

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

**April • 1942**

**NOTES OF THE MONTH**

**WAR AND THE COLONIAL PEOPLES**

## **SOCIAL CLASSES IN INDIA** **A THESIS**

## **The Partisan Review Controversy**

**Dwight Macdonald's Letter and Editor's Reply**

## **WHAT NEXT IN EUROPE?**

**By Europacus**

## **Aspects of Marxian Economics**

**By J. R. Johnson and Joseph Carter**

**Book Reviews of St. John and Stolper**

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## MANAGER'S COLUMN

The March issue of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL was well received by its readers. In New York City an excellent record of newsstand sales was set. Several literature agents sent in requests for additional numbers of the March issue. Most interest was centered around the articles dealing with an economic review of the year 1941 and the first section of the brilliant thesis on the question of India (completed in the present issue).

As one reader wrote us, "I want you to know with what pleasure I read THE NEW INTERNATIONAL each month. In times like these it is indeed a pleasure to read a magazine of such profound theoretical penetration and understanding. It is in the best classic Marxist tradition!" (H. T., New York City.)

The subscription campaign being conducted by THE NEW INTERNATIONAL, in collaboration with the weekly newspaper, *Labor Action*, has been progressing. There is still another month in which agents can secure the \$1.00 special six-month combination offers to both publications (\$1.25 in New York City). Many new readers and subscribers have already been added to our list and we hope to continue this during the month of April. In next month's issue we shall announce the final gains of the drive. Meanwhile there remains a whole month in which to get \$1.00 or \$1.25 subs!

We are pleased to announce that THE NEW INTERNATIONAL still has a wide circulation in various foreign countries, where its arrival—as always—is eagerly awaited. Throughout South America, England and certain countries of the Far East THE NEW INTERNATIONAL still continues to arrive more or less regularly.

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

The May issue of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL is already in preparation. In addition to the Notes of the Month, we have received the following articles: The War in the Pacific, by Henry Judd; the final installment of Zinoviev's brilliant article, The Social Roots of Opportunism; an article by Albert Gates reviewing the life of James Connally, the Irish revolutionist, and a review by Sentinel of the book by Lieut.-Col. Kernan, *Defense Will Not Win the War*.

The May issue will also feature an article on the situation in France and the tasks of the socialists there, as well as several reviews of recent books.

The best way to insure your receipt of this issue of the NI is by subscribing under the special plan now sponsored by the Business Office.

# THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

*A Monthly Organ of Revolutionary Marxism*

VOLUME VIII

APRIL, 1942

NUMBER 3

## NOTES OF THE MONTH

### **War and the Colonial Peoples**

Nothing has so laid bare the reactionary nature of imperialism as the war in the Far East. Since the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the United Nations have suffered uninterrupted defeats, surrendered one possession after another to a foe striking with great speed and unrelenting in its haste to gain as much as possible in the shortest period of time, i.e., before the superior material resources of the Allies begins to make itself felt in that sector of the World War.

The Japanese forces simultaneously attacked in a multitude of directions, the Philippines, Guam, Wake, Malaya, Singapore and the Dutch East Indies. In each instance, it is true, they employed superior military arms, more troops, larger air forces, greater naval squadrons and auxiliary forces. Despite the assurances by Churchill that Singapore could be defended and would be held for six months at least, it fell quickest of all. Only in the Philippines, and now (for how long, no one can tell) in Burma does resistance continue, but in the latter country the struggle is doomed, if only for the reason that the native population turned on their British overlords. Examine the military campaigns on these various fronts and one fact stands out: the only place where a genuine resistance continues is in the Philippines, but that is the only country in which a native army, equal or greater in size than a foreign ally, is in the field battling an invader. The Philippines enjoyed a pseudo-independence, yet even such limited independence did not obtain on the other fronts.

#### **A Defense Without the Natives**

War strategists and the "expert" commentators in the United States have written a great deal to point out that British imperialism was less benevolent than the Dutch and for that reason were unable to bring themselves to arm the native populations of Malaya and Singapore to help them in the struggle against the Japanese. They had forecast that the situation would be entirely different in the Dutch East Indies because the Dutch were more intelligent (!) colonizers, or, stated in another way, a less rapacious exploiter. But this

was not true in any way. The imperialist prerogatives were just as firmly applied by the Dutch in defense of their possessions.

Let us assume for the moment that Sumatra, the Celebes, Timor and Borneo were, from a military point of view, indefensible (this is only another way of saying that the enemy had military preponderance). But the Dutch and their Allies continually proclaimed that Java, the richest and most populated island of the Indies, was defensible and that the defenders would give an excellent account of themselves. Moreover, the military staff in Java had made public the fact that the Dutch military strength was concentrated on that island in order to insure a real defense. However, when Java fell, the reason given for this new catastrophe was the same as in all other cases: military inferiority.

Admitting for the moment that the real sources of Allied military strength were thousands of miles away from the South Pacific waters, the reasons given for this series of defeats overlooks the most important element: the indifference of the native populations in face of a new invader! In Malaya, the native population did not give the slightest aid to some 50,000 to 75,000 Empire troops battling a superior force of Japanese. In Java, the defenders numbered from 50,000 to 100,000 troops, but never were more than 50,000 effectives in a position to join battle. Here, too, superiority in numbers gave the Japanese an easy victory.

Why did this situation obtain? Why did the native population of the Malayas remain immobilized and indifferent to the new invader? Why were there only a handful of defenders in the Dutch East Indies with a population of more than 60,000,000 people? Why was it impossible to mobilize a vast army in Java, whose population numbered about 45,000,000 people?

#### **Why the Colonials Are Indifferent**

In each instance, the British and the Dutch proceeded to map defenses of lands which did not belong to them. In each instance, the British and the Dutch worked out defenses which ignored the presence of the peoples of these lands. Think of it! Java, inhabited by 45,000,000 people, was defended by a handful of troops! Such a situation could obtain only because the Allies conduct this war in an imperialist manner. On the eve of the fall of Singapore, a thousand Chinese natives were armed with pistols and rifles! Not even such a gesture was reported from the Dutch East Indies.

Those who support the Allied powers in this war on the ground that it is a war for the freedom of all peoples, four

freedoms, no less, for genuine democracy in all countries, for the right of self-determination of all subject peoples, are troubled. They are confused, not because of these defeats, but because it is clear that none of these things are applicable, in the minds of the leaders of the United Nations, to the colonial world. Imperialist ideology dominates the Allied policy.

Consider Burma for a moment. The "liberal" mind thinks in the following way: it is true that the British have been cruel exploiters of the Burmese. Japanese domination, however, would be a far worse evil. Therefore, it seems reasonable that the Burmese people should support the British in repelling the Japanese. But a considerable number of Burmese are aiding Japan to drive out the British. The liberal is heart-sick and even a little bit hopeless about it all. At a distance of some 8,000 to 10,000 miles away it does not occur to the liberal intellectual that the native peoples *cannot* distinguish between one imperialist and another. Exploitation and foreign domination, no matter what the garb, no matter which country is the interloper, cannot make a fundamental difference to a subjugated people!

What has made the situation worse is the manner in which the British and the Dutch have conducted the war in their possessions. They have refused to arm the people! They have refused to involve them in the defense of their own countries! They have asked them only to give support to the British and Dutch rulers! To put it in its sharpest form: *The native peoples were not permitted to defend their own countries!* In the minds of the colonial peoples, *their* lands were fought over by foreign powers. But this fighting was not in the interest of the native peoples, but of the imperialist wealth and possessions of these foreign powers! Not a single promise of freedom was given them by the British or Dutch in exchange for their aid in the fight against the Axis. Not even the promise of an alleviation of the cruel conditions of their existence after the war! Nothing, absolutely nothing! Is it any wonder, then, why the colonial peoples are indifferent to a war which involves their future?

The real impediment to an arming of the colonial peoples is the fear of Britain and the Netherlands that, with weapons, the native may strike out for their complete freedom from *all* foreign domination! Rather than face this prospect they have pursued a course which doomed in advance a powerful defense of those possessions won by the Japanese.

### **The Case of India**

This brings us to India, the most important colonial country in the world, with enormous resources and an inexhaustible population. India is the basis of the British Empire; its more than 350,000,000 people are ruled by a nation of about 45,000,000! For more than 150 years the British have drained the wealth of this immense country, kept its people divided, imposed a terrifying exploitation upon them and resisted every effort of the nationals for independence. There is no need here to recount the history of this colonial adventure. THE NEW INTERNATIONAL last month published a brilliantly written thesis of the British conquest. This issue contains additional sections on the situation there prepared by the Fourth Internationalists of that country.

The present situation is very simple. The British Empire cannot pursue the same policy in India, now threatened with a Japanese invasion, as they did in Burma and Malaya. The loss of the latter countries is as nothing compared to the loss of India. Furthermore, England knows that it cannot defend India unless the struggle is supported by the Indian people.

But she is also acutely aware that this support will not be forthcoming unless India obtains her freedom, or some rotten compromise is reached between Downing Street and the native bourgeois rulers (the Native Princes appointed in London, and the bourgeois leaders of the Nationalist movements).

It is abundantly clear, however, that England rejects the very thought of Indian freedom. For many decades the British have rejected any genuine measures which might finally secure this independence. It has persecuted all independence movements, including the harmless compromisers. In each instance, force was employed to beat back the most intimate desires of the peoples of India. And yet, the imperialist contradictions are such that now, at a moment when the complete loss of India is threatened, the Empire itself has come forward with proposals which she hopes will bring the enormous potential strength of India to bear in the war against Japan.

### **The Nature of the British Proposals**

What is it that the British propose? Namely, that India shall have a dominion status *after* the war in exchange for an unqualified support of the war *now*. Gandhi has described this proposal as a "post-dated check" which could be rejected or not. This is the proposal in general. Specifically, the British are prepared to allow an increasing development of administrative functions by Indians! We shall see exactly what this means in a moment. After the war India shall draw up a new constitution and call into existence a constitutional assembly, proportionately represented by members of the existing provincial legislatures.

The proposals contain clauses which permit the secession of various Indian states—a new type of dismemberment—and a division along religious lines. All of these proposals contain a joker. No provisions are presented allowing for a true democratically constituted assembly of the people. In contrast, however, there is an assurance that the Native Princes, appointed by the British, shall retain their power. The proposed constitutional convention will be made up of representatives from provincial legislatures for which less than five per cent of the people have voted! As a dominion, India would have the optional right of withdrawal from the British Empire.

There are several significant features in the present situation which deserve special attention. The proposals from London are proposals of despair! Churchill was driven by the state of the war to make what he regards as a world-shaking concession to the Indian people. The political situation in England coincided with the war situation to force this "concession." Sir Stafford Cripps, riding the wave of mass dissatisfaction with the way in which the hidebound conservatives were conducting the war, employed his reputation as "a friend of India" to wrest this "concession" from a reluctant Churchill. Obviously the aristocratic and conservative British ruling class, thoroughly saturated with the imperialist tradition, feel that they have made a tremendous sacrifice in the cause of liberty: they propose to give, after the war, a measure of freedom to more than 350,000,000 people, whose land they have usurped, whose wealth they have taken, whose liberty they have stolen! So cynical and reactionary has the liberal and democratic mind become that this farce is hailed as a harbinger of a truly new world!

Thus, the *New York Times* informs India that this is not the time to quibble over such abstractions as freedom and independence—Japanese guns might make such discussions ludicrous. As an imperialist newspaper *The Times* does not

advise Britain to give India freedom; it advises India not to argue with the Empire and to accept its offer in good faith even though the grounds for such good faith are non-existent.

### **What Britain Fears**

But the British conservatives are not so simple. They know that they have made no immediate concession. They hope for the best in the future. This was evident in the whole manner in which the proposals were made to India. They were kept secret for two weeks. Why? Because an announcement of them would have met with immediate rejection even by Nehru and the other bourgeois nationalist leaders. Instead, Sir Stafford Cripps was despatched to India to deliver the proposals in person and to employ his reputation as a friend of Indian freedom to push through the acceptance of this bogus program. Thus the issue of the independence of India was reduced to the reputation of a Stafford Cripps and the respect he enjoys in some Indian circles. The British ruling class knew that *they* could not bring about their acceptance—they employed a person with a “left wing” reputation!

The proposals, which may have been a concession in “principle” in the collective mind of the British ruling class, do not alter the economic dominion of British capital. The economic control of British monopoly capitalism would remain unchanged after the war. Indian foreign trade and Indian defense would remain British controlled.

But what of the present? What would be the task of the Indians? To handle the administrative task of mobilizing the native population behind the war effort! The government in London understands only too well that it has not the power to win the support of the Indian people to the war and this is the only reason why it is even willing to consider a native administration for this job. Only a native administration can garner such support and make possible the employment of vast numbers of Indians as troops and other effectives in the war. To turn the defense of India over to the Indians would create the *condition* for the expulsion of Great Britain and the achievement of complete independence. As a matter of fact, given a more militant and determined leadership, this could be achieved without serious resistance. It is the fear of the consequences of such a situation which deters the British from offering anything of a substantial nature which *could* lose everything or destroy forever the power of British capitalism to exploit and profit from control of India.

### **The Reaction of India**

In contrast to the manner in which the British proposals were hailed by the Allies is the almost thorough rejection they have met even by those leaders in India who were believed to be the ones most amenable to their acceptance. Gandhi was the first to make known that he had little or no faith in the conditional freedom offered by Churchill. And when he counselled India to reject any proposal for the use of a scorched earth policy against the Japanese, he struck fear in the hearts of the British only because they regard that statement as indicative of a certain spirit which, if it represents the feelings of the Indian masses, would make a Japanese invasion rather easy. But Gandhi's pacifism in relation to the question of the “scorched earth” merely approximates, from another angle, the policy pursued by the British in Malaya and Burma, where the British landowners and capitalists, dominated by the “instinct of private property,” permitted vast stores of military supplies, plantations and some factories to fall intact to the Japanese. This counsel by Gandhi, moreover, could

mean that the Japs would not face a fierce resistance by the native population.

The Indian leaders, even those who would prefer to accept the British proposals, do not have much faith or trust in Great Britain. They have learned through bitter experience that the British never meant to give India the slightest freedom. They remember, too, that during the last war, similar promises were made and never kept. They recall how every practical measure employed by the Indians in the post-World War period to wring concessions from London was met by the armed resistance of their overlords. But, above all, they know that the masses in India are not ready to accept much longer crumbs tossed them by the British. And their present rejection of the British “concessions” is based primarily on their knowledge of the temper of the masses who, by their knowledge of the objective situation, realize that *now* is the time to obtain freedom and independence—now, when Britain is weak, when it cannot successfully cope with their mass strength. They know too, that after the war, in the event of an Allied victory, it will be more difficult to win democratic rights from a victorious Empire.

It is difficult to forecast exactly what will happen in the next period. At the time of this writing the Japanese have landed forces only 100 miles from India's borders. The military situation, the influence of Cripps, the pressure exerted from the outside by the United States, the liberal world, the absence of a mass militant party of Indian independence, the absence of a mass revolutionary party of socialism—all these are factors militating against a complete rejection of an understanding with Britain, or, put in another way, create the conditions for compromise.

### **An Imperialist Impasse**

The situation in India is the living proof of the decay of the social order of capitalism. All that is rotten in this system of war and fascism is expressed there. More than 350,000,000 people are held the subjects of a power which proclaims its struggle for freedom and democracy. Yet this power cannot grant a single genuine democratic demand to this country even while it faces a military defeat of colossal magnitude. For a military defeat of Great Britain in the struggle over India would lay the grounds for a German-Japanese junction in Asia and at worst spell the doom of the United Nations, at best prolong the war for many, many years.

This prospect, dark as it is, does not appear strong enough to bend the imperialist will of the Empire. It is not a question of ill-will or of desire, even though these may be factors in the situation. It is the fundamental inability of imperialism to act as a progressive force! Imperialism cannot grant freedom to colonial possessions without destroying its own base. That is why the Empire, faced with a total defeat in Asia, cajoles, debates, resists and then retreats, hoping for the best of various bargains. In the end the inevitable and irresistible surge of the colonial peoples will triumph and true freedom and independence will be theirs. The present state of affairs is temporary. As the United Nations suffer uninterrupted defeats in Asia, the sense of power and dignity will grow upon the oppressed peoples. They will realize that freedom is immediately possible if only they will take it. And it is this same condition that will make it impossible for Japanese imperialism to gain what it hopes—a new and grand Asiatic empire which it can exploit without end and without mercy.

A. G.

# An Impudent Slander

The following article is in the nature of an introduction to the final sections of the Indian thesis, the first part of which was published in the March issue of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL. The Indian thesis immediately follows this article.—Editor.

A slander is a slander, no matter who utters it. There is such a thing as "proletarian politics"; there is even such a thing as "proletarian violence." But there is no such thing as a "proletarian slander" any more than there is a "proletarian frame-up." Here is a case in point.

Several weeks ago we received from the Orient a thesis of the Bolshevik-Leninist Party of India on the situation in that country which we began to publish in the last issue of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL. We were requested by our comrades to make copies of the material received available to the Socialist Workers Party. This request was forthwith complied with by us. The thesis is now also reproduced in the theoretical organ of the Cannonites, the *Fourth International*, for March, 1942.

In his introduction to the thesis, the editor of the *Fourth International* writes:

Together with the Ceylon Socialist Party (the Lanka Sama Samaj Party) and a recently formed organization in Burma, our Indian comrades have established the Federation of Bolshevik-Leninist Parties of Burma, Ceylon and India, for the revolutionary destiny of these three peoples is closely linked together.

All three parties stand firmly on the program of the Fourth International. On the decisive question of defense of the Soviet Union and the character of the USSR as a workers state, they stand with Trotsky and the Socialist Workers Party against the petty-bourgeois opposition of Burnham-Shachtman, which abandoned Trotskyism. In documents which we have received, the parties of the Federation make unambiguously clear their agreement on the Russian and all other questions with the Fourth International against the petty bourgeois opposition, which has been spreading false stories about the position of the Indian and Ceylonese comrades.

The individual who wrote this is a common slanderer.

What honorable or "educational" purpose is served by linking Burnham and Shachtman today? Is it in order to suggest that these two persons and those they respectively represent have political views or activities in common? We speak freely of Hitler and Mussolini in brackets; we link Roosevelt and Willkie; we hyphenate Churchill-Stalin—because in each case those whom we thus combine are held together in one common bond or other. What common bond is supposed to unite Burnham and Shachtman? The former is an avowed enemy of socialism and has been for two years; the latter remains a revolutionary socialist. The only way they can be linked is by means of a malicious *amalgam*, that is, the method notoriously employed by Stalinism against its adversaries.

But is it not true that Burnham *was* once associated with Shachtman? And doesn't this fact justify the device employed by the editor of the *Fourth International*? No, not in the least. Otherwise, the editor would have written that the Federation "stand with Trotsky and the Socialist Workers Party" and with Jean Rous, Fred Zeller and Walter Dauge "against the petty bourgeois opposition of Burnham-Shachtman."

Rous, Zeller and Dauge supported the Cannonites against us "on the decisive question of defense of the Soviet Union"; their authority as the leaders of the French and Belgian sections of the Fourth International and as members of the latter's executive committee was cited as additional warrant for the decision to "expel" us from the International at the farcical rump "emergency conference" which the Cannonites convoked for that sole purpose almost two years ago? Why, we repeat, are not these three worthies mentioned among the adversaries of the "petty bourgeois oppositions"? Could the reason for the omission be that shortly after the "conference" the three of them began to orient toward a more or less open fascist position?

If someone were to speak *today* of the "Trotsky-Cannon-Rous-Dague position on the Russian question," he would rightly be denounced as a slanderous demagogue who does not aim at clarifying a question but at muddying it up. Not two years ago, when such a characterization was accurately descriptive and expressive, but *today*. No less slanderous a demagogue is anyone who writes today of the "petty bourgeois opposition of Burnham-Shachtman." We are ready to admit that such a characterization might be permissible even if Burnham were no longer associated with Shachtman or the Workers Party, *provided*—for example—it could be demonstrated that Burnham's political evolution as an urbane capitulator to fascism (to put it mildly) followed logically from the position of the Workers Party, or that the Workers Party itself has capitulated to the imperialist reaction in the war. But even to attempt to demonstrate this would be very risky, especially on the part of a spokesman for the only working-class party in this country which has failed to issue a declaration of its position on the United States in the war since war was declared, that is, which has failed to make that formal public statement which, under the circumstances, is a *political action* against the imperialist war of the first importance for a consistently Marxist organization.

Finally, the editor charges that the Workers Party "has been spreading false stories about the position of the Indian and Ceylonese comrades." We stare at this almost in disbelief of what our eyes reveal. Where did this man acquire such cool effrontery? What "false stories" have we spread about our Indian and Ceylonese comrades? Perhaps the editor will condescend to name one—not many, just one. We never spread false stories about these comrades or about anyone else; and we *never disseminated slanders about them*, either. But—

Only a few months ago, toward the end of 1941, the people with whom the editor of the *Fourth International* is associated, issued an international bulletin which we open to page 16. Under the heading of India, the following appears, and we print it word for word

From a letter from India, dated March, 1941:

I should like to say that I am now—as before—100 per cent in support of your policy and ideas. The policy of Messrs. Burnham, Shachtman, Sherman Stanley and Abern is obviously wrong *on each of the disputed issues*... Stanley's ideas of the business in the Indian Empire, and especially about Ceylon, have to be thoroughly scrutinized. The opinions he enunciated here were fundamentally wrong. Neither the aristocratic planters of Ceylon, nor the stockbrokers of Calcutta are suitable representatives for our business in India.

(Editor's Note: Sherman Stanley made a trip to India some time ago and the writer of this letter had the opportunity to speak with him directly.)

We do not know what "false stories" we are supposed to have spread. We do know, however, that *we*, at least, never disseminated such poisonous slanders about our Asiatic comrades as "aristocratic planters of Ceylon" and "stockbrokers of Calcutta," only to hail them a few brief months later as "Marxists revolutionists" and "our comrades"—and to attack others for "spreading false stories" about them!

A slander is a slander; a slanderer is a slanderer. The man who burned fingers once by abusing his authority when entrusted with the editorship of a workers' paper, evidently does not fear the fire. Or perhaps he is under the illusion that persecution at the hands of the class enemy confers upon him a special right to slander political adversaries with impudence and with impunity. He is mistaken. That "right" does not exist. At least, we shall continue seeing to it that it doesn't.  
—M. S.

## The Social Classes in India

The revolt of 1857 represented the last attempt of the old feudal ruling class of India to throw off the British yoke. This revolt, which, despite its reactionary leadership, laid bare the depth of mass discontent and unrest, created an alarm in the British rulers and led to a radical change of their policy in India. Seeking for bases of social and political support within India, the British abandoned the policy of annexing the Indian states within British India, guaranteeing the remnants of the feudal rulers their privileged and parasitic positions in innumerable petty principalities, buttressing their power and protecting them against the masses, and receiving in return the unqualified support of these elements for the British rule.

The princes of the Indian states, maintained at the cost of a chaotic multiplication of administrative units, are today only the corrupt and dependent tools of British imperialism, and the feudatory states, "checker-boarding all India as they do, are no more than a vast network of fortresses" erected by the British in their own defense. The variety of the states and jurisdiction of the feudal princes defies a generalized description, but they bolster alike the reactionary policies of imperialism in India. The despotism and misgovernment practiced by the great majority of these rulers, in their territories, have created and perpetuated conditions of backwardness extreme even in India, including the most primitive forms of feudal oppression and of slavery itself. Their collective interests are represented by the Chamber of Princes, instituted in 1921, which is the most reactionary political body in India.

### Landlords and the Indian Bourgeoisie

The most solid supporters of British rule in India, after the princes, are the landlords. In fact, the majority of the princes themselves are no more than glorified landlords, playing the same parasitic rôle as the landlords of British India. The landlords of India have a record of medieval oppression, of rack-renting and usury, and of unbridled gangsterism over a disarmed peasantry, which has made them the most hated exploiters in India. The rapid extension of landlordism in modern time through the development of intermediary and new parasitic classes on the peasantry, has not only increased the numbers of those who receive land-rents, but firmly linked their interests with those of the Indian capitalist class, by the ties of investment and mortgage. The political rôle of the landlords has always been one of complete subservience to British imperialism, which alone guarantees their parasitic position. Landlordism is today the most formidable buttress

of British imperialism within Indian society, as well as the greatest obstacle in the way of agricultural development which demands a thorough-going democratic revolution in the agrarian field and the liquidation of landlordism in all its forms.

The second half of the nineteenth century saw the rise of an Indian capitalist class in Bombay and other industrial centers. The Indian bourgeoisie of the early period, conscious of its own weakness and dependent position in economy, offered no challenge whatever to British rule. But the deep economic conflict between their own interests and those of their British competitors drove them, from the first decade of the twentieth century, to utilize the national political movement as a means to strengthen their bargaining power against British imperialism and to extend their own field of exploitation.

The bourgeoisie, in the absence of any competing class and especially of an independent proletarian movement, assumed complete leadership of the national political movement from the beginning, through its party, the Indian National Congress. The bourgeois leadership of the movement was clearly demonstrated in 1905, by the choice of the economic boycott of foreign goods as the method of struggle against the partition of Bengal. The aims of the bourgeoisie were defined during this period as the attainment of "colonial self-government within the Empire" as junior partners of the imperialists. They abandoned the struggle for a policy of co-operation with the government after the grant of the Morley-Minto reforms, their own aims being satisfied for the moment.

The last years of the First World War, and the years which immediately followed it, were marked by the development, for the first time since 1857, of a mass struggle on a national scale against imperialism, based on the discontent and unrest of the peasantry and the working class. This discontent was especially marked in Bombay, where the wave of working class strikes was on a scale hitherto unknown in India, and reached its highest point in 1920, for which year the number of strikers reached the gigantic total of one and one-half millions. The Montague-Chelmsford reforms were designed to meet this rising threat by buying off the bourgeois leadership, and they succeeded to an extent, that section of the bourgeoisie which wanted whole-hearted co-operation with the government seceding from Congress to form the Liberal Federation (1918). But the growth of the mass movement compelled the Congress bourgeoisie either to enter the struggle or to be isolated from the masses. Launching



under its own banner the passive resistance movement and the later mass civil disobedience movement of 1921-22, they entered the struggle, but only to betray it from the inside.

The movement, which, despite its timid and unwilling leadership, had "attained the undeniable character of a mass revolt against the British Raj," was abruptly called off when at its height by the bourgeois leader, Gandhi, and a period of demoralization for the masses followed. The reactionary and treacherous character of the bourgeois leadership was shown clearly in the Bardoli resolution of 1922, which condemned the no-tax campaign of the peasantry and insisted on the continuation of rent payments to the landlords, assuring the zamindars that the Congress "had no intention of attacking their legal rights." The bourgeoisie thus demonstrated their reactionary attitude toward the land question, in which lies the main driving force toward revolution in India.

### **The Influence of Gandhi**

With the worsening conditions of the late twenties, the mass struggle developed again at a rising tempo, and was again led to defeat by the Congress (1930-34). The aims of the new struggle were limited by Gandhi beforehand to the celebrated eleven points which represented exclusively the most urgent demands of the Indian bourgeoisie. Nevertheless the movement developed in 1930 far beyond the limits laid down for it by the Congress, with rising strikes, powerful mass demonstrations, the Chittagong Armory raid, and the risings at Peshawar and Sholapur. Gandhi declared openly to the Viceroy that he was fighting as much against the rising forms of revolt as against British imperialism. The bourgeois aim was henceforward to secure concessions from imperialism at the price of betraying the mass struggle in which they saw a real and growing threat to themselves. The Gandhi-Irwin settlement was a settlement against the mass movement and paved the way for the terrific repression which fell on the movement during its ebb in the years 1932-34.

Since 1934 Gandhi and the leaders of the National Congress have had as their chief aim that of preventing the renewal of a mass struggle against imperialism, while using their leadership of the national movement as a lever to secure the concessions they hope to obtain from imperialism. They see in the rising forces of revolt, and especially in the emergence of the working class as a political force, a threat to their own bases of exploitation, and are consequently following an increasingly reactionary policy. Reorganizing the party administration so as to secure to the big bourgeoisie the unassailable position of leadership (1934), they transferred the center of activities to the parliamentary field and to working the new constitution in such a way as to secure the maximum benefits to the bourgeoisie; until the intransigence of the British Parliament and the Indian government in the war situation and the withdrawal of many of the political concessions of provincial autonomy again forced the Congress into opposition (1939). At present the Congress bourgeoisie is engaged in a restricted campaign of individual "non-violent" civil disobedience, with narrowly defined bourgeois aims, and under the dictatorial control of Gandhi himself. By this move they hope to prevent the development of a serious mass struggle against imperialism, the leadership of which will be bound to pass into other hands.

The main instrument whereby the Indian bourgeoisie seeks to maintain control over the national movement is the

Indian National Congress, the classic party of the Indian capitalist class, seeking as it does the support of the petty bourgeoisie and if possible of the workers, for their own aims. Despite the fact that under these conditions revolutionary and semi-revolutionary elements still remain within the fold of the Congress, despite its mass membership (five millions in 1939) and despite the demagogic programmatic pronouncements (Constituent Assembly: Agrarian Reform) which the Congress has repeatedly made, the direction of its policy remains exclusively in the hands of the bourgeoisie, as also the control of the party organization, as was dramatically proved at Tripuri and after. The Indian National Congress in its social composition, its organization and above all in its political leadership, can be compared to the Kuomintang, which led the Chinese revolution of 1925-27 to its betrayal and defeat.

The characterization of the Indian National Congress as a multi-class party as the "National United Front" or as "a platform rather than a party" is a flagrant deception calculated only to hand over to the bourgeoisie in advance the leadership of the coming struggle, and so make its betrayal and defeat a foregone conclusion.

The more open reactionary interests of the Indian bourgeoisie find expression in many organizations which exist side by side with the Congress. Thus the Liberal Federation (1918) represents those bourgeois elements which co-operate openly with the imperialists. The sectional interests of the propertied classes are represented by various communal organization, notably the Moslem League (1905) and the Hindu Maha Sabaha (1925), which are dominated by large landlord and bourgeois interests and pursue a reactionary policy on all social and economic issues, deriving a measure of mass support by an appeal to the religious and communal sentiments of the backward masses.

### **The Petty Bourgeois Intelligentsia**

Because of their position of dependence on the capitalist class, and in the absence of a real challenge to its leadership from the proletariat, the various elements of the urban petty bourgeoisie and of the petty bourgeois intelligentsia, have always played a satellite rôle to the bourgeoisie. The radicalization of the petty bourgeoisie under imperialism found its first and strongest expression in the prolonged terrorist movement in Bengal and elsewhere, despite the heroism of its protagonists the failure of which demonstrated finally the utter inability of the petty bourgeois intelligentsia to find an independent solution of its own problems.

Today the urban petty bourgeoisie finds its political reflection mainly in the various organizations within the fold of or under the influence of the Indian National Congress, such as the Forward Bloc, the Congress Socialist Party, the Radical Democratic Party of M. N. Roy, etc.

Within the Congress the petty bourgeois leaders have repeatedly lent themselves to be used by the bourgeoisie as a defensive coloration before the masses, bridging with their radical phrases and irresponsible demagoguery the gap between the reactionary Congress leadership and the hopes and aspirations of the masses. Thus the demagoguery of Bose and Nehru, as well as the socialist phrases of M. N. Roy and the Congress Socialist Party, to say nothing of the "Marxism" of the National United Fronters of the Communist Party of India, have



in turn served the Gandhian leaders as a smoke screen for their own reactionary maneuvers.

The humiliating capitulation of the CSP to the Congress leadership, the conversion of M. N. Roy and his Radical Democrats to imperialist warmongering and the departure of S. C. Bose from the Indian scene are symptoms of the diminishing political rôle of the petty bourgeoisie intelligentsia, which, however theatrically it may posture before the masses in normal times, exposes in times of growing crisis its political bankruptcy and exists only to be utilized by the bourgeoisie in its deception of the masses.

### The Rôle of the Peasantry

The peasantry comprises the vast majority of the Indian population (about 70 per cent). The stagnation and deterioration of agriculture, the increasing land hunger, the exactions of the government, the extension of parasitic landlordism, the increasing load of rural debt and the consequent expropriation of the cultivators are together inevitably driving the peasantry on to the revolutionary road. Peasant unrest, leading frequently to actual risings (Santhal Rebellion of 1855, Deccan riots of 1875), has been a recurring motive in recent Indian history. In the last two decades and especially since the world economic crisis of 1929 the peasant movement has been on the rise and has taken on a more and more radical character.

It is precisely the depth and scope of the agrarian crisis that places the revolution against imperialism on the order of the day, contributing to it the driving force and the sweep which are necessary to accomplish the overthrow of the ruling power. Nevertheless the agrarian crisis alone cannot produce a revolution, and the peasantry requires the leadership of another class to raise the struggle to the level of a national revolution. The isolation and the scattered character of the peasant economy, the historical and political backwardness of the rural masses, the lack of inner cohesion within the peasantry and the conflicting aims of its various strata, all combined to make it impossible for the peasantry to play a leading or even an independent rôle in the coming revolution.

The invasion of moneyed interests has sharply accelerated the disintegrating tendencies within the peasantry. The creation of a vast army of landless peasants, sharecroppers and wage laborers on the land has immensely complicated the agrarian problem and rendered necessary revolutionary measures of the most far-reaching character. The basic antagonism between landlord and peasant has not been reduced by the entry of finance-capital into agriculture, since this did not bring with it any change for the better in farming methods or in the system of land tenure. On the contrary, the landlord peasant antagonism has been given a sharper emphasis by the extension of parasitic claims on the land, and the overthrow of landlordism by the transference of the land to the cultivator remains the primary task of the agrarian revolution. Nevertheless, this basic antagonism has been supplemented by a new one, which is reflected in the growth of an agricultural proletariat in the strict sense of the word. Besides this, the invasion of finance-capital has made the problems of mortgage and of rural debt more pressing in some parts of India than in others, and these facts taken together will probably give to the agrarian revolution, at least in some areas, an anti-capitalist character at a very early stage.

It is clear that the rural laborers are still too closely con-

nected with the peasantry and share too closely the misfortunes of the peasantry generally for the movement of the rural workers as such to assume national significance. But at the same time, these new problems of agriculture cannot be solved by the overthrow of landlordism alone, which cannot by itself put an end to land hunger or reduce the heavy and disproportionate pressure of the population on the land. The introduction of socialist measures, of large-scale collective farming, etc., will become necessary at some stage, depending on the correlation of political forces and the prospects of industrializing agriculture.

The leadership of the revolution, which the peasantry cannot provide for itself, can come only from an urban class. But the Indian bourgeoisie cannot possibly provide this leadership, since in the first place it is reactionary through and through on the land question itself, sharing as it does so largely in the parasitic exploitation of the peasantry. Above all, the bourgeoisie, on account of its inherent weakness and its dependence on imperialism itself, is destined to play a counter-revolutionary rôle in the coming struggle for power.

### Leadership of the Peasantry

The leadership of the peasantry in the petty bourgeois-democratic agrarian revolution that is immediately posed can therefore come only from the industrial proletariat, and an alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry is a fundamental prerequisite of the Indian revolution. This alliance cannot be conceived in the form of a "Workers and Peasants Party" or of a "Democratic Dictatorship" in the revolution. It is impossible so to fuse within a single party or a dictatorship the policies of two classes whose interests only partially coincide and are bound to come into conflict sooner or later. The revolutionary alliance between the proletariat and peasantry can mean only proletarian leadership of the peasant struggle and, in case of revolutionary victory, the establishment of the proletarian dictatorship with the support of the peasantry.

The growth of the peasant movement in recent times has led to the formation of various mass organizations among the peasantry, among which the most important are the Kisan Sanghs (Peasant Committees) which are loosely linked up on a district, provincial, and finally on an all-India scale in the All-India Kisan Sabha, whose membership in 1939 was 800,000. These associations, whose precise character varies from district to district, are in general today under the control and influence of petty bourgeois intelligentsia elements, which, as pointed out before, cannot follow a class policy independent of the bourgeoisie, although the growing mass pressure upon them is reflected in the more sharply radical demands they are forced to put forward.

There is no means of deciding in advance the exact rôle of the Kisan Sanghs in the coming revolution. This will be determined by the correlation of forces within them, which in turn will depend largely on the consciousness and militancy of the lower layers of the peasantry and the measure of control they exercise in the Kisan Sanghs. But it can be stated beforehand, on the basis of the experience of the Russian and Chinese revolutions, that the existence of Kisan Sanghs, on however wide a scale, does not offer a substitute for the separate organizations of poor peasants and agricultural laborers in the rural Soviets, under the leadership of the urban working class. Only the Soviets can assure that the

agrarian revolution will be carried out in a thoroughgoing manner.

### The Position of the Proletariat

The industrial proletariat is the product of modern capitalism in India. Its rapid growth in the period since 1914 can be illustrated by a comparison of the Factory Act statistics for 1914 and 1936.

	No. of Factories	No. of Work- ers Employed
1914	2,936	950,973
1936	9,323	1,652,147

The numerical strength of the industrial proletariat can be estimated at five millions, distributed mainly as follows (1935 figures):

Workers in Power Driven Factories (including those of the native states)	1,855,000
Miners	371,000
Railwaymen	636,000
Water Transport Workers	361,000
Plantation Workers	1,000,000

The Indian working class is chiefly employed in light industry (cotton, jute, etc.), but also to some extent in the iron, steel, cement and coal mining industries. The degree of concentration in industrial establishments is relatively high, owing to the recency of industrial development and the typically modern character of many of the new enterprises. Despite its numerical weakness in relation to the total population, the proletariat holds a position in Indian society which is quite out of proportion to its actual size, on account of the vital place it occupies in the economy of the country. The proletariat has grown with the investment of British capital from the beginning of capitalist production in India to this day. Although the native bourgeoisie has come belatedly on the scene to take part in the capitalist exploitation of the working class, the main effective means of production are in the hands of British capital. Consequently the working class has developed out of all proportion to the relative growth of the Indian bourgeoisie.

The wage rates of the Indian proletariat are among the lowest, the living conditions the most miserable, the hours of work the longest, the factory conditions the worst and the death rate the highest in the civilized world. When these facts are taken together with the fabulous profits made by the capitalists (British and Indian alike) out of Indian industry, it becomes clear that the working class is the most ruthlessly and directly exploited class in India. The fight to remedy these intolerable conditions and to protect themselves against the steadily worsening conditions of exploitation bring the workers directly to the revolutionary struggle against imperialism and the capitalist system, the abolition of which is necessary for their emancipation.

### Working Class Struggles

The record of proletarian struggle in India can be traced back to the last century; but the movement took on an organized character only in the post-war period. The first great wave of strikes (1918-21) signalled the emergence of the Indian working class as a separate force and gave to the national political movement during this period a truly revolutionary

significance for the first time in its history. In 1920, on the crest of this strike wave, the Indian Trade Union Congress was formed. The second great strike wave of the late twenties, especially in Bombay, showed an immense advance in the working class movement, marked by its increased awakening to Communist ideas. The increasing millions of the workers and the growing influence of the Communists caused the trade union movement to be split in two by those leaders who sought the path of collaboration with the bourgeoisie. Thus the reactionary Trade Union Federation was formed in 1929. This policy of the reactionary labor leaders was facilitated by the disastrous "Red Trade Union" policy followed by the Communist Party of India on orders from the Comintern bureaucracy. With the arrest of the Communist leaders on a trumped-up charge (the Meerut conspiracy case) and the further splitting of the Trade Union Congress in 1931, the wave of working class struggle subsided once more. It was in this period (1930-31) that the Communist Party of India, which commanded the confidence of the awakening working class, made the grievous political mistake of standing aside from the mass movement which was again assuming revolutionary proportions.

The tendency toward economic recovery commencing in 1936 combined with the mass activities in connection with the election campaign of the Congress led to a revival in the mass movement which entered once again on a period of rise. The Congress ministries saw a resurgence of the working class strike movement with the Bengal jute strike (1937) and the Cawnpore textile strike (1938), which was arrested only by measures of increased repression introduced by the government since the outbreak of war; but not before the Indian working class had clearly demonstrated its attitude toward the imperialist war, particularly by the mass political anti-war strike in Bombay of 80,000 workers.

In the political arena the working class has repeatedly demonstrated its heroism and its readiness for unremitting struggle. Its failure nevertheless to wrest the leadership of the national movement from bourgeois hands must be explained by its own weakness in consciousness and organization, added to by the defects of its leadership in the critical years in particular.

### The Political Parties

The Communist Party of India which alone in the last two decades could have afforded the Marxist leadership that above all things it needed, made instead a series of irresponsible mistakes which find their expression in the bureaucratically conceived policies of the Comintern. In conformity with its false central programmatic aim, the "democratic dictatorship" of the proletariat and the peasantry, the CPI fostered the growth of workers' and peasants' parties from 1926-28, at the expense of an independent working class party. This policy was shelved in 1929 to make way for an ultra-left sectarian policy (in the celebrated third period days of the Comintern), the signal expression of which lay in the splitting of the trade union movement by the formation of "Red Trade Unions." This sectarian policy of the CPI led to its isolation from the mass struggle of 1930-31 and made the bourgeois betrayal of the struggle so much the easier. In the period of ebb which followed (1934) the CPI was illegalized and has remained so since. From 1935 onward the CPI (again at the behest of the Comintern, now openly and flagrantly the tool of the Soviet bureaucracy) reversed its policy once more and held out the

hand of collaboration to the bourgeoisie through its policy of national united front, which credited the bourgeoisie with a revolutionary rôle. The CPI was transformed into a loyal opposition within the Congress, having no policy independent of that organization, a state of things which continues even today.

The mechanical echoes of every new slogan advanced by the Comintern to suit the changing policies of the Soviet bureaucrats, the CPI has shown its reactionary character by its vacillating attitude toward the imperialist war. With its false theory of national united front, the CPI is making ready to repeat its betrayal of the Chinese Revolution by handing over the leadership of the revolutionary struggle to the treacherous bourgeoisie. The Communist Party of India, because of the prestige it seeks to obtain from the Russian Revolution and the Soviet Union, is today the most *dangerous* influence within the working class of India.

To the right of the Communist Party, openly preaching class collaboration with the bourgeoisie, and today with the British imperialists at war, is the party of M. N. Roy. With a narrowing base within the working class, Roy has turned to the labor bureaucrats supporting the war and to the bourgeoisie itself for a following.

The Congress Socialist Party (1934) has from the beginning followed a policy of utter subservience to the Congress bourgeoisie and remains today completely without a base within the working class. Surrendering its claim to an independent existence, the CSP has been split wide open by the Communists, who worked inside it, and is today an empty shell, devoid of political substance.

To the left of the Communist Party, disgusted with its bureaucratic leaders and its reactionary policies, there exist a number of small parties and groups, occupying more or less centrist positions. Such are the Bengal Labor Party (Bolshevik Party of India), the Red Flag Communist Party led by S. N. Tagore, etc. Without a clear cut revolutionary policy and without making a decisive break organizationally and politically with the Comintern, these parties and groups are unable to offer the working class the independent leadership it requires. Nevertheless these groups and parties contain many tried fighters and able Marxist theoreticians who would be invaluable in a revolutionary working class party. This party can only be the Bolshevik-Leninist Party of India, the party of the Fourth International in India, which alone with its revolutionary strategy based on the accumulated experience of history and the theory of permanent revolution in particular, can lead the working class of India to revolutionary victory. This party has still to be built on an all-India scale, though many groups exist already whose fusion in the formation committee of the Bolshevik-Leninist Party of India has provided the nucleus for its formation.

## THE PERMANENT REVOLUTION

Despite its subjective weakness in organization and consciousness, inevitable in a backward country and in the conditions of repression which surround it, the working class is entirely capable of leading the Indian revolution. It is the only class objectively fitted for this rôle, not only in relation to the Indian situation, but in view of the decline of capitalism on a world scale, which opens the road to the international proletarian revolution.

The proletariat needs above all to develop its own independent political party, free from the influence of the bour-

geoisie and armed with the weapons of revolutionary Marxism, to lead it not only in the day-to-day struggles but above all in the coming revolution. Without such a party the proletariat must fail in its historic task of leading the masses of India to revolutionary victory.

India faces a historically belated bourgeois-democratic revolution, the main tasks of which are the overthrow of British imperialism, the liquidation of a semi-feudal land system, and the clearing away of feudal remnants in the form of the Indian Native States. But although the bourgeois-democratic revolutions occurring in the advanced capitalist countries in previous centuries found leadership in the then rising bourgeoisie, the Indian bourgeoisie, appearing on the scene only after the progressive rôle of the bourgeoisie in the world as a whole has been exhausted, is incapable of providing leadership to the revolution that is unfolding in India.

In the first place, as a historically belated class, they do not possess the strength and independence of the early bourgeoisie of former times. Connected with and dependent on British capital from their birth, they have progressively been brought into a position of subservience to British finance capital and today display the characteristics of a predominantly compradore bourgeoisie enjoying at the best the position of a very junior partner in the firm British Imperialism & Co. Hence, while they have been prepared to place themselves through the Indian National Congress at the head of the anti-imperialist mass movement for the purpose of utilizing it as a bargaining weapon to secure concessions from the imperialists, they have restricted its scope and prevented its development into a revolutionary assault on imperialism. Incapable from the very nature of their position of embarking on a revolutionary struggle to secure their independence, and fearful of such a struggle, they have maintained their control over the mass movement only to betray it at every critical juncture.

Secondly, unlike the once revolutionary bourgeoisie of former times, which arose in opposition to the feudal landowning class and in constant struggle against it, the Indian bourgeoisie has developed largely from the landowning class itself, and is in addition closely connected with the landlords through mortgages. They are therefore incapable of leading the peasants in the agrarian revolt against landlordism. On the contrary, as is clearly demonstrated by the declared policy and actions of the Indian National Congress both during the civil disobedience movements and in the period of the Congress ministries, they are staunch supporters of *zamindari* interests.

### The Native Bourgeois Is Reactionary

Finally, unlike the bourgeois-democratic revolutions of former times, the revolution in India is unfolding at a time when large concentrations of workers already exist in the country. The industrial proletariat numbering five millions occupies a position of strategic importance in the economy of the country which cannot be measured by its mere numerical strength. It is important to remember, moreover, that a hitherto uncalculated but indubitably very high proportion of these workers are employed in large concerns employing several hundreds and thousands of workers. The high degree of concentration of the Indian proletariat immeasurably advances its class-consciousness and organizational strength. It was only in the post-war years that the Indian working class emerged as an organized force on a national scale. But the militant and widespread strike waves of 1918-21 and of 1928-29, which were the precursors of the mass civil disobedience

movements of 1920-21 and of 1930-33 respectively, testify to the rapidity of the awakening. These workers are in daily conflict not only with the imperialist owners of capital, but also with the native bourgeoisie. The workers, moreover, being a class exploited not only by indigenous capital, but also—in fact, predominantly—by foreign capital, have as a class grown to an extent out of all proportion to the size and strength of the Indian bourgeoisie. Faced by the threat of this new and growing class, which is rapidly awakening to consciousness and making a bid to play an independent rôle in the national political arena, the Indian bourgeoisie has grown more conservative and suspicious. With every advance in organization and consciousness of the workers, they have drawn nearer to the imperialists and further away from the masses. Even the oppositional rôle they were wont to play against imperialism has become a caricature of its former self. Fearful already of any kind of mass movement against imperialism, the aim of their control over the national movement through the Indian National Congress is today not so much the securing of concessions from imperialism as preventing the outbreak of an anti-imperialist movement on a mass scale. It is clear that not a single one of the tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution can be solved under the leadership of the Indian bourgeoisie.

The urban petty bourgeoisie, daily becoming declassé and pauperized under imperialism, and, declining into economic insignificance, cannot even conceive of playing an independent rôle in the coming revolution. Since, however, there is no prospect whatever of improving their condition under imperialism, but on the contrary they are faced with actual pauperization and ruin, they are forced on to the revolutionary road. The peasantry, the largest numerically and the most atomized, backward and oppressed class, is capable of local uprisings and partisan warfare, but requires the leadership of a more advanced and centralized class for this struggle to be elevated to an all-national level. Without such leadership the peasantry alone cannot make a revolution. The task of such leadership falls in the nature of things on the Indian proletariat, which is the only class capable of leading the toiling masses in the onslaught against imperialism, landlordism and the native princes. The concentration and discipline induced by its very place in capitalist economy, its numerical strength, the sharpness of the class antagonism which daily brings it into conflict with the imperialists who are the main owners of capital in India, its organization and experience of struggle and the vital position it occupies in the economy of the country, as also its steadily worsening condition under imperialism, all combine to fit the Indian proletariat for this task. It is only under the leadership of the proletariat (as distinct from the "hegemony of the proletariat," which is an equivocal and deceptive phrase coined in preparation for handing over the leadership to the bourgeoisie) that the revolution in India can be carried to a victorious conclusion.

### Hope Lies in the Proletariat

But the leadership of the working class in the bourgeois-democratic revolution poses before the working class the prospect of seizing the power and—in addition to accomplishing the long overdue bourgeois-democratic tasks—of proceeding with its own socialist tasks. And thus the bourgeois-democratic revolution develops uninterruptedly into the proletarian revolution and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat as the only state form capable of supplanting the dictatorship of the imperialist bourgeoisie in India. The realiza-

tion of the combined character of the Indian revolution is essential for the planning of the revolutionary strategy of the working class. Should the working class fail in its historic task of seizing the power and establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat, the revolution will inevitably recede, the bourgeois tasks themselves remain unperformed, and the power swings back in the end to the imperialists, without whom the Indian bourgeoisie cannot maintain itself against the hostile masses. A backward country like India can accomplish its bourgeois-democratic revolution only through the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The correctness of this axiom of the theory of permanent revolution is demonstrated by the victorious Russian Revolution of October, 1917, as it is confirmed on the negative side by the tragic fate of the Chinese revolution of 1925-27. The seizure of power and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat is the supreme task of the Indian proletariat. The illusory slogan of "democratic dictatorship of workers and peasants" (postulating a non-existent intermediate stage prior to the proletarian dictatorship in which the bourgeois-democratic tasks are performed), which Lenin abandoned in time to save the Russian Revolution, can result only in confusing and misleading the workers. In China, the "democratic dictatorship of workers and peasants" was demonstrated in practice to be nothing more than the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie.

In India, moreover, where the imperialists are the main owners of capital, the revolutionary assault of the workers against imperialism will bring them into direct and open conflict with the property forms of the imperialists from the moment the struggle enters the openly revolutionary stage. The exigencies of the struggle itself will, in the course of the openly revolutionary assault against imperialism, demonstrate to the workers the necessity of destroying not only imperialism but the foundations of capitalism itself. Thus, though the Indian revolution will be bourgeois in its immediate aims, the tasks of the proletarian revolution will be posed from the outset. The expropriation of the capitalists will be on the order of the day on the very morrow of the seizure of power by the workers.

But the revolution cannot be stabilized even at this stage. The dictatorship of the proletariat in India alone cannot maintain itself indefinitely against the hostile forces of world imperialism without the support of the international proletariat. It will find a powerful ally, no doubt, in the Soviet Union, the first workers' state. But the ultimate fate of the revolution in India as in Russia will be determined in the arena of the international revolution. Nor will India by its own forces be able to accomplish the task of making the transition to socialism. Not only the backwardness of the country, but also the international division of labor and the interdependence—produced by capitalism itself—of the different parts of world economy, demand that this task of the establishment of socialism can be accomplished only on a world scale. The Indian proletariat will, of course, proceed with the socialist transformation of society to the extent that this is possible in the concrete circumstances, but the establishment of the socialist society will depend on the course of the international revolution. The victorious revolution in India, however, dealing a mortal blow to the oldest and most widespread imperialism in the world, will on the one hand produce the most profound crisis in the entire capitalist world and shake world capitalism to its foundations. On the other hand, it will inspire and galvanize into action millions of proletarians and colonial slaves the world over and blaze the trail of world revolution (inaugurate a new era of world revolution).

# Aspects of Marxian Economics

We are printing below a letter from J. R. Johnson which take issue with the interpretation of some aspects of Marxian economics as presented by Leon Trotsky in his essay, "Stalin as a Theoretician." The letter is followed by the reply of Joseph Carter. It will appear that both writers deal with the question of Russian economy. This is unavoidable by the nature of the discussion, but it in no way reopens the pages of the *NI* to a discussion of the "Russian Question."—Editor.

## THE LETTER

1. In the article, "Stalin as a Theoretician" (*NEW INTERNATIONAL*, November, 1941, page 282), Trotsky is translated as saying: "There is no contradiction here with the formulae of extended reproduction, which are in no way limited by national boundaries, and are not adapted either to national capitalism or, even less, to socialism in one country."

Whatever construction Trotsky may have put on this sentence, as it stands it can give rise to a very profound error. The only formula in the chapter on "Reproduction on an Enlarged Scale" is the formula that  $I(v + s)$  must be greater than  $IIc$ , if accumulation is to take place.  $I$  represents means of production and  $II$  consumption, the formula is carefully adapted by Marx to precisely a national capitalism.

The point is not only of academic importance. (a) Some of the greatest controversies in Marxism have hinged upon it. (b) Without it the road is open to the most vulgar and vicious of all misunderstandings of Marxism, i.e., the workers cannot buy back the product and therefore the capitalist is compelled to seek markets abroad. (c) It is my view that there is no way of avoiding bourgeois conceptions of modern economic development except by recognizing that Marx's theory of the reproduction and extension of the total social capital is strictly adapted to a national capitalism, excluding all foreign commerce.

2. I do not propose to take up here and now Trotsky's application of this formula in an article written in 1930 about the dictatorship of the proletariat, against Stalin's theoretical stupidities. The opportunities for confusion are too many. However, the question can be approached from another and more fruitful angle. Trotsky is very insistent that these formulae reveal the basic tendencies of capitalism and capitalism alone. This can only mean that the formula would not apply to the "bureaucratic collectivist" society of Russia.

I now assert that the formula, as posed and developed by Marx, not only applies to Russia of 1941, but both theoretically and concretely applies more closely to Russia than to any capitalism which existed in Marx's day or has existed since. I reserve further comment until some adequate and authoritative statement is made (a) taking some position as to whether the formula applies or not, (b) giving some demonstration of the unfeasibility of the formula when applied to bureaucratic collectivism.

J. R. JOHNSON.

## THE REPLY

Johnson's views on Russian economy as a capitalist system are well known to readers of *THE NEW INTERNATIONAL*. He has presented them at length in these columns. Now he seeks to buttress them with the aid of statements made by Leon Trotsky in an article written over a decade ago, and reprinted in the "Archives" section. However, the greater part of his letter is a criticism of another statement made by Trotsky in the course of the same article. I propose to show that Johnson understands neither Trotsky's article nor the meaning of the Marxian concepts involved. In the course of this criticism I hope to throw some light on a few essential aspects of Marxian economic theory.

I. Johnson begins his letter by taking issue with Trotsky's contention that the Marxian formulae of extended reproduction "are in no way limited by national boundaries" and are "not adapted to national capitalism." Johnson insists, on the contrary, that "the formula is carefully adapted by Marx to precisely a national capitalism." (We will consider later the strange substitution of "formula" for "formulae.")

The point in dispute seems clear: Trotsky wrote that the condition premised by Marx was an abstract capitalism in which there are no national boundaries, that is, a pure world capitalism; whereas Johnson holds that Marx specifically assumed "a national capitalism." Clear enough, that is, until we read further in Johnson's letter (*cf. his point I c*) that the Marxian theory "is strictly adapted to a national capitalism, excluding all foreign commerce." (My emphasis—J. C.)

But with this qualification, how would Johnson's "national capitalism" differ from a hypothetical pure world capitalism? If it is taken in complete isolation, does this not mean that it is studied as though it were a pure world capitalism? In which case, Johnson appears to be merely repeating Trotsky's contention against which he previously polemized! But why then should he insist on counterposing "a national capitalism" to world capitalism? This would make sense if his "national capitalism" has *specific national, that is, political features*—though it would then be in conflict with Marx's premise of a *pure capitalism*, one free of non-economic factors. However, I do not think that this is Johnson's meaning. Rather, his criticism of Trotsky flows from his hazy grasp of Marxian economic theory and his misunderstanding of what Trotsky wrote. (*On the latter point, cf. "II" below.*) It would not be surprising that, when Johnson wrote that Marx "strictly adapted" the formulae to "a national capitalism," he had in mind a passage in the first volume of *Capital* which declares the exact opposite!

We here take no account of export trade [Marx stated] by means of which a nation can change articles of consumption into means of production or means of subsistence, and *vice versa*. In order to examine the object of our investigation in its integrity we must treat the whole world as one nation, and assume that capitalist production is everywhere established and has possessed itself of every branch of industry. (*Capital*, Vol. I, page 636. Charles Kerr edition.)

As we shall also see later, Johnson has a strange knack of apparently paraphrasing Marx and in reality saying the exact opposite! It is obvious here that when Marx excluded foreign trade and treated the whole world as one nation he thereby identified the world with the nation, that is, assumed that it



was the only economy on the planet, to wit, world economy. *Elementary enough, yet Johnson presents us with "a national capitalism" in opposition to world capitalism!* Whatever the source of Johnson's mistake, his first criticism of Trotsky is invalid; he contradicts his own criticism and reveals confusion on an elementary aspect of Marx's methodology.

### The Scope of the Formulae

II. His confusion is further expressed in his statement that it follows from Trotsky's contention (discussed above) that "the workers cannot buy back the product and therefore the capitalist is compelled to seek markets abroad." (cf. his point I b.) \* How and why does this follow? It is true that for Johnson's "national capitalism" which excludes all foreign commerce, there is no problem of "markets abroad" because there are no "markets abroad." But how can such foreign markets exist on the premise of a pure world capitalism? Are these markets on the planet Mars or the planet Jupiter! If not, then what does Johnson mean? I can arrive at only one conclusion: that he interprets Trotsky's statement to mean that Marx's premise was a *real* world capitalism consisting of national economies connected by foreign trade. In a word, the reverse of what Trotsky did write! For, when following his exposition of the Marxian concept of a pure capitalism, Trotsky declared that the formulae "are in no way limited by national boundaries" and "are not adapted to national capitalism" he was thereby stating that national divisions, and thus, foreign trade and markets abroad, are assumed to be non-existent! And Johnson's misinterpretation of Trotsky's thought also partially explains his confused criticism discussed in point I above.

III. However, Johnson's confusion goes much deeper than a mere misinterpretation of this or that passage from Trotsky or Marx. It extends to the very formulae with which his letter is concerned. What are these formulae, according to Johnson? He tells us: "The only formula in the chapter on "Reproduction on an Enlarged Scale" is the formula  $I(v + s)$  must be greater than  $IIc$ , if accumulation is to take place." Simple enough—a single formula. Yet, is it not strange that Trotsky constantly referred to many formulas? Is it not even stranger that despite the numerous controversies among Marxists in regard to these formulae, not a single disputant denied the validity of the formula cited by Johnson? \*\* A single formula? Yet even a cursory glance at the aforementioned last chapter of the second volume of *Capital*—not to speak of a study of the chapter or a knowledge of Marx's theory!—reveals a whole series of formulae without which Marx's theory would be meaningless!

However, let us examine the formula which Johnson tells

\*I do not propose to discuss the validity of the quoted statement taken by itself. This would take us too far afield, to a consideration of the theory of "underconsumption," held by bourgeois economists, and the Marxian theory of crises.

\*\*Johnson writes that "some of the greatest controversies in Marxism have hinged upon" the question of whether the premise of Marx's formulae is "a national capitalism." Apparently he is here referring to the famous dispute around Rosa Luxemburg's work on the accumulation of capital, and/or the earlier dispute in the Russian movement between Lenin and the Narodniki. In either case he is gravely mistaken as to the nature of these disputes. None of the disputants denied that Marx postulated a pure world capitalism. The differences, in the main, revolved around the question of whether on the basis of this abstract hypothesis there could be any accumulation at all under capitalism; that is, whether the capitalists could convert the surplus value into capital on the basis of a *pure capitalism*; or whether, even in theory, a non-capitalist market was indispensable for this accumulation. Rosa Luxemburg held the latter view; and from it she developed her theory of modern imperialism and her theory of capitalist collapse. Lenin, Hilferding, Bauer, Bukharin, etc., held the former position. But whatever the merit of either view, both sides accepted the fact that Marx assumed a pure world capitalism as the premise of his formulae.

us is the *differentia specifica* of extended reproduction and accumulation under capitalism.

Marx divided total social production into two great departments. The industries manufacturing producer goods (or means of production), he called *I*; and the industries producing consumer goods (or means of consumption), represented by *II*. The products of each department (as the products of each industry) are the sum of constant capital (the employed means of production), symbolized by *c*; variable capital (the value of the labor power paid the workers in wages), or *v*; and surplus values (the new value produced by the worker but owned by the capitalists), or *s*. Thus:

$$\begin{aligned} I c + v + s &= \text{Total Producer Goods} \\ II c + v + s &= \text{Total Consumer Goods} \end{aligned}$$

However, the products of these departments are not only values, embodiments of socially necessary labor, but also particular use values—machines, buildings, raw materials; food, shoes, clothing, etc. If, then, in a given economic cycle, let us say one year, the total producer goods manufactured only equal, both in value and in material form, the means of production used up in that period, the production during the next year can only be *on the same scale* as in the previous year. This would mean that the capitalists would directly consume the surplus value produced. Marx called this simple reproduction. If, however, there is to be an expansion of the scale of production, new producer goods must be manufactured in excess of the means of production required for mere replacement. This is what Marx called extended reproduction. And the conversion of part of the surplus value into new capital for expansion—possible only on the above condition—he called accumulation.

### What Marx Really Meant

Expressed in Marx's algebraic formula we get:

$Ic + v + s$  (or total producer goods manufactured) must be greater than  $Ic + IIc$  (or total producer goods used up), if accumulation is to take place. Or more simply:  $I(v + s)$  must be greater than  $IIc$ .

Here, then, is the formula which Johnson informs us is valid for capitalism alone. And apparently this is the great contribution of Marx. But what does the algebraic formula tell us? Merely this: that if there is to be accumulation and productive expansion, more producer goods must be manufactured than have been used up. An important but quite axiomatic proposition!

*It goes without saying* [Marx wrote] that as soon as we assume a process of accumulation,  $I(v + s)$  must be greater than  $IIc$ , not equal to  $IIc$ , as it is in the case of simple reproduction. (*Capital*, Vol. II, page 601. My emphasis—J. C.)

Johnson's "only" formula—that which is supposed to distinguish capitalism from all other economies—"goes without saying," according to Marx. This should not be surprising since, despite Johnson's view, the formula can be an algebraic expression of a necessary premise of accumulation in *any economic system taken as a whole*. In every economy, extended reproduction and accumulation are possible only if more producer goods are made in a given economic cycle than are used up. The products of every economy are a sum of the means of production used, living labor, and an excess produce above these material and human resources (no matter how measured). If then, we abstract the specific class meanings of the terms of Marx's formula (*c. v.* and *s*) so that the terms



symbolize the most general form of the three elements of the total products, we can state that  $I (v + s)$  must be greater than  $II c$  if accumulation is to take place.

Thus the algebraic formula cited by Johnson *taken abstractly* does not in itself describe the *specific social* character of the accumulation; nor does it tell us anything about the mechanism regulating the process of accumulation; how and why more producer goods are put out than consumed. Nor, whether extended reproduction and accumulation are a result of class exploitation. More precisely: the formula describes a necessary condition for *capitalist* accumulation only if the terms are actual capitalist categories—constant capital, variable capital, surplus value. Therefore one cannot prove that, e.g., Russian economy is a capitalist system—as Johnson seeks to do—by showing that the formula describes a necessary aspect of its process of accumulation. On the contrary, one must prove that the terms of the formula, the social relations of production, are in fact capitalist.

In economic forms of society of the most different kinds [Marx wrote] there occurs, not only simple reproduction, but, in varying degrees, reproduction on a progressively increasing scale. By degrees more is produced and more consumed, and consequently more products have to be converted into means of production. This process, however, does not present itself as accumulation of capital, nor as the function of a capitalist, so long as the laborer's means of production, and with them, his product and means of subsistence, do not confront him in the shape of capital. (*Capital*, Vol. I, page 655.)

And if Johnson had read Trotsky's article with care he would have noted that his alleged specific capitalist formula is nothing but an algebraic expression of Stalin's formulation of the *Marxian theory of accumulation against which Trotsky's article is directed!* Stalin had declared: "The Marxist theory of reproduction teaches that contemporary society cannot develop without annual accumulations, and it is impossible to accumulate without extended reproduction year in and year out. This is clear and evident." And Trotsky commented: "It cannot be clearer. But this is not taught by Marxist theory, for it is the general property of bourgeois political economy, its quintessence. . . . 'The Marxist theory of reproduction' refers to the *capitalist* mode of production." (*THE NEW INTERNATIONAL*, November, 1941, page 281.)

Of course, Trotsky is not denying that for accumulation there must be extended reproduction. He is emphasizing that it is not the contribution of Marxism, i.e., that there is nothing specifically "Marxist" in this conception. Johnson did not know he was repeating Stalin because he does not understand the meaning of the *Marxian theory of accumulation* and the algebraic formulae.

### Extended Reproduction and Accumulation

IV. It is not necessary or possible for me at this time to treat in any detail the highly complex question of the function of Marx's algebraic formulae of capitalist extended reproduction. However, some additional remarks are relevant to the present dispute.

(a) Marx sought, with the aid of these formulae, to determine the mechanism whereby in an *unregulated, anarchical system* in which the individual capitalists are interested solely in profits (and not in the particular use values which the produce) they can nonetheless find the *necessary material goods* for progressive expansion. For, unless the required producer and consumer goods are manufactured in proper proportions, progressive accumulation becomes difficult; and if the dispro-

portions are very great, impossible. Of course, such balance is never attained under capitalism (except by accident), and dislocations, overproduction and crises occur. However, to discover the inherent tendencies of the system, Marx assumed a pure capitalism in perfect equilibrium—that is, constructed what the scientists call "an ideally isolated system." On the one hand, he assumed that there were only workers and capitalists (and their retainers); that there were neither non-capitalist elements nor non-economic capitalist factors involved; that the workers received the full value of their labor power; that commodities exchanged at their value, etc., etc. On the other hand, he assumed that the development of production from one cycle to another took place at a *constant rate of increase*, e.g., the capitalists in each period converted only one-half of the surplus value into money capital; which in turn they transformed into (invested in a *fixed* proportion of constant capital (means of production) and variable capital (labor power).

Then he showed how, in such a system in equilibrium, the circulation of capital and commodities could take place so that there could be extended reproduction and accumulation. This requires not only that the production of producer goods in excess of the means of production used up in both departments of production (the formula cited by Johnson); but that these new producer goods (both as to their value and their use value) are manufactured in a proper relation to the output of consumer goods, and in accordance with the requirements of the economy for means of production for expansion. For example: if the producer goods put out exceed the needs of the economy for expansion (that is, cannot be converted into capital which would yield a profit to the capitalists!) then there is an overproduction of producer goods; and if this excess piles up, there follows a temporary breakdown of the system, crises. Or, if more consumer goods are put out than can be bought, accumulation can cease as a result of this overproduction even though  $I (c + v)$  is greater than  $II c$ . And so on.

Johnson does not understand the abstract-hypothetical premises of Marx's formulae and, therefore, cannot comprehend that the formulae are not supposed to "apply" to a concrete, real capitalism or to "a national capitalism"—let alone Russian economy.

(b) The regulating principle of capitalist accumulation, according to Marx, is the insatiable drive of the capitalists for profits. This is the *unique* driving force of *capitalist* extended reproduction flowing from the capital-labor relations of production, and without which the contradictions and antagonisms of capitalism cannot be explained. In fact the social difficulties of accumulation arise precisely because capitalism is a profit-economy. *Strange to say, for Johnson profits are not an essential feature of capitalism!*

### A Capitalism Without Profits

For example, in this article, *Russia and Marxism*, (THE NEW INTERNATIONAL, September, 1941) he defines capitalism without a single reference to profits. He tells us that capitalism "is organized and must be organized for the production of surplus value (production for the sake of production)." And further, that its "main aim . . . is nothing but the expansion of this accumulated labor." So that, he adds, in Russia also (1) "the main aim of production (is) the production of surplus value for the specific purpose of increasing production" (page 215). Then why do the capitalists ever cease pro-

ducing? Because they cannot *produce* "surplus value" or because they cannot *realize* surplus value? But why should they be interested in these obstacles if their "specific purpose" is "increasing production"?

Johnson here shows that he has read Marx... but without much success. Again, he tries to paraphrase a major thought of the Marxian theory of capitalist accumulation but forgets the essential element, i.e., the driving force of this accumulation! It is precisely the drive for profits which compels the capitalists constantly to produce, expand and accumulate *in order that they can realize greater profits—or perish as capitalists in the competitive struggle!*

However, Johnson's failure to mention profits in his definition of capitalism was not an oversight—he simply does not comprehend what they are.

Profit is only a "peculiar form" of surplus value [he once wrote]. Surplus value can take the form of capitalist wages "for quantity and quality of work performed" (in Russian today its distribution takes very unusual forms). But it can be produced in only one way. (THE NEW INTERNATIONAL, April, 1941, page 57.)

In other words, in Russia there is "surplus value" but not "profit." Profit is only a "peculiar form" of surplus value? Quite right; this is what Marx stated. *But Marx referred to profits as the peculiar capitalist form of surplus value or surplus labor!*

And now let us take profit [Marx wrote]. *This definite form of surplus value is a prerequisite for the new creation of means of production by means of capitalist production. It is a relation which dominates reproduction...* Furthermore, the entire process of capitalist production is regulated by the prices of production. But the regulating of the prices of production are in turn regulated by the equalization of the rate of profit and by the distribution of capital among the various spheres of production in correspondence with this equalization. *Profit, then, appears here as the main factor, not of the distribution of products, but of their production itself, as a part in the distribution of capital and labor among the various spheres of production.* (Capital, Vol. III, pages 1028-29. My emphases,—J. C.)

### The Formulae and Russia

Let us grant, then, that in Russia there is "surplus value" but no "profits." But then it is not profits (*in the capitalist sense*) which regulate the distribution of the material and human resources to the various spheres of production, which determine the prices of production, and the process of reproduction. Of course, there is class exploitation and surplus labor. The ruling class, the bureaucracy, is interested in the production of more and more surplus labor as the source of its increased revenues (higher living standards) and its accumulation-fund for expansion—essential for its class security and development. The peculiar character of Russian economy, however, which determines its specific process of reproduction and accumulation flows from the fact that the bureaucracy owns the means of production and exchange through its control of the state, and the enslaved character of the working class. The process of accumulation is then consciously directed through the state, and the state alone. It is this "special manner" in which the factors of production are united, this specific way in which surplus labor is extracted from the working class, that differentiates bureaucratic collectivism from capitalism.

Of course, since Russian economy is a system of class exploitation (and based on modern machine technology) and since it operates in a world dominated by capitalism, it neces-

sarily has many features in common with capitalism. However, the basic class relations and therefore the specific character of the economy and its process of accumulation are qualitatively different. (Cf., my article, "Bureaucratic Collectivism," THE NEW INTERNATIONAL, September, 1941.)

V. Now let us return to Trotsky's article. Johnson calls to our attention Trotsky's statement that the Marxian formulae of extended reproduction are valid for capitalism alone. He therefore asks: Do the formulae "apply" to present-day Russian economy?

I have already showed that:

(a) Trotsky correctly wrote that the Marxian formulae taken as a whole assume a pure world capitalism—and "apply" to neither "a national capitalism," nor Russian economy of 1930. Not even Johnson will contend that present-day Soviet economy is "pure" or a "world capitalism."

(b) The specific formula cited by Johnson taken in its most abstract form is merely an algebraic expression of *Stalin's statement (of the "Marxian theory of extended reproduction") against which Trotsky's article is directed.*

(c) In its abstract form this formula does describe a premise or necessary condition for accumulation in any economy, and therefore in Russia; but then this formula, divorced of its specific capitalist terms, cannot indicate that Russia is a capitalist economy. (How else, by the way, would Johnson formulate in algebraic terms the elementary premise of extended reproduction under a workers' state or even socialism?)

\* \* \*

In addition, it should be added that, despite some ambiguity, Trotsky used interchangeably the Marxian theory of extended reproduction and the formulae of the second volume of *Capital*; that is, he did not deal with the algebraic formulae in their most abstract form (as explained above) but only in their general capitalist form. Thus, he wrote that the formulae of capitalist extended reproduction have as their "central point... the pursuit of profits."

In fact, in Stalin's speech there is no direct reference to the formulae, but only to the Marxian theory of extended reproduction.—Cf. *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. 10, No. 2, January 9, 1930, page 18.)

In any case, it should be clear from a reading of Trotsky's article that his thesis is that the Marxian *theory* of accumulation was not valid for Russia of 1930, or for socialism; and that it is valid for capitalism alone. In this I, of course, agree completely with Trotsky. And this is the real issue which Johnson raises by his letter as he makes clear when he writes that the matter in dispute is "Marx's theory of reproduction and extension of the total social capital." (Cf. *his point I c.*) And as previously stated, this theory, whose central point is the pursuit of profits, does not explain the process of accumulation in present-day Russia.

JOSEPH CARTER

# What Next in Europe?

## A Discussion Article

The following considerations are prompted by reports we have received from the French Trotskyists with regard to their attitude toward Stalinism and by a document of a French Trotskyist organization which is contained in the March issue of the *Fourth International*. They have been prompted by the conviction that a continuation of its present attitude to Stalinism and the Soviet Union will doom the Trotskyist group of France.

We do not intend to discuss the question of the Soviet Union. What is to be said about it has been excellently stated in the pages of this magazine and the writer agrees with those views, especially with the position of Carter and Kent. We shall only treat with Stalinist policies in Europe, its aims and what I believe our attitude toward it should be.

After declaring that the policy of the Communist Party has lost all working class character, the French comrades in the above mentioned document proceed: "Under conditions of illegality, the apparatus of the Communist Party cannot directly control the rank and file groups. Thus great possibilities for united action are open to us. *The common platform for them and for us is the defense of the SU. Our common goal is the proletarian revolution.* The unity of action will enable us to exercise a *friendly criticism* and to detach the Communist workers from Stalinism (emphasis mine—E.). These few lines contain an almost incredible amount of confusion and denote a political blindness of the most dangerous sort. First we have the time-worn explanation of the "sane" membership and the "bad" leaders; the leadership and policy of the CP has lost its working class character but the members fight for the "proletarian revolution."

### "Marxian Scholasticism"

This is an example of a scholastic approach, very typical of a certain kind of political thinking in a period of decadence in Marxian thought. No analysis is given of what are the real motives and reasons behind the attitude and thinking of members of the Communist Parties. No attempt is made to clarify the changes which have occurred in the political motives and the thinking of the rank and file members. This whole matter is dismissed by the formula: the good members and the bad leaders. It is, of course, obvious that the aims and ideas of the leadership and members of the CP may not coincide, but if it were true that the membership of the CP stands for the proletarian revolution I cannot see why the the founding of a separate party was held necessary, years ago. The policy of working from within would still be the only correct and workable one. But is this really true? For example, do the average rank and file members have the same ideas on the proletarian dictatorship that we do? We deny this most emphatically.

"Politics is the art of the concrete," Lenin liked to say. But for many of the would-be "Leninists" politics has become the art of the abstract. Not the living reality is analyzed, but formulae are substituted for analysis. Webster defines scholasticism as "close adherence to traditional teachings and methods prescribed by schools and sects." And, indeed, no better

definition could be found for this type of scholasticism prevalent among many Marxists in our time. The "variable," in their explanation, is constituted by the different turns of Stalinist policy, whereas the "constant" is furnished by a repetitious roundelay about the sanity of the rank and file. But, has it not occurred to them that in fifteen years of undisputed reign of Stalinist theory inside the Communist movement, the basic thinking of the rank and file members also must have been heavily influenced? Has it not occurred to them that such a phenomenon is often observed in history (e.g., church, etc.)?

Fifteen years of Stalinist theory and practice have profoundly influenced the mentality of the average members of the Stalinist party. His ideas about socialism have been completely distorted by the example of the Soviet Union, his conception of proletarian morals has been fundamentally influenced by what is going on there, above all, the concepts socialism and democracy have been completely disassociated in his mind in these years. He has been led to imagine that the proletarian revolution is a product of a concerted drive by some leaders who conquer power and hold it. His concept of revolution is not that of spontaneous revolutionary activity of the masses but that of a "revolutionary" shepherd driving his herd where he considers it best and most suitable.

### Two Kinds of United Front

Does all this mean that we are in principle against a united front with local organizations of the Stalinists? Not at all. Just as we were for a united front policy with the social democracy in Germany before the Nazis came to power, so we are for united front actions in principle with Stalinist workers. It is impossible to decide from here whether or not this is warranted in the given concrete situation. But the decisive point is: do we make a united front with organizations, whose leadership we characterize as counter-revolutionary, on the basis of defending principles or in a general defense of the working class. There is a gulf between the two. Of course, we can make united front against the rising cost of life, for better pay, for a common defense against the Nazified French police, against the Gestapo and for many other practical objectives. The contacts established in these common actions can then be utilized to make clear what is, and to fight for Marxian socialism as opposed to Stalinism. But what the French comrades propose is a quite different form of united front based presumably on common principles. Such a united front can only lead to self-destruction of the group itself, because its *raison de vivre* is to preserve certain principles of socialism which are or should be the exact opposite of principles fostered by the Stalinists.

The struggle inside the workers' movement should be confined to a dispute over "totalitarian" or "democratic" concepts of the proletarian revolution: are you for a workers' state which is based on democratic soviets as the basis of the proletarian power, or are you for a one-party system, with a bureaucratic apparatus controlling the destiny of the country in the name of the proletariat. Are you for a dictatorship from above, or from below? *Hic Rhodos hic Salta*. This is the cru-

cial question of the times to come. The crime of Stalin is not that he failed to do this or that; *his crime is anti-socialism*. The systematic deformation of the fundamental ideas of socialism, above all, is why we reproach Stalinism. What has to be restated as the root of revolutionary theory is the fact that there can be no socialism without democracy, that five-year plans of themselves have nothing in common with socialism. This is the message the young socialist revolutionaries must bring to the workers of Europe. Can this be achieved by "friendly criticism," by stating that, in fact, there is the common ground of the "proletarian dictatorship" upon which we both stand?

Only two explanations can be found for such an unprincipled attitude. One, either these comrades themselves do not clearly visualize the foregoing fundamental difference and still think in the manner of the by-gone days on the "right" or "left" deviations of Stalin. Or, two, while realizing this, they believe they are making a very "clever" strategical move. But strategical moves which abandon the very principles of our existence are criminal, especially when they are for the sake of "not hurting feelings." There are certainly many communists, especially among the younger generation, who are not by any means lost to the cause of the socialist revolution, but they can be won only by a clear-cut criticism, by a merciless pounding at the very heart of the counter-revolutionary theories of Stalinism. In periods of decline and defeat like the present, what is needed most is a clear vision of principles and a relentless fight for the preservation of the idea of democratic socialism. With the mounting tide of alien and hostile ideologies, it is urgently needed to state and restate them, not to regard them as matters which are to be taken for granted.

What is further required today is the understanding that Stalinism is not an ideological trend within the working class movement itself, but is really an ideology of an oppressor. To make this clear among the most advanced sections of the proletariat is one of the main tasks of the revolutionaries in Europe. It is a tragic misconception of their rôle if these revolutionaries think that they must concentrate on the CP, on gaining influence among this or that isolated group of communists. They continue to act as though there were still a powerfully established workers' movement, of which they are one tendency. They overlook the consequences of the great defeats of the European working class in the last ten years. It is necessary to understand first that what is needed in this dark hour is a constant restatement of the ideas of the *Communist Manifesto*, a restatement of the principles of socialism as the autonomous movement of the proletariat. Once that is understood the tactical question can be resolved.

Most of the theoretical material which is now produced by these people might come under the heading: the policy of "if." If there were a class-conscious proletarian movement, it must take this or that stand on concrete questions. They put the end at the beginning and try to write an "April Thesis" for a Bolshevik Party which does not exist. Such theories are bound to be entirely without value for the very simple reason that if there existed a movement of the kind they speak about, then the objective situation would be altered and the tactical problems would again be different. A small revolutionary socialist group which does not represent a real mass movement should not split hairs about this or that hypothetical turn in their tactical approach to a movement which is absolutely outside their reach. They ought to concentrate on the restatement and elaboration of the broad lines of socialist

thought, on the propaganda for the socialist aim among the most advanced layers of the proletariat.

### With or Against the Stream

The French Trotskyists report that they have established close contacts with certain local Stalinist organizations and that they even issue a common newspaper. What is this other than a simple capitulation. This newspaper cannot even accuse Stalin of the crimes committed against socialism in the Soviet Union; it can say nothing about the class character of the USSR. Instead it will "defend the SU" and state their "common belief in proletarian dictatorship." This means that it can only contribute to retarding the political consciousness of its readers. It can only make them believe that "after all, there are tactical differences between us; we agree on the principles."

In the French movement there are people who raised the question of the character of the SU long ago and these same people now approve not only the the defense of the Soviet Union but also the unprincipled deal with the local Stalinists. The only explanation for this is to be found in the fact that it is very difficult to go "against the current." Isolation from political events is depressing; a revolutionary seeks always to be in the midst of the struggle. But the chief virtue of the revolutionary in these times is to have the courage to stand alone in the fight to uphold socialist principles precisely because he is firmly convinced of their future.

The Stalinists have a clear and logical program in their defense of the Soviet Union. They sabotage the German war machine wherever they can and they support the Allied imperialists wherever and whenever the occasion presents itself. What concrete steps do the French Trotskyists propose in the defense of the Soviet Union. The answer which states that the continuation of the class struggle is the best defense of Russia is no answer at all. Continuation of the class struggle is a primary consideration of revolutionaries quite apart from defense or no defense of the Soviet Union. Scholastic distinctions between the "good" socialist base (the Soviet Union) and the "bad" Stalinist leadership does not give any answer to the concrete problem. How shall we aid the Soviet Union? the Stalinists will ask, and the French Trotskyists can only answer by an abstraction or they must more or less adopt Stalinist propositions.

One of the most important traditions of the Trotskyist movement has been its internationalism. Trotsky never analyzed a question without considering its international consequences. But this sound internationalist basis is also endangered by the French comrades. If you propose a united front with Stalinists for the defense of the Soviet Union this must also have repercussions on your general political policies. It is absurd to say: "We are for revolutionary methods in France. The Stalinists are actually in cooperation with British imperialism and stand for a new Versailles. If you are for a peace brought about by fraternization with the soldiers and workers of Germany, if you are for the closest cooperation with a German revolutionary movement, how can you be in a united front with the Stalinists, whose aim is to behead a mass revolution as quickly as it springs up. The only logical defense of the SU, under the circumstances, is the one which the Stalinists propagate and it is a course which is completely devoid of internationalism. Any other course is impossible. The pitiful scholastic distinctions in the above mentioned document are proof of this.

## The Issues at Stake

We already imagine our critics saying: You propose to remain in splendid isolation, not to engage in the real struggles which are now going on. You abandon the thousands of sincere workers who are inside the communist movement. You advocate a policy of complete isolation for the proletarian vanguard. Our answer is twofold. First, the present isolation of the revolutionaries is a fact not caused by this or that policy; it is the outcome of political events of the last fifteen years. It is the product of objective circumstances and it cannot be changed by this or that clever move but only by objective conditions.

The question is not *if* we are to try to influence and to gain communist workers, but *how* we are to achieve this. One proposition is to exercise "friendly criticism," i.e., to blur the real issues at stake for the sake of gaining some momentary influence. This, in its very essence, is an opportunistic proposition. The other proposition is to state, very bluntly, things as they are.

## The Menace to the Coming European Revolution

Some weeks ago in a *Labor Action* article, I attempted to outline roughly some of the reasons which explain the continued dominant position of the Stalinist organizations in France and among the workers of many other European countries. The most important seem to be: (1) the traditional linking, in the minds of advanced workers, or revolutionary action with Moscow, the capital of the first successful proletarian revolution, and (2) the absence of self-reliance by large layers of the proletariat which, as a result of continuous defeats, unemployment and starvation, has lost confidence in its own strength and craves for leadership and direction from the outside. I should now like to stress another more concrete aspect of the same problem: What the rôle of Stalinism will be in the coming European revolution.

It should, of course, be realized that such discussions are bound to be hypothetical. They are based on *possible* trends. It may be that history will take an entirely different course, but awareness of the implications of all possible trends is essential to any attempt to play an active rôle in the future course of history. Our aim is not to prophesy but to attempt to make clear, by way of one possible tendency of development, what are the dangers stemming from the Stalinist movement.

Quite naturally, our attention must be directed toward the German movement, since we are convinced that, whereas the first great popular movements against fascist domination may well come from the occupied countries, it is more than probable that the fate of the European revolution as a whole will be decisively determined by what happens in Germany. There are numerous reasons for this. Germany has the greatest productive capacity of any European nation; it is today, and unless consciously weakened, will be tomorrow the most powerful country on the Continent. Even in terms of numerical strength, not to speak of cultural level, its working class, compared to the working classes of other countries, is more advanced. On the other hand, it should be remembered (especially by certain neo-nationalists in the proletarian movement) that a revolt in the occupied countries is not possible before a decided weakening of the German war machine and German morale. Furthermore, the national question in the occupied countries complicates the picture of the whole struggle

to come there and for this practical reason we also prefer to take the Germans as our example.

Let us assume as one possibility a complete Nazi defeat on the Russian front. The beaten army retreats to Germany; its discipline is broken; revolutionary propaganda eats its way into the army; councils of revolutionary soldiers spontaneously arise everywhere. The generals try to stop this by an attempt at staging a palace coup against Hitler, but things have already gone too far; the officers have lost their hold on the army; they cannot stop the outbursts of passion and hatred against them and the system as a whole. At the same time the workers have begun to seize power in Germany itself. A series of demonstrations spread throughout Germany; mass strikes, armed clashes occur between the workers and the élite guard of the régime; the Nazi apparatus disintegrates; the revolutionary process develops beyond its control.

In such a situation the crucial question of the German revolution arises: Will a new state machine of oppression replace Hitler, or will the workers be able to control their destiny and that of society through their own democratically constituted councils? Here the degree of class-consciousness and political clarity of the German workers will be of tremendous importance, will, indeed, be *the* crucial question.

Britain and America undoubtedly will try to utilize those social-democratic and "liberal" politicians whom they are keeping in stock for such an occasion, in order to build some sort of puppet government. These tools of the "democratic" nations will try to find mass support among the former social-democratic and Catholic workers, seeking to lure them with promises of big Allied help and promising a return of "law and order." But we do not consider this the paramount danger to the German proletarian revolution. A repetition of "Weimar" is a prospect which cannot possibly attract the German worker. "Weimar" is too much linked to "Versailles." German labor has been fooled once before into handing over its power to the Eberts and Noskes, and we are convinced that the class as a whole has thereby acquired experiences which will be remembered tomorrow. Furthermore, we think that the "morale" inside the Allied armies will in any case make it impossible, after a long military conflict, to employ English and American soldiers as a tool to crush a German socialist revolution.

Thus, once again, we are drawn to the conclusion that the greatest danger will come from Stalinism. Here is a counter-revolutionary force, still clad in the attractive, if usurped, cloak of the October Revolution (at least in the eyes of many German workers) and here is an apparatus which knows the mentality of the German worker far better than do the Allies. Here is a force which appears to be opposed to a new Versailles. Above all, whereas counter-revolutionary movements sponsored by the Allies will have to come from outside the workers movement, the Stalinist counter-revolution will arise from within. A victorious Red Army advancing to the German borders would most probably, in the beginning, meet with considerable enthusiasm from large sections of the German working class.

But even in the Nazi apparatus itself, in its lower ranks as well as in the lower ranks of the army and state machine, a movement of instinctive sympathy for the Stalinists will appear. After all, many will feel, this is also a totalitarian régime and it might be possible to worm one's way into the more privileged strata of it. (Similar developments have taken place



in Spain and in the occupied Baltic states.) This might furthermore be linked with vague sentiments of a "socialism from above" which has always existed among certain ideologists of the left-wing Nazis (Niekisch, Juenger, etc.) The Stalinists will exploit these sentiments to the utmost. In the Baltic countries, after the Russian occupation, a great distrust toward the communist workers went together with a pronounced friendliness toward the government bureaucracy, provided they accepted the "accomplished facts" of the invasion.

The policy of the Stalinists will be (while talking of socialism and the revolution) to restrict as much as possible the spontaneous initiative of the workers seeking to establish their new proletarian democratically constituted councils. There may be agreement between revolutionaries and Stalinists with regard to expropriating the capitalists and destroying the power of the old ruling classes. It is of decisive importance to understand very clearly what Stalinism really is. If the German workers as a whole, and the revolutionary vanguard in particular will adhere to the belief that there are no fundamental differences between socialism and Stalinism because both are for the overthrow of the exploiting class, then the German revolution is inevitably lost. It is, therefore, essential to establish in the most outspoken manner that expropriation of the bourgeois and planned economy does not necessarily mean that the revolution is victorious or that socialism is approaching. Counter-revolution is not something peculiar to capitalism or fascism. Counter-revolution and oppression of the workers are possible on the basis of a nationalized and planned economy. Therefore, when Stalinists fight to smash private capitalism they do not necessarily fight for socialism. They are not our allies but our most deadly enemies, because they want to build a totalitarian bureaucratic state which shall oppress the workers as much as the bourgeoisie oppresses them. This means that the decisive question of the revolution is bound to be political and not economic. Where is the real power in society to be vested, in the soviets or in the state machine? Are the workers to have a free determination of their destiny through the channel of their democratically elected councils in which all working class tendencies can be represented, or shall power be vested in a new state apparatus governing ostensibly in the name of the proletariat but in reality over the proletariat.

Even if the workers have no clear understanding of the danger of Stalinism, they will spontaneously form their own

councils, occupy the factories and organize their armed guards. A race for time will take place between the Stalinist attempt to "reorganize" the country and the workers' councils of action. In such a situation, a revolutionary socialist movement with a clear conception of the issues at stake, will have great importance. It will be able to clarify the instinctive feeling of the masses, help to organize and coordinate the action of the different regional soviets into a national representative body, fight every attempt to take power out of the hands of the workers and to vest it in the hands of a bureaucratic apparatus. But such a gigantic task can only be performed by those who have the most acute insight into the real situation, who know from where the danger comes. The education of such elements of a future vanguard is what is necessary to do today. The elaboration of a clarified political program with regard to these fundamental questions, is the burning need of the hour. What is required are not people who want to play the "game" of politics according to long-established rules, but revolutionaries who are able to grasp and cope with the fundamental problems of our time.

An analogous situation will also arise in the occupied countries. While immediate circumstances might take a different shape, the essential questions discussed above will be the same. Therefore, we can only say to our French friends: the road which you propose to travel can only lead to failure and defeat. If you abandon a principled attitude on decisive questions today in order not to be out of tune with existing mass sentiments, you will be thoroughly incapable of coping with the immense possibilities of tomorrow. Because of a sterile desire not to lose contact with today you will have surrendered your right to take a leading place with the vanguard of tomorrow.

These brief and incomplete remarks can find no better conclusion than the words which Rosa Luxemburg wrote many years ago but which hold as true today as then: "If we detect a stagnation in our movement as far as these theoretical matters are concerned, this is not because the Marxian theory upon which we are nourished is incapable of development or has become out of date. On the contrary, it is because we have not yet learned how to make an adequate use of the most important mental weapons which we had taken out of the Marxian arsenal. . . . The scrupulous endeavor to keep within the bounds of Marxism may at times have been just as disastrous to the integrity of the thought process as has been the other extreme. . . ."

EUROPACUS.

**ARCHIVES OF THE REVOLUTION** Documents Relating to the History and Doctrine of Revolutionary Marxism

## The Social Roots of Opportunism – II

[Continued from Last Issue]

The leaders of German imperialism know exactly how dependent the German social democracy is upon its petty bourgeois camp-followers. And they know very well how to play upon the chords of "patriotism."

Above all else the imperialist gentlemen would like to be assured of the demoralization of the workers, main pillar of the German social democracy. In a book which appeared shortly before the outbreak of the war the well-known Ger-

man imperialist, Rüdorffer (the active German diplomat, Ritzner), gives expression to the following sober views: "If international socialism should succeed in severing the worker, in his innermost convictions, from the woof of the nation and in making him a mere link of his class, then its victory is assured. For the purely violent means by which the national state can attempt to keep the worker fettered to itself must, by themselves and in the long run, prove to be entirely untenable. Should international socialism fail in this, however, and should those internal bonds which, even unconsciously, bind



the worker to the organism known as the nation remain intact, then the victory of international socialism remains questionable as long as these bonds exist and turns into a defeat in case these bonds should, in the last analysis, prove to be the stronger." (*Grundzüge der Weltpolitik in der Gegenwart*, p. 173, 1914.)

That is how things stand with regard to the workers. So far as the petty-bourgeois camp-followers are concerned, Mr. Rüdorffer sees no cause for worry. "When the government of Prince Bülow dissolved the Reichstag in 1907 over a question of colonial policy and appealed to the people, election experts, clinging to the experiences of previous days, regarded the electoral slogan as unpopular and held that a defeat was inevitable. The contrary happened. The older generation of politicians stood there, amazed at the elemental force of the nation's will to self-assertiveness in world politics," Rüdorffer-Ritzner tells us. Indeed, the patriotic propaganda of Bülow and his friends led to the most favorable results. The demagogic outcry about "defense of the fatherland," and "national interests," etc., exerted great influence over wide layers of the population. "No bourgeois party," writes Rüdorffer, "can permit itself a policy of negation in such questions; even the social democracy must, in its parliamentary conduct and in its agitation among the people, reckon with the national argument more and more each year." And several pages later, the same author says: "Even the social democracy which, bound by its program, naturally remains in opposition, must exercise a certain amount of prudence and moderation in combatting such demands and will not deny the fact that when such a question leads to new elections, it is sure to suffer a painful defeat." (*L.e.*, pp. 103, 110.)

Rüdorffer has observed the facts very correctly: out of the fear of losing its camp-followers, the official German social democracy has always made big concessions to petty bourgeois "patriotism." "The election campaigns of the last few decades," the same author continues, "have showed ever more distinctly that every emphasis upon the national questions by its opponents has reduced the attractive powers of the social-democratic movement and that socialist agitation itself has been forced to conceal or to adulterate the international side of its program when facing its voters. . . . The party has been forced, in practice, to restrict its internationalism and to submerge it by means of all kinds of conditioning clauses. It has not dared to develop sharp agitational campaigns against any of the great armament budgets proposed in the past decade and its opposition, to which it is theoretically obligated, has been conducted with a certain amount of prudence. It has indignantly denied the assertions of its opponents that in case of war, the social democracy will instigate the laboring masses following the party to turn their weapons against their leaders and thus seek to prevent the war together with the French socialists. Indeed, it even regards complaints of its lack of patriotism as insults." (*L.e.*, p. 176. Note that all this was written before the war.

### Socialism by Votes

The facts are here once again described correctly. The official German social democracy actually avoided an open struggle against bourgeois "patriotism." It took up the struggle against the bourgeoisie *on the latter's own premises*. The official opposition of the German social democracy in this question was exhausted by the thesis: "We are also patriots, we are even better patriots than you are." Instead of a strug-

gle between two principles—internationalism against nationalism—there appeared an unprincipled rivalry over the question as to who the greater "patriots" were. And there can remain no doubt: *this position of the official German social democracy was determined in a very important measure by opportunist considerations as to how to hold the camp-followers to the party*. It suffices to recall the fact that in 1911 Molkenbuhr (one of the pillars of the party leadership and officially a "Marxist" and not an opportunist) proposed that the International Socialist Bureau shall not be convoked and that no alarm should be sounded over the Morocco conflict. He based this position upon the grounds that Reichstag elections were approaching in Germany and that it would not be favorable for the social democracy to have international politics debated at every election meeting and in every village in place of the questions of internal policy.

Immediate successes in the elections, even if they had to be paid for at the price of concessions to national prejudice—that was always the aim of the opportunist wing of the German social democracy. The greatest possible number of seats in Parliament—that is the Alpha and Omega of the policy of opportunism.

The old leaders of the social democracy attempted to combat this tendency which was steadily gaining the upper hand. But not always with success. On the eve of the elections of 1912 Bebel made a speech in Hamburg in which he postulated the following thesis: Let us rather have 50 deputies and 4,000,000 votes than 100 deputies and 3,000 votes. In other words: what is important for us is not the number of seats in Parliament, but the number of sympathizers we have among the population. This was a feeble attempt to enter into a struggle against the policy of adaptation to the camp-followers. Only a feeble attempt; for, in order to speak out clearly it would have been necessary to say: let us rather have 2,000,000 votes of *convinced socialists* than 4,000,000 votes at the price of an adulteration of socialism; let us rather have twenty deputies who are really *socialists* than a hundred deputies of whom half are still deeply immersed in the petty bourgeoisie. But even for this feeble attempt Bebel was fiercely attacked by the opportunists. And to tell the truth, the elections of 1912 actually proceeded far more under the banner of Südekum than under that of old Bebel.

The opportunists began to demand ever more openly that the line of the social democracy be determined *not* by the party, not by the sum total of the *party* organization, but by all the *voters*. For while the party amounted altogether to about 1,000,000 members, the voters on the other hand, numbered fully 4,500,000. "Our responsibility is toward broader masses," said the opportunists.

In 1912 the German social democracy consisted of 4,827 locals and over 1,000,000 members—970,112 men and 130,371 women. For every hundred voters there were only 22.8 party members. "We," said the opportunists, "want to be responsible not only to these 22 but also to the other 78." In reality this meant that they wanted to free themselves of all responsibility, of *any kind* of discipline from the side of the organized socialist workers. In reality this meant that they considered themselves the political representatives *not of a revolutionary class, not of a revolutionary party, but of an accidental mass of petty bourgeois camp-followers* who are radical today but fall into the arm of nationalism and reaction tomorrow, who vote for the social democracy today and tomorrow serve as tools of a robber imperialism.

Naturally, we do not wish to contend that the opportunism inside of the German social democracy arose only and exclusively because of the camp-followers. No, opportunism is the product of a whole series of facts. The camp-followers, however, constitute *one of the channels* through which opportunism penetrates the workers' party.

The opportunists won the victory over the Marxists in the German social democracy and not in the German alone. *That signifies*, among other things, that the policy of adaptation to the petty bourgeois camp-followers defeated the other policy. The official German social democracy has itself become a camp-follower, an agent, a tool of imperialism.

### The Labor Bureaucracy

The term "labor bureaucracy" was long ago legitimized in scientific and political literature. When we spoke of labor bureaucracy before the war we understood by that almost exclusively the British trade unions. We had in mind the fundamental works of the Webbs, the caste spirit, the reactionary rôle of the bureaucracy in the old British trade unionism, and we said to ourselves: how fortunate that we have not been created in that image, how fortunate that this cup of grief has been spared our labor movement on the continent!

But we have been drinking for a long time out of this very cup. In the labor movement of *Germany*—a movement which served as a model for socialists of all countries before the war—there has arisen just as numerous and just as reactionary a caste of labor bureaucrats. The present crisis has revealed this fact with unsparing clarity.

Up to now little has been known of the numerical composition of the labor bureaucracy, of its influence, of its income, of its corporative organizational strength. Just as a great many things are concealed from the public eye and wrought in secrecy within the circle of the leaders of the capitalist trusts, so it is in that closed caste of the labor bureaucracy which represents a unique job trust that directs the mass organization of the workers in all countries with an advanced labor movement. It is a characteristic attribute of every caste to be shut off from the entire world outside of it, to be accessible only to the initiated. That is why it is so extraordinarily difficult to obtain factual data about the rôle of the labor bureaucracy.

### The Type of Functionary

Let us first of all turn our attention to the labor movement in *Germany*. How strong is the labor bureaucracy there? How big is the influence of the "leaders" of the mass movement? Let us dwell for a while on the quantitative side of the matter. Several exceptionally interesting descriptions of the rôle of the labor bureaucracy, i.e., the rôle of the functionaries in the social democratic party and in the free\* trade unions may be found in the *Handbuch des Vereins Arbeiterpresse*. This manual has been appearing only for the past three years and is accessible only to functionaries of the labor movement. It cannot be obtained in book stores. With great effort we succeeded in getting a copy of it for the purposes of this work.\*\*

\*The German trade unions were designated as "free" in contradistinction to the "yellow" company unions and the Catholic unions.—*Trans.*

\*\*We received this rare material on the situation of the German social democracy through the gracious aid of Comrade Julian Borchardt, to whom we express our thanks here.

At the very end of the booklet there is an alphabetical index of all the paid officials working for the party and the free trade unions. This register of names alone occupies 26 pages of three columns each in print of the very smallest petit type. According to our calculation, the entire number of paid officials working for the party and the trade unions in 1914 amounts to 4,010. In Greater Berlin alone it amounts to 751, in Hamburg to 390. (*Handbuch des Vereins Arbeiterpresse*, pp. 252-299, 392-415, 534-589.)

The great majority of this "upper" four to five thousand are *workers* in their origin. We have thoroughly investigated the data for a number of cities and received the following results:

*Berlin*. For every 100 functionaries who were previously workers there are non-workers as follows: 17 clerks, salesmen and white collar employees, 2 lawyers, 4 journalists, 1 drug-gist, 1 waiter, 2 coachmen, 1 merchant.

*Berlin and the province* (without the big urban centers). For every 200 worker-functionaries there are: 27 clerks, salesmen, white collar employees, 5 artists and musicians, 10 journalists, 3 lawyers and physicians, 3 waiters, 2 coachmen.

*Hamburg*. For every 10 worker-functionaries there are: 4 clerks and salesmen, 3 sailors, 3 coachmen, 2 teachers, 2 waiters, 1 journalist, 1 judge, 1 shopkeeper.

*Munich*. Here a total of 129 party and trade union functionaries are employed, among them: 85 workers, 13 clerks and salesmen, 9 journalists, 4 merchants, 3 officials, 3 waiters, 1 photographer, 1 coachman.

*Frankfort*. A total of 103 party and trade union functionaries, among them: 85 workers, 4 journalists, 4 salesmen, 3 merchants, 4 officials, 1 barber, 1 waiter, 1 coachman.

*Dresden*. 153 functionaries, among them: 115 workers, 5 journalists, 4 officials, 2 merchants, 2 salesmen, 1 artist, 1 waiter, 1 barber.

*Stuttgart*. Altogether 134 functionaries. Among them: 116 workers, 8 clerks and salesmen, 4 journalists, 4 merchants, 1 official, 1 teacher.

*Karlsruhe*. Altogether 34, as follows: 28 workers, 4 white collar employees, 1 merchant, 1 chemist.

### Bureaucracy and Aristocracy

In general the picture is the same all over. The great, the overwhelming majority of the functionaries are *workers*. The purely bourgeois element (merchants, academicians, literary men, etc.) is strongest in the opportunist center, Munich, and in part also in Frankfort and Stuttgart. Generally, however, it may be said that workers constitute the absolutely preponderant element among the "upper" four thousand functionaries of the German labor movement. This fact cannot be disputed and in this respect our data here correspond with all the other data.

But the concept "worker," in and by itself, must be applied with the greatest care in this case. It would be better perhaps in this case not to say "worker" but "worker in his origin." For such party leaders as Scheidemann, Ebert, Legien, Pfannkuch, etc., also belong in the category of worker-functionaries. Scheidemann is a compositor, Ebert a saddler, Legien a turner, Pfannkuch a carpenter, Molkenbuhr a tobacco worker. In reality, however, these people are no longer workers and have not been for decades. They have incomes bigger than that of the average bourgeois and have long ago

given up their trades. They are workers in the same sense as the well known "labor" ministers John Burns, Henderson, Fisher, etc. And that holds true not only for the people in the center who stand on the highest rung of the bureaucratic ladder and direct all the affairs, like Legien, Scheidemann, etc. It holds true also for the *great majority of all the four thousand functionaries* of the German labor movement. In the provinces the picture is the same, the functionaries have long ago given up their original trade. They are workers in name only. In reality they are bureaucrats with a standard of living quite distinct from that of the average worker.

The worker-functionaries very often hail from the circles of the labor aristocracy. The labor *bureaucracy* and the labor *aristocracy* are blood brothers. The group interests of the one and of the other very often coincide. Nevertheless, labor bureaucracy and labor aristocracy are two different categories.\*

The four thousand constitute a particularly unique corporation that has a number of purely craft interests of its own. To protect their corporative interests they have founded their own special trade association of party and trade union functionaries. This association numbered 3,617 members in 1917 and had an income of 252,372 marks in membership dues. Interest on capital (and other incomes) netted the association 47,552 marks in 1913. (*Handbuch des Vereins Arbeiterpresse*, p. 60.) Apart from this, the functionaries in the individual branches of the labor movement have formed still other, separate mutual aid societies, etc. Thus, for example, an association of all functionaries employed in the coöperative movement. In 1912 this association had 7,194 members and its capital amounted to 2,919,191 marks. (*L.e.*, p. 73.)

The employees of the labor press, the editors, correspondents, reporters, etc., form a numerically large group in themselves. It suffices to point out that the free trades unions spent 2,604,411 marks for their union organs in 1912 alone. (*L.e.*, p. 1.) If we add to that the 70 social-democratic daily papers and all the numerous social-democratic weeklies and monthlies, then the sum of the salaries received by all the employees of these publications mounts high up into the million mark figures every year. It is easy to imagine what a large number of journalists, secretaries, etc., live on these millions. Those participating in the work of the labor press have their own professional society, the "Labor Press Association," which has been in existence for more than a decade. This association has worked out an entire scale of salaries for editors and editorial employees. The salaries of an editor, for instance, must be at least 2,200 marks—and with a bi-annual increase of 300—can mount up to 4,200 marks annually (*L.e.*, p. 51). In reality they are paid considerably *more*. There is a constant demand for editors. Often an "ad" appears in the party press: this or that paper is seeking the services of an editor, etc.

According to our calculation, 4,000 functionaries occupy at least 12,000—if not more—important party and trade union functions. Every more or less efficient functionary takes care simultaneously of two to three and often even more offices. He is at the same time a Reichstag deputy and an editor, a member of the Landtag and a party secretary, the president of a trade union, an editor, a coöperative functionary, a city councilman, etc. Thus all power in the party and trade unions accumulates in the hands of this upper 4,000. (The salaries accumulate, too. Many of the officials of the labor movement receive 10,000 marks and over per year.) The whole

business depends upon them. They hold in their hands the whole powerful apparatus of the press, of the organization, of the mutual aid societies, then entire electoral apparatus, etc.

### The Role of the Youth

At the moment in which we are setting down these figures, a report has come in of the death of the outstanding Hamburg social democrat, Adolph von Elm. In the obituaries are enumerated all the offices von Elm held in the last years of his life. We have counted a dozen and a half such offices in trade union and coöperative organizations. Reichstag deputy, chairman of the press commission, member of the social-democratic fraction of the city council, chairman of the district committee of the Wholesale Buying Association, etc., etc.—these are some of his offices. And von Elm is by no means an exception.

Regarding the number of persons vested with functions and of "representatives" in the individual provincial organizations of the social-democratic party, there is very little material in the press. There are some isolated examples, however, which are noteworthy. Thus, for instance, the social-democratic organization of the Baden district had 7,322 members all told in 1905; its representatives in the municipalities, however, reached a figure well above the thousand mark. (Minutes of the Jena Congress, 1905, p. 16.) Consequently, every seventh party member in Baden was, in a certain sense, a party functionary.

But the real power in the party does not reside in the hands of this relatively broad layer of "representatives." It rests in the hands of a much smaller stratum of party functionaries, the top bureaucracy. More than a thousand small employees, clerks, managers, etc., are directly dependent economically upon the party and trade union leadership. As early as 1904 there were already 1,476 men in the employ of the print shops belonging to the social democratic party (the number of editors had reached 329). In 1908, 298 men worked in the *Vorwärts* plant alone. All these people are just as dependent economically upon the higher bureaucrats as the workers are on any given private entrepreneur.

The business turnover of the *Vorwärts* alone reached the figure of 1,904,659 marks, i.e., about two million marks in 1914-1915 (from April 1, 1914, to March 31, 1915). The salaries for members of the editorial board of this paper amounted to 94,005 marks in the same year. In the course of the year 239,754 marks were paid out to editorial workers and other collaborators of the paper. In 1915-1916 (from April 1, 1915, to March 31, 1916) the turnover had dropped, in view of the war, to 1,406,726 marks. The expenditure for salaries remained about the same as before. (*Verband der Sozialdemokratischen Wahlvereine Berlins und Umgebung*, Annual Report, 1914-1916, p. 104.) In the fiscal year 1915 expenditures for the printing of the *Vorwärts* amounted to 997,573 marks, almost a million. The administration of the paper's circulation department required an expenditure of 33,914 marks that year. All the expenses of circulation totaled 419,773 marks. The *Vorwärts* alone is a great enterprise that feeds several hundred party functionaries and employees. It was upon these functionaries, above all, that the party leadership (Scheidemann and Co.) supported themselves when they seized possession of the *Vorwärts* with the aid of the government, at the end of 1916, violating the legal prerogatives of the oppositional Berlin organization. It was upon these functionaries that the party leadership supported itself also in

\*The rôle of the latter has a special sub-chapter devoted to it.

Bremen, Stuttgart and a number of other cities when they wrested from the oppositional majority the local newspapers, the publishing houses and book stores, the treasuries, etc., with methods of brutal force. The legal owner of the party property is in most cases some party functionary. If the majority of workers in any locality opposes the party leadership, the legal owner appeals, with Scheidemann's blessings, to the "law." The editors who permit an expression of the views of the opposition are discharged after being paid their salaries for six weeks in advance and—suddenly the paper becomes "patriotic." . . . The reactionary rôle of the labor bureaucracy is so openly revealed in such cases as to leave nothing more to be desired.

### The Rôle of the Youth

The youth organizations brought a breath of fresh air into this set-up. Here there was no stultifying routine. These organizations enjoyed organizational autonomy on a genuinely democratic basis. A spirit of equality and brotherliness prevailed. Every tendency toward bureaucratism was eschewed. And what happened? Hardly ten years passed before the official party (the "adults") succeeded in penetrating the youth committees as well with its bureaucrats.

Naturally the youth organizations never thought of refusing well-meant aid from the side of the adult "Marxists"; on the contrary, they valued it greatly. But the "party heads" did not restrict themselves to that. They wanted to get into their hands the entire apparatus of the youth organizations. For the youth are notoriously an "unreliable" band of enthusiasts. And by systematic efforts the "older" generation of opportunists succeeded completely in achieving their aim. Inside the responsive social democratic youth of Germany, in a state of continual ferment, an almost unanimous *opposition* against the official course has prevailed. But the official youth paper and the official youth committees stand entirely and completely behind Scheidemann and Co. The "adult" bureaucrats have done their "duty" to the "party." Wherever the youth has attempted, in the course of the war, to defend the autonomy of its organization, it has been deprived of its means of existence; the party subsidies have been withdrawn, they have been kicked out of the headquarters, the "People's Houses," in which they have been lodged. Finally, the recalcitrant organizations were dissolved altogether. That is what has recently happened in Hamburg, for instance, one of the great centers of the German labor movement.

The following table illustrates this process of the displacement of the democratic autonomous administration by bureaucratism from the top:

THE ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITTEES IN THE YOUTH\*

Year	Total No. of Comms.	Equal No. of Youths and Adults	Only Adults	More Than % Adults	More Than % Adults	Educ. Comms.	(Adult) Funct'g as Youth Orgs.	Youths Only
1909-10	360	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1910-11	454	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1911-12	574	132	53	89	11	66	62	—
1912-13	655	125	75	119	13	82	76	2
1913-14	837	117	32	104	37	70	112	3

\*We take these figures from the interesting article by Alfred Nussbaum, "Bureaucratie und Selbstverwaltung," published in the magazine *Die Jugend Internationale*, No. 5, December, 1916.

### Maintaining the Bureaucracy

The trade unions cite, in their literature, detailed data regarding the moneys required for the maintenance of the bureaucracy in the trade unions. In 1914 alone the administrative costs of the free trade unions of Germany reached the round sum of 12,877,090 marks.\* These administrative costs are for the greatest part expenses for the maintenance of functionaries. For all the other categories of expenditures, such as those for agitation, educational purposes, etc., are *entered separately*. Thus it appears that expenses for the maintenance of the trade union bureaucracy and several other administrative expenditures together amount to 13,000,000 marks annually, consequently to *over one million monthly*. The lion's share of these sums is spent directly on the salaries of the trade union functionaries; this is apparent from the figures of the expenditures incurred by the central administration of the free trade unions. Here the expenditures for salaries are quoted separately. Of the 2,009,834 marks constituting administrative costs, the salaries, the personal administrative costs, amount to 1,266,615 marks. (*L.e.*, p. 169.)

The total sum of all expenses paid out by the free trade unions in 1914 amounts to 79,547,272 marks. Of these 80 million, 12 million marks were spent in one year (1914) for agitation, maintenance of connections, etc., and 2,598,476 marks for educational purposes. (*L.e.*, p. 169.) Here we have again twelve and a half million marks, of which a good part was likewise spent for personal salaries due to speakers, journalists, etc. These twenty-five million, which are expended annually for administration, agitation, etc., are of course collected by more than one thousand trade union functionaries who form a closed corporation.

We cite below the latest data regarding the number of functionaries in the free trade unions of Germany. These data were made public in October, 1916. In forty-six trade unions—it is still only the free (social-democratic) trade unions that are in question—there were employed in 1914, before the outbreak of the war, the following number of functionaries (*Korrespondenzblatt der Gewerkschaften Deutschlands*, Statistical Supplement No. 4, October 1, 1916, p. 74):

In the Central Offices	407
In the District Offices	429
In the Local Unions	1,956
In the Editorial Offices of the Trade Union Papers	75
Total	2,867

Toward the end of 1914 this figure dropped to 2,287, toward the end of 1915 to 1,477. The war had cut the number of functionaries down to half the previous figure. But the *pre-war* figure must naturally be taken as the normal figure. Thus almost 3,000 paid officials—chairmen, presidents, editors, etc.—are employed by the German free trade unions.

In 1915—right in the middle of the war—the costs of the central administration of the German free trade unions amounted to 1,718,820 marks. The expenses are divided into two categories: for materials, and for personnel. The former amounted to 488,389 marks in 1915, the latter, i.e., the functionaries' salaries in the first place, to 1,230,431 marks. And that only in the central administration! Together with the expenses of the local departments, the administrative costs in 1914 amounted to 9,721,190 marks, i.e., almost ten million.

\*This sum was calculated on the basis of tables printed in the jubilee book of the secretary of the General Commission of the Trade Unions, F. Umbreit, *25 Jahre deutscher gewerkschafts bewegung; 1890 bis 1915*, pp. 164-169, 1915.

The publication of the trade union organs—a separate category—cost 2,079,049 marks (circulation, 2,610,695) in 1914, and 1,225,165 marks (circulation, 1,328,218) in 1915. Obviously, a good part of these sums is expended on salaries received by trade union officials, editors, editorial secretaries, permanent staff workers, etc.

These sums are enormously high!

In the social-democratic party as well as in the free trade unions there has been a notably over-developed *specialization of functions*—an extremely favorable circumstance for the labor bureaucracy. Hundreds of labor bureaucrats specialize in communal policy, in insurance problems, in the consumers coöperative system, etc. In the social-democratic Reichstag fraction the division of labor among the speakers according to professional specialities has taken on extreme forms. In the trade union movement the situation is the same. A whole science of bureaucracy—if one may say so—has arisen. The statutes of the German Metal Workers Federation, for instance, fill 47 printed pages and 39 paragraphs, of which each is once again subdivided into ten to twelve sections. That is really a complete bureaucratic encyclopedia. The uninitiated inevitably go astray in the midst of it. Only a specialist, a functionary who has been engaged in such affairs for years, can find his way in it without any trouble.

### “The Need for Trained People”

The good old German social reformists are very much concerned that the social democracy shall have “sufficiently trained” leaders, that the functionaries of the labor movement shall be up to the “necessarily high level” of their tasks. The bourgeois professor, Ferdinand Tönnies (today an open imperialist) proposes that the social-democratic party shall introduce regular examinations. Before a party member can become a candidate in the election, or for a secretarial post, he should be obliged to pass an examination. (Prof. Ferdinand Tönnies, *Politik und Moral*, p. 46, Frankfurt, 1901.) The well known Prof. Heinrich Herkner goes even further. He poses the question as to whether the great trade union federations can content themselves altogether with leaders of working-class origin. He foresees a situation in which the trade unions will soon be compelled to do without exclusively proletarian elements and to prefer as directors, persons who possess economic, juridical and commercial school training. (Heinrich Herkner, *Die Arbeiterfrage*, pp. 116-117, 5th ed.) That means nothing else than that the workers are being propositioned with the idea of choosing for themselves educated bourgeois as leaders, of selecting their functionaries from the ranks of the *bourgeois* intelligentsia “standing above the party.” And this proposition is not at all unexpected if we recall the usages in the labor movement of other advanced countries. In England, for instance, the socialist paper, *Daily Citizen*, founded by the trade unions, not so long ago selected its editors from among the staff of the bourgeois *Daily Mail*. The *Daily Citizen* could not, or did not want to, find sufficiently experienced journalists among the socialist writers. The paper was organized on the model of the “great” European newspapers. Inside of a very short time it ate up a millimark and went under. This is a very characteristic picture of the practices prevalent in these spheres. . . .

The reactionary rôle of the trade union bureaucracy is confirmed even by such moderate critics as the historians of the British trade union movement, the Webbs. But we cannot here go into the rôle of the labor bureaucracy in England

more thoroughly (the number of *top* functionaries in the trade unions in 1905 was 1,000; more recent figures are, unfortunately, not available). That would be too much of a digression.

In the land of “unlimited possibilities,” in America, the leaders of the labor unions sell themselves quite openly to the bourgeoisie. There the material dependence of the leaders upon the bourgeoisie is not even concealed. There it is a common practice for the capitalists and labor leaders, and their respective wives, to exchange valuable “gifts” after the conclusion of a wage agreement with the trade unions. Naturally, this is quite ordinary bribery. The labor leaders there are often pure and simple handy-men of the bourgeoisie, “labor lieutenants of the capitalist class,” as they say in America. That is no longer a matter of petty bourgeois hangovers or of the group interests of the labor aristocracy, but plain and ordinary venality. There, the trade unions do a wholesale and retail trade with labor votes before the presidential elections. The leaders of the labor unions over there take a prominent part in various capitalist associations.

One example: the notorious Samuel Gompers. He is simultaneously the president of the American Federation of Labor, that is, the trade union federation of the workers, and first vice-president of the Civic Federation, that is, the most important capitalist organization for the combatting of socialism. When Gompers came to Europe in 1909, Karl Kautsky extended to him this mocking greeting: “Welcome, brother—president of the American labor unions; begone, Mr. Vice-President of the National Federation of American capitalists!” (*Neue Zeit*, 1908-09, Vol. 27, Bk. II, pp. 677 f.)

### From the “Down-Under” Land

However, the reactionary rôle of the “socialist bureaucracy” appears nowhere so ostentatiously as in Australia, that veritable Land of Promise of social reformism. The first “labor ministry” in Australia was formed in Queensland in December, 1899. And ever since then the Australian labor movement has been a constant prey of leaders on the make for careers. Upon the backs of the laboring masses there arise, one after another, little bands of aristocrats of labor, from the midst of which the future labor ministers spring forth, ready to do loyal service to the bourgeoisie. All these Hollmans, Cooks and Fishers were once workers. They act the parts of workers even now. But in reality they are only agents of the financial plutocracy in the camp of the workers. The caste of the “leaders” here appears quite openly as a unique type of job trust. The labor party as such comes to the surface only during the parliamentary elections. Once the elections are over, the party disappears again for three whole years. The party conventions are only conventions of party functionaries. They never include a trace of real representatives of the mass of labor. The party leader is elected in conference and functions as such until the next election at the succeeding conference. If he is elected to Parliament, he also becomes the leader of the parliamentary fraction. If the party gets a majority in Parliament, the leader becomes prime minister and forms a “labor ministry.” The powers of this leader are almost unlimited. It went so far that the “labor” minister of New South Wales, Hollman (a former carpenter), proposed at the party conference of 1915 that the leader be given the power to change the *program of the party* at his own discretion, if this should be necessary for its “salvation.” We have recently had quite a striking example of the means



whereby Fisher, Hollman & Co. "save" the labor party. These "leaders" have proved to be the worst sort of chauvinists. The majority of the workers pronounced themselves against the introduction of military service in Australia. But Fisher and his friends continue to represent the views of the bourgeoisie.

When the Danish socialist, Stauning, not so long ago became a minister, Huysmans congratulated him on his success and noted with joy the fact that Stauning is the tenth socialist to become a minister. It would be interesting to know whether Huysmans counts Fisher also among the ten ministers. . .

## CORRESPONDENCE

# The Partisan Review Controversy

Dear Ex-Comrades:

Irving Howe's article on *Partisan Review* is pleasantly distinguished from previous Trotskyist articles of this kind by its sober and civilized tone. It's true he can't resist a phrase like "the garbage pails of *The New Republic* and *The Nation*"—an echo of that contribution to Marxist culture, Max Shachtman's profound essay entitled "Old Garbage in New Pails"—but in general he writes like a reasonable human being. A most welcome break with party tradition! Unfortunately the content of Howe's remarks represents no break at all. At considerable length he establishes what is by now hardly a secret: that the editors of *PR* are divided on the war and that the magazine therefore has no editorial line on the war. But where he should analyze, he moralizes. *PR*'s alleged "dilemma" is interesting from two points of view: (1) How does it happen that the editors, once united on the war, are now divided? Is it because Rahv is a scoundrel? Or for deeper (and more significant) reasons? What does this show us about the intellectual life of America today? (2) What should those editors of *PR* who still hold a socialist position *do*, exactly? And what would be the effects, good or bad, of this or that action on their part? Instead of illuminating these, the really important aspects of the development of *PR*, Howe preaches the usual sermon about how sinful Rahv is and how unprincipled Greenberg and Macdonald are and how extraordinarily wicked and/or stupid everyone in the world today is, in fact, except members of the Workers Party. In this letter I'd like to try to get down to more interesting and significant issues.

Howe spends almost two full pages—over half his article—in a laborious analysis of that great historical document, the half-page editorial statement in our January-February issue. He rests most of his case on this analysis, patiently examining every nuance of logic, every twist and turn of rotten compromise. Yet it seems to me this statement is quite in line with the original editorial statement with which *PR*'s career began four years ago (and which the Trotskyists then found equally unsatisfactory). Howe seems to think now that the *Socialist Appeal*'s attack on this original statement was rather sectarian, and he agrees with the late John Wheelwright, who defended *PR* at the time in a witty and eloquent letter to the *Appeal*. In fact, the first part of Howe's article is a long lament for the vanished golden age of *PR*, when it fulfilled its purpose, from his point of view. But has the change really been so great? I don't think so. Two things, for example, worry Howe about our recent statement on the war: its emphasis

There is one consolation for the opponents of Fisher, nevertheless. Namely, that even in distant Australia it has come to an open break between Fisher and the genuine labor organizations. "Every cloud has its silver lining." The present crisis has accentuated the situation tremendously and it will lead to a good and healthy "cleansing" of the democratic ranks.

GREGORY ZINOVIEV.

Hartenstein, Switzerland, August 4, 1916.

[To Be Continued]

on cultural values, which he thinks is a cowardly retreat, and its statement that the editors disagree on the war. Yet our 1937 statement declared:

For our editorial accent falls chiefly on culture and its broader social determinants. Conformity to a given social ideology or to a prescribed attitude or technique will not be asked of our writers. . . . Marxism in culture, we think, is first of all an instrument of analysis and evaluation; and if, in the last instance, it prevails over other disciplines, it does so through the medium of democratic controversy. Such is the medium *PR* will want to provide in its pages.

"Accent . . . chiefly on culture," "democratic controversy"—are not these formulations also the heart of our recent statement?

### PR as a Cultural Magazine

But I really don't think these formal statements worth terribly much space, whether to attack or defend. Let's come down to the practical issue. Howe insists that the enunciation of editorial neutrality in our last issue but one means that *PR* is finished as a political organ. Why? Because it will not continue to publish left-wing articles critical of war and capitalism? No, because the statement explicitly declares that all the editors agree that "in times like these it is a necessity, not a luxury, for *Partisan Review* to continue to give space to radical—in the literal sense of 'going to the roots'—analysis of social issues and the war." Then because *PR* will no longer *editorially* comment on the war? But I wonder if Howe realizes that the last issue in which such an editorial appeared was the Fall, 1939, issue? So that *PR* has expressed no formal war position for two and a half years.

What Howe doesn't understand, and what few Trotskyists have ever been able to understand, is that (1) *PR* is primarily a cultural magazine, and (2) that *PR*'s editorial policy has always been based on the principle of "democratic controversy," both as to contributors and as to the editors themselves. Because of (1), we have tried to accept political articles not on the basis of whether the editors agree with their political tendency or not, but according to whether they seem to make an original contribution to serious political discussion. (That the editors have prejudices, being human, is true; but at least the formal criterion has never been adherence to any given political line.) I must also add that it has always seemed to us the main function of a magazine like *PR* to be to analyze, to understand, to speculate rather than to propagandize. As for (2), I can understand, on the basis of my own experience in the Trotskyist movement, how hard it is for a



Trotskyist to grasp the idea that editors may disagree sharply with each other on political issues and yet be able to live and let live—and even to find these disagreements a source of stimulation rather than of weakness and confusion. The monolithic organizational tradition of Trotskyism can see in controversy only the soil of “splits” and “factions.” I’ve never believed this was a sensible way to organize a political party which hopes to achieve democratic social ends. And I’m even more sure, as a professional journalist, that it’s not the way to produce a good magazine of ideas.

### Neutrality on the War

So much for *PR*’s future. But what about the present? What does Howe propose that the “left wing” of *PR* should do? Should we attempt a *coup d’état*, which would either smash up the magazine completely or put us in sole control? Or since it is the case that we would not favor such methods and that they would not be successful anyway, should we submit our resignations forthwith as editors? In that case, either *PR* would continue on a new pro-war basis, or else it would go out of existence altogether. Is that the alternative Howe thinks preferable to continuance on the present basis? It seems to be the implication of his article, although he does not venture to pose it so baldly.

These tactical questions cannot be answered until a question of principle is cleared up, namely: can a magazine like *PR* continue to serve any useful purpose, from a socialist and left-wing point of view, if it remains editorially neutral on the war issue? Again, Howe seems to imply it cannot, but once more he fails to argue the question or even, indeed, to pose it clearly. (The trouble with the present-day Trotskyist approach is that it is primarily moralistic, that it *assumes* its basic positions instead of *analyzing* them and thus showing how they apply, in theory and in practice, to the problem in question.) Now there unquestionably *are* issues, in my opinion, on which a magazine like *PR* could not remain neutral and still fulfill its function, either politically or culturally. Fascism is one, Stalinism another. Personally, I should be unwilling, in fact, to take part in editing a magazine with colleagues of fascist or Stalinist views, because those political doctrines are so vicious and so all-embracing as to corrupt all human and cultural values. But is this true of a pro-war position? I don’t think so. People support the war in a hundred different ways, from a dozen different political positions. The values of democratic capitalism, for all their defects, are certainly far superior in a human way to those of fascism or Stalinism. It is true that the tendencies toward some totalitarian solution will probably become more sharply accentuated as the war drags on, and the time may come when support of the present war may necessitate the same kind of dehumanization as support of Stalinism or fascism now involves. But that point is as yet a considerable distance away, and it is revolutionary ultimatism to behave *now* as though it were already reached. In fact, it seems to me one of the ways to prevent its being reached is precisely to keep open organs of “democratic controversy” on the war issue like *PR*.

### Trotskyists as Political Purists

My dear ex-comrades, if you are really so concerned that *PR* should preserve its revolutionary virtue, if you think it so disgraceful that *PR* hasn’t printed more left-wing material, why haven’t any of you taken the trouble ever to write for the magazine? The only Trotskyist intellectual who ever wrote

regularly for us was . . . James Burnham. *PR* still opens its pages to radical and Marxist criticism of the war. Yet today, as in the past, the Trotskyists are satisfied to complain about its political impurity, without thinking of doing anything so practical as to write articles for *PR*’s audience (not a negligible one, either in quantity or quality) expressing *their* point of view. Why didn’t Shachtman take advantage of the opportunity we gave him to review Burnham’s book? Why didn’t the “Ten Propositions” controversy provoke any letters or articles from Trotskyists?

It seems that in this as in other fields, my dear ex-comrades, you conceive your function to be that of critical bystanders purely, commentators on the struggle looking down from the lofty heights of Marxist illumination. Trotsky spoke of the epigones of Lenin. His own epigones have given us by their practice a new political type: the revolutionary kibitzer.

DWIGHT MACDONALD.

March 6, 1942.

## IN REPLY

The foregoing letter from Dwight Macdonald is not an official reply from the editors of *Partisan Review*; it is the expression of an individual point of view held by the writer. Naturally, it would have been preferable to reply to an official statement by the editors of *PR*. But we are ready to believe the explanation that Macdonald’s opponents agree with most of what we have said about them. The fact that it is Macdonald and not the anti-socialist, pro-war editors, who has stood up to defend what we regard, from revolutionary socialist conceptions, as an indefensible position, is symptomatic. It is he who is in a quandary, not they.

Macdonald’s reply to Howe’s article, “The Dilemma of *Partisan Review*,” pursues a course of deliberate special pleading in order to avoid the essential charges contained therein. He vociferously argues about secondary questions having no basic importance or relation to the issue itself. For example, the question of whether or not Rahv is a scoundrel, concerns us not at all. No personal characterization of Rahv or any other editor of *PR* was made in the *NI*, because we are interested, above all, in political programs, not individual psychology.

While Macdonald pays special respect to the “tone” of Howe’s critique, we find it impossible to say the same for his letter. The concrete reasons for this are outlined in this reply.

1. Macdonald evades the main point of Howe’s article: the present position of *PR* on the war (the lack of a position, Macdonald, is one of the most obvious expressions of a *certain* position, nevertheless) is in direct contradiction to the original statement of principle adopted by the magazine and its editors, namely, that the struggle for cultural freedom is inseparable from the struggle for socialism and against imperialist war!

Why, then, does Macdonald avoid this question in his letter? Why does he misrepresent the former position of *PR* by saying that the present editorial statement on the war is “quite in line with the original editorial statement”? Did he not write the opposite in his polemic against Van Wyck Brooks? Obviously, he did!

Macdonald *knows* that the position of *Partisan Review*

was not that of neutrality on the question of the class struggle and imperialist war. The origin of *PR* as a left-wing cultural magazine stems from the struggle it waged against "neutrality." Even more, the editors chose the name "*Partisan Review*" to make the fact more forcefully known that, not only was it not neutral in the class struggle, but it was a partisan. It stood on the side of the proletariat; it was determined to fight for the interests of that class as the most progressive class in bourgeois society; it was ready to fight against the devastating effects of unemployment, against fascism and imperialist war, and above all, it was ready to fight for socialism!

2. Either Macdonald does not understand the essential meaning of the editorial statement of *PR*, or he himself has traveled the long road away from it. Observe again the "logic" of the following statement:

Now there unquestionably are issues, in my opinion, on which a magazine like *PR* could not remain neutral and still fulfill its functions, either politically or culturally. Fascism is one, Stalinism another. Personally, I should be unwilling, in fact unable, to take part in editing a magazine with colleagues of fascist or Stalinist views, because those doctrines are so vicious and so all-embracing as to corrupt all human and cultural values. But is this true of a pro-war position? I don't think so. People support the war in a hundred different ways, from a dozen different political positions.

What twaddle! People not only support the war for different political reasons and in different ways, they similarly support fascism and Stalinism. If fascism and Stalinism are corrupters of all human and cultural values, what shall one say of imperialist war? Are not all three social phenomena of world capitalism? Are not war and fascism two sides of the same coin? Macdonald knows as well as anyone that imperialist war is the most brutal, destructive and anti-social outgrowth of bourgeois society. It brings untold international suffering to the proletariat, the peasants, the colonial peoples and the lower middle classes. It corrodes the whole social structure; it makes a farce of culture! It hastens and strengthens totalitarian and fascist processes! Yet our friend, who presumably has full knowledge of what is said here, writes as though the whole subject had now come to his attention for the first time. But we believe that this is not mere error in judgment. Macdonald can express such elementary confusion only because of his personal contradictory position.

In former months *Partisan Review* did give the impression of being opposed to imperialist war. But it publishes the London letters of George Orwell, whose pro-war writings appear without editorial comment. This can mean and does mean that *PR* as a magazine either agrees with him or has no position at all on the subject. What does *PR* have to say, for example, about Orwell's observation that anyone in England who is opposed to the imperialist war is therefore pro-Hitler? If Macdonald justifies this silence, we must again point out that the editorial statement specifically precluded such ambiguity. Not a very honorable or principled position for a magazine which professed that one of its main aims was the struggle against imperialist war!

Moreover, the class struggle becomes accentuated as the burdens of the war are placed on the backs of the masses. The aim of the bourgeois state is to blunt this struggle, to force the war burdens upon the peoples, to make them pay for the war in a hundred different ways, all of them having the effect of reducing their level of social, economic and cultural existence. What do Macdonald and *PR* propose to do about this?

Herein lies the crux of the whole question and it is pre-

cisely this which Macdonald does not understand. Attacking Brooks and MacLeish is fine sport on Sundays and holidays but not overly important, because they are in reality the minor figures of the class struggle. A struggle against their "cultural barbarism" means nothing if the struggle in defense of the working class, against imperialist war as a social phenomenon, and for world socialism, is not made the paramount occupation of a magazine which, formally at least, accepted the latter as the all-important issue of this epoch.

3. When Macdonald fights for the right of *PR* to be anything but what its early principles dictated, on the ground that it is a cultural magazine, he is reiterating the point, made so clear by practice, that its principles never really meant anything. The fact that *PR* has had no editorial position on the war for many, many months, does not improve Macdonald's position. It was obvious a long time ago that *PR* was moving rapidly away from its revolutionary statement of principle. It was brought home in another way, in the hesitation and refusal to publish James T. Farrell's criticisms.

It does not help Macdonald any to excuse *PR* on the ground that it is a cultural magazine. That argument means that the goal which Macdonald sought for *PR* was merely a subterfuge, never seriously adhered to. If *PR* is nothing but a cultural magazine, pure and simple, wherein lies its superiority over other magazines of a similar type. The only reason why *PR* was regarded as something extraordinary in the field of cultural journals was precisely because it professed socialist aims!

4. Everything else in Macdonald's reply is secondary or of complete unimportance. For example, if Macdonald cannot accept our judgment of his rôle as a socialist anti-war editor of a magazine whose other editors are cynical anti-socialists and war-mongers, what difference can it make to him what we suggest for him to do? Why should he be interested in doing anything about a situation in which he allegedly sees nothing wrong? Before Macdonald can do anything, he must first understand what is wrong with his position. If he sees nothing wrong with his position, he cannot even *desire* to do anything about it. If he is satisfied with his political course, *he must be satisfied with what he is doing*. But his constant harping: What shall I do? What do you suggest I do about it? only indicates that back in his mind, he is troubled. He *suspects* that there is something wrong in collaborating with anti-socialists and pro-imperialists, no matter what the reasons may be for their positions. If Macdonald is ready to acknowledge our criticisms we can tell him what to do about it. Failing that, he cannot but reject any suggestions we might make, such as conducting himself in the way of a Randolph Bourne or a John Reed!

5. Macdonald's comments about "moral" judgments being the basis of our criticisms are beside the point and totally uninteresting. Especially so, when one remembers Macdonald's criticism of Bolshevism as "immoral" and his remarks about the "amorality" of the Trotskyist movement. It is similarly unimportant to us whether his colleagues on *PR* are "nice fellows." They may be, but what of it? How can that have anything to do with the issues in dispute?

The same holds true for Macdonald's remarks about the invitations he extended to the editors of the *NI* to write for *Partisan Review*. We are ready to agree that their failure to write may have weakened the political level and content of

PR, but this has nothing to do with Macdonald's position as an editor of PR, nor with the discussion between us.

6. We are ready to forgive Macdonald his failure to understand Marxism, economics, history or politics. But we cannot forgive his impudence. In addressing us as "Dear Ex-Comrades" he again reveals his bad taste. Certainly we do not belong to the same organization, but it is as obvious as day and night that Macdonald does not understand anything about "a general labor movement" and the use of the term, comrade; or he understands it so well that perhaps we were too optimistic in the very beginning in having used that salutation to him.

This "slip" is made no better by his polemic to the effect that we "conceive (our) function to be that of critical bystanders purely, commentators on the struggle looking down from the lofty heights of Marxistical illumination." Macdonald should never have said that. Everyone knows that Macdonald spent all his time in the revolutionary organization quibbling about theory and organizational principles, none of which he was fully acquainted with then nor understands any better since his departure.

It is known that the Workers Party is a small organization. But that organization endeavors, within its means and resources, to do as much as possible in the day-to-day struggle to realize socialism as the only hope for humanity, for freedom, for culture! Why did Macdonald leave that organization? Everyone knows! The Workers Party rejected his ideas, his ill-digested theories on politics and organization and because they didn't accept his ideas, he quit. He felt stifled; there was no "freedom" for him in that party. He wasn't greatly interested in the practical work that party was doing because in his opinion it was a waste of time and effort, since it didn't conform to his "theories." That party spent many months discussing his "ideas." It gave far more time to him as an individual than was warranted by the "materials" offered in those disputes. The *NI* also carried Macdonald's contributions in its columns on many occasions, as did *Labor Action*. And his objections to that party then was not that it wasn't doing anything, but that it was doing too much practical work at the expense of listening to his ill-digested theories endlessly! *Revolutionary kibitzer, indeed!*

But Macdonald doesn't know where to stop. Having made this charge he goes further and refers to the Workers Party and such literary organs as THE NEW INTERNATIONAL and *Labor Action* as epigones of Trotsky, quite blandly coupling this characterization with the following statement: Trotsky spoke of the epigones of Lenin.

Here again, if Macdonald knew what he was talking about, he would have omitted this statement. When Trotsky spoke of the Stalinists as the epigones of Lenin, he meant that they were counter-revolutionaries, revisers of the principles of the October and betrayers of the socialist goal—all of this in the name of the greatest leader of international socialism in the twentieth century. With the death of Lenin, Trotsky became his theoretical and political heir. When Macdonald calls us epigones of Trotsky, exactly what does he imply? If he did not mean to insinuate that we are the equivalent of Stalinists he should avoid employment of dubious opprobriums.

Macdonald pursues a bad habit. He writes and talks about things that are foreign to him. Pontificating doesn't help him in the slightest.

In summary, it is necessary to make the following observations. Macdonald resigned from a revolutionary organization because he had various differences with it, though he declares that these differences did not touch on *fundamental* questions of Marxism and revolutionary theory and strategy. He ceased collaboration with a magazine and paper because the respective editorial boards would not permit the expression of views in regular articles, contrary to their accepted editorial policies and because these boards insisted that such views be expressed in special discussion articles. While Macdonald found life there intolerable, he does, with the greatest equanimity, collaborate with cynical anti-socialists, pro-imperialists, and worse. These colleagues do not defend PR against our criticisms. They apparently agree. It is Macdonald who is in a mire! And it is he who pens a questionable defense.

THE EDITOR.

## BOOKS IN REVIEW

### The Balkan Debacle

FROM THE LAND OF THE SILENT PEOPLE, by Robert St. John. Doubleday, Doran & Co., New York. 353 pages, \$3.00.

This is a good book, well worth reading. The author makes no pretentious literary claims but his work will be read and remembered long after many of the more popular best sellers in the same field are on the junk heap, where they properly belong. For Robert St. John has written an absorbing and imperishable story, not so much of his own personal experiences in the Balkans, but rather of the fall of Yugoslavia and Greece before the Nazi juggernaut.

This "personal adventure" story contains political dynamite. It contains an overwhelming array of facts largely hidden or censored by the press and the military about Yugoslavia's sudden turn-about in *realpolitik*, and its primitive resistance to the Nazi war machine. The contrast between what the newspapers published about Yugoslavia's struggle and what happened is startling even at this late date. The tragedy of the Serb and Greek peoples, the terrifying Nazi ruthlessness and wantonness, exemplified in the destruction of Belgrade, the collapse of Greece, the true facts on Crete; these and other events and factors, all an important part of the pattern of World Imperialist War II, are described simply and effectively by a first-class reporter.

St. John, an American correspondent stationed in Belgrade, tells enough to open one's eyes about the nature of the present world struggle, but a special foreword hints that even this book has pulled its punches to some extent. "If I were on somebody's payroll in Berlin I could tell you things that would either make you hate the British or make you say I was on somebody's payroll in Berlin. If I were on somebody's payroll in London I could tell you things that either would make you hate the Germans, or make you say I was on somebody's payroll in London," St. John declares. "And it would all be truth, either way. Part of the truth, anyway," he adds.

The reason for this unusually candid foreword—in a war correspondent—becomes clear in the reading of his book. The Nazi technique of propaganda, "Britain is ready to fight to the last drop of anybody else's blood," obtains a partial factual basis in St. John's revelations on the Balkan situation.

British propagandists also find fertile ground for their accusations of Nazi terror. St. John's attitude appears to be, "they're both telling the truth about the other, the liars!"

#### A WAR OF DECEPTION

Quite a point is made by St. John on the way the British duped the Serbs into thinking that a couple hundred thousand British soldiers would help them resist a Nazi invasion. He describes in detail the not-so-clever technique of the British in planting this rumor about their troops. And about the total ignorance of the Serbian population either about the military or political situation, since a ruthless and complete censorship prevailed. The Serbs had only their traditional, fierce, personal courage and pride and an "ox-cart army" as St. John says, to cope with an enemy whose modernized war machine was completely unknown and unheard of to the Serbian masses. Nor did the people have a war aim. In the light of all the facts brought out by St. John, the present guerrilla fighting in Yugoslavia today becomes an amazing example of dauntless spirit and heroism, even more so than that of the Russian guerrillas. (How utterly tragic that such a magnificent resistance is subordinated to one of the imperialist camps, rather than in the struggle for the liberation of all mankind.)

After living through the horror of the devastation of Belgrade, an undefended city filled with Serbian workers and peasants (as usual, the rich folk got away), St. John made his way to Sarajevo, where, by the way, he was able to try to think a little about this war, and about which he expresses his own views. "Maybe you can reconcile international politics and Christianity. But as I lay there in a stolen bed in the Europa Hotel in Sarajevo, which was soon to be obliterated by bombs on Easter Sunday, I couldn't make sense out of it. I wondered where God was, anyway. I wondered how Christians on both sides—because there are Christians on both sides—reconciled these things." The answer, of course, is that they don't. Nor does the Church intend to. For that would be getting on "dangerous ground."

St. John recalls his conversations with young Nazi officers, indicating again the fear the German people have of another Versailles, and the arguments of Englishmen in opposition. "They were also fighting a holy crusade. Both sides called it a holy crusade, just like the last time. The Englishmen said they were fighting this time for the liberty of individuals, for peace in Europe, for freedom of the little nations, for democracy."

"Then I remembered how another Englishman, James Hilton, had written a little book just a couple of years ago in which he said you can never fight a war to make the world safe for democracy, because all wars kill democracy, and you can't fight a war to end all wars, because each war begets a new one. Only that book wasn't as popular as "Good-Bye, Mister Chips," because—well, because we were all about to fight another war for democracy and peace." Unfortunately, St. John stops here. He doesn't look into the social and economic structure of the world today for a basic answer to his question of WHY?

#### WHO PAYS FOR THE WAR?

Let us quote you one of the many descriptions of the war with which St. John packs this book:

No one agreed about how many people the German bombers killed in Patras, but they surely did a job. A Greek hospital ship with tremendous red crosses painted all over its sides got a direct hit. It was listing

badly and before long would go to the bottom. Someone said it was the last hospital ship the Greeks had. The rest were already at the bottom, some of them still weighed down with the bodies of their wounded passengers who hadn't a chance when the planes came over. The hospital ship in Patras harbor had been full of wounded too.... But the worse job the planes did was on hundreds of refugees... they flocked down to the water front... it was a well organized exodus... They were going away in flat bottomed barges towed by a large ship... They were ready to shove off when the planes came."

Of course it was a stupid mistake. They never should have tried to get away in the daylight. Some of them managed to hide between the blocks of concrete on the quay, but most of them just huddled down on the barges, burying their heads in the blankets and mattresses and tin kettles and baby cribs and all the other stuff they wanted so much to save. They tried to play ostrich, but bullets from a machine gun in an airplane can hit people just as well and kill them just as dead even if their heads are buried. That was what happened. The planes dropped some bombs and then they used machine guns.

#### THE SOLDIERS ARE THINKING

By now everyone is acquainted with the feelings of the Australian soldiers who were sacrificed in Greece and Crete. There is one slant on them, however, which St. John reveals which is illuminating.

The Anzacs lay around the decks those two days and two nights reading books they had stored away in their knapsacks. It was interesting to circle around and see what entertained them. Here and there a boy had a bible. Others, who had lived through more adventure in the last few weeks than most novelists had ever seen, were reading Sabatini adventure stories. But a lot of them had their noses in serious books. One spent all his time with *Propaganda for War*, by an American college professor. It was a book that a British censor had once confiscated from my luggage. Another was passing *Undertones of War* around among his friends. A lot of them were thinking and talking about the war and what it meant and what we're really fighting for and what kind of a world we ought to try to create after it's all over. That amazed us. Soldiers on the front line aren't supposed to do much thinking. But we realized now that on both sides common ordinary soldiers were trying to think the thing out. And some of them were having their troubles reconciling this and that.

The book serves a good purpose because it helps dispel many illusions prevalent today about the war, the soldiers and the peoples who are bearing its burdens. Indirectly, it is a real indictment not merely against the press which distorts the news of the war, and the censors who contribute heavily to the distortion by their omissions, but also against the world system that has plunged mankind into the present holocaust.

JACK WILSON.

## A New Bourgeois Critic

**THE AGE OF FABLE**, by Gustav Stolper.  
369 pp. Reynal and Hitchcock. \$3.00.

The reception which this book received from the bourgeois reviewers was one of unanimous enthusiasm. Both in the daily press and in the magazines it was hailed as a clarifying force in a world of confusion, a book which destroyed obsolete social myths and which contributed the fine edge of precision to a world in which sloppiness and musty thinking are the rule.

The author has for his purpose a two-edged literary war against the outlived ideologies of the 19th century laissez-faire capitalism and what he designates as the oversimplified, scholastic, utopian, rigid formulae of Marxism. Most of the book—as might be expected—is concerned with the latter. After all, it hardly requires much argumentative skill or factual material to prove that 19th century capitalist thought is outlived; that is pretty much a matter of beating a dead horse.

But as for Marxism, that is something else again. Despite the ceaseless "annihilations" to which it is subjected these days, Marxism manages to continue to disturb the mental peace of the powers that be.

Stolper is really out to slap the Marxist dragon. But since he knows that such an announced purpose won't do very well for circulation purposes, he veils his book with references to "the age of fable." Most of the "fables" turn out to be parts of Marxism. He argues not directly against the premises and conclusions of Marxism, but rather by attempting to show that Marxism constantly oversimplifies complex phenomena and ignores facts which contradict its thesis.

#### ANOTHER ANTI-MARXIST DIATRIBE

We hope that we shall not be accused of either intolerance or impatience when we say that it is simply not worth while to attempt a lengthy refutation of the book; certain anti-Marxist works have at least the value of having marshalled some array of factual material or of having a finely developed theoretical argument. Stolper's book has neither. It is a compendium of every cliché hurled against Marxism since 1848, containing the most blatant puerilities, innumerable *non sequiturs*, irrelevancies and a fair-sized dose of plain ignorance. The best way to substantiate this harsh judgment is to cite a few choice sentences from a book which is supposed to expose the loose thinking of Marxism:

1) In arguing against the Marxist theory of the economic causes of war and the concept that the world was divided, at the time of the outbreak of the war in Europe, into "have" and "have-not" imperialist powers, Stolper writes: "You cannot quite refrain from wondering whether Germany, the powerful leader of the Have-nots, looked at Poland as a Have nation when she invaded this neighbor and thereby started the Second World War." (Page XIV.)

This incredible argument, used by many bourgeois observers, ignoring the simple fact that when Germany invaded Poland she did so merely as an initial military step in a war involving global stakes, is offered as proof that the basic cause of war is not economic or imperialist! Presumably when Japan invades Burma that likewise disproves that the war is an imperialist struggle between the Have and Have-not powers. What Stolper does is to play the semantic game—he confuses the relation between imperialist powers and the strategy of war, subsidiary territorial seizures with the main objectives, and because of his unscientific approach, searches for the explanations of these phenomenon in subjective factors in no way controlling the current world situation.

2) In discussing the American democratic tradition, Stolper writes of the last war: "There were labor unions; they were either conservative or were disregarded altogether." (Page 11.) Here again Stolper shows that he knows little or nothing about American history. The American labor movement was divided during the last war between the conservative AFL and the radical anti-war IWW. The AFL made possible America's war effort by pledging complete support to Wilson and his administration. A close liaison was established between that section of organized labor and the government. So far as the IWW was concerned its militancy brought the forces of reaction and the state into operation against it. Long prison terms, dark-of-the-night assassinations, physical attacks

were the measures employed to "ignore" the IWW in 1917 and 1918!

#### AN AUTHORITY ON BOLSHEVISM

3) In discussing the Bolshevik Revolution, Stolper informs us that "Utopia was organized over an area covering one-sixth of the globe by methods of massacre and terror compared to which even the terrors of war seemed to pale." (Page 13.) Isn't this really too precious—this comparison of the Leninist revolution with imperialist war, especially coming at a time when imperialism is literally devouring generations and countries?

4) In discussing Marxism, Stolper writes: "Those who believe in the fable of collectivism do not seem to care about the accomplishments of the 19th century; they are only shocked by its shortcomings." (Page 23.) Doesn't this historical expert know that at a time when England was shaken by the powerful writings of Ruskin and Carlyle, which attacked the evils of industrial capitalism out of a desire to return to pre-industrial times, it was precisely Marx who emphasized the progressive aspects of the bourgeois revolution ("the 19th century") *despite* its toll in human misery? And isn't it a fact that it is the Marxists today who point to a progressive phase of early capitalism, in contradistinction to its present decadent phase, indicating a completely objective approach to history?

5) In discussing Bolshevism, Stolper states: "Only against the historical background of the Russian state can the reality of Bolshevism be understood. The fundamental psychological attitude of the average Russian has not been much changed by the revolution." (Page 31.) One must really be an expert and a former economic correspondent for the *London Times* to be able to write that the psychology of the muzhik and worker was not much changed by the Bolshevik revolution, that the Soviets stimulated the same psychological reactions as czarism.

6) In discussing British imperialism, Stolper attempts to show that it wasn't so bad after all. He trots out all the old puerilities about building roads, etc. And then he has the gall to inform his readers that Britain—which doesn't really have an imperialist apparatus in India, because there are only some 500 members of the British civil service residing in India!—has been aiding in all the attempts of the Indian people to improve their conditions. Thus, in writing of Gandhi's fasts, he says: "In this great humanitarian work for the suppressed classes Gandhi is offered and accepts the full collaboration of the British." Which is partly true, at least in the sense that the British were willing to provide jails for him in which to fast.

These illustrations ought to be enough to give the reader a glimpse of the character of this book. It is really a pathetic illustration of the desperation of the bourgeois intellectual world which attempts to seize on every straw for support, even if that straw be as crumpled as this one is.

IRVING HOWE.

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