

# **The New** \_\_\_\_\_ **INTERNATIONAL**

**November • 1943**

*NOTES OF THE MONTH*

**The Elections and a Labor Party**

**THE CIO-AFL CONVENTIONS**

*By David Coolidge*

*26th Anniversary of the Russian Revolution*

**The "Mistakes" of the Bolsheviks**

*By Max Shachtman*

**STALIN'S AIMS IN EUROPE**

**DeGaulle - Churchill  
in Lebanon**

**General Wavell  
Comes to India**

**THE AMERICAN TRADITION, *by J. R. Johnson***

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# The Minneapolis Case

We go to press just as a meager report arrives that the United States Supreme Court has curtly denied the petition of the leaders and militants of the Socialist Workers Party convicted under the Smith Act in the Minneapolis case. The court refused to hear the arguments of the defense, and thus side-stepped the embarrassing problem of expressing an opinion on the constitutionality of the Act under which the defendants were convicted. It now seems that further legal recourse is barred, and that only presidential action can intervene to save the comrades from serving their sentences of from twelve months and a day to eighteen months.

The facts in the case are well known to our readers. The militants of the SWP were brought to trial because the Teamsters' Union in Minneapolis which was officered and influenced by them was a thorn in the side of the employers and the reactionary labor bureaucracy. The government very graciously accommodated both, by getting the SWP comrades out of the way. The fact that these comrades exercised their democratic rights, both before and after the United States entered the "War for Democracy," to point out its imperialist character, has not served to convince the government that they should be permitted to continue at liberty.

Notorious fascists remain at large; adulators of Hitler and Mussolini are in the highest places in the government and on the floor of both Houses of Congress; if one of them is in prison, like Mosley in England, his health and comfort are the government's great concern. But revolutionists, whose only crime, according to the court itself, is their *opinions* and their refusal to renounce them—they must go to prison.

The persecution and prosecution of the SWP, in the Minneapolis case, in the hounding of *The Militant*, as well as the persecution of the Workers Party in the harrassing of *Labor Action*, are of a piece with the growing reaction against labor. Into the same pattern fall the imprisonment of the SWP comrades, the freezing of wages, the imposition of exorbitant taxes upon workers, no-strike "pledges" extorted from labor and no-strike legislation threatened against labor, job-freezing... and fabulous profits. Class rule goes hand in glove with class justice.

The NEW INTERNATIONAL reiterates its indignant protest against the persecution of the SWP comrades and denounces the blantant hypocrisy of the supporters of the "war for democracy" who deny the democratic right of opinion to their critics and political opponents. Our readers join with us in sending the warmest salute and expression of solidarity to the comrades who face imprisonment at the hands of people who stupidly think they can cow revolutionists and stupidly ignore the lessons of history.

All our friends are strongly urged to give utmost aid and support to the Civil Rights Defense Committee, 160 Fifth Avenue, New York City, which is in charge of the Minneapolis case.

## THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

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# THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

A Monthly Organ of Revolutionary Marxism

VOLUME IX

NOVEMBER, 1943

NUMBER 10

## NOTES OF THE MONTH

### The Election Results

By-elections are not decisive political events, especially where only local candidates are to be chosen, but they are important nevertheless in disclosing the national trend.

This year the Republicans continued to roll up victories at the expense of the Democrats in one state after another. The anti-Administration party now has control of a majority of the state governments; out of the forty-eight states it now has the twenty-six in which four-fifths of the total popular presidential vote was cast in 1940. Adding to the victories gained in last year's congressional elections, the Republicans won in New York and elected their governor in New Jersey and normally Democratic Kentucky.

In New York, the CIO and the ALP backed the Democratic loser; in Philadelphia and Hartford the unions backed the Democratic loser; in Detroit, the powerful UAW also saw the candidate it endorsed and financed go down in defeat; and in New Jersey, where the Democratic candidate for Governor was Vincent Murphy, Mayor of Newark and secretary of the New Jersey State Federation of Labor (AFL), who had the support of the AFL, the CIO, the Railroad Brotherhoods, the CIO Political Action Committee, the Stalinists, Frank Hague, and outgoing Governor Edison, the Republican nominee, Walter E. Edge, nevertheless won the contest by 100,000 votes.

"President Roosevelt and Willkie," wrote Victor Riesel, labor editor of the *New York Post*, "the two political leaders most anxious to discover whether labor could make good its boasts and swing decisive blocs of votes—learned this gloomy day that labor had failed to deliver."

There is a peculiar kernel of truth in this statement, but it is too simple for a clear and complete picture of the situation. It begs the important question of *why* labor "failed to deliver." Mr. Riesel, in spite of his education in the school of *The New Leader* (or because of it!) sheds no more light on the question than is to be found in the substitute-for-an-explanation which is given by every superficial commentator. In his own words, "for some reason the rank and file members of all unions—AFL and CIO—are not following their leaders into any political camp." But what is the reason?

#### Growth of Discontent

In the first place, it is universally acknowledged that the discontentment with the present Administration in Washington and its local representatives and defenders is widespread. If an analysis is confined to the vast majority of the people,

namely the workers and the lower middle classes, there can be no question of scope and depth of this discontent. Every month the weight of the war burden falls more heavily upon labor and the middle classes that are being driven to ruin. Rationing goes from one muddle to another. The cost of living continues to rise in spite of all official promises to the contrary. The Administration brings all its strength to bear against most urgently needed and long overdue wage increases. Government intervention into and regimentation of one sphere of life after another grows continually and becomes ever more onerous and obnoxious. And all the while, profits flow into the coffers of the big capitalists in a broad and shimmering golden stream.

The resentment, the demands for relief and the struggles of the workers are no longer directed exclusively against their immediate employer. How can they be when the government has gradually taken over the direction or control of almost every sphere of economic life! It is against the government, at least as much as against the mine operators, that the miners have found themselves compelled to strike four times in a row, and it is from the government that they finally wrested a concession. The strike vote being taken by half a million railroad workers is directed not less against the government than against the banks and railroad magnates who pass themselves off euphemistically as "management."

It is the government, not only in theory, but also in instructively accumulated daily experiences, that is primarily responsible for reducing the economic and political standards of labor. It is now the wise employer who says to labor: "I would like to give considerate attention to your demands, but all such questions are now settled in Washington, and that is where you will have to take your grievances and proposals." And labor has been given plenty of lessons in the meaning of visits to Washington and the results of such visits.

#### Labor and the New Deal

At one time, Mr. Riesel forgets, "labor" (he means the labor officialdom) was able to "make good its boasts and swing decisive blocs of votes." Example: the 1932 presidential election, in which Roosevelt won his first term. Whatever the New Deal represented in fact, in the minds of the workers it meant a program and a fight to put an end to the plague of unemployment and insecurity and to achieve higher economic standards at the expense of the thunderously denounced "economic royalists"; it meant political progress in the form of greater democratic rights and influence for the common people. Roosevelt was, to them, the leader of a popular crusade. Roosevelt offered what seemed to the masses a real and progressive alternative, a radical change, from Hoover's *status quo*. He was not in their eyes just another politician cooking up a few minor issues in order that the In should be the Out and the Out the In. Therefore labor and the middle classes voted almost unanimously for Roosevelt, and voted with the greatest enthusiasm and hope. Labor did "deliver."

But the course of the New Deal came to an end long ago.

e trend it represented—bourgeois reformism—has been re-  
sed by its original protagonists, and particularly by Roose-  
e. Wage-freezing, job-freezing, strike-breaking, the Roman  
iday of the war profiteers—these are neither the language  
the realities of the New Deal of 1932. Labor's enthusiasm  
Roosevelt is almost entirely dissipated. If it grants him  
support at all now, it is given grudgingly, without deep  
conviction, with all sorts of reservations and criticisms, and  
principally out of fear that the Republican alternative would  
altogether intolerable.

That is why "labor" in this election did not "deliver." Mil-  
lions still voted for Roosevelt's party and Roosevelt's candi-  
dates. But not all the millions who voted for them a decade  
ago. Some took the traditional American way of rebuking their  
"Administration without running the risk of ousting it  
altogether (this being a by-election); namely, they voted for  
the Republicans. Others rebuked it by their indifference; namely,  
they stayed away from the polls in much greater numbers  
than they otherwise would in such an election.

The Republicans won because the principal reactionary forces  
were behind them. They won because the disillusioned and  
battered middle classes lashed out blindly against the Adminis-  
tration party, as they always do in a crisis when that party  
offers them no hope and thereby drives them on to the  
shores of conservatism and even reaction. The Republicans  
won because labor has lost its enthusiasm and conviction in  
favor of yesterday's New Dealers. It is upon these factors that  
the Republicans count for victory in 1944.

All this is as much as to say that "labor" will "fail to deliv-  
er" in 1944 as well, and later too, that is, that labor will not  
be the united and decisive political force that it can be, unless  
it has a progressive and radical alternative and a clear-cut  
program around which to rally.

It *thought* it had one in 1932; in 1943 it didn't even think

Take the contest between Bullitt and Samuel for Mayor  
Philadelphia—a miserable affair if there ever was one. Of  
the multitude of burning political and social issues of the day,  
only one of them was dealt with in the platform or campaign  
of either candidate. Leaving aside the only issue that was  
set in the Detroit election—the question of the treatment  
of the Negroes, on which the victor, Jeffries, took an outright  
reactionary position, but on which the CIO-supported loser,  
Gerald, took a wretched, mealy-mouthed, apologetic stand  
—what was there in that contest that could arouse a crusading  
spirit among the discontented and militant-minded Detroit  
working class? Virtually the same can be said of the contest  
in New Jersey between Edge and Murphy, who could hardly  
present himself as the paladin of progress while riding around

on Boss Frank Hague's shoulders; or of the contest in New  
York between two such outstanding zeros as Haskell and  
Hanley, or Hanley and Haskell, or whatever their pseudonyms  
were.

### Radical Alternative Is Needed

An alternative is needed, and it must be genuine, radical,  
and fundamental.

Roosevelt does not meet a single one of the requirements.  
Even those who put all their hopes in resurrecting that mild-  
of reformers who was Roosevelt are doomed to disappoint-  
ment on two counts: in the first place, whether he was once  
favorable to labor's needs or not, Roosevelt the New Dealer is  
dead, and there are no miracles in politics; in the second  
place, if the miracle of the resurrection could be accomplished,  
Roosevelt of the first New Deal days would be as much an

anachronism, as much a bankrupt, in the crisis which is gath-  
ering in fury for this country, as the Hoover of 1929 was in  
the crisis that burst over his head.

Labor alone can put forward the alternative. The first  
prerequisite is its declaration of independence as a class in the  
form of a national Labor Party. This does not mean the or-  
ganization of a sideshow of the Democratic Party, like the  
ALP of New York. It means an *independent* Labor Party  
which challenges the two parties of decrepit capitalism, not  
for a few thousand votes here and there but for not less a prize  
than government rule, charge of the destiny of society. A  
Labor Party which does not set itself the aim of a labor govern-  
ment is next to nothing at all. It acknowledges in advance  
its own unworthiness, its own impotence, its own dread of or-  
ganizing the nation along its own ideas. It pledges itself to  
the mean rôle of servant of other parties, or at best as partner  
of the very parties it challenges before the people on the  
ground that they do not deserve support.

Could labor "deliver" the votes if it organized itself inde-  
pendently on the political field? There cannot be any serious  
doubt about that, provided one condition is fulfilled. This  
condition is the adoption by the Labor Party of a compre-  
hensive, bold and militant program.

It is utterly erroneous to think, even in the United States,  
that it is labor's "radicalism" and "selfishness" (read: inde-  
pendence) that alienated popular support from it. This *might*  
be true in the United States under the conditions of compara-  
tive prosperity, peace, security and progress that prevailed, for  
example, before the First World War or during the first post-  
war prosperity. But those conditions are of the past. There is  
already a crisis in the United States and there is every indica-  
tion that it will grow in depth and breadth. There is already  
a universal fear of the post-war period and a skepticism to-  
ward all the official plans for dealing with it. Millions feel  
deeply that the "old order" brought them insecurity, growing  
inequality, and the scourge of war, and that it will bring them  
nothing else in the future.

Under such conditions, it is not a radical change that mil-  
lions of people fear, but the attempt to preserve what is old  
and discredited, or the attempt to fiddle around with a patch  
here, an emergency repair there, a coat of whitewash some-  
where else. It is well to remember that under similar condi-  
tions, during the Hoover days, Roosevelt couldn't speak radi-  
cally enough to suit the masses; that he actually put into effect  
a program in many respects more radical than that contained  
in the election platform of Norman Thomas (a fact perplex-  
edly acknowledged by Thomas himself!); that the outraged  
denunciations of his program as "socialism" and even "com-  
munism" left the masses cold to the denouncers and warm to  
the denounced.

In other words, they denied the allegations and denounced  
the allegators!

### The Outlook of a Labor Party

A Labor Party that confines itself to the pettifoggery of  
the old reformist parties, which ended in such disaster in Eu-  
rope; that pledges itself only to fixing a leaking pipe when it  
is the floodgates of social crisis that must be dealt with; or  
plastering up a hole in the ceiling when the whole roof of capi-  
talist society is collapsing, will doom itself. It will only suc-  
ceed in driving millions of people—not only the middle classes  
but even the working class—into the arms of reactionary dema-  
gogues of the fascist or semi-fascist variety. The ultra-modern  
demagogues know enough about the crisis of the old order,

capitalism, and about the moods and aspirations of the masses to speak boldly about a *new* order.

A Labor Party which speaks bluntly in favor of labor, of the need of organizing society in such a way that this most important and useful class shall have the decisive say, need have little fear about gaining the support of the workers.

A Labor Party which presents and fights for a program boldly directed against the monopolists, the big banks, the blood-profiters; which does not propose merely to talk against the "economic royalists" (talk alone rallied millions to Roosevelt's support!) but to act against them as ruthlessly as the interests of the masses require it, need have little fear about gaining the support not only of labor but of all the "little people" in the country.

A Labor Party which says that the present government did not hesitate to intervene in the most arbitrary way in the lives of the people in order to prosecute a bloody war, and that it will not hesitate, when it constitutes the government, to intervene in the most arbitrary way in the property interests of big capital in order to prosecute a war against poverty, unemployment, planlessness, inequality—is assured of the support of the great masses in the coming crisis.

A Labor Party which says boldly and courageously that it will put an end to the bestiality and shamelessness of Jim Crow, an end to any attempt to divide the workers and the nation as a whole along racial lines (and similarly, along religious or national lines), is assured of the support of some fifteen million Negroes in the country. Why, even with his timid and shamefaced half-a-kind-word attitude toward the Negroes, FitzGerald received the support of virtually every Negro in the city in his Detroit mayoralty campaign.

Labor has nothing to fear or to lose from the immediate organization of an independent party of its own and the adoption of an aggressive program of attack upon the capitalist

reaction all along the line and of social reconstruction for peace, security and plenty. Every conceivable argument against it, especially the so-called "practical" arguments, however valid it may appear to be, falls to pieces in face of the fact that if labor does *not* take this path, victory will not possibly or probably, but surely, go to capitalist reaction. All modern history shows that where labor does not step forward in its own name and under its own banner to solve big social problems in a situation of crisis, these problems are "solved" nevertheless, but solved by capitalist reaction, solved in a barbarous way, solved at heavy cost to labor's economic and political position.

To think, as some myopic labor bureaucrats do, that the masses of the people will vote for Roosevelt and "democracy" for the next ten or twenty years, in crises and out, until these bureaucrats get ready to form a "Labor Party" that will very quietly, smoothly and ever-so-bureaucratically shift the masses from "middle-of-the-roadism" to a more "radical" party and program, is criminal stupidity.

As the crisis grows and sharpens, the masses will simply turn by the millions to a reactionary alternative if they are not offered a genuinely radical and progressive alternative. Anyone who has not learned this most important lesson from the tragedy of the European people in the last ten, fifteen or twenty years is either incapable of learning anything or else has his head solidly stuck in a barrel of concrete which may well be broken open for him by... fascism.

The working class as a whole cannot, however, afford to learn its lesson from such a brutal experience. Too much is at stake. Mr. Riesel and all his kind to the contrary notwithstanding, labor *can* "deliver." But it must first deliver itself from political bondage to the parties and politicians of capitalism. In this country, now, the most important step in this direction is the formation of an independent Labor Party.

# France and England in Lebanon

## *Imperialist Intrigue in the Middle East*

When the Chamber of Deputies of Lebanon voted unanimously on November 8 to proclaim its full sovereignty and independence, the police occupied the newspaper offices and confiscated the native press in Lebanon's capital, Beirut, and troops arrested Lebanon's President, Premier, Cabinet members, members of the Chamber of Deputies, shot down scores of Lebanese and proclaimed martial law. They did not wear the uniform of the Third Reich nor that of the Son of Heaven. Their uniforms were French.

Pétain-French? Laval-French? No, de Gaulle-French.

Which de Gaulle? Why, the very one who is the reincarnation-in-the-flesh of Joan of Arc, the idol of the liberal school of Dorothy Thompson-Johannes Steel-Edgar Ansel Mowrer-Samuel Granfton-Frieda Kirchwey and other journalistic droolers.

Is that possible? Is not de Gaulle the self-dedicated chief of the French Committee of *National Liberation*? And is it not precisely national liberation that the Lebanese proclaimed? Then why...?

The Lebanese are indeed fighting for national liberation. The answer to the "why?" is that de Gaulle is in reality chief

of a Committee to Free France from German Domination So as to Restore the French Empire to the Poor French Bourgeoisie. After the experience of North Africa and now of Lebanon, there is not the slightest possible excuse for anyone making a mistake about the real title of de Gaulle and his committee, or about their real rôle.

### **The French Record in Syria**

After France capitulated to Germany, de Gaulle's General Catroux declared, in June, 1941, just before the Allies began the reconquest of Syria, "Free France, identifying herself with the real traditional France and in the name of General de Gaulle, will come to put an end to the mandatory régime and proclaim you free and independent."

It goes without saying that this pledge was not kept.

Upon sending Catroux back to Beirut after the November 8 vote of the Lebanese Chamber of Deputies, the de Gaulle committee proclaimed again that it has always intended to grant complete sovereignty to the peoples of Syria.

This "intention" is worth exactly as much as the solemn pledge of June, 1941; or the Treaty of 1936, a scrap of paper

on which the French swore that "the states of Levant are to receive all attributions of sovereignty"; or, for that matter, all similar promises, pledges and oaths made before and since.

The Lebanese and other Syrian peoples are perhaps the most advanced, politically, of all the Arab countries. From the very beginnings of French rule they have sought their freedom in one armed rebellion after another, all of which were savagely, if not always easily, suppressed by the French overlord. It took years, and bloody ones, before the French would even permit a simulacrum of democratic rights to the people or any kind of serious personal rights. Martial law, established by General Allenby during the First World War, was not abolished by the French in Syria until 1925. Imprisonment, expulsion and deportation of natives were not only every-day measures, but could be employed at will by any French officer. The country was artificially split into administrative units in order to keep the people divided against their oppressors. Protests and those who made them were treated with summary brutality.

Isolated insurrections, which occurred year in, year out, were crushed without mercy. A first-rate uprising in the mountain state of Jabal Al Druze (sometimes "Jebel Druze") began in 1925 and lasted for two years before the imperialists could quell it. Out of a population of some 50,000 Druzes, the French killed 6,000 in the two years of warfare—not one less than were slaughtered by the Turkish Valis in the Druze rebellion of 1910.

In October, 1925, came the massacre of Damascus. To clear the Syrian capital of "bandits," the representatives of French tenderness and culture, Generals Gamelin and Sarrail, turned their artillery upon the *civilian* population, its homes and places of business with such devastating effect as to make the later Nazi bombings of Rotterdam and Warsaw look like mere reconnaissance flights. More than 1,500 men, women and children perished in this grisly fusillade, their graves a monument to exactly the same kind of civilization as are the ruins of Warsaw's ghetto. Fifteen hundred murdered in a few days, in one city of a country whose total population barely numbers 2,000,000 persons. The number of armed rebels in Damascus at the time was never estimated by any responsible source at more than 500!

The long-suffering Lebanese want their freedom from these delights of French rule. They want to take that freedom now, when French imperialism is weak. They are intelligent enough to understand that it is better to try for freedom today, rather than when French imperialism regains its strength and its impudence.

But no—that is obviously an error. French imperialism does not need to gain an impudence which it has never lost. Could there be a cooler and more cynical display of impudence than that shown by de Gaulle, Catroux and their committee?

At the very moment when they are wailing and spluttering about how the Hun has deprived their people and their nation of freedom and independence, they imprison and shoot down the people of another nation who are really fighting for freedom and independence. At the very moment when they proclaim that for the Frenchman sabotage, arson, terror and all other forms of battle are a sacred duty against those who occupy his native land against his will—they denounce as desecration that most mild of attempts—a legislative vote—by the Syrian to free *his* native land from a foreign oppressor. Blum and Herriot in prison? Outrageous! President Bechara el Khoury and Premier Riad Solh in prison in Beirut? It is for

their own good, believe me! A German general in Paris? Barbarous boche! A French general in Damascus? The triply-distilled essence of civilization, a benefaction, a dove of peace in gold braid and stripes!

Yet there can be a cooler and more cynical display of impudence than de Gaulle's, and there is. By whom? Churchill!

### **The British Are Indignant**

By the sheerest coincidence—who can believe it could be more than coincidence?—Mr. Churchill delivered an address at the Lord Mayor's luncheon in London one day after the vote for independence of the Lebanon Chamber of Deputies, in which he went out of his way to emphasize that, to England, "the French National Committee are not the owners but the trustees of the title deeds of France. These must be restored to the French nation when freedom is achieved," and more of the same sanctimonious wish-wash. This on November 9.

Immediately afterward, a rather extraordinary thing took place, not only in the pages of the London press, but most importantly in the office of the news censor in Cairo, controlled, of course, by the British and hitherto notoriously tight-lipped and restrictive. The Cairo censor let down all the bars. The "uprising" of the Lebanese and the justice of their demands was emphasized in every dispatch to the press. The censor did not seem perturbed by the bluntest and most fulsome criticism directed at the French. In both London and Cairo, correspondents were even urged by the British not to pass the Syrian events by lightly. On November 13, the Associated Press reported from London: "While the French-controlled Beirut radio announced that the situation in Syria and Lebanon was quiet and charged that reports of disturbances were 'enemy propaganda,' the British showed that they definitely did not share this view. Correspondents here were told that they could not exaggerate the importance that the government attached to maintaining order in the Near East."

On November 9, the *New York Times* correspondent in Cairo, A. C. Sedgwick, sent a dispatch which opened with the observation, cleared by the censor, that "the present political crisis in Lebanon raises . . . the question of France's rights and privileges in the Levant"; and went on to show, as casually as you please, that France, the de Gaullists in particular—yes, our allies, the de Gaullists—had deceived the Syrian people, lied to them, failed to keep their promises, and in general had not behaved in a manner befitting a sacred trust toward a nation put in their charge. In other words, they had not acted like, let us say, the decent British.

On November 12, the British Foreign Office announced that the government had protested vehemently to the French Committee of National Liberation (do not laugh—that is its official name) against its conduct of affairs in Lebanon. It reminded the de Gaullists that the British Ambassador in Cairo had declared in June, 1941, "that his government supported and associated themselves with the assurance of independence given by General Catroux on behalf of General de Gaulle to Syria and Lebanon. The British government stand firmly by this declaration. The Lebanese government has a nationalist majority of forty-eight to two." Only people with a proud record of righteousness as long as your right arm, like the British Foreign Office, could employ such a severe tone of moral reprimand.

Three days later, Algiers made public the information that the United States government had joined the British in "strong representations to the French Committee of National

Liberation when the disorders in Lebanon broke out. The committee was reminded that the United States would be unable to understand how a nation suffering from oppression on its home soil could take a step that might infringe the liberties of another people."

A perfectly beautiful formulation! The British could not possibly take exception to it. What the United States "would be unable to understand" is "a step that might infringe the liberties of another people—but only, you see, by a *"nation suffering from oppression on its home soil."* And inasmuch as England is not "suffering oppression on its home soil," Washington is perfectly able to understand a "step that might infringe the liberties" of . . . India! The people of India have voted for independence and demonstrated for it, just like the Lebanese. They have been promised independence, just like the Lebanese. All sorts of British Catroux and Helleus and Illes have been sent to India to crush the people's fight for independence, just as their French counterparts have been sent to Lebanon. What makes it good for the British goose and not for the French gander? The fact that the former is not "suffering oppression on its home soil"?

Surprising as it may seem, that is the fact. More accurately, the kernel of the truth is contained in the fact that the French ruling class has no "home soil" over which to rule. Or, more simply, French imperialism is no longer a second-rate power but a tenth-rate power lying on its broken back. And who is more easily fleeced of his last possessions than a thief lying on his broken back?

#### **A Chapter of Imperialist Intrigue**

The relations between France and England in the Near East form one of the dirtiest chapters in the history of imperialist intrigue. To know it is to see that Mr. Churchill is covered not with the oil of unction and piety but with the much richer and, if an impiety may be permitted, more profitable oil that is piped and refined from the earth.

England controls most of the extensive, rich and strategically important oil fields that run from Mosul, in Northern Iraq, down along the western frontier of Iran.

When the British suffered a catastrophe at Kutel-Amara at the hands of the Turks in 1916, they desperately offered the French the greatest possible concessions in the undefined territories of Syria and Mesopotamia in exchange for active French participation in the Turkish war theater to relieve the pressure on the British. The bait was all the land beyond the Euphrates, up to and including Mosul. The French accepted, although they never engaged the Turks in action.

After the war the British discovered to their consternation that Northeast Mesopotamia (now Iraq), centering around Mosul, was one of the world's richest oil fields. They shyly asked the good French to revise the frontier ever so slightly, so that the oil fields would become part of Britain's Mesopotamian mandate. The polite but thrifty French declined. Whereupon the British became intensely interested in national freedom for Syria—just like today. They prompted or at least helped the son of the former King of Hedjaz, Emir Feisul, a British jumping-jack, to proclaim himself "King of Syria" in 1920. This compelled the greatly pained French to undertake a mission against him under General Gouraud, who took Damascus in the summer. Feisul fled, and, by accident, turned up in London.

Then began a long contest between England and France to jockey for the most favorable position with the Turks, who laid claim to the disputed territory and were ready to fight for

it. The struggle finally broke out into a bloody war in the summer of 1922 between Turkey, supported by French money and munitions, and Greece, supported by Lloyd George and the pound sterling. The Greeks were humiliatingly smashed, lost all their Asiatic possessions, lost their King Constantine; and Lloyd George lost his job as First Minister of His Britannic Majesty.

Later the same year, the tireless British made another attempt. The British press suddenly began reporting meetings and resolutions of Bedouin tribesmen presenting the "thousand-year-old historical claim of Iraq," defined as its rule over "the Assyrian Kings' seat of royalty at Nineveh." The Assyrian Kings had had the miraculous prescience to pick their seat of royalty on the eastern bank of the Tigris, right across the river from Mosul. Nobly determined to set aright this thousand-year-old injustice, Anglo-Indian officers entered the disputed territory that October at the head of numerous Iraq tribesmen "to defend and liberate their countrymen from the cruel oppression of the Turks" and, of course, with disdainful unconcern over the lakes of oil lying right underneath the ancient seat of Tiglath Pileser I, Tiglath Pileser III and Sennacherib, whose depredations twenty-six and thirty centuries ago were more modest than those of Lloyd George, Lord Curzon and Winston Churchill, but not one whit more knavish.

The supple British, facing the adamant and scoffing Turks of Kemal Pasha, soon restored Sennacherib and Assurbanipal to their proper place in the Second Book of Kings and proceeded to more mundane business. At the second Lausanne Conference in 1923, they made the best deal they could. Turkey received every possible concession in return for an agreement on the Mesopotamian frontier by which the League of Nations in 1925 finally awarded the Vilayet of Mosul to Iraq on condition that the British mandate continue for twenty-five years. The award was fortified by a British agreement with the by-no-means satisfied French and Americans. The Turkish (i.e., British) Petroleum Company was reconstructed and its share capital of a billion pounds—no trifle—"allotted in four equal parts to the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, Royal Dutch Shell [both British], seven American oil companies (including Standard Oil), and sixty-five French companies."

#### **Oil Does Not Stink**

The Mosul oil field is not the greatest producer in the world, but neither is it inconsiderable. By 1929, it had been developed to the point where it almost exactly equalled the Iran fields in production. The former ran 30.78 million barrels to the 30.8 million barrels of the latter. For Britain, dependent upon other countries for oil, Mosul is a treasure.

The trouble is that the commercial (and now the military) value of Mosul oil is reduced by the long haul; so, for that matter, is the oil of the rest of Iraq and all the oil of Iran. It must be hauled all the way down to the Persian Gulf, shipped through the Gulf, then around the coast of Oman, Hadramaut and Aden at the south of the Arabian peninsula then up the Red Sea through Suez and out into the Mediterranean.

A pipeline right across the Near East deserts would pour it right into the Eastern Mediterranean. Such a pipeline was laid out by the British to connect Kirkuk, another field just southeast of Mosul, with the first-class port of Haifa, in Palestine. A branch line was marked out to run from the Iraq-Syrian border to Tripoli, a big port in French Syria.

In the eyes of the British, the trouble with the branch line

is that it is laid out through *French Syria*. This is very vexing at best. How easy to dispose of the vexation by ousting the accursed French oppressor of Syria and substituting the exalted British liberator!

India? No. She has already been liberated, at least as much as she will ever be by the British.

Syria? Yes. She sorely needs liberation from the French, and Mr. Churchill is just the paladin for that crusade.

And when it is considered that the issuance by the Foreign Office of statements of outraged indignation at the felonies of the French in Syria will not hurt the faltering stock of British imperialism in the Arab world; that demonstrations in the streets of Cairo and elsewhere shout "Down with the French!" instead of "Down with the British!" (as is, alas! usually the case)—then the crusade becomes a downright bargain. General de Gaulle's despairing—we almost said demagogical—attempt to checkmate the British by issuing statements expressing a somewhat tardy sympathy for a "Pan-Arabic Federation," will only make the desert camels laugh fit to bust.

It is possible that de Gaulle and Churchill will arrange themselves, as the French say. For the time being, the British may content themselves with wresting some humiliating and weakening concessions from the French, with a simple warning that next time they will not get off so lightly. "Of all the crosses I have had to bear, the cross of Lorraine is the heaviest," said Churchill. This de Gaulle is an infernally assertive fellow who dreams of ruling France without the benefit of

Anglo-American supervision. He must be cut down to size before he gets too big for his boots.

Some mischievous compromise may be reached, especially because of the fact that the British and American imperialists are playing with fire. The harrassed de Gaullists hint that the British arranged or stimulated the whole Lebanon affair. Who would put it past them that knows the record of Albion and its many Emir Feisuls?

But whether or not they did, what started in Lebanon is not so easily controlled as it develops. Millions of colonial and semi-colonial peoples in the Arabic world alone reacted to the Lebanon events like prairie grass to a spark. A very little bit of that kind of reaction may prove useful to British imperialism in its drive against the French. More than a little bit can put the British in even greater jeopardy than the French, for a thousand Lebanons are ruled from London.

Lebanon is not just the latest example of the noisome hypocrisy of all the imperialists, particularly the more unctuous of them. It is a sign that the world of colonial revolt against imperialism is not dead. The more the imperialists unmask each other, the closer comes the day when the people will proclaim: Lebanon for de Gaulle? No. Lebanon for Churchill? No. Lebanon for the Lebanese! And Syria for the Syrians! And all the peoples who have been deprived by imperialism of their birthright of freedom—united to wipe the scum of foreign oppression from the face of their lands.

In the imperialist countries, these peoples will find in the revolutionary socialist movement their unswerving champion.

## After the Moscow Conference

# Stalin's Aims in Europe

"It is therefore quite certain," we wrote last month, "that the forthcoming meeting of the second-rank minds (not the great statesmen themselves, but only their Foreign Secretaries) will produce nothing worth serious mention so far as solving the fundamental question of Anglo-American-Russian relations is concerned. They may some day get near to a patched-up solution, but much time must yet elapse, many events take place, and many, many more meetings be held before that is accomplished."

The almost universal enthusiasm with which the agreements at the Moscow meeting of Hull, Eden and Molotov was hailed in the press seems to refute this prediction.

"A great beginning has been made, and that Russia has shared in the task is a further demonstration... of Russia's willingness to coöperate," said the *New York Times*.

"In Moscow was put together the four-cornered frame within which the questions of the war and the peace must henceforth be settled," wrote Mrs. Anne O'Hare McCormick.

"This is a happy day," exclaimed the leading Scripps-Howard paper, the *New York World-Telegram*.

"The declaration of Moscow is a start from which a new age can come," wrote Raymond Clapper, and his fellow-commentator, William Philip Simms, spoke of "the momentous declarations of the Foreign Ministers at Moscow" "What a victory for the United Nations and what a promise!" added Edgar Ansel Mowrer. "The Moscow balance sheet is superbly

profitable." And more of the same from Miss Dorothy Thompson, and, of course, much more, in half-hushed awe, from Samuel Grafton.

However, the closest scrutiny of the main declaration of the Moscow Conference makes all the delirious jubilation extremely puzzling. Especially when it is borne in mind that the declaration says nothing, or nothing that has serious meaning, about all the problems which the now so jubilant commentators said, prior to the conference, would have to be settled firmly and clearly when the foreign secretaries assembled.

The key question—What is to be done about Germany?—is dealt with only indirectly, vaguely, and ambiguously enough to allow of several interpretations. The other key question, inseparably connected with the first—What is to be done about Europe's various national boundaries?—remains just as obscure. These problems, after all, sum up, or at least express most clearly, the main question of the war aims of the Allies. That is the question that the Allies have not agreed upon, and cannot agree upon to their mutual satisfaction.

Time was when Mr. Churchill could content himself by saying that his war aim was—to win the war. This objective did not help greatly to distinguish him from Hitler or anyone else who ever fought a war. Now that the fear of a Hitler victory has declined among the people, Mr. Churchill's unenlightening declaration no longer suffices. The demand for a clear statement of objectives grows stronger among the peo-

ple and in the needs of the objective situation. The Moscow Declaration is a substitute for a clear statement, a stalling for time, an agreement to defer consideration of an agreement.

### The Points of Agreement

There are, nevertheless, points on which agreement has been reached, at least in so far as words mean anything on the scraps of paper which imperialist diplomats sign and file for discardment at any indicated moment.

First, there is agreement upon joint efforts to prevent or suppress the coming revolution in Europe. On this score, Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin can agree with the fullest sincerity and with every determination to keep their pledge. To the Stalinist bureaucracy, the socialist revolution in Europe is not less a threat than it is to the bourgeoisie of England and the United States. Hence, there is real unity among them on what the Declaration calls "the necessity of insuring a rapid and orderly transition from war to peace" and mutual consultation and joint action "for the purpose of maintaining international peace and security pending the reestablishment of law and order."

There can be no two constructions placed on those classic words: "law and order." The "rapid and orderly transition from war to peace" means, of course, preventing the "disorderly" intervention of the masses in the solution of their problems and the determination of their fate. That is to be determined for them.

Second, there is agreement that the "united action" of the Big Three "will be continued for the organization and maintenance of peace and security" and that they "will act together in all matters relating to the surrender and disarmament of that enemy."

It is this statement that really generated the enthusiasm. Out of it has been read Russia's decision to remain on the side of the United States and England throughout the war and the post-war period. If such a declaration has been greeted with such obviously hysterical relief, it is only because the prospects of Russia remaining in the "democratic" alliance were secretly regarded as not very bright before the Moscow conference took place.

*England and the United States have been fearful of a separate peace between Stalin and Hitler, which would give Stalin a good deal of what he wants but would leave his whilom allies to face Hitler alone.* How concrete were the possibilities of a Russo-German peace, is of course hard to say. Specific information on that score is at a minimum, particularly information about the extent of the differences between those in the upper German circles who regard the war with Russia as a mistake and those who do not. But what is indubitable is that Stalin played his hand for all it was worth, and played it in a situation which made the hand worth a lot.

How did England and the United States counter this threat? *By an agreement, at least tentative, to give Stalin much of what he wants in order that they shall not have to face Hitler alone,* but face him with the invaluable collaboration of Russia. Or, to be strictly accurate, by an agreement not to deny Stalin what he wants.

In other words, if we discount the possibility of secret agreements in Moscow as being unthinkable in people as reticent and morally elevated as the spokesmen of Anglo-Saxon imperialism (to say nothing of the *Vozhd* of all the Russian peoples), Messrs. Hull and Eden may not yet have agreed to grant all of Stalin's imperialist demands, but neither did they rule them out of the question.

The problem still remains to be solved, and as we said, "much time must yet elapse, many events take place, and many, many more meetings be held before that is accomplished." At bottom, it will be decided by superior force, by the power most favored by the relationship of forces, and consequently the power in a position to take what it wants and impose approval of its seizures upon "friend" and enemy alike.

However, without for a moment wishing to reflect upon the uprightness and candor of the delegates from Washington and London—God forbid!—we are of the opinion that in so far as these questions can be settled in the closed upper circles of imperialism (the time for the masses to say their word is yet to come), they have been settled far more in favor of the Kremlin than of England and the United States. In the given situation, Stalin is in a better position to dictate the terms of an agreement to his allies than they are to dictate to him.

### Stalin's Program

First, Stalin is determined to annex at least southern Finland, all of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, all of the western Ukraine and western White Russia that were formerly ruled by the Poles, all of Bessarabia and Bukovina. Neither Roosevelt nor Churchill, Hull nor Eden, have dared to say him nay. Any doubts on this score that may have been propped up by the hopeful muddleheads of the bourgeois press were promptly dispelled by the statement of Stalin's Ambassador to Mexico, Oumansky, a few days after the Moscow Conference.

Second, Stalin aims to place all the countries east of Germany under the domination of the Kremlin. Such a policy already has the support of responsible circles in England, which advocate the division of Europe into two parts, the western half under English control and the eastern half under Russian. "Under the domination of the Kremlin" means one of two things for eastern Europe, depending on circumstances and the strength of Stalinism:

1) Outright rule by the Stalinists proper. Toward this end, Stalin already has his "National Committees" for Poland, for Yugoslavia, recently, according to reports, for Greece and even for Austria, under the leadership of the Stalinist Johann Kepfenig.

2) If the more preferable choice of direct Stalinist rule, through an open or concealed Stalinist party, backed by the Russian army and the GPU, is not possible, then domination of these countries by régimes entirely subservient to Stalin, that is, a system of vassal states such as France established in eastern and southeastern Europe after the First World War. On both these parallel-running roads, Stalin has already advanced very far.

Third, whatever the success of his "maximum" program, Stalin aims at the very least to maintain and even aggravate the "Balkanization" of Europe. Hitler sought to unite Europe, by reactionary means, that is, inside a German jail. Stalin, who cannot expect to unite all Europe within his jail, wants to keep it as split-up as possible, also by reactionary means.

Europe's only hope for survival, to say nothing of progress; its only way out of the barbarism into which it is sinking; its only weapon against being exploited, disfranchised and degraded, either by British, American or Russian imperialism, or a combination of them—is the economic and political unity of the continent. Such unity is an essential necessity for the life of the Old World now. It is realizable only in the form of a United Socialist States of Europe.

Stalin, like Churchill, requires the splitting-up of Europe in order to facilitate the domination of the peoples and the nations that compose it. That, far more than any fear of an impossible *cordon sanitaire* around Russia like the one set up after World War I, is what makes Stalin adamant against any combination of European countries. Along this line, Stalin has met with success thus far. He has torpedoed the plan for a Polish-Czech alliance, and is signing a pact with Benes to bring Czechoslovakia within his own sphere of influence. What he intends to do with Czechoslovakia and with Benes, is another matter. But no doubt he remembers that Bismarck said: "Whoever has Bohemia, has Europe."

#### A Conference on Europe—Without Europe

It is control of Europe that is at stake. It is highly significant—not to say astounding!—that at the Moscow Conference, which was considering the fate of Europe, not a single continental-European country was represented, except for Russia herself. Europe is not to decide its fate, that is to be decided for it. When de Gaulle warned, after the Moscow Conference, that "France thinks that any European settlement and any major world settlement without her would not be a good settlement," grief vied with impotence. And if that is how de Gaulle, of once mighty France, speaks, it is easy to imagine the thoughts of Queen Wilhelmina, King Peter, King George of Greece, King Albert, to say nothing of King Victor Emmanuel. The Powers grow fewer in number, the Pawns more numerous.

Bismarck's aphorism about Bohemia is limited by its context. More to the point—there is no control of Europe without control of Germany. The converse is not less true—there is no control of Germany without control of Europe. The Allies know the truth of the first statement, just as Hitler knows the truth of its converse. Hitler's days, however, are shorter in number than the days of the Allies. The problem stands before the Allies.

What are the Allies going to do about Germany? All the disputes among them lead to this question. Assuming the defeat of Germany, the United States and England have the general aim of crushing Germany economically and politically, eliminating her as an imperialist rival, and subjecting her to joint domination. As to just how this is to be done concretely, there is the greatest uncertainty. The source of their uncertainty—leaving aside the danger of a proletarian revolution in Germany which they count on smashing without too great difficulty—is Russia.

What does Stalin want with Germany, or in Germany? In the first place, he does not want a Germany ruled by England and the United States. It is the greatest of absurdities to imagine that when the war ends Stalin will say to his allies: I now have Estonia; you make take Germany. Failing a revolutionary victory in Germany, the United States and England will have to share control of the country with Russia. If the Hitlerite armies collapse, the Anglo-American forces will march in from the West (and perhaps the South), but the Russian army will not come to a halt at the eastern frontier out of fear of violating Stalin's theory of "socialism in one country"; it will march in, and meet its allies at an agreed-upon point in Germany, much in the same manner as it met its German ally in 1939 in Poland.

Does this mean that the two armed forces will face each other in open hostility? Most likely not. Both have too much to lose by such a conflict. It is far more likely that every effort

will be made to establish a "joint" occupation of Germany, and "joint" responsibility for it. But underneath this joint responsibility, the conflict would nevertheless continue.

There are points of agreement on Germany, in the first place. Czechoslovakia will be "restored," in one form or another. It has already been announced by the Moscow declaration that Austria will be separated from Germany, and that the Allies will seek to maintain this head-without-a-body in much the same state of artificial animation by which Russian scientists keep alive the severed head of a dog, that is, by rigid control of its bloodstream. In the West, there may be another attempt at what the French tried to set up after the First World War, an "Independent Rhineland Republic." In the East, the Russians may seek to "compensate" a controlled "independent Poland" by attaching to it the territory of East Prussia. But whatever else the Allies agree upon, Russia does not want a completely dismembered and disemboweled Germany.

#### Russia's Post-War Needs

Germany crushed economically and politically means Anglo-American domination of the continent, or at least of the most important part of it. Anglo-American domination of most of Europe means greater Russian dependence upon the United States after the war. The war is bleeding Russia more than any other country. After the war, she will be dependent to a great extent—the outside world does not know to just how great an extent—upon foreign aid, in the form of food and, above all, in the form of capital goods, for the reconstruction of the country.

Where is this aid to be obtained? American imperialism counts upon its tremendous economic superiority, and its indispensability to Russian reconstruction, not only for a market in Russia but also as a means of getting approval for its European political program from the Kremlin. Guarded expressions of this expectation have already appeared in the American press. But this is precisely what Stalin does not want. The difference between Stalin "not wanting" and, for example, de Gaulle "not wanting," is that the former has trumps to play whereas the latter is hunting desperately for deuces and treys.

The only other important source of materials for the reconstruction of Russia is Germany. To escape dependence upon the United States, Russia must have at least considerable control over Germany. The official press (there is no other) in Russia has already said: We have suffered most at German hands, we must come first in reparations. By reparations is meant: German labor and the products of German industry, the machine-tool industry especially, to be used to reconstruct Russia. In this respect, Stalinist imperialism stands on the same plane as Clemenceau and Lloyd George in 1919.

How to appear before the German people as its despoiler and plunderer, who makes it pay for the crimes of its ruling class, and at the same time as its "liberator," who does not want it humiliated, dismembered and crushed, as the other Allies do—that would of course be a tremendously complicated problem for Stalin, and may bring him more grief than glory. But he has instruments at his disposal that Churchill and Roosevelt do not have. The chief instrument is a *native political force*, or one that operates as such, in the capitalist countries, Germany included. That force is the Stalinist movement, in all of its guises and transmutations.

## The "Free German" Committee

The disguise now assumed by Stalinism in Germany is the "Free German National Committee" in Moscow, plus its "Union of German Officers," plus a network of affiliates in Sweden, England, Mexico. Neither its significance nor its strength can be underrated.

The Stalinists have won over, by one means or another, the vast majority of the politically active German émigrés, social-democrats included. Among the Germans taken prisoner in Russia, a most intensive campaign of Stalinist agitation and organization has been conducted for a long time, and not without success. The literature issued by Moscow for German consumption is enormous, and makes the efforts of the OWI look like a publicity campaign to put across a Kiwanis convention. This is on the record. What efforts are made behind the scenes to establish contact in Germany with that element among the ruling classes, above all in the Junker officer caste, which is for the "Bismarckian orientation," that is, an alliance between Germany and Russia against the Western powers, is only hinted at by the special efforts the Stalinists have directed at gaining the allegiance of captured officers.

The propaganda of the Stalinists is concentrated against Hitler and his immediate circle, and promises immunity to all who break with him. There is no end to its praise of Russia as the friend of Germany, as her liberator, as the indicated partner in political and economic collaboration after the war, as the "decisive guarantee of the freedom and independence of Germany." Every printed page recalls that Russia was always opposed to the Versailles Treaty, and that without alliance with Russia now, Germany will get an even worse treaty imposed upon her. Praise for Allied England and Allied America is not even muted—it just isn't sung at all. Each point in this propaganda speaks volumes.

Stalin may pledge himself, along with his partners, to ever-so-democratic a régime in Germany after Hitler is overturned. He has already made such a pledge for Italy. But if every one of the seven "guarantees for democracy" contained in the Declaration on Italy of the Moscow Conference were to be repeated for Germany, Stalin would have no difficulty in concretizing them in the form of a "democratic" government, ranging from some of the "anti-fascist" Junker officers to out-and-out Stalinists, with some democratic figures in between. If a government of the monarchists and social-democrats was possible in Germany in 1919, a government of generals and Stalinists is certainly not out of the question for the present-day Kremlin. Besides, is not Russia herself the world's greatest democracy?

Would it merely be influenced by the Stalinists? Or dominated by them? Or under their outright control? The answer lies entirely in the realm of the relationship of forces, and has not at all been decided *a priori* by Stalin. He will go as far as he can in gaining control over Germany—and not a step less. The limits will be set not by any reluctance on his part, but by the given strength of his allies, on the one side, and the revolutionary resistance of the German proletariat, on the other. As for the German bourgeoisie itself, without the support of England and the United States, or the support of the people, it would not be a decisive force.

This is what England and the United States fear, and no agreement has yet been reached to dispel their fear. Wherever Stalinist Russia advances and establishes its domination, it inspires antagonism in the ranks of the bourgeoisie, whether momentary considerations make it expedient to express this

antagonism or not. From this point of view, those who see the conflict between Russia's "nationalized property" and bourgeois "private property," are quite right, even if they do exaggerate tremendously the weight of the conflict.

But to point this out, and this alone, is to tell a half-truth which is the worst kind of falsehood and deception to the working class. A far greater conflict is produced by the advance of Stalinism—the conflict between the conquering bureaucracy and the masses it reduces to economic and political slavery. That Churchill is not delighted at the prospect of Stalin annexing Poland, goes without saying. It does not follow, however, that the class enemies of Churchill, the proletariat of Poland and all other countries, *should* be delighted at the prospect. For the working class, Stalinist domination means a new totalitarian slavery.

Woe to those revolutionists and woe to those workers who fail to understand this and to lay the necessary emphasis upon it.

## The Proletariat Has Yet to Speak

The *aims* of the imperialists are not too difficult to understand. The *aims* of Stalinist imperialism are no more mysterious. They are ambitious and sweeping aims, for the Stalinist bureaucracy is not only under great compulsions to expand and conquer, but has gained a great self-confidence in undertaking the expansion.

*IF* the aims of all the imperialists were assured of realization, a dark period would be ahead for all peoples. But while the imperialists, the Kremlin gang in particular, take the masses into account in working out their aims, their reckonings are based on the assumption that the masses will not get into motion for their own class interests and under their own class banner, or that if they do, it will again be possible to trade or crush them.

There is the real "flaw" in all the ambitious lusts of reaction. The antagonisms and conflicts in its ranks have opened crevices before, and the masses have poured through. That will happen again and again. Churchill may dispose of de Gaulle as impotent; but the masses at whose head de Gaulle formally stands are not impotent, and they will yet say their word. Stalin will find that the corruption and acquisition of a few Nazi officers is one thing, and the subversion and enslavement of the German proletariat another. The imperialists have their aims. The working class has its own. To clarify these aims is the task of the time. One of the most important elements of that task is to gird the proletariat for the war against Stalinism, to the bitter end.

MAX SHACHTMAN.

### THE TRUTH ABOUT INDIA:

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# Shifts in the Union Movement

## The CIO and AFL Conventions

Trade union conventions this year have carried on their deliberations in the shadow of strikes and the threat of strikes. While the CIO was meeting in Philadelphia, the miners were out for the fourth time this year and in Philadelphia itself CIO members employed by the city transportation system walked off the job in protest against a company order not to wear their CIO buttons on the job. In Detroit a UAW local was voting overwhelmingly in favor of a strike despite the efforts of the National Labor Relations Board to intimidate these workers by asking them to vote on the question of whether or not they wished to hold up war production by striking. There were other strikes in the making, not the least important of which was the strike vote being prepared by the railroad unions.

These events and others unquestionably had some effect on the slow thinking of the trade union leadership. This leadership has been compelled to bend just a little away from its blind and uncritical support of the Roosevelt Democratic Party and its governmental machinery to give attention to the restlessness of its own membership. It was unmistakable that there was an acceleration of the unrest and resentment over the fact that, so long as labor adhered to the no-strike pledge, it was an army without a weapon.

These sporadic but stubborn and ominous outbursts evidently compelled the leadership to think over its course of the past two years, and especially during the past eleven months, since giving the no-strike pledge and adopting as its main slogan: the first duty of labor is to make any and every sacrifice necessary for complete victory over the Axis powers. This "Win the War" slogan of the trade union leadership had been dinned into the ears of the membership, not always skillfully, sometimes tearfully and beseechingly, but always with persistence and constancy. The whole labor movement had been encompassed about with the conception: "this is labor's war;" "victory through equality of sacrifice;" "support to our Commander-in-Chief." "My primary consideration . . . for the moment," said Philip Murray, "must necessarily, therefore, be the winning of this war." R. J. Thomas, president of the huge UAW, told the delegates to the aircraft workers' convention that he knew the employers had not cooperated but that "two wrongs don't make a right." Labor must submit, suffer under indignities, accept all manner of inconveniences, but renew its sacrifices. If the ruling classes refuse to win the war, then labor must win it for them.

One illuminating aspect of the submissiveness of the trade union leadership was its elevation of Roosevelt to a new post: Commander-in-Chief of the United States. He was no longer to be Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy only, but of the civilian population as well. Roosevelt seemed to think well of this promotion granted him by the Stalinists and the CIO-AFL leadership because he himself began to use the title and had it appear on billboards for the war bond drive.

### The Policy of the Labor Leaders

For the past year or eighteen months, the trade unions have attempted to carry on their proper functions within this "Win the War" framework. Every consideration and every

need of the labor movement was crowded into the narrow compass of this main slogan. The most important resolutions of conventions emphasized that, no matter what the grievances, they must be subordinated to winning the war. And what was to be labor's main contribution to the winning of the war? Refusal to strike for the duration!

The struggle against John L. Lewis is at least partially motivated by the attitude of the CIO and some of the AFL leaders on the war and what they hold to be labor's responsibility. Bureaucratic interests of course are prominent on both sides but the other factor is far more important and relevant. Lewis is not sufficiently patriotic for Murray and friends. He doesn't keep his word as given the President. The bitterness of this conflict and the heat that has entered into this fight can only be properly understood if the struggle is evaluated in the light of the unqualified pro-war position, for instance, of the CIO leadership. Many of the CIO leaders, aside from the Stalinists, approached very near to the line of treason against the labor movement in their attitude toward Lewis in relation to the miners' strikes. These treasonable attitudes can be interpreted properly only if we fit them into the general position of the trade union leaders on the war and the support of Roosevelt.

What Murray would call the first "constructive," "intelligent" and "wholesome" contribution of labor toward the war was made on December 17, 1942, when he, Green, Lewis and others went to the White House and gave the "Commander-in-Chief" a pledge that the millions of workers in the United States would not strike for the duration of the war. To be sure, no conventions were called to go through the forms and mechanics of getting the consent of the workers, following argument and discussion. This little democratic detail was considered either a luxury not to be indulged in during the war, or these leaders were fairly certain that their proposals would be rejected by their memberships. Subsequent happenings and events prove that their fears were well founded.

### Who Gave the No-Strike Pledge?

In an address to the CIO Executive Board in May, 1943, Murray made the statement that "we have consistently adhered to our no-strike policy for the duration of the war. That commitment was made to the President of the United States. . . . The President did not ask for that commitment. Organized labor went over to the President of the United States . . . and said: 'Mr. President, we are not going to strike for the duration of the war.' He did not ask for it. . . . It was made voluntarily. There was no compulsion, there was no legislation pending."

This statement by Murray can be correctly called bureaucratic nonsense. "Organized labor" did not give Roosevelt that no-strike pledge and had no part in it. Organized labor was bureaucratically delivered to Roosevelt by Murray, Lewis and Green, claiming to represent the sentiments of their organizations. This act was fully in line with their other actions, especially those of Green and Murray, before Pearl Harbor. They had been preparing the way for this capitulation for many months. Roosevelt had been consistently putting on

the pressure and tightening the screws. After Pearl Harbor the labor bureaucracy knew full well what was expected of it, i.e., what rôle it was to play. It had been through the First World War and knew its place.

Murray also attempts to make much of the fact that they made obeisance before Roosevelt voluntarily and without "compulsion." "The President had addressed no communications to anyone," says Murray, "asking them to give up the right to strike, nor had he any conversations that I am aware of with any leader of labor asking labor to withhold its right to strike." Murray evidently wants us to believe that Roosevelt really had no interest in this question. It was only the great men of labor who thought about strikes and their relation to production. It had never occurred to Roosevelt. But the mass of labor was not panting in its dash to the White House to give a no-strike pledge. It was left to Murray and Green and Lewis to get Roosevelt and labor together in this "constructive" and wholesome "Win the War" commitment.

Murray consistently berates Lewis for not keeping the no-strike pledge. And not only this but, according to Murray, "Mr. Lewis knows perfectly well that his acts were wholly responsible for the conduct of the Congress in seeking the enactment of the Smith-Connally Bill." The "acts" of Lewis that Murray was speaking of were the miners' strikes.

It is necessary to ask how Murray can confine his anger to Lewis and the miners? Did Lewis alone break his pledge to the President? But thousands of workers in the CIO did the same thing. That is, if we take Murray's word for it that "labor" as a whole gave Roosevelt the no-strike pledge. Murray's steel workers have been on strike in town after town, in mill after mill and from week to week. The shipyard workers have been on strike—thousands of them. The rubber workers, after years of peaceful slumber, virtually had a general strike of the industry in Akron. The aircraft workers have had strike after strike, despite their leader's solemn dictum that "two wrongs don't make a right." There have been strikes in every type of industry in the CIO and AFL. And now the railway labor executives, the elder statesmen of the labor movement, have authorized a strike vote in their crafts.

### **Background to Labor Conventions**

This year's crop of trade union conventions faced discontentment, resentment and strikes. The labor chieftains had given the no-strike pledge without "compulsion" and had in all probability been rewarded with the promise of maintenance of membership clauses in contracts approved by the National War Labor Board. Under this exchange, they would maintain union membership at high levels and thus build up local, international and federation treasuries. But the workers wanted something more than big unions and million dollar treasuries. They wanted more wages, less job freezes, lower prices and the settlement of grievances through genuine collective bargaining.

It was one thing for three men to tie labor bureaucratically to the imperialist war machine by making a no-strike promise without the consent of the workers; it was a far more difficult task to induce the millions of workers to live up to that promise. It is one thing to tell labor to make sacrifices and carry the main burden of the war, but it isn't so easy to keep labor on its knees after months of experience with knee-bending and retreats in which their union directors took the lead.

While it is true that the leaders of labor have learned something about the mood of the working class today, they haven't learned too much. I suppose, however, that we should

be thankful for even this small amount of progress made by these men. What is also important to remember is whence the fire comes that causes them to step up forward just a little. The many strikes tell the story. Sad and bitter experience is beginning to have effect. Roosevelt is a little less "labor's friend" now than a year ago.

The myth fabricated by the trade union bureaucrats, which had Roosevelt on one side of the barricades with labor, and Congress, along with the administrative boards, on the other side, is not so palatable to labor today as when it was first invented. The President was pictured as a sort of man of sorrows, always busy with foreign affairs, while his aides distorted his real aims. These aides carried on anti-labor practices behind Roosevelt's back which were unknown to him. But labor today has learned enough of the truth to be able to influence the leaders of all except the Stalinist-dominated unions to withhold, for the present at least, endorsement of Roosevelt for a fourth term.

Furthermore, while it may be easy to get a no-strike pledge formally reaffirmed, the leadership knows now from experience that in order to get labor to give heed to its unwilling reaffirmations, it is necessary to take a stand against the crippling Little Steel formula. If you don't want strikes, pledges are not enough; you must talk very concretely about practical things like more wages for the workers. Hypocritical sobbing about not letting "our boys suffer for the lack of supplies" no longer suffices for workers who are getting their eyes open to the fact that they have produced but haven't been paid for it; who know that supplies are piled high all over the country and who know now that where there has been a let-down in production it is due to the venality of profit-hungry employers always protecting their capitalist class interests, and, finally, to the skullduggery of bureaucrats in Washington bureaus.

### **New Pressures from the Ranks**

This is what gives meaning to, and helps explain, the fact that the UAW convention modifies its support of Roosevelt while the CIO convention fails to pass *any* resolution on the fourth term. Murray can say, today, that he doesn't like what is going on in Washington and that he does not intend to permit the CIO to be delivered to the Democratic or any other party. He can say these things because he must. The CIO and the ranks of all organized labor are stirring. This is what has pulled the trade union leaders off their chairs and into some action.

I said that the leaders have moved forward a little bit, but not much. The CIO convention was a good illustration. The leaders were aware of the dissatisfaction but they undoubtedly decided to wait as long as possible before taking any action such as demanding the elimination of the Little Steel formula. This decision was made on Tuesday, the second day of the convention, in a special meeting of the international board.

The very first resolution of the convention was on Murray and his leadership. This unusual procedure probably had several reasons behind it. For one, in the face of the known flop of the no-strike pledge and the failure of the workers to profit by the policy of bowing to Roosevelt, it was necessary to make sure that none of the resentment was directed at Murray. Positive and glowing support, presented in a resolution right at the beginning, would take care of this.

The next resolution was on the no-strike pledge. It was necessary here, too, to keep the lines clear. There were a lot of matters coming up in the convention that might lead some of the bolder delegates to suggest that a strike vote might be

the solution. To steer the convention away from any such dilemma, the no-strike position was presented second and passed without any discussion at all.

Then came the resolutions on organization, Smith-Connally Act, WLB, NLRB, support of Roosevelt war policies, political action, and manpower. The discussion on each of these resolutions revealed clearly that the leadership was in a very contradictory position in advocating support of Roosevelt's war policies and reaffirmation of the no-strike pledge and at the same time hoping to solve the problems raised in the above-mentioned resolutions. Of course this was true also of the resolution on the Little Steel formula. Concrete instances came up in the convention, for example, the case of a copper plant in Utah where the CIO had won an NLRB election, but the employer refused to bargain. The refusal was made on the grounds that the so-called Frye amendment to the appropriations act to the NLRB forbids the NLRB to proceed against a company union that has a contract which had been signed three months or more prior to an election in which the company union was defeated in the voting.

It was clear that there was one simple, tried and true procedure for the copper workers: strike. But the no-strike resolution had been passed the first day of the convention.

It is reported that this matter was raised in the meeting of the CIO's International Board just before the convention. Reid Robinson, president of the Mine, Mill & Smelter Workers, and Stalinist line advocate, was complaining bitterly over the plight of his union in this case. He didn't know what to do. Murray expressed surprise that an international president expressed impotence in such a situation. Murray said that if that happened to his union he would fight. Robinson asked whether or not Murray meant that he would call a strike. Murray replied again that "I would fight, I would fight."

Before Hitler invaded Russia, Robinson would have fought also. He knew precisely what Murray meant. Let the president of the local call the workers out. That would be no violation of the no-strike pledge: for what a leader does in such situations is proclaim the walkout to be "an unauthorized strike."

During the whole week of the convention the delegates seemed to be suffering from an acute case of inhibited jitters. They were not rank and filers but high officers of the internationals and of the CIO. They knew that the millions they were expected to represent were watching and waiting to see what come out of Philadelphia. These high ranking officers knew also that the masses were against the no-strike pledge. After they had reaffirmed the pledge their pent-up emotions were unloosed in a flow of oratory on the resolution, "Organization." This continued throughout the convention in connection with other resolutions. It was a sort of safety valve, a kind of therapeutic against bad dreams caused by voting for a no-strike resolution which these men knew they had no business to vote for and which they feared they could not enforce.

The worst case of jitters was among the Communist Party delegates. (Perhaps I shouldn't say the Communist Party, since there is some evidence that it may change its name to the "Community Party.") They certainly must have sent in a crop of resolutions on a fourth term for Roosevelt and for incentive pay. But none of these appeared in the resolutions book nor did they breathe a word on these pet themes in the convention. This is really astounding. It seems that the only possible explanation for this curious conduct is to say that they were halted and driven into retreat before the conven-

tion opened. It is highly probable that they were told by Murray not to bring in any fourth term resolution, that he would have to oppose it and that this would impair the unity of the convention. The Stalinists, being in favor of "unity," therefore subsided.

On the matter of the wage resolution calling for the elimination of the Little Steel formula and for an increase in the base pay, the Stalinists were probably caught off guard.

Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt appeared at the convention to discuss the no-strike pledge and related matters. Her speech was interesting from several points of view. She was glad that the convention had adopted the no-strike pledge but "for us at home there is something that must go along with that pledge . . . and I think sometimes you haven't done it quite as well as you should do it. That is, I believe that you should tell the story of injustices, of inequalities, of bad conditions, so that the people as a whole in this country really face the problems that people who are pushed to the point of striking know all about, but others know practically nothing about." Mrs. Roosevelt said that she was convinced that a great deal more would have to be done to change conditions, and recited what a soldier said to her overseas: "Since I have been out here I have had medical care, dental care, so that I would be in good fighting shape. They watch me all the time. I wonder why I could not have had that when I was at home and growing up, in order to be better able to live."

The President's wife received tremendous applause. The reason behind the applause is significant. To the CIO leadership and to hundreds of thousands of trade union members, Mrs. Roosevelt, along with Wallace, represents the struggle of the New Deal for survival. It is said at time that Wallace and Mrs. Roosevelt express the real opinions of the President, which he cannot say due to the necessities of his political position in connection with the winning of the war.

Whether or not this is true, it is true that Mrs. Roosevelt represents a very insidious danger for the labor movement. She is a liberal, a genuine liberal, and there is no reason to doubt that she means what she says. But what does she say? She says that she is glad the workers have agreed not to strike. But they must publicize their grievances and let the public know that they are suffering injustices. The inference, of course, is that the public will be sympathetic, it will put pressure on the employers (and presumably on the government: Roosevelt and the WLB) and the grievances will be resolved. According to Mrs. Roosevelt, the employer and the worker will come to understand that "their interests are identical." When the public understands, and the employers and the workers understand, there will be no need for strikes. This, of course, will not happen. The CIO, the AFL or any other group of workers know from experience that they will only be wasting time and falling into a morass of weakness and low morale if any such philosophy is adopted.

The labor movement has at last started to its feet again and is slowly beginning to move forward as it did two or three years ago before the days of no-strike pledges. What is necessary now for all of us in the working class movement, is to renew our pledge of militancy and struggle and solidarity. Striking out against the Little Steel formula and refusal to endorse Roosevelt now is a small and faint beginning in the right direction. The next step is not to endorse Roosevelt at all: nor Willkie, nor any of their kind, but independent political action of the working class and the organization of the Independent Labor Party.

DAVID COOLIDGE.

# The "Mistakes" of the Bolsheviks

*On the 26th Anniversary of the Revolution*

The causes for the decay of the Russian Revolution are often sought in the "mistakes of the Bolsheviks."

If only they had not suppressed freedom of speech and press! If only they had not suppressed the freedom of political organization and all the non-Bolshevik parties! If only they had not established a one-party dictatorship! If only they had not set up a Communist International to split the Western European labor movement! Had they acted otherwise, we would have no fascism today, and no Stalinism, but instead a progressive development toward democratic socialism inside Russia and out.

That is the tenor of most of the criticism leveled at the Bolsheviks in the labor movement. Consistently thought out, they boil down to the idea that the real mistake was made in November, 1917, when the Bolsheviks took power. This judgment is based essentially on the same factors that generated the fundamental theory of the Stalinist counter-revolution—"socialism in one country"—and differs from it only in that it is not on so high a level.

## **Class Relations in Russia**

The bonds by which Czarism held together the Russian Empire were brittle in the extreme. Under the stress of so minor a struggle as the Russo-Japanese war of 1904 and the revolutionary rehearsal a year later, the bonds almost shattered. Twelve years later, under the much heavier stress and pounding of the World War, they exploded beyond repair and tore Czarism to bits like the shot from shrapnel.

With Czarist despotism gone as an integrating force, who was left to keep the nation together and maintain it as a power, economic as well as political? One or two hundred years earlier, in similar circumstances, it was the bourgeoisie. In one country after another, it united the nation on a new basis, eliminated or repressed the disintegrative forces, expanded the wealth and power of the country, and vouchsafed democracy to the masses in one measure or another. In Russia, however, the bourgeoisie had come too late. The solving of the problems of the democratic revolution had been too long postponed to permit a repetition of the French Revolution. This was the theory held in common by Lenin and Trotsky.

The period of the revolution in which Czarism was overturned tested the theory to the end. The bourgeoisie did come to power, but it was quite incapable of mastering the centrifugal tendencies which Czarism, in the comparatively peaceful days, had been able to hold in precarious check. The empire was falling apart. Be it in the person of Lvov, or Miliukov, or Kerensky, or Kornilov, the bourgeoisie made desperate, violent, but vain efforts to keep the subjected peripheral countries like Finland, the Ukraine, Poland, the Caucasus, inside the old empire with a new nameplate. It is unbelievable, but it is a fact, cried Lenin, that a peasant uprising is growing in a peasant country, "under a revolutionary republican government that is supported by the parties of the Social Revolutionists and the Mensheviks." The peasant rising did not come to strengthen the bourgeoisie and its pallid democracy, but was directed against it. The bourgeoisie was unable to

deal with it in any better way than the Czar had discovered. At the same time, a proletarian power, the Soviets, not at all Bolshevik, grew up spontaneously by the side of the bourgeois power and threatened its existence.

The bourgeois democracy was incapable of seriously approaching a single one of the social and political problems at home. Given the collapse of Czarism, all the long-standing, outer-Russian imperialist tendencies to reduce Russia to a colony—tendencies most vigorously represented by the Germans, but not exclusive with them—received free rein. The country ruled by the bourgeois republicans was about to be overrun by foreign imperialism as a prelude to its partition among the great powers. This problem, too, the "revolutionary democracy" was unable to solve, or even undertake seriously to solve. The country faced complete economic ruin, political disintegration, chaos, dismemberment and subjugation from abroad, the imminent triumph of counter-revolution and reaction, with all the consequences flowing from them. The bourgeoisie, the bourgeois democracy, was impotent in dealing with the situation, notwithstanding the support it received from the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionists.

## **The "Interference" of the Bolsheviks**

To say that they might have solved these problems democratically if the Bolsheviks had not interfered, is not only to ignore an overwhelming mass of facts, but to stand the question on its head. The "interference" of the Bolsheviks was made possible only because the bourgeois democrats, plus the social democrats, could not solve the problems.

Political action can be understood, not in the abstract, but in the concrete conditions in which it occurs. It cannot be rationally appraised by itself, but only in terms of the alternative. The alternative to the "risky" seizure of power by the working class under Bolshevik leadership was not the painless flowering of "democracy" but the triumph of savage counter-revolution and the partitioning and colonialization of the country.

The "mistake" of the Bolsheviks in taking power when they did and where they did, not only saved the honor of international socialism and gave it a new and powerful lease on life, but it saved Russia. Without this "initial mistake," the greatest likelihood is that long ago German imperialism would have been ensconced in Petrograd and Moscow. French imperialism in Odessa, British imperialism in the Caucasus, Japanese imperialism throughout Siberia, Kerensky in a clerk's chair, with the Mensheviks running errands for them all.

The Bolsheviks cannot, and therefore must not, be judged as if they were uncontested masters of a situation in which they could calmly and undisturbedly plan a campaign of social reorganization. The disdainful critics like to overlook the fact that they, or at least their friends and patrons, left no stone unturned or unhurled to prevent the new state power from working out its destiny. Class interest came before "scientific interest" in the "new social experiment."

Both Czar and bourgeoisie left the Bolsheviks, who took power almost without shedding a drop of blood, a heritage of chaos and violence and multitudinous unsolved problems.

The sabotage of the bourgeoisie, loyal patriots of the

tatherland who were ready to sell it to foreign imperialism rather than have it ruled by the proletariat, forced the Bolsheviks to resort to the most radical socialist measures from the very beginning. The Bolsheviks were anything but Utopian. Their program was modest and realistic. If they took what would otherwise have been premature steps, it was done under the compulsions of the bitter class struggle immediately launched by the counter-revolution.

Decrees permitting capitalists to continue owning their factories under workers' control are impotent against shells loaded and fired at these factories by their departed owners. Terroristic attacks upon the government and its officials cannot be effectively met with sermons on the superiority of oral agitation and moral suasion. Freedom of the press cannot be extended by a government to "critics" who come to overthrow it with arms and battalions furnished by Czarists and foreign imperialists. Freedom must be defended from such critics, and with all available arms.

Not only the bourgeois democrats like Kerensky, but the Mensheviks and SRs resorted to arms against the democratic Soviet power. Nor were they too finicky about the company they kept in their crusade against the Bolsheviks. Alliance with the Bolsheviks against the reaction was inadmissible in principle and beneath the integrity of these democrats. Alliance with reaction, with the Czarist generals, the Cossacks, the Clemenceaus and Churchills against the Bolsheviks, that was good, practical politics, realistic, tolerable by democracy.

In any country, such "practical politics" are commonly known as treason and treated accordingly. Against the Soviet power, this was not merely "treason to the nation," but treason to the working class and the working class revolution. Those who tolerated the traitors, who even collaborated with them in a common party, who did not join the Bolsheviks in crushing them, were not much better. The Soviet power had no alternative but to outlaw these elements and their political institutions. This can be contested only by those who ignore facts—we say nothing of the class interests of the proletariat, of the interests of socialism!—including the fact that civil war is not conducted in accordance with the rules recommended in finishing schools for young ladies of good breeding.

What is downright outrageous is the impudence of the criticism of Bolshevism's dictatorial measures leveled by the very persons or groups which acted in such a manner as to leave the Soviet power no alternative but stern decisions of sheer self-defense.

### The Place of the Comintern

This holds true also for the organization of the Communist International. The picture of Lenin as some sort of wild and irresponsible "professional splitter" is three-fifths myth and two-fifths abysmal misunderstanding. The social democracy during the war had led the working class into the cattle corrals of the bourgeoisie. The Communist International was organized to restore the class independence of the proletarian movement, of which it had been robbed by the leaders of the Second International. It was organized to unite the proletariat once more around a revolutionary socialist banner, to have it serve itself again, instead of serving the Kaiser, the French Steel Trust or the British Empire.

Above all, however, it was organized an indispensable weapon of the Russian Revolution itself. The Comintern was the general staff of the world revolution. Its task was the organization of the victory of the proletariat in the capitalist

countries. This was assigned to it by the Bolsheviks, not out of considerations of abstract internationalism, but out of the thousand-times-repeated conviction that without the revolution in the West, the Russian workers' state could not hope to survive, much less solve its fundamental problems.

This fact is well known and widely acknowledged. Its full significance is not always grasped. The Russian Revolution was the first act of the world revolution. That is how it was conceived by its authors. That was the starting point of all their policies. The heart of the question of the "mistakes of the Bolsheviks" is reached when this is thoroughly understood. Everything remains mystery and confusion if the question is studied from the standpoint of Stalin's nationalist theory.

The program of the Bolsheviks called for establishing the widest possible democracy. The Soviet régime was to be the most democratic known in history. If a state power, that is, coercion and dictatorship, was needed, it was to be directed only against a counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie.

Was so much concentration of dictatorial power and violence needed against the Russian bourgeoisie, that is, against a bourgeoisie described as helpless and hopeless? *On a Russian national scale*, the answer could easily have been in the negative. But as the world bourgeoisie understood, and immediately showed, the Russian Revolution was directed at international capitalism. Without world capitalism, the Russian bourgeoisie could have been disposed of by the Soviet power with a wave of the hand. With world capitalism behind it, the bourgeoisie of Russia, which is only another way of saying the danger of a victory for the counter-revolution, was a tremendous force against which the greatest vigilance was demanded.

Because the problem was only posed in Russia but could be solved only on a world scale, the Bolsheviks counted on the international revolution. Because they counted on the international revolution, the Bolsheviks allowed themselves all sorts of infringements upon the standards of political democracy, and even upon the standards of workers' democracy.

The suppression of democratic rights for other working class organizations, even of those which were not directly engaged in armed insurrection against the Soviets, was first conceived as a temporary measure dictated by the isolation of the Russian Revolution and in virtue of that fact by the dangers to which it was immediately subject.

The victory of the revolution in the West would have meant a vast relaxation of suppressive measures. To this day the best of the Russian Mensheviks (if there are any left who have not gone over to Stalin) do not understand that the primary responsibility for their disfranchisement in Russia (and, more important, the degeneration of the revolution) falls upon the shoulders of their German co-thinkers, who so effectively prevented the German proletariat from coming to power.

In other words, if the October Revolution is looked at as a purely Russian revolution; if the world revolution on which the Bolsheviks reckoned is looked upon as a Utopia doomed in advance to failure; or if the world revolution is looked upon as a movement that *should* have been suppressed, as was done by the reaction and its social-democratic supporters; or if the world revolution is looked upon from the standpoint of the Stalinist theory of nationalist reaction—then the dictatorial and suppressive acts of the Bolsheviks (the Bolsheviks, not the Stalinists) become a series of mistakes and even

crimes. If, however, these acts are regarded as measures imposed upon the Bolsheviks seeking to hold out at all costs while the world revolution was maturing—the world revolution on which they had every right to count—then their true nature is revealed. They are then understandable, not as something “inherent” in Bolshevism, as that which “unites” Bolshevism with Stalinism (or fascism!), or as that which produced the degeneration of the revolution; but as temporary measures aimed at overcoming the effects of an enforced isolation and superfluous to the extent that this isolation was relieved by socialist victory abroad.

### Democracy in Coming Revolutions

However, if this is so, an important conclusion follows. The proletariat that triumphs in the next wave of socialist revolutions and triumphs in *several* of the *advanced* countries will have neither wish nor need to repeat all the measures of the Russian Revolution. It is absurd to think otherwise. It is much more absurd for the revolutionary movement to adopt a program advocating the universal repetition of all the suppressive measures of the Russian Bolsheviks. This injunction applies most particularly against the idea of a single, legal, monopolistic party, or as it is sometimes (and inaccurately) put, a “one-party dictatorship.”

The workers' power in the advanced countries will be able to assure the widest, genuine democracy to all working class parties and organizations, and even (given favorable circumstances, which mean, primarily, no attempt at counter-revolution) to bourgeois parties, and this assurance must be set down in advance. The assurance cannot be confined to a ceremonial pledge on holiday occasions, but must be reflected in the daily political practice of the revolutionary vanguard party. In the concrete case, the “daily practice” includes a critical reexamination of the Russian experience.

There were “mistakes” imposed upon the Bolsheviks by the actions of their opponents and by conditions in general. There were mistakes, without skeptical quotation marks, that cannot be sheltered under that heading.

The most critical and objective reconsideration of the Bolshevik revolution does not, in our view, justify the attacks made upon Lenin and Trotsky for the violence they used against their violent, insurrectionary adversaries. Nor, even after all these years, can the excesses in repression and violence be regarded as having been weighty factors in the degeneration of the Soviet state. To condemn a revolution for excesses is to condemn revolution; to condemn revolution is to doom society to stagnation and retrogression.

But after having been compelled to outlaw all the non-Bolshevik parties, the leaders of the party in power made a virtue, and then a principle, out of a temporary necessity. “There is room for all kinds of parties in Russia,” said one of them, Tomsky, if we rightly recall, “but only one of them in power and all the rest in prison.” Tomsky merely expressed what had become the rule and principle for all the other leaders.

The idea of one party in power is one thing, and not at all in violation of either bourgeois or workers' democracy. The idea that all other parties must be, not in opposition, with the rights of oppositions, but in prison, violates both bourgeois and workers' democracy, and it is with the latter that we are concerned here.

Even if every non-Bolshevik group, without exception, had resorted to armed struggle against the Soviet power, it was a disastrous mistake to outlaw them in perpetuity. From every

point of view that may legitimately be held by a revolutionary party or a revolutionary government, it would have been wise and correct if the Soviet power had declared:

“Any political group or party that lays down its arms, breaks from the foreign imperialists and the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie at home, adapts itself in word and deed to Soviet legality, repudiates armed struggle against the government and those who resort to armed struggle, will enjoy full democratic rights in the country, equal to those of the party in power.”

The Bolsheviks made no such declaration. Instead, the kind made by Tomsky gained prevalence. There can be no question in our mind that the adoption and enforcement of the “Tomsky policy” contributed heavily to the degeneration of the revolution and the victory of Stalinism. From the prohibition of all parties but the Bolshevik, only a step was needed to the prohibition of all factions inside the Bolshevik Party at its tenth congress. Anyone acquainted with the history of the subsequent developments, knows that this decision, also taken as an “emergency” measure, was a most powerful weapon in the hands of the bureaucracy against the Left Opposition. Disloyally construed, disloyally used, it smoothed the road to the totalitarian dictatorship of the bureaucracy.

The whole Bolshevik Party was politically miseducated and ideologically intimidated against the very idea of more than one party in the country, and for this miseducation none of its leaders can escape his share of responsibility. It is enough to recall that from the time of Zinoviev's first capitulation to Stalin in 1927 to the time of the last of the capitulators, every desertion from the Opposition was motivated to a considerable extent by the cry, “No two parties in the country!”

### Proletarian Revolution and Democracy

The Bolshevik revolution was betrayed and crushed by the Stalinist counter-revolution. It is not right to say that nothing remains of the revolution. Much remains: its great tradition is still alive in millions of men; its ideas and teachings remain fundamentally sound for the much greater socialist revolution to come; its experiences are still before us and so are the lessons to be learned from them.

Not the least important lesson is the need to return to the principles set forth by Lenin in *The State and Revolution*. Especially in the light of what has happened the heaviest emphasis must be laid upon the dictatorship of the proletariat as the democratic rule of the workers; as the widest and most genuine democracy the workers have ever had; as the equitable enjoyment of democratic rights by small groups, political opponents of the government included and military opponents alone excluded; as the safeguard of the principle of electivity of officials, above all of the trade unions and the soviets.

The revolutionary Marxists must learn, and then must teach, that the struggle for democratic rights is not just a clever device for embarrassing the undemocratic bourgeoisie, that the struggle is not confined to the days of capitalism. On the contrary: it is precisely when the new revolutionary power is set up that the struggle for democratic rights and democracy acquires its fullest meaning and its *first* opportunity for complete realization.

The revolutionists after the overturn of capitalism differ from the revolutionists before that overturn not in that they no longer need democratic rights and no longer demand them, but in the fact that they are for the first time really and fully able to promulgate them and to see to it that they are pre-

served from all infringement, including infringement by the new state or by bureaucrats in it. The right of free speech, press and assembly, the right to organize and the right to strike are not less necessary under the dictatorship of the proletariat, but more necessary and more possible.

Socialism can and will be attained only by the fullest realization of democracy. The dictatorship of the proletariat must be counterposed to the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie in this

sphere because the latter denies the people access to and control over the very material bases whose monopoly by the bourgeoisie makes its "democracy" a formality not really enjoyed by the great masses.

That is what the revolutionary Marxists should teach. But first of all they must learn it, and thoroughly. It is one of the most important lessons of the Russian Revolution and its decay.

M. S.

# In the American Tradition

## The Working-Class Movement in Perspective

"But I consider this certain: the purely bourgeois basis with no pre-bourgeois swindle behind it, the corresponding colossal energy of the development... will one day bring about a change which will astound the whole world. Once the Americans get started it will be with an energy and violence compared with which we in Europe shall be mere children."\*

Thus on the 30th of March, 1892, Engels wrote from London to a friend in America. Marx and Engels knew that in every country, in whatever continent, the socialist revolution denoted the seizure of power by the working class under circumstances dictated by the law of uneven development and the historical peculiarities of each country. But they were sensitive to the subjective qualities of different sections of the international proletariat. Thus they looked upon the German proletariat as the most theoretical in Europe; the British workers were somewhat slow but once they had gained some advantage, did not let it go lightly, etc. In his last years, Engels always wrote about the American proletariat in such terms as the above. It is therefore important to see what Engels thought, why he thought it, to examine the historical development since his death and to see how far his analysis and expectations have been justified. This, useful at all times, is particularly necessary today because Engels was stirred to write about America at the time when it seemed to him that a national labor party was at last on its way.

Engels based his views on two fundamental facts. The country in 1886 is "*rich, vast, expanding.*" That is its special economic characteristic. Its special historic characteristic is that its political institutions are "*purely bourgeois... unleavened by feudal remnants...*" These combined give to the economy a tremendous power of development and this national characteristic is of necessity imbued in the proletariat. Yet at the same time "*in every young country*" where the development is of a predominantly material nature, there is a "*certain backwardness of thought, a clinging to traditions connected with the foundations of the new nationality...*" The "*exigencies*" of practical labor and the concentrating of capital "*have produced a contempt for all theory*" and in such a country the people must become conscious of their own social interests by making "*blunder upon blunder...*" But always he insists that when the workers begin their political development it will be like nothing ever seen before. They will go fast, "*faster than anywhere else, even though on a*

singular road, which seems from the theoretical standpoint, to be almost an insane road."

It would be perhaps most fruitful to begin with a comparison between the economic and political development of the working class movement in America with the working class movement in Great Britain. For Marx and Engels, England was the model capitalist country and in their day the most fully developed. It is the easier to do so because in his observations on America, Engels constantly referred to earlier parallel and future developments in Britain.

### The National Tradition

The "traditions connected with the foundations of the new nationality" date back to before the American Revolution. But just as the French Revolution is the foundation of the modern French nation and the English Revolution in the seventeenth century is the foundation of modern Britain, just so the modern American nation finds its roots in 1776. This revolution differs sharply from the other two. A hundred and fifty years before, in Britain, the Cromwellian Revolution produced a powerful combination of petty bourgeois and neo-proletarian elements. They raised a program for political democracy which was not realized in Britain until over two hundred years afterward. Though they raised the question of property openly in debate with Cromwell, they were not communists. The real communists, the Levellers and the Diggers, were a small minority to the left of this movement which was so large and well organized that it almost drove Cromwell and his associates into the arms of the monarchy. He had to suppress these formidable revolutionaries by force. Carlyle calls them "*sans culottes* before their time." The real *sans culottes* were the driving force and the mainstay of the French Revolution. From that day to this the French bourgeoisie has lived in terror of revolutionary Paris.

No such conflicts took place in the American Revolution. Whereas the other two nationalities were born out of civil war, the American nation was born in a national struggle against foreign rule. Despite the very real class differences among the American revolutionaries and the struggle against the Loyalists, yet bourgeoisie, farmers, artisans and mechanics were a more or less homogeneous whole against British imperialism. Their ancestors had left European tyranny behind. Now they were clearing it out of the magnificent new country for good. The economic opportunities of this rich and vast new world prevented the extreme sharpening of class relations which characterized the old, but the consequent absence of sharp class political differentiation had powerful subjective

\**Marr-Engels Correspondence*, page 497. The *Correspondence* has a fairly good collection of the letters to America. *Science and Society*, spring and summer, 1938, contain letters which are not in the *Correspondence*.

reinforcement in the very circumstances under which the American people first felt themselves a nation.

It is this which Engels refers to fifty years ago, and today, despite the unprecedented development during the last twenty-five years, this sense of America being a free country, inherently different from the rest of the world, is still enormously powerful among all sections of the people. It has its drawbacks, but it has its virtues also.

But if, except for Shay's Rebellion, the American masses did not assert themselves with the vigor and independence of the English petty bourgeoisie and the French *sans culottes*, they ran far, far ahead of Europe politically in the years immediately following their revolution. By 1825 the battle for manhood suffrage had been won. The vote of the farmers and the masses in the towns exercised an influence upon the ruling class, upon legislative machinery and upon the "money power" which today might seem more illusory than real. For it to be appreciated it should be seen in comparison with conditions in Britain, reputedly the classic country of bourgeois democracy.

### Politics and the British Workers

If 1776 saw the Declaration of Independence of the American commercial bourgeoisie, in the same year appeared *The Wealth of Nations*, the declaration of independence of the British industrial bourgeoisie. Britain entered upon a period of dazzling economic development. Politically, however, the country was a hundred years behind the United States. Feudal remnants had Britain by the throat. G. K. Chesterton has summed up the situation perfectly when he contrasted the Commons with a capital C and the commons with a small c. The English aristocracy ruled in the House of Lords and their sons, brothers and sons-in-law sat in the House of Commons in close alliance with the financial and commercial magnates. Not only the masses of the people but even the rising industrial bourgeoisie were excluded. It took nearly fifty years to break this political stranglehold of the feudal remnants. Britain reached the verge of revolution in 1832 before the aristocracy gave way. Yet the Great Reform Bill of 1832 enfranchised only some 200,000 people. The masses, whose revolutionary agitation and direct action were the main causes of the bill being passed, were entirely excluded. This political advance was so eminently satisfactory to Lord John Russell, who pioneered the bill, that he became known afterward as "Finality John."

We shall understand America better if we continue with Britain. The masses, disappointed with the results of the Reform Bill, started the Chartist agitation. It lasted from 1839 to 1848 and embraced millions of British workers. Its demands were a curious mixture of political and social aspirations which we shall meet again forty years later in the Knights of Labor in the United States. Politics, however, predominated. The Chartists demanded universal suffrage, equal electoral areas, payment of members of Parliament, no property qualifications, vote by ballot and annual Parliaments. But they aimed also at "social equality." A worker needed a good house, good clothes and "plenty of good food and drink to make him look and *feel* happy." They were not quite sure how they were to achieve all this and wavered between petitions and direct action which on one occasion reached the stage of a half-hearted general strike and on another a planned insurrection.

The movement suddenly collapsed in 1848. In 1846 the Corn Laws, by which the British landlords had kept up the

price of corn, were abolished. The British industrialists, on the basis of cheap food, began that economic development by which Britain dominated the world market for forty years. The Chartist movement faded away. In 1851 the workers' movement took the form of slow and solid craft unionism, which dominated the British labor movement for forty years, the same period of time that Britain dominated the world market. It took the same forty years before Britain achieved manhood suffrage. The workers in the town got the vote only in 1867 and the workers in the country only in 1888.

### The American "Chartists"

In America between 1825 and 1850 industries are at a far lower stage of development than they are in Britain. But we have the beginnings of a labor movement, and the utopian socialism of Fourier and Owen flourishes not only in theory but in practice. Between 1850 and 1860 the growth of industry brings numerous strikes, fought out with the customary vigor of the American working class. But the political development of the country is overshadowed by the necessity of crushing the slave power. Astonishing development! Such is the territorial extent of America that the crushing of the plantation owners is a regional struggle. The industrial bourgeoisie wins its victory in civil conflict so gigantic that it is the first great modern war. Yet it manages this without a single serious clash with the workers.\* The leader of the bourgeoisie is a national hero who fights "to save the Union" and later to abolish slavery.

Yet the signs of a mass labor movement with political aspirations were ominously clear. This movement, however, was deflected by the richness and the vastness of the country and the absence of feudal relations. In the average European country there would have been no land. If there had been any it would have been owned by some noblemen. The Homestead Act of 1862, which opened up free land to the more dissatisfied and adventurous of the proletariat, diluted the independent political aspirations of the working class. America enters upon a period of industrial development comparable to that of Britain between 1784 and 1848. It took fifty years in Britain to produce Chartism. In America, where the energy of development is so colossal, the movement corresponding to Chartism appeared within less than ten years.

The Knights of Labor was organized in 1869, as a secret society. By 1879 the secrecy was discarded and between 1879 and 1886 it developed in much the same way and on much the same scale that Chartism had developed forty years before. The Knights wished "to secure to the workers the full enjoyment of the wealth they create, sufficient leisure in which to develop their intellectual, moral and social faculties, all of the benefits, recreations and pleasures of association." The similarity to the ideas of the Chartists is very striking. Like the Chartists, the Knights aimed at a new social order, but they were not socialist in the European sense. Their main demands were not political because, being Americans, they already had political freedom. But in accordance with their country and their time, they demanded the reserving of public lands for actual settlers, the abolition of the contract system of labor and public works, the eight-hour day, etc. Like the Chartists, the movement aimed at helping all workers in all fields. Suddenly in 1886, the year of the "Great Upheaval," the Knights of Labor claimed international attention.

Late in 1885 and early in 1886 a huge strike movement,

\*The draft riots lasted only a few days.

based on their struggle for the eight-hour day, swept over the United States. A number of Labor Parties sprang into being. In November, 1886, candidates of the newly formed Labor Parties were successful in the municipal elections. In New York City, where a united Labor Party had been formed only in July, it put forward Henry George as candidate. The Democrat got 90,000 votes. George came next with 68,000, beating Theodore Roosevelt, the Republican candidate, by 8,000 votes. The Chartists had aimed at more but done much less.

Engels in London greeted the upheaval as the dawn of a new age. On June 3 he writes to America: "Six months ago nobody suspected anything, and now they appear all of a sudden in such organized masses as to strike terror into the whole capitalist class. I only wish Marx could have lived to see it." The old man was sixty-six, but he reacted with the exuberance of someone who had just joined the movement.

In November after the electoral successes he writes again and takes up the question of the National Labor Party. "The first great step of importance for every country entering the movement is always the organization of the workers as an independent political party, no matter how, so long as it is a distinct workers' party. And this step has been taken far more rapidly than we had a right to hope, and that is the main thing. That the first program of the party is still confused and highly deficient, that it has set up the banner of Henry George, these are inevitable evils, but also only transitory ones. The masses must have time and opportunity to develop, and they can only have the opportunity when they have their own movement—no matter in what form, so far as it is only *their own* movement—in which they are driven further by their own mistakes and learn wisdom by hurting themselves. The movement in America is in the same condition as it was with us before 1848. . . ."

That the movement had attained such electoral successes after only eight months of existence was "absolutely unheard of."

Engels warned the German émigrés working in the movement not to be doctrinaire. "A million or two of working men's votes next November for a *bona-fide* workingmen's party is worth infinitely more at present than a hundred thousand votes for a doctrinarily perfect platform."

These ideas Engels repeated formally in his introduction to the American edition of *The Conditions of the Working Class in England*. The passage is worth ample quotation.

In February, 1885, American public opinion was almost unanimous on this one point; that there was no working class in the European sense of the word in America; that, secondly, no class struggle between workmen and capitalists such as tore European society to pieces was possible in the American Republic, and that therefore socialism was a thing of foreign importation which could never take root on American soil. And yet at that moment the coming class struggle was casting its gigantic shadow before it in the strikes of the Pennsylvania coal miners and of many other trades and especially in the preparations all over the country for the great eight-hour movement which was to come off and did come off in the May following. That I duly appreciated these symptoms, that I anticipated the working class movement on a national scale, my Appendix shows; but no one could then foresee that in such a short time the movement would burst out with such irresistible force, would spread with the rapidity of a prairie fire, would shake American society to its foundations.

The spontaneous and instinctive movements of these vast masses of working people, over a vast extent of country, the simultaneous outburst of their common discontent with the miserable social conditions, the same and due to the same causes, made them conscious of the fact that they formed the new and distinct class of American society. . . . and with true American instinct this consciousness led them at once to take the next step toward their deliverance: the formation of the political working-

men's party, on a platform of its own and with the conquest of the Capitol and the White House for its goal.

A passage which followed is even more significant. For Engels the working class movement developed in two stages, the mass trade union movement acting on a national scale and the independent labor party, also on a national scale. Usually there is a lengthy period between both of these. But history can develop very rapidly and Engels writes:

On the more favored soil of America, where no medieval ruins bar the way, where history begins with the elements of modern bourgeois society, as evolved in the seventeenth century, the working class passed through these two stages of its development within ten months.

Engels really thought that the moment had come in America. In November, 1886, he had written that the American bourgeoisie was persecuting the movement so "shamelessly and tyrannically" that it would bring matters rapidly to a decision "and if we in Europe do not hurry up, the Americans will soon be ahead of us." That was on November 29. Three weeks before, in his preface to the first English translation of *Capital*, he had shown that he was expecting social revolution in Britain. The number of unemployed in Britain was swelling from year to year "and we can almost calculate the moment when the unemployed, losing patience, will take their own fate into their own hands."

In both instances, the expectation was not realized.\* In Britain the British bourgeoisie solved the problem by the export of finance capital, thus ushering in the age of imperialism. In the United States once more the vastness and richness of the country came to the rescue of the bourgeoisie.

### The Turn of the Century

Let us once more take a rapid survey of British development.

It was only three years after Engels' preface to the English edition of *Capital* that Britain found itself in turmoil. The year 1889 was the year of two famous strikes in Britain: the dock strike and the match girls' strike. There was none of the violence associated with similar large-scale actions in the United States. The strikes, in fact, evoked great popular sympathy. They were triumphant and they marked the beginning of the organization of the unskilled workers in Britain. Let us note that this took place precisely at the moment when Britain was beginning to lose its almost exclusive domination of the world market and just a few years after the working class in the agricultural areas had got the vote. But the long lag behind the political activity of the American masses was now rapidly overcome. Hitherto the British working class had on the whole supported the liberals. In 1892, however, Keir Hardie, a Scottish miner, and an avowed socialist, founded the first independent labor party. The Trade Union Congress had refused to have anything to do with Hardie at first. Then (as now) there was the usual lamentation that the formation of an independent labor party would weaken the "progressive" vote and so let in the reactionaries. For many years there had been working class members in Parliament elected from predominantly working class constituencies. They had supported

\*It is easy to point out the numerous occasions when Marx and Engels made predictions about revolution which did not come true and which seemed indeed to be wide of the mark. In their early days some of this was due to youthful enthusiasm. Later it was different. Whenever the possibility of revolution appeared, they threw themselves into it, hoping to make the best of the opportunities. In 1891 Bebel asked Engels if he had prophesied the collapse of bourgeois society in 1898. Engels replied: "All I said was we might possibly come to power in 1898. . . . An old casing like this can survive its inner essential death for a few decades, if the atmosphere is undisturbed."

the labor-liberal combination almost exclusively. But the work of Marx and Engels and their associates on the First International now bore fruit. By 1899 a joint committee of the Trade Union Congress, the Independent Labor Party and some socialist societies, was organized. The British Labor Party was on its way.

In 1906, out of fifty candidates, twenty-nine were successful. In 1918 there were sixty-one members in Parliament; in 1922, 142 members; in 1923, 191, and the first Labor government took office in 1924.

Even for Britain this development was extraordinary, taking into consideration the long years that the British workers had had to fight in order to gain manhood suffrage toward the end of the century. One reason for the success lay in the strength of the trade union movement which is the base of the Labor Party in Britain. And the strength of the trade union movement lay not only in the cohesiveness of the British people but in the fact that between 1848 and the end of the century Britain became industrialized to a degree far surpassing that of any other great European country. Britain imported food and raw materials and exported manufactured goods. The population was proletarianized until by 1914 Britain was between sixty per cent and seventy per cent "proletarian." On this basis and the political pressure of a declining economy, the British workers pushed ahead in the representation of their interests by a national Labor Party.\*

Exactly the opposite is the development in America. After 1886 the Knights of Labor rapidly declined. American labor historians have blamed the failure upon the weakness of the bureaucracy, etc. There is no need to go into these questions here. It is sufficient that immediately after the failure of the Knights, the American Federation of Labor emerged to prominence and took much the same place in the American labor movement that the craft unions in Britain had taken after the Chartist fiasco in 1848.

Engels visited America in 1888. He saw at first-hand the immigrant problem and other subjective difficulties from which the American working class suffered. In 1892 he put his finger on the fundamental weakness behind its slow political development. "*Land is the basis of speculation, and the American speculative mania and speculative opportunity are the chief levers that hold the native-born worker in bondage to the bourgeoisie. Only when there is a generation of native-born workers that cannot expect anything from speculation any more will we have a solid foothold in America.*" Yet so strong was his belief that the national characteristic would find powerful expression in the American proletariat that it was in that very 1892, after the failure of the Knights was patent, that he penned the confident words which head this article.

History slowly but nevertheless surely is justifying his concept of American development. Between 1880 and 1914 American industry developed with the colossal American energy, and the American proletariat reacted with equal vigor. The Homestead strike in 1892, the Pullman strike of 1894, the anthracite coal miners' strike in 1902, these were working class actions which astonished the world and, in Engels' words, struck terror into the hearts of the American bourgeoisie. But whereas in Britain industry overwhelmingly outdistanced agri-

culture, in the United States, American industry developed not only itself but American agriculture as well. The total population of the United States in 1860 was not thirty millions. In 1910 there were more than fifty million people living on farms or in villages dependent upon agriculture. The AFL grew steadily and a Socialist Party appeared toward the end of the century. By 1908, however, the Socialist Party could boast of only one member of Congress. In 1914 the national party of labor was pretty much where it had been after the failure of the Knights of Labor.

Yet the colossal energy of the development was perfectly visible, though Engels was not there to trace it after 1895. The later development of agriculture was thoroughly capitalistic. The disruption which capitalism carries into the countryside and financial swindling raised the wrath of the farmers and they replied with a "Populist" movement which repeatedly rocked the whole political life of the country. Though the rapid penetration of industry into the West prevented the organized extension of trade unions such as characterized countries with a more peaceful development like Britain and Germany, yet even to these unstable conditions, the American working class reacted with an organization unique in the history of organized labor.

In the years just previous to the First World War, the work of the IWW among the textile workers in Massachusetts, in the Western Federation of Miners and among nomadic workers, such as lumbermen and longshoremens, gave them a reputation which spread over the whole world and earned them the ferocious hatred of the American bourgeoisie. Their strikes for "free speech" and the fearless energies with which they threw themselves into all their industrial struggles made them internationally famous. Their songs and slogans have traveled all over the world. This is particularly remarkable because only for a few years in Australia did the movement ever take hold in any other country. It was a characteristic American phenomenon.

The end of the First World War saw the United States pass rapidly through a period of the export of finance-capital. By 1929, however, the world crisis put an end to capitalist expansion on a world scale. Whereupon this most capitalistic of all countries experienced a crisis of a scope and depth far exceeding all other previous crises and greater than that of all the other countries of the world put together. America had now reached the stage that Britain had reached in 1889. The American proletariat, true to the national tradition, replied in kind. History will record that between 1935 and 1943 the American proletariat, in the organization of the CIO, did exactly what Engels fifty years before had prophesied. "Once the Americans get started, it will be with an energy and violence compared with which we in Europe shall be mere children."

The land boom is now over, the immigrant elements are being kneaded into a whole. The organization of labor and the struggles on the industrial field have given the American worker that class consciousness which has been so absent in his past. The American proletariat now faces the organization of an independent national party of labor. We need have no doubt that when the moment comes it will be true to its traditions.

J. R. JOHNSON.

\*We do not propose here to go into the history of its failures. The history of the Social-Democracy in Europe, its rise and decline, are well known to the readers of *The New International*.

# General Wavell Comes to India

One year has passed since the All India Congress party, yielding to the insistent demands of the people, helped precipitate a violent struggle for independence throughout the sub-continent. All of us are familiar with the terroristic counter-attack launched against the masses by the British, as well as with the fact that the movement has been temporarily defeated and even crushed. But it is still worth while to examine briefly the situation in India—in so far as the niggardly information available makes this possible. What transpires in the classic land of imperialist victimization is always significant in answering the questions: what are the plans and intentions of the imperialists; what are the basic trends within the colonial movement?

Several brute facts are immediately observable in the India of October, 1943.

1) Lord Linlithgow, that stilted, pompous and stuffy symbol ever meant by the term "heartless British imperialism," has departed. Lord Wavell has taken his place. That, as the saying goes, "is the same difference."

2) The Indian masses of virtually every province (Bengal, Punjab, Bombay, Bihar, etc.) are in the midst of a calamitous agricultural and food crisis; heightened by such facts as the loss of Burmese rice and unparalleled hoarding and "black marketing" by robber merchants. Famine and starvation apparently are widespread, with epidemics of bubonic plague, typhus and cholera getting a firm grip, according to the meager reports. It can be said, without a trace of exaggeration, that the people of India are today suffering as never before in the long two hundred years of their foreign enslavement.

3) The Congress Party, particularly its left and center wings, has been beheaded. The latest government report admitted that 20,000 Nationalists fill the jails, comprising every leading executive committee member, plus provincial, town and village leaders. Political life, in any formal, parliamentary or discussion sense of the word, has ceased to be. In the words of Herbert Matthews, there is a deep sense of frustration all over the land.

4) Taking advantage of the Congress failure to provide leadership, the Moslem League, with its appeal to backwardness and a further disintegration of the as yet fully unachieved national unification, has apparently succeeded in making substantial gains among the Moslems. This has further added to the reactionary winds that blow over the land.

5) Great efforts are being directed toward the *military* upbuilding of India as a base of operations for the coming Burma and China campaigns. These preparations include the island of Ceylon.

## Routing of the Congress

To outward appearances, imperialism seems to have its great colony well in hand and resurgent nationalism has been shoved back to remote corners where it barely lives.

There can be no question, of course, that the conservative Congress Party of Gandhi and the Indian bourgeoisie was decisively defeated and ruthlessly routed. Forced to call a struggle that it did not want (it has always lived on the decayed fruits of compromise) and certainly was not prepared for, the party has met the inevitable fate of those incapable of leading in such times. Its entire leadership rots in jail; its structure and apparatus are smashed; its right wing (Rajagopalichar-

riar) has openly deserted to the imperialist masters and its prestige and influence among the peasantry and workers has sunk to the vanishing point. It refused to fight imperialism in a revolutionary manner and lies strewn about as so much political rubble.

Even the great Mahatma himself has suffered the greatest and most humiliating defeat of his long career! His hunger strike of several months back proved a fiasco—the British told him to die, if he so wished; the people were more or less indifferent. Gandhi's efforts to disown and disavow the violent struggles of the workers and students have been rudely ignored, along with similar efforts by various right wingers of the party. Imperialism, we must admit, won that battle, thanks to the leaderless opposition it faced. Now it can afford to spurn disdainfully those essentially responsible for this tragic situation.

The other existing political organizations have fared little better than the Congress during the past year. The Congress Socialist Party—a party of petty bourgeois radicals within the amorphous left wing of the Congress—has apparently disappeared completely from the scene. Its leaders are in jail, its activities are nil. The official Communist Party of India can point to a legal existence and public activity, but it is eternally disgraced for its open opposition to the independence movement. In the mind of those acquainted with it, it is associated with British imperialism and anti-nationalism. Particularly among its students and intellectual supporters has its former influence declined. Its strike-breaking rôle was apparent to every participant in the movement.

The only radical organization that emerged from the defeats without disgracing itself, or without loss of strength, was the Bolshevik-Leninist Party of India. This is not to say that it, too, has not suffered in the general setback experienced by the workers and peasants of India. But this new and youthful revolutionary party definitely proved its tenacity and determination by actively participating in the struggles and even registering some gains. It participated in the demonstrations and struggles of the people; it published and distributed many leaflets explaining its stand; it succeeded in establishing itself as a force on Indian soil. Most of its gains came from revolutionary students who learned, in action, what Stalinism represented. The behavior of the Indian Fourth Internationalists is the one bright spot in the whole situation.

## British Plans for India

The past year underscores a theme that has been repeatedly stated in this magazine since the war began. Namely, that the colonial bourgeoisie is incapable of any decisive success on the terrain of the struggle for national freedom. In this transitional period between the collapse of bourgeois nationalist leadership and the coming assumption of leadership by the rising Indian proletariat we must allow for the possibility of a temporary descent into the valley of political apathy and inertia. But the Indian Bolshevik-Leninists, concentrating their efforts among the industrial workers—particularly those hundreds of thousands of war-created workers in heavy industry—have indicated the source of this coming leadership.

Basing themselves upon their undoubted victory, the general stagnation that prevails and their customary contempt for the colonial people, British imperialism has several clear

plans. First, it is preparing to mount an offensive against the Japanese, whose threat to India has vanished. Reconquest of Burma, Malaya, Hong Kong and other positions in Asia are the main objectives in British plans. The British aim to do all this with a modicum of American aid, since they are not anxious to see American imperialism penetrate into British spheres any more than necessary. Secondly, the British have to strengthen further their hold over the Indian Empire, since they appreciate fully the need to possess that market and source of materials in the post-war world. These frankly imperialist ambitions preclude in advance any efforts to resolve the crisis in India by a new "Cripps mission," or any further approaches for the time being to the Indian native bour-

geoisie. It is a game played without any pretense or sham. For Churchill to open the route to China and drive the Japanese out of South Asia under his own steam, so to speak, would be a profitable victory indeed for British imperialism.

Every problem of India's future, from the elementary question of national existence to the complex question of its reconstruction, remains totally unsolved after four years of war. But the two prime elements for the revolutionary settling of these matters exist—the nucleus of a future mass revolutionary party, and a growing body of class-conscious workers who will find their way into the ranks of the Bolshevik-Leninist Party.

HENRY YOUNG.

# Politics in the Stratosphere – II

## Further Away from Reality, Not Nearer

The class, taken by itself, is only material for exploitation. The proletariat assumes an independent rôle only at that moment when from a social class *in itself* it becomes a political class *for itself*. This cannot take place otherwise than through the medium of a party. The party is that historical organ by means of which the class becomes class-conscious. (Trotsky, *What Next?*)

In this brief statement Trotsky summarizes *the* key to the dispute on the national question. The revolutionary stature of the proletariat, its will to struggle, its consciousness, its education and experience, and, conversely, its "impotence," are finally determined by the existence or non-existence of the revolutionary vanguard socialist party. Many of the other questions discussed, which are unrelated to this primary question, are totally beside the point. It is Johnson's inability to comprehend the implications of the above quotation that leads him to write the really fabulous things which appear in his reply.

In the first part of my answer to him I tried to describe the state of the working class movement in Europe which is epitomized by the absence of any revolutionary socialist party on the whole continent. There should really be no difficulty in assessing the *concrete* position of the European proletariat from the viewpoint of its political organization, for organization is something tangible. You can point it out and describe it; you can determine the scope of a living movement, its strength and activity. But the most amazing thing about Johnson's contribution is that, beyond his references to the many underground movements, he is unable to supply any *concrete* evidence whatever on the presence or absence of the revolutionary socialist party except to say, in general, that the working class movement in Europe today is stronger than it was before the war! Moreover, in the many writings he has published there is little that shows that he is even vitally interested in this master-key to the European, and therefore, the world situation.

Actually, the *existence* of mass revolutionary socialist parties in Europe would be a subjective factor of such magnitude as to change the whole relationship of forces between the bourgeoisie in *all* countries and the proletariat in *all* countries, and thus *create a new objective situation*.

If the working class on the Continent was politically organized, if it was as Johnson says, *socialistically conscious*, and "more determined than ever before in its history to struggle

for socialism," we would also have an entirely different situation in Europe. Certainly, the victory of Hitler in Germany and the trend toward reaction throughout the whole period prior to the outbreak of the war would have had a different result than the present relationship of class forces, and Europe would now be faced with a different kind of struggle than the national struggle. But we are led into a blind alley on the basis of Johnson's views. It is impossible to adhere to them and really understand the European situation. Despite Johnson, the *fact* remains that the working class did suffer a crushing and paralyzing defeat. Its organizations, all of them, political parties, unions, coöperatives and, yes, fraternal organizations, were *destroyed*.

The unfortunate *fact* is that the revolutionary vanguard must *begin* again—not entirely anew, it is true, for we start with an accumulated experience of many decades—to reconstruct the workers' movement and its vanguard organizations. It is necessary to add, at this point, that the revolutionary socialist party is the single indispensable requirement for a socialist victory and all talk of the socialist revolution without such parties is really self-agitation and breast-beating.

There is, in addition, another fundamental approach involved. Johnson has presented an "idealized" picture of an imminent European revolution for socialism which has no reference to the existence of the party of socialism—or to the realities in Europe. The most striking element in his "system" is the concept of "spontaneity." The sweeping generalizations he makes about the character of the present epoch and the nature of capitalist perfidy are necessary to his "system." There is no other way in which he can substantiate his views except by painting the utter collapse of capitalism, its dismal future. The drawing of such a picture, without understanding the rôle and nature of the subjective factor in the class struggle, creates the illusion of the automatic collapse of capitalism and the spontaneous character of the rise of working class consciousness and the working class struggle, not merely against capitalism as such, but, above all, for such a conscious goal as socialism.

### Spontaneity Versus the Party

In the opinion of this writer, the present stage of political development in Europe poses once more the Leninist concept (the party) of the socialist victory in contradistinction to the

variety of notions which are properly described as the theory of "spontaneity," or are expressed by the words "spontaneous revolution," "spontaneous struggle," or the "spontaneous development of the revolutionary party."

*Without a party*, the working class cannot develop beyond trade-union consciousness. *Without a party*, the working class cannot become a *socialist* class, for "the history of all countries shows that the working class, exclusively by its own effort, is able to develop only trade union consciousness" (Lenin). For the development of socialist consciousness, a party is necessary because "this consciousness could only be brought to them [the workers] from without" (Lenin). While emphasizing that we are not starting all over again in Europe, we must remember that in striving to revive the political movement of the continental working class, we are dealing with a class that has not yet learned the most important lessons of its uninterrupted defeats, and remember also that after more than four decades of existence the European proletariat finds itself politically and economically *unorganized*.

Thus, in one sense at least, our job is more difficult. We have now to demonstrate to the working class not merely the superiority of our program and organization, but also to overcome the great damage done by the Second and Third Internationals. My own views on the national question and the prospects of the socialist victory in Europe and their relation to the revolutionary party are as clear as they are simple: without the formation of the revolutionary socialist parties throughout the Continent, all talk of the victory of socialism, the Socialist United States of Europe, "nearer, not further away," becomes mere sectarian prattle required to bolster a faltering optimism.

Revolutionary socialists need to know the truth about an objective situation. The Marxian movement is not well served by false analyses, misrepresentation, or subjectivity in the field of politics, nor by ideas which manifestly reflect the influence of newspaper headlines and the pap of ignorant, but alarmist columnists. Nor is the movement served by taking too seriously the "radical" writings of the bourgeois demagogues who produce the underground papers which flood the metropolitan centers of America and England. To me, the national movements offer a way for the reconstruction of the revolutionary parties, and the national struggle itself becomes an avenue in which to carry on the fight for socialism, i.e., creates the possibility of raising the national struggle to a higher plane.

### **Substituting Fantasy for Reality**

What Johnson has been trying to say, though not too directly, is that he advocates a revolutionary point of view while the resolution of the NC does not; that he sees revolutionary developments in Europe while the resolution does not. It goes without saying that what he attributes to the resolution is wholly false. It is not an honest interpretation of the resolution, as one can readily see by reading the section on the dual power which makes up, not a piece of the resolution, as Johnson says, but one of its most important sections.

Subjectivity completely dominates Johnson's views, since what he presents as a picture of the European situation just does not exist except in his own mind. The following quotation, which is the key to his whole position, reveals that it is completely baseless in fact and purely the product of belief. He writes:

The NC resolution believes that inasmuch as the proletariat is compelled to take upon itself the national defense against a foreign power it

thereby becomes less class-conscious, less concerned with socialism, less concerned with socialism, less militantly determined to achieve the socialist revolution, *I state unequivocally that exactly the opposite is the case, that inasmuch as the proletariat, particularly in France and Poland, now has to take upon itself the national defense in place of the bankrupt bourgeoisie, it is more class-conscious, it is more socialistic, and more determined than ever before in its history to achieve the socialist revolution.* (Emphasis in the original.)

This argumentation, like everything else Johnson treats "concretely," is in the realm of religious faith, and not Marxism.

In the first place, Johnson is guilty of a . . . misunderstanding. Anyone interested in the truth will easily see that the Workers Party resolution does not "believe" what Johnson attributes to it, namely, that the working class, when it takes upon itself "the national defense against a foreign power, it thereby becomes less class-conscious, less concerned with socialism, less militantly determined to achieve the socialist revolution. . . ."

The resolution of the party does not "think" in the terms attributed to it by its opponent. The resolution proceeds from the view that the national struggles in Europe propel masses in motion against the existing order of things; that this struggle by the masses lays the groundwork to agitate for socialist demands and the socialist society as the way out; but more important than this general condition that it would create, the struggle makes possible the reestablishment of the revolutionary socialist parties without which the struggle for socialism is mere parlor debate.

But with Johnson it is obviously different. He regards the working class *now* as a *socialist* working class, "more determined than ever before in its history (its whole history, mind you!) to achieve the socialist revolution."

### **Revisionism—New Style**

This single quotation, I believe, reveals the essential nature of the differences with Johnson. His early articles, which presumably established his agreement on the main agitation slogan, were filled with argument against it. Of what other significance was his insistence that the slogan of the Socialist United States of Europe is "nearer, not further away," that to "moderate the slogan . . . is completely false. The only meaning of this is that it must be the main slogan! Exactly the opposite must be done."

Or, what does Johnson mean when he says: ". . . the living truth is that the slogan [the Socialist United States of Europe] is now more concrete than at any other time since 1933"? If it is *more* concrete, if "*exactly the opposite must be done*," it should be the main political slogan *now*. Furthermore, if what he says is true—mind, you he is not speaking of the vanguard of the working class, i.e., the revolutionary socialist party, but of the whole working class, all over Europe!—then, placing the struggle for national independence to the forefront is a negation of the struggle for socialism, and if it is such a negation, it must be opposed by the conscious socialist elements. Yet Johnson insists he is for the slogan of national liberation as the main agitational slogan to be used in Europe today!

*What Johnson is saying is this: after the victory of Hitler, after the victory of Franco, after the working class defeat in France, after the beginning of the present war which was not prevented by an organized, educated and powerful working class, after the decapitation of the proletarian movement and all its organizations, the workers, on the basis of these defeats and in the absence of a vanguard socialist party, have become*

"more class conscious, more socialistic, and more determined than ever before in its history to achieve the socialist revolution." If the working class of Europe has been able to achieve this tremendous stage of development in the last year or two, after terrific defeats, without the aid of the vanguard socialist party, then Johnson has proved the position of the theorists of "spontaneity" and has destroyed Lenin's position that the working class needs a revolutionary party to educate it beyond its "economic struggles" to give it socialist consciousness and to struggle for power!

Fortunately, Johnson hasn't proved a thing. I say fortunately, because if his views became widespread, and the theory of the "spontaneous revolution" of the masses received wide support, the working class would be doomed to another series of defeats.

### On the Role of the Party

Despite the thesis of Johnson, the position of the European working class is really easy to determine: there is not one serious revolutionary Marxist party in Europe. If this is today the single indispensable requirement for the socialist victory, and it does not yet exist, what then is required? Listen again to what Trotsky wrote about this question:

The proletariat assumes an independent rôle only at that moment when from a social class *in itself* it becomes a political class *for itself*. This cannot take place otherwise than through the medium of a party. The party is that historical organ by means of which the class becomes class conscious."

All of this is so simple for Johnson that he does not even concern himself with the problem as the main problem in Europe. His sole answer is that capitalism organizes the working class in the factories. *Ipsa facto*, the party is guaranteed! So simple! But listen to another ABC from Trotsky:

The progress of a class toward class consciousness, that is, the building of a revolutionary party which leads the proletariat, is a complex and contradictory process.

And further:

The task of the party consists in *learning*, from experience derived from the struggle, how to demonstrate to the proletariat its right to leadership.

Isn't this the problem in Europe today—the building of party, the need for it to prove in practice its right to leadership of the working class, to accumulate experiences in the struggle, to win confidence? But to Johnson—as Trotsky wrote:

The historical problem that must be solved is decreed as solved already. The confidence yet to be won is announced as won already.

Is there anything in Johnson's article that shows that he understands this question?

Because he does not understand this question, Johnson twists my assertion of the need to reestablish the working class organizations and above all, the revolutionary party, to mean that "you must even build a fraternal organization." Sometimes called . . . demagoguery. The trouble with our r-r-r-revolutionary friend is that he makes his revolutions in his head and then concretizes them—with a pen and paper.

### A New Twist on Democratic Demands

Consider again the national slogan. It is not put forth in that bare form alone. Revolutionists give . . . flesh and blood by the addition of other democratic demands, demands which can set the masses into motion because they reflect their keen-

est desires. Such democratic slogans are: the right to free press, free speech, free organization, the right to free elections. Revolutionary socialists advocate and support such demands because they are the most consistent democrats and because the achievement of these demands, especially in the context of given European situations, enhances the struggle for socialism.

How does Johnson treat this question? Listen:

Johnson presumably does not know that in a fascist country, *in general*, you must use democratic slogans. Right to organize and a program of economic demands to educate the workers, that is what preoccupies the NC resolution which Gates so stoutly defends. *The truth is, that, in occupied Europe today, given the fierce hatred of the invader which characterizes the masses of the people, their feeling that the foreign government is not theirs and cannot last; such slogans push the masses back. When used by a revolutionary organization as the main slogans after the slogan of national liberation they are thoroughly reactionary and place those who use them, for whatever purpose, at the tail of the national movement. The slogan to emphasize after national liberation is the power of the workers in a workers' government.* (Emphasis mine—A. G.)

What a fantastic muddle, indeed. In a fascist country, where the workers live in a state of complete subjugation, under a police régime, its organizations destroyed, its vanguard decapitated or incarcerated, and the masses more or less passive, there Johnson would raise the democratic slogans! In the occupied countries, however, where there is a vast movement of the masses, as he so eloquently proves, there the *democratic slogans are reactionary!* If Johnson has not turned this matter on its head, it is only because he is himself standing on his head.

The democratic slogans are a most important auxiliary to the slogan for national independence. They should and must be used simultaneously. It is the democratic slogans which give life and substance to the national slogan, which takes it from under ground and "throws it in the streets."

Why are they reactionary? Johnson admits that the fight for national independence in the conquered countries is progressive. Are the democratic slogans reactionary because they retard this fight? Was it democratic slogans which prevented Italy from achieving national independence and from experiencing a rebirth of the mass movement of labor?

Johnson simply does not learn from the Italian situation or the Italian workers, whose instincts and demands are a thousand times superior to his schematic pedantry. The Italian masses *demand* the right to organize, to free press and free speech! They demanded free elections *now!* Their very demands made the rotten régime tremble and resist granting these demands. Only the turn in the war saved Savoy and his Marshal. But the whole lesson of these events passed by our critic.

### Some Evidence of Muddle-headedness

Let us cite more examples of his utter muddle-headedness. He writes:

In June, 1941, he [Hitler] attacks Russia. *The moment he does so the European proletariat stirs itself. . . . His dramatic failure in front of Moscow lifts the European proletariat still higher. So does the entry of America. The unexpected and superb defense by Russia during 1942 has a tremendous cumulative influence on the revolutionary development of the European proletariat. In this war every month is equal to a year.* (Emphasis in the original. A. G.)

Johnson needs something, if not facts, then at least flamboyance, to bolster his views. What, in a concrete sense, does the above mean? First of all, in what way did the proletariat stir on Hitler's invasion of Russia? By demonstrations, meet-

ings, slogans, actions in the streets for power, the *establishment of its class organizations?*

Secondly, in what way did Hitler's failure in front of Moscow lift the proletariat "still higher"? I am willing to grant that the workers felt much better at Hitler's defeats. But as a Marxist, I want to know what its concrete manifestations were so that I can determine the significance of the stir and what it meant to the revolutionary movement.

Thirdly, I want to know how the entry of America lifted "still higher" the European proletariat. Unless . . . unless what Johnson is trying to say is that the defeats of Hitler, and the subsequent entry of the United States into the war, gave joy and hope to millions in Europe *that their national emancipation was closer*. Yes, that makes some sense. But Johnson is far off the track if he believes that in the above views he is presenting proof of the *socialist* elevation of the European working class.

Says Johnson: "Today, not a year after the NC resolution, all occupied Europe is poised for revolution." Here again Johnson spins rhetoric. He agitates himself too much. Europe is poised for revolution! This is phrase-mongering. The whole question, the only question, is this: *What kind of revolution?* If Johnson knew what he meant he could tell us whether he means a national, a proletarian, a "democratic" or a socialist revolution. If he means a socialist revolution, then he must tell us how it will take place, who will lead it and under what slogans this poised revolution operates.

Johnson will find it difficult, indeed, to answer questions in the concrete. But as he does so often, he presents his view in such a contrast to the position of the Workers Party as to distort the position of the latter. Let me repeat: "Today, not a year after the NC resolution. . . ." What does Johnson imply by this construction? That the NC resolution does not foresee revolutionary developments? That this resolution sees *no* revolutionary perspective, or visualizes a peaceful achievement of national liberation and a peaceful period thereafter? Either Johnson has not read the resolution or he is guilty of willful . . . misunderstanding.

Extending his thoughts, he says that "the danger for a revolutionary grouping is not that it will ignore national liberation. The danger is exactly the opposite." Johnson sees everything backwards. The danger happens not to be the one Johnson cites. "The danger is exactly the opposite," namely, that revolutionary groupings in the name of the revolution, with a capital R, turn their backs to the national movement, even as Johnson actually does in all his argumentation. How many revolutionary groupings does Johnson know which have rallied to the struggle for national independence? One? Perhaps two? Certainly not more. Yet in his completely distorted view he sees the danger exactly in the wrong place.

Johnson obviously is in a hopeless dilemma. He has engaged in self-agitation and in his fervor has lost himself. We cannot leave him at this point without recalling Lenin's polemic with Piatakov on the national question. Piatakov, in answering Lenin's position on this problem, always talked (like Johnson) about the "revolutionary epoch." And Lenin remarked that Piatakov's phrase-mongering always reminded him of Alexinsky (an Old Bolshevik). Lenin wrote:

Even at the London Congress in 1907, the Bolsheviks turned away from Alexinsky when, in reply to theoretical arguments, he assumed the pose of an agitator declaiming high-sounding phrases against some form or other of exploitation and oppression, totally irrelevant to the subject. "The squealing has started," our delegates used to say, when he held forth. And this squealing did Alexinsky no good.

What failed to do Alexinsky any good will not help Johnson, either.

### Summary Remarks—Advice from Lenin

The resolution of the Workers Party is based upon the recognition of the existence of a mass desire, and an *active popular revolutionary movement* in the oppressed countries for national independence. There is not only this desire, but there are in existence numerous underground, revolutionary movements fighting now against the oppressor. It is in these "all-class" movements that the proletariat is once more entering the field of struggle. These movements are as yet, by and large, dominated by a petty bourgeois ideology.

The revolutionists must be in these movements because they are progressive movements. The struggle for and realization of national independence for these countries will hasten the process of the revolutionary organization of the working class in the fight for socialism. This fight is as inevitable as the inability of the rotten ruling classes of Europe to solve in any fundamental way the social problems which confront them.

These national movements are the first important evidence in the war of a recrudescence of the proletariat. They offer the basis for the reconstruction of the *independent* labor movement and the revolutionary socialist parties. The achievement of national independence will not solve the social problems of the day, but will pose them only more sharply, pitting the fighting proletarian ranks against the returning bankrupt old ruling class.

The determining factor in this situation is the reconstruction of the labor movement and the revolutionary socialist parties, without which the proletariat is doomed to another defeat. The task of the Marxists is to participate in these national movements with their own class program, to be with their class, to educate it, to organize it, to lead it. Without that, it will be impossible to rebuild again. The revolutionary parties which will arise in the soil of the coming struggles must by their activity not only win the confidence and support of the overwhelming majority of the population, but the party itself must train and educate itself in the process of the struggle.

The whole situation is favorable for such a reorganization of the revolutionary socialist movement, provided it shuns sectarian ideas, rejects the theory of spontaneity of masses, of the "automatic" character of the socialist revolution. Lenin warned us so many times: there is no final collapse of capitalism, no final bankruptcy—*no hopeless situation* for the bourgeoisie. Without the lever of the revolutionary party, without the conscious intervention of the socialist masses, capitalism has found a way out before and can find a way out again—at the expense of the masses.

Our teacher, Lenin, never tired of warning against the things Johnson is so guilty of. Sobriety and objectivity are indispensable qualities for a revolutionist. They are a bulwark against self-intoxication and exaggeration, which always lead to disastrous results. Lenin wrote:

. . . The greatest danger, perhaps the only danger, that confronts a genuine revolutionary is exaggeration of revolutionariness, forgetting the limits and conditions in which revolutionary methods are appropriate and can be successfully employed. Genuine revolutionaries have most often broken their necks when they began to write "revolution" with a capital R, to elevate "revolution" to something almost divine, to lose their heads, to lose the ability in the coolest and most sober manner to reflect, weigh up and ascertain at what moment, under what circumstances and in which sphere of action it is necessary to act in a revolutionary manner and when it is necessary to adopt reformist action. Genuine revolution-

aries will perish (not that they will be defeated from outside, but that their internal affairs will collapse) only if—and they certainly will, if they do—they lost their sobriety of outlook and take into their heads that “the great victorious world” revolution can and must solve all problems in a revolutionary manner under all circumstances and in all spheres of action. (Lenin, *The Importance of Gold*, November, 1921.)

What Johnson does is muddle together three different things and considers them as one: a revolutionary situation;

a revolutionary uprising; and a socialist revolution. The difference between these three *related* situations is decisively important. The development of one situation into another and the realization of socialist power depends, in the final analysis, upon only one factor in our time: *the revolutionary socialist party*. In Johnson's scheme of things, it plays no rôle.

ALBERT GATES.

# Origin of Capitalism in Russia - II

*An Old Essay by Lenin*

The editor neglected to point out in the last issue that the title of Lenin's essay has been changed for typographical reasons. The actual title reads, “The Theoretic Mistakes of the Narodniki,” and the essay is Chapter I of Lenin's *Development of Capitalism in Russia*.

Additionally, the reader's attention is called to the inadvertent omission last month of the page number in *Capital*, Vol. I, to which footnote 4 of Lenin's article referred. It should read, page 819.

[Continued from Last Issue]

## V. The View of Adam Smith on Production and Circulation of Social Production as a Whole in Capitalist Society, and Marx's Criticism of These Views

In order to analyze the doctrine of realization, we must begin with Adam Smith, who laid the basis of the erroneous theory on this question. Adam Smith divided the price of a commodity into only two parts: variable capital (wages, according to his terminology) and surplus value (“profit” and “rent” are not united into one with him, so that he counted three parts).<sup>\*</sup> In the same manner he divided the aggregate of commodities, the entire annual product of society, according to those classifications, and directly related them to the “revenue” of the two classes of society: workers and capitalists (manufacturers and landlords with Smith).<sup>\*\*</sup>

How does he explain the omission of the third component part of value—constant capital? Smith could not avoid noticing this part, but he considered that it also is reduced to wages and surplus value. This is how he deliberated on the subject:

Into the price of corn, for example, one part pays the rent of the landlord, another pays the wages or maintenance of the laborers and laboring cattle employed in producing it, and the third pays the profit of the farmer. These three parts seem either immediately or ultimately to make up the whole price of corn. A fourth part, it may perhaps be thought, is necessary for replacing the stock of the farmer, or for compensating the wear and tear of the laboring cattle, and other instruments of husbandry. But it must be considered that the price of any instrument of husbandry, such as a laboring horse, is itself made up of the same three parts” (that is: rent, profit and wages). “Though the price of the corn, therefore, may pay the price as well as the maintenance of the horse, the whole price resolves itself either immediately or ultimately into the same three parts of rent, labor and profit.<sup>\*\*\*</sup>

Marx calls this the “surprising” (II, page 366) doctrine of Smith: “His proof consists simply in the repetition of the same

contention.”<sup>†</sup> Smith “sends us from Pontius to Pilate” (I, B. 2, Aufl., page 612)<sup>†</sup> In stating that the price of the instrument of production *itself* falls into those three parts, Smith forgets to add: and the price of those means of production which are used in the production of these instruments. The erroneous exclusion of the constant portion of capital from the price of the product is connected in A. Smith (and equally in the economists who followed him) with an erroneous concept of accumulation under capitalism, i.e., the expansion of production, the transformation of surplus value into capital. Here too Smith omitted constant capital, assuming that the part of surplus value which is transformed into capital is consumed by the productive workers, i.e., is fully spent for wages, when in reality the accumulated part of surplus value is spent on constant capital (means of production and raw auxiliary materials) plus wages.

Marx criticized this view of Smith (and also Ricardo, Mill and the others) in the first volume of *Capital*, (Part VII, *The Accumulation of Capital*, Ch. XXIV, *Conversion of Surplus Value into Capital*, Sec. 2, *Erroneous Conception, by Political Economy, of Reproduction on a Progressively Increasing Scale*). Marx remarks there that in the second volume “it will be shown that the dogma of A. Smith, adopted by all his successors, hindered political economy in understanding even the most elementary mechanism of the process of social reproduction.” (I, 612).<sup>‡</sup> A. Smith fell into this mistake because he confused the value of the product with the newly-created value: the latter really falls into variable capital and surplus value while the first includes, in addition to these, the constant capital. The mistake was exposed in the analysis of value by Marx, who had established the distinction between abstract labor creating new value and concrete, useful labor transforming the previously existing value into a new form of a useful product.

The explanation of the process of reproduction and circulation of the entire social capital is especially necessary in solving the question concerning national income in capitalist society. It is extremely interesting to observe that A. Smith, in speaking of this last question, was unable to proceed with his erroneous theory which excluded the constant capital from the whole production of the country:

The gross revenue of all the inhabitants of a great country compre-

<sup>\*</sup>Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, 4th ed., 1801, Vol. I, page 75. Book I, *Of the Causes of Improvements in the Productive Powers of Labor, and of the Order According to Which Its Produce Is Naturally Distributed Among the Different Ranks of the People*, Ch. VI, *Of the Component Parts of the Price of Commodities*. (Russ. tr., Bibikov, St. P. 1888, V. I, page 171 (Modern Library Edition, page 50—Tr.)

<sup>\*\*</sup>L.c., I, page 78, Russ. tr. I, c. page 174 (Modern Library, page 52—Tr.)

<sup>\*\*\*</sup>*Ibid.*, I, pages 75-76. Russ. tr., I, page 171. (Modern Library, page 50.)

<sup>†</sup>*Capital*, II, page 481.—Tr.

<sup>††</sup>*Capital*, I, 647, but there the phrase, “from Pontius to Pilate,” is translated as “from pillar to post.”—Tr.

<sup>‡</sup>The above quotation is from the first edition of *Capital*, which is unavailable in English, and can be found in the 1872 Russian translation on page 509. In the later editions of *Capital*, Marx substituted for this sentence an entire paragraph, which appears as the last paragraph on page 647, Kerr edition.—Tr.

hends the whole annual produce of their land and labor; the net revenue, what remains free to them after deducting the expense of maintaining, first, their fixed, and, secondly, their circulating capital; or what, without encroaching upon their capital, they can place in their stock reserved for immediate consumption, or spend upon their subsistence, conveniences, and amusements. (A. Smith, Book II, *Of the Nature, Accumulation, and Employment of Stock*, Ch. II, Vol. II, page 18, Russ. tr., II, page 21.)<sup>9</sup>

Thus, out of the entire production of the country, Smith excluded capital,\* asserting that it is resolved into wages, profit and rent, i.e., on (net) income; but in the gross revenue of society he includes capital,\* separating it from articles of consumption (net revenue). Marx seizes upon this contradiction of Smith: how can *capital* be included in *income* if *capital* had not previously existed in the *product*? (Cf. *Das Kapital*, II, page 355).<sup>10</sup> Unwittingly, A. Smith here acknowledged the three component parts of the value of the whole product, not merely variable capital and surplus value but also constant capital. In the subsequent discussion, Smith hits upon another important distinction, which has tremendous significance in the theory of realization.

The whole expense of maintaining the fixed capital must evidently be excluded from the net revenue of the society. Neither the materials necessary for supporting their useful machines and instruments of trade, their profitable buildings, etc., nor the produce of the labor necessary for fashioning those materials into the proper form can ever make any part of it. The price of that labor may indeed make a part of it; as the workmen so employed may place the whole value of their wages in their stock reserved for immediate consumption. But in other sorts of labor, both the price (of labor) and the produce (of labor) go to this stock, the price to that of the workmen, the produce to that of other people. (A. Smith, *Ibid.*)<sup>11</sup>

Here there is a suggestion of recognizing the necessity of distinguishing the twofold character of labor; one, to produce articles of utility capable of inclusion in "net revenue"; the other, to produce "useful machines, instruments of trade, buildings, etc.," i.e., products which can never be used for personal consumption. This is already one step toward recognizing the fact that to explain realization it is absolutely necessary to distinguish between two forms of consumption: personal and productive (i.e., reverting to production). The correction of these mistakes of Smith (omission of constant capital from the value of the product, and confusion of personal with productive consumption) made it possible for Marx to construct his remarkable theory of realization of the social product in capitalist society.

The economists between A. Smith and Marx all repeated the mistake of A. Smith\*\* and therefore did not advance a step. What confusion therefore reigns in the theory regarding national income we shall see later. In the dispute which occurred regarding the possibility of general commodity overproduction—Ricardo, Say, Mill and others on the one hand, and Malthus, Sismondi, Chalmers, Kirchman and others on the other—both sides accepted as a basis the erroneous theory of Smith and therefore, according to the just remark of Bulgakov, "as a result of the erroneous points of view and incorrect formulation of the problem itself, these controversies

could lead only to empty and scholastic disputes." (L.c. page 21. Cf. the description of these disputes by M. Tugan-Baranovsky, *Industrial Crises*, etc., St. P., 194, pages 377-040.)

## VI. The Marxist Theory of Realization

From the above it follows that the basic postulates on which the Marxist theory is built consist of the two following premises: First, that the entire product of a capitalist country, like that of an individual product, is comprised of the following three parts: (1) constant capital, (2) variable capital, (3) surplus value. For him who is acquainted with the analysis of the process of production of capital in Marx's first volume of *Capital*, this postulate is self-evident. The second postulate is that it is necessary to distinguish two great departments of capitalist production: Department I, the production of means of production, or objects which serve productive consumption, that is, are utilized in production which is consumed, not by people, but by capital; and Department II, the production of means of consumption, i.e., articles used for personal consumption. "In this one division there is more theoretic sense than in all the preceding controversies regarding the theory of markets" (Bulgakov, l.c. 27).

One may ask why such a division of products into their natural form is necessary in the analysis of the reproduction of social capital when the production and reproduction of the individual capital was analyzed without such a division, entirely ignoring the question of the natural form of the product. How is it possible to introduce the question of the natural form of the product into a theoretic examination of capitalist production built entirely on the exchange value of the product? The answer is that in the analysis of the production of individual capital the question where and how the product will be sold, where and how the articles of consumption will be bought by the workers and the means of production by the capitalist, was abstracted as a question that had nothing to contribute to that analysis and was not related to it. There we had under analysis only the question of the value of the separate elements of production and the results of production. Now the question consists precisely in this: Where will the workers and capitalists get their means of consumption? Where will the latter get means of production? How will production meet these demands and create the possibility of expanding production? Consequently we have here not only "a reproduction of value, but also of material" (Stoffersatz, *Das Kapital*, II, 389).<sup>12</sup> Hence it is absolutely necessary to distinguish between types of products which play entirely different rôles in the process of social production.

Once we take into consideration these basic postulates, the question of realization of the social product in capitalist society presents no difficulty. Let us first assume simple reproduction, i.e., repetition of the process of production in the existing quantities, the absence of accumulation. It is evident that the variable capital and surplus value of Department II (existing in the form of articles of consumption) are realized by the personal consumption of the workers and capitalists of this department (because simple reproduction presupposes that the whole surplus value is used up and not an iota is transformed into capital). Further, in order to be realized, variable capital and surplus value existing in the form of means of production (Department I) must be exchanged for articles of consumption for the capitalists engaged in the production of means of production. On the other hand, the

<sup>9</sup>Modern Library edition, page 271.—Tr.

\*Evidently because he is paraphrasing Smith. Lenin here uses the word, capital, instead of constant capital.—Tr.

<sup>10</sup>*Capital*, II, page 419. This is not a quotation from Marx but a paraphrase by Lenin of Marx's second paragraph on that page.—Tr.

<sup>11</sup>Modern Library edition, page 271. Lenin's emphasis.—Tr.

\*\*For example, Ricardo asserts: "The whole produce of the land and labor of every country is divided into three portions: of these, one portion is devoted to wages, another to profit, and the other to rent." (*Works*, tr. Ziber, St. P., 1882, page 221.) (*Principles of Political Economy and Taxation*, 1891, page 386.—Tr.)

<sup>12</sup>*Capital*, II, page 456.—Tr.

constant capital existing in the form of means of consumption (Department II) can be realized only by exchange for means of production in order again to be converted into production the following year. Thus we have an exchange of variable capital and surplus value in the means of production for constant capital in the means of consumption. Workers and capitalists (in the department of means of production) receive in this manner their means of existence, and the capitalists (in the department of means of consumption) sell their product and receive constant capital for new production. Under conditions of simple reproduction, these exchanged parts must be equal to each other: the sum of variable capital and surplus value in the means of production must be equal to the constant capital in the articles of consumption. On the other hand, if we assume reproduction on an expanded scale, i.e., accumulation, the first magnitude must be greater than the second because there must be present a surplus of means of production to begin new production.

Let us return, however, to simple reproduction. There remains a realized part of the social product, specifically, the constant capital in means of production. It is realized partly by exchange between capitalists in this department (for example, coal is exchanged for iron because each of these products serves as a necessary material or instrument in the production of the other) and partly by direct conversion into production (for example, coal is mined in order to be utilized in the same undertaking in order once again to mine coal; seed in agriculture, etc.). So far as accumulation is concerned, then, the point of departure is, as we have seen, an abundance of means of production (which are derived from the surplus value of the capitalists of this department) as well as transformation of part of the surplus value in the articles of consumption. We consider it superfluous to analyze in detail how this additional production will be united with simple reproduction. Our task does not comprehend a special analysis of the theory of realization. As an explanation of the mistakes of the Narodnik economists, which will permit us to draw certain theoretical conclusions about the home market, the above will suffice.\*

In the question which most concerns us, i.e., the home market, the growth of capitalist production and, consequently, of the home market, proceeds not so much with respect to articles of consumption as to means of production. To put it otherwise: the growth of the means of production outdistances the growth of articles of consumption. In fact, we saw that the constant capital in articles of consumption (Department II) is exchanged for variable capital plus surplus value in the means of production (Department I). But, according to the general law of capitalist production, constant capital grows faster than variable. Consequently, constant capital in the articles of consumption must grow faster than variable capital and surplus value in the articles of consumption, and constant capital in the means of production must grow faster yet, outdistancing both the growth of variable capital (plus

surplus value) in the means of production and the growth of constant capital in the articles of consumption. Thus the growth of the home market for capitalism to a certain degree is "independent" of the growth of personal consumption, being consummated particularly in the field of productive consumption. However, it would be incorrect to construe this "independence" to mean a complete divorce of productive consumption from personal consumption. The first can and must grow faster than the second (by this its "independence" is limited) but it is obvious that in the final analysis productive consumption always remains linked to personal consumption. Marx treats this question thus:

We have seen in Volume II, Part III, that a continuous circulation takes place between constant capital and constant capital... [Marx means constant capital in the means of production which is realized by exchange between capitalists of the same department] ... which is in so far independent of individual consumption, as it never enters into such consumption, but which is nevertheless definitely limited by it, because the production of constant capital never takes place for its own sake, but solely because more of this capital is needed in those spheres of production whose products pass into individual consumption. (*Das Kapital*, III, 1, 289. Russ. tr., page 243.<sup>12</sup>)

This enhanced use of constant capital is nothing other than an enormous development of the productive forces, expressed in terms of exchange value, because the principal part of the rapidly developing "means of production" consists of materials, machines, instruments, buildings and all other adjuncts of large-scale and especially machine production. It is quite natural, therefore, that capitalist production, developing, as it does, the productive forces of society, and creating large-scale production and machine industries, is distinguished by the striking expansion of that department of social wealth which consists of means of production:

That which distinguishes in this case [that is, in the production of means of production] capitalist society from a society of savages is not, as Senior thinks, that it is a privilege and peculiarity of a savage to expend his labor during a certain time which does not secure for him any revenue convertible into articles of consumption, but the distinction is the following:

(a) Capitalist society employs more of its available annual labor in the production of means of production (and thus of constant capital) which are not convertible into revenue in the form of wages or surplus value, but can serve only as capital.

(b) When a savage makes hoes, arrows, stone hammers, axes, baskets, etc., he knows very well that he did not spend the time so employed in the production of articles of consumption, but that he has simply stocked his supply of means of production, and nothing else. (*Das Kapital*, II, page 436. Russ. tr., page 333.)<sup>14</sup>

This "conscious recognition"<sup>15</sup> of one's relation to production has been lost in capitalist society because of the characteristic fetishism which represents social relations between people in the form of relations between things as a consequence of the transformation of every product into a commodity produced for an unknown consumer and subject to realization in an unknown market. And since for the individual manufacturer the kind of product he produces is a matter of complete indifference—every product gives him an "income"—this superficial, individualist point of view was adopted by the theoretician-economists toward society as a whole and hindered them from understanding the process of reproduction of the entire social product in capitalist production.

The development of production (and consequently of the

\*Cf. *Capital*, Vol. II, Part III, where both accumulation and division of articles of consumption into articles of necessity and articles of luxury, and money circulation and exhaustion of the original capital, etc., are analyzed in detail. For the readers who are unable to acquaint themselves with Vol. II of *Capital*, it is possible to recommend the analysis of the Marxist theory of realization in the above quoted book of C. Buleakov. The analysis of Bulgakov is more satisfactory than that of M. Tuzan-Baranovsky (*Industrial Crises*, pages 407-438), who made very unsuccessful deviations from Marxism in the construction of his own schemata and insufficiently explained the Marxist theory—more satisfactory also than the analysis of A. Skvortsov (*Basis of Political Economy*, St. P., 1898, pages 281-295), who holds incorrect views on the very important questions of profit and rent.

<sup>12</sup>*Capital*, II, 339.—Tr.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, pages 509-510.

<sup>15</sup>Lenin is referring to the phrase "he knows very well" in the above quotation from Marx, which was translated into Russian as "conscious recognition."—Tr.

home market), because it relates chiefly to means of production, appears paradoxical and undoubtedly does present a contradiction. This is genuine "production for production's sake," expanded production without a corresponding expansion of consumption. However, this is not merely a doctrine but real life; it is this contradiction which corresponds to the very nature of capitalism and to other contradictions of this system of social production. It is precisely this expanded production without a corresponding expansion of consumption which is in consonance with the historic mission of capitalism and its social structure: the first characteristic consists in the development of the productive forces of society; the second prevents the utilization of these technical achievements for the benefit of the masses of the population. Between the limitless striving for expansion of the productive forces characteristic of capitalism and the limited consumption of the people (limited as a consequence of their proletarian composition there is undoubtedly a contradiction. Precisely this contradiction is affirmed by Marx in those very postulates which are glibly quoted by the Narodniki as if they supported their views about the contraction of the home market, the non-progressive character of capitalism, etc. Here are some of these postulates:

Contradiction in the capitalist mode of production; the laborers as buyers of commodities are important for the market. But as sellers of their own commodity—labor power—capitalist society tends to depress them to the lowest price." (*Das Kapital*, II, 303.)<sup>18</sup>

... The conditions... realization... are limited by the... proportional relations of the various lines of production and by the consuming power of society... But to the extent that the productive power develops, it finds itself at variance with the narrow basis on which the conditions of consumption rest. (*Das Kapital*, III, 1, 225-6.)<sup>19</sup>

The barriers, within which the preservation and self-expansion of the value of capital resting on the expropriation and pauperization of the great mass of producers can alone move, these barriers come continually in collision with the methods of production, which capital must employ for its purposes, and which steer straight toward an unrestricted extension of production, toward production for its own self, toward an unconditional development of the productive forces of society... Thus, while the capitalist mode of production is one of the historical means by which the material forces of production are developed and the world market required for them created, it is at the same time in continual conflict with this historical task and the conditions of social production corresponding to it. (III, 1, 232. Russ., 194.)<sup>20</sup>

The last cause of all real crises always remains the poverty and restricted consumption of the masses as compared to the tendency of capitalist production to develop the productive forces in such a way that only the absolute power of consumption of the entire society would be their limit.\* (III, 2, 21. Russ. tr., 395.)<sup>21</sup>

In all the above quotations the contradiction between limitless striving to expand production and limited consumption is attested, and nothing else.\*\* Nothing is more absurd than to conclude from the quotations from *Capital* that Marx did not consider it possible to realize surplus value within a capitalist society, as if he explained crises by insufficient consumption. In his treatment of realization, Marx demonstrated

<sup>18</sup>*Capital*, II, page 363, footnote.—Tr. <sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, III, pages 286-287.—Tr. <sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, page 298.—Tr. <sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, page 368.

\*It is precisely this sentence which the eminent (eminent in a Herostratian manner) Ed. Bernstein quotes in his *Die Voraussetzungen*, etc. (Stuttg., 1898, page 67). (*Evolutionary Socialism*, page 75.—Tr.) It is of course natural that our opportunist, turning from Marxism to the old bourgeois economy, should have hastened to declare that this arises from a contradiction in the Marxist theory of crises, and that such a view on the part of Marx "is not very different from Rodbertus's theory of crises." In reality, there exists a "contradiction" only between the pretensions of Bernstein on the one hand and his non-sensical eclecticism on the other. The degree to which Bernstein failed to understand the theory of realization is clear from his very curious argument that the tremendous growth of the mass of surplus value necessarily signifies an increase in the number of proprietors (or an increase in the well-being of the worker) because the capitalists themselves and their "servants" (*Sic!* Page 51-2) cannot "consume" the whole surplus value!! (Remark to the second edition.)

that "in the final analysis the exchange between constant capital and variable capital is limited by personal consumption," but that same treatment showed the true meaning of "limitation," showed that the articles of home consumption play a lesser rôle in the formation of the home market than the means of production. Furthermore, there is nothing more absurd than to deduce the impossibility, unprogressive character, etc., of capitalism from its contradictions. This is merely to hide oneself high in the clouds of romantic fantasies from unpleasant but indubitable reality. The contradiction between the striving for limitless expansion of production and limited consumption is not the only contradiction of capitalism, which, in general, cannot exist and develop without contradictions. The contradictions of capitalism bear witness to its historically transitory character; they explain the conditions and causes of its disintegration and its transformation into a higher form, but they exclude neither the possibility of capitalism nor its progressive character as compared to earlier systems of social economy.

V. I. LENIN.

[Concluded in next issue]

\*\*The view of Mr. Tugan-Baranovsky, who states that Marx, in formulating these postulates, fell into contradiction with his own analysis of realization, is erroneous. (*Mir Bozhy*, 1898, No. 6, page 123, in the article, "Capitalism and the Market.") There is no contradiction in Marx whatsoever because, in the analysis of realization, he shows the connection between productive and personal consumption.

Statement of the ownership, management, circulation, etc., required by the Acts of Congress of August 24, 1912, and March 3, 1933, of

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Sworn to and subscribed before this second day of October, 1943.

NATHAN KIRSCHSTEIN.

(My commission expires March 30, 1945.)

## Government and Labor

**LABOR'S VOICE IN THE CABINET**, by  
John Lombardi. Columbia Univ. Press.

A short history of labor's political struggle for a voice in the government through the medium of a Department of Labor has just been published in a new book called *Labor's Voice in the Cabinet*, by John Lombardi.

The author is a liberal who, of course, believes that labor should have a voice, together with capital, in the executive branch of the government. His book is factually accurate and filled with item after item of references and detail.

Beginning with the agitation for the creation of an "executive arm of the government" to represent labor, which coincided with the rise of the labor movement in the 1860's, he follows its history through the first ten years of the department's existence.

Lombardi goes back to William H. Sylvis, president of the National Labor Union, and his introduction of a resolution into his union in 1868 calling for labor's representation in government. The resolution stated in part: "...Whereas, we find as part of our government in Washington a Department of State, of War, of the Navy, of the Interior, of Finance, and others of a similar character, all supposed to be for the benefit of the people but sadly prostituted in their administration and used almost exclusively for furthering the rich and powerful of the land; and whereas, there is no department of our government having for its sole object the care and protection of labor, and the various enterprises and undertakings of workingmen, having for their object an equitable distribution of the products of industry and the elevation of those who labor..."

But the initial agitation of Sylvis was short-lived. It died with the National Labor Union in 1873. Soon afterward it again picked up in the form of a fight for the creation of a Bureau of Labor Statistics when Terence V. Powderly, leader of the Knights of Labor, felt that by tempering the complete demand for a full department he would be able to at least win the much needed statistical information which labor wanted. With these statistics he hoped to see to it that "unscrupulous employers will not have it in their power to rob labor of its just due and take all the profits of the combination of labor and capital for their own aggrandizement." This demand was further supplemented with the request that these bureaus be staffed with labor members and sympathizers.

In 1884, together with the newly formed AFL, the Knights were able to secure the first Federal Bureau of Labor. Again upon realization of labor leaders that the bureau was only a statistical agency and that it did not eliminate any of the injustices of big business against the working men, the union movement, through the AFL, carried on constant agitation for a quarter of a century until finally, in 1912, Congress created the Department of Labor.

The first head of the Department of Labor was William B. Wilson, one of the leaders of the United Mine Workers, and he became the first labor man to enter a cabinet. While the author gives us a glowing picture of Wilson as a "fair" man who didn't let his past record as a union man interfere with his ability to be above both labor and capital, we can actually see a complete picture of this man, who remained Secretary of Labor until 1921, as the typical example of the labor lieutenant of the bourgeoisie!

One of the most interesting phases of the book is its chapters on the Department of Labor during the last war. As today, they had then created a War Labor Board "to settle by mediation and conciliation controversies arising between employers and workers in fields of production necessary for the effective conduct of the war..." This board, while not granted as much power as the present WLB, was the same thorn in the side of the trade union movement. Its record was just as black as it is today. Only it lacked the teeth of Little Steel formulas and executive orders with which to bite and enslave labor. But, as today, it knew how to tie up labor when it was asking for something. *For example, the book tells us that out of the eight hundred and seventy-four cases that then came before the board, it listened to only four hundred and fifty-five of them and made awards in only seventy-two of these cases.*

The book is of value only as a collection of data and facts on this single subject to the student of labor history. If you can read cold data mixed with liberal hash, then go ahead. But one thing remains clear, a Department of Labor and a Secretary of Labor in the cabinet have not been a boon to the working class.

S. L.

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