, Viking Press, New York, 1939 IX. 553 pp.,  
\$3.50.

Max Lerner went from an editorship on the *Nation* to a professorship at Williams College. Since then he has published his first book: *It Is Later Than You Think* (see *S. R.* Vol. VI, No. 7) and now brings out his second, *Ideas Are Weapons: The History and Uses of Ideas*.

This new work isn't really new. Actually it is a reprint of some fifty articles and book reviews written since 1931, all but six of which have already appeared. Lerner is lucky in his publisher for ordinarily learned and other authors do not succeed in persuading commercial publishing houses to bring out in such handsome format the occasional and not always consequential writings of a decade. *Ideas Are Weapons* is, thus, a collection of papers which does not add much to our present understanding of Professor Lerner. Nevertheless, insofar as he has come to be regarded as a younger and American version of Harold J. Laski, his career and output warrant attention.

The papers gathered in this volume emphasize the major intellectual interests of the author: Theory of History; the role of the Courts, especially the Supreme Court and in its leading jurists, in American life; and the nature of the State. His conclusions would appear to be qualifiedly Marxist. However many of the articles and reviews are too brief, too undeveloped to merit serious criticism. They are the passing reflections of a fluent and gifted author. As a matter of fact Lerner indicates that part of the present collection, dealing with the Courts, will be the basis for a later book. He has already devoted his first book mentioned above to other aspects of his major concern.

This review might well end here if Lerner had not been and still is a participant in the current political scene. He has been one of the illustrious fellow-travelers of the Communist Party; he has defended Stalinist practices down to August 1939 when he signed the "Open Letter of 400" put out by Corliss Lamont—a letter which characterized the Committee for Cultural Freedom as "fascist" and "aids to fascists." In the preface to this book he calls attention to the fact that the opening chapter "was completed after the Soviet-Nazi non-aggression pact and Hitler's (also Stalin's, F.N.T.) attack on Poland." His reaction to the pact is therefore a key to his future development. In summary he was "shocked" by the "diplomatic rapprochement between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union;" shocked "not because we had underrated the force of power-politics but because we had overrated the compulsion of ideologies. We had assumed that the Soviet Union would cleave to its doctrine or perish; and it has preferred to suspend its doctrine."

Now these are interesting words. Were they from an ordinary citizen unaccustomed to the thoroughfares of scholarship they would be understandable and acceptable. But Lerner is not the ordinary citizen; he is a student of politics; he admits to being a qualified Marxist; he recognizes the *sequential* character of events in history. He may have been shocked; but surely long before August 1939 he should have perceived the *course* of events in Stalinland. Surely he cannot pose as one who believes that up to August 19, 1939, Stalin rigorously and undeviatingly adhered to a Communist ideology and on



August 20 "suspended;" his doctrine in order to make common purpose with Hitler. Lerner must accept either horn of an unpleasant dilemma: He was an extremely naive and unperceiving historian, or he was willing to traduce his own principles by giving support to Stalinists abroad and here. Merely to say that he was "shocked," that he overrated the compulsion of an ideology is not enough. Nor is there lacking a suspicion of weasel-wordedness in the conclusion of the above quotation: The Soviet Union has preferred to "suspend its doctrine" rather than "perish." This was not the choice for the Soviet Union and Lerner knows it. An ideology allegedly governing 170,000,000 people is not an item of experience on which one hangs a sign: Action temporarily suspended—wait for developments. Lerner knows that a society represents dynamic experience. And in a society called "socialist" who gave Stalin the authority to "suspend doctrine." Lerner knows the answer as well as anyone does. Why then this curious apologetic and false disjunction: "The Soviet Union would cleave to its doctrine or perish; and it has preferred to suspend its doctrine" (rather than perish, implies Mr. Lerner). Why, Mr. Lerner, unless you expect to recover from your shock to find yourself once again following the "Party-line."

We—Socialists, Marxists, liberals—have every right to expect from Lerner an unequivocal declaration. We hear—and it may be rumor—that he is fathering the group of ex-fellow-travelers and communist party-members led by James Wechsler of the *Nation* who are searching for a "New Beginning"—a sort of American imitation of one of the underground groups in Germany which published a manifesto by that name after Hitler came to power. If Lerner seeks a new organization and orientation for American liberalism or American socialism, we seek of him a clear, honest analysis not only of the obvious deficiencies in American liberalism and American socialism but also an equally clean, honest analysis of his own deficiencies which up to August 20, 1939, so clearly aided and abetted the Stalinist monstrosity, a tragic monstrosity for workers, liberals and progressives throughout the world.\*

\*I am sure Professor Lerner will understand the purpose of this review—it uses his book, as he has done so often, as the occasion for an extended comment.

## HOW TO REMAIN AT PEACE

"Keep America Out of War", by Norman Thomas and Bertram Wolfe. 184 pp. Frederick A. Stokes, N.Y.C., 1939, \$1.50. (Order through the National Office of the Socialist Party, 549 Randolph St, Chicago, or Keep America Out of War Congress, 22 E. 17th St., N.Y.C.)

Radicals and liberals are well acquainted with books around which programs have been organized as well as with books arising out of activity in some phase of the labor movement. The book here reviewed is of the latter type and shows its origin in the actual struggle against war in the life and vitality with which it attacks the problem.

The program contained in the two chapters, "How to Stay Out," is the result of two years collaboration in the Keep America Out of War Congress. It is the result of discussion and agreement between representatives of peace organizations, the Socialist Party, the Independent Labor League and many other labor and farm organizations.

The authors propose a specific legislative program but they recognize there is "... no fool proof code of legislation which will keep us out of war." This is the Socialist contribution to

the common program and the united effort represented by the book and the movement for which it speaks.

*"If we keep out, it will be because . . . the overwhelming anti-war sentiment of this country has been clarified as to means and organized for continuous and effective expression . . . because we have increased democratic control of politics and foreign affairs . . . because we have curbed—though not eliminated—the imperialist tendencies inherent in our economic set-up . . ."*

This book is of immense significance in to-day's chaotic world, for it does not accept the choices, the alternatives, of the capitalist organization of society. It affirms other alternatives. For America this book refuses to accept the theory of "inevitable involvement." For the world the book refuses to accept the alternative of imperialist war or imperialist peace.

This book concerns itself with the problem of keeping America out of war as a contribution to the Socialist reorganization of the world. At a time when many are examining the "Peace Aims" of war-making imperialists, the authors present the third alternative:

*"In our opinion there will be no lasting peace in Europe, except as the peoples of Europe become conscious that they have no quarrel with each other. The one hope of bringing permanent peace to Europe's bloodsoaked soils lies in the peoples joining hands across all frontiers and together making a peace and reorganizing their continent into a democratic and Socialist United States of Europe."*

This perhaps is the reason why all the major book sections of the metropolitan press have consistently boycotted this book. At least the only consideration that has been given to it comes from the movements that have been inspired by these men and in turn have given them the program they present.

Here are two men, one a recognized leader of the American Socialist movement, the other a representative of a sect expelled from the Communist movement. Their joint authorship of the book is a symbol of the closeness with which two working class political organizations can co-operate in a program on which there is agreement. Perhaps it also indicates that the group represented by Wolfe has broken with its Communist past and has begun to move into the stream of a new revolutionary Socialism that must be developed if there is to be a Socialist solution of to-day's ills.

## BOOKS RECEIVED

"Labor and Democracy", by William Green. Princeton, N. J., Princeton University Press, 194 pp. \$2.50.

A plan of action to safeguard the American way, by the president of the American Federation of Labor.

"Russia's Struggle for Democracy", by Harry Dorosh, Ph.D. New York, Savoy Book Publishers, 103 pp. \$1.25.

A history of the Russian Constitutional Assembly.

"Warfare", by Ludwig Renn.. New York, Oxford University Press. 276 pp. \$2.50.

The relation of war to society.

"Is Plenty Too Much for the Common People", by George R. Kirkpatrick. Published privately by Florence H. Kirkpatrick at San Gabriel, Calif. 311 pp. Illustrations by Art Young.

A biting damnation of the capitalist system by the late Socialist pamphleteer.



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