

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

**January • 1944**

*Editorials:*

**How Long Will The War Last?  
Conflict Over Poland  
The 'Dissolution' of the Communist Party**

*In the International Tradition*

## **American Labor's Tasks**

*By J. R. Johnson*

## **The Revolution In Italy**

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# THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

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# THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

*A Monthly Organ of Revolutionary Marxism*

VOLUMES X

JANUARY, 1944

NUMBER 1

## NOTES OF THE MONTH

### Long War—or Short?

Last year's Christmas bells which rang out mockingly their "peace on earth, good will toward all men," almost drowned out the latest official announcement of the war dead. The war had already lasted two weeks longer than the whole of World War I. The report declared that Allied military deaths on all fronts already totalled more than 7,500,000, compared with a grand total of 5,152,115 of Allied dead in the First World War; the estimated German dead in this war was given as 2,500,000, compared with 1,773,700 at the end of 1918. The figures seem to be an understatement of the facts which will be known in full and accurately only at the war's end. But they are impressive enough. The destruction and grief they represent are emphasized when the maimed, the wounded, the prisoners and the "missing" are added. They do not, of course, include the civilian dead and wounded. In World War I there was some distinction between the civilian and the soldier; in the present war the distinction is all but lost.

Grewsome statistics! But there is more to the picture. The genius of the race and scientific endeavor have never been put to such destructive and abominable uses as in this war. The nations vie with each other to produce devastation compared with which the holocausts of older history look like littered picnic grounds. The wonders of construction of early capitalism to which Marx paid ungrudging tribute are now wiped out in blockbusting twinkles. Whole cities crash about Goering's vainglorious boast of immunity from aerial attack. The "democrats" argue their superiority to fascism by comparing the ruins of Germany to the ruins of Rotterdam and Warsaw. Industry all over the world works as never before to produce the means of destroying industry all over the world. Food is served in scientifically compact tastelessness to soldiers charged with scorching the sources of food from the face of the earth. More ships have probably been sent to the bottom of the sea than sail its surface. Whole peoples are reduced to national shame. Whole peoples are imprisoned, enslaved; others are policemen and turnkeys. Whole peoples are torn from their lands and the lands of their fathers, and shipped to the farms and factories of slavers like cattle to the stockyards. The abolition of all liberty is jubilantly hailed by the degenerates of totalitarianism, its "suspension" casuistically justified by the apologists of rotting bourgeois democracy.

Capitalism once said that the many must toil and the few must rule so that society can expand and build, and slumbering millions be awakened to modern civilization. Capitalism is the builder and creator, however imperfect. It is building the cities, the industries, the roads, fertilizing the plains,

bringing riches from the earth, sending ships to the dark worlds, arousing the moribund, linking peoples, creating the world market. Now it is systematically destroying all that it built, and millions of people along with it. Now it is creating a world cemetery: farmer boys from Honshu and Wisconsin are buried in Guadalcanal; men from Berlin and Rome, from Melbourne, the Punjab and Scotland, traveled continents and seas to die in Bengasi; the dead in Stalingrad came from Vladivostok and Brest. Henry Wallace's century of the common man looks more like the century of the common grave.

Not a shred of a claim to moral support of its rule has been left to capitalism. The limits of choice are clearly established before the world: "Socialism—or barbarism!" The barbarism of the old social order in decay does not lie ahead, it is already here. Only the socialist reorganization of society can prevent it from engulfing us completely.

#### Where Will Military Struggle End?

This ineluctable conclusion is pointed up by a consideration of the prospects on the two decisive military fronts and of the post-war plans of the ruling classes.

On the military front of the war, neither side has cause for lively optimism. If victory means crushing the enemy militarily, and then politically and economically, the Axis powers no longer have any realistic hope for victory. The best they can now expect is a stalemate, a division in the ranks of their opponents, and a compromise peace. It is a far cry from the confident fanfaronades of Hitler three years and a year ago and his anything-but-confident New Year's address to the nation. There are no longer victors and vanquished in sight, he said, but only those who will survive and those who will be annihilated. All Hitler can now say, in effect, is: "Prolong the war against us with the idea of annihilating Germany and you will have no victory yourself but only chaos, a European revolution, on your exhausted hands. Better that we come to a reasonable agreement, as we did once before."

The Allies, pouring endless streams of Russian manpower and American machinery into the battle, are imbued with more hope, especially now that the specter of a separate Russo-German peace has been laid, along with the living bodies of nations that put some faith in the Atlantic Charter. But their hope is, at bottom, restrained. In the first place, a military triumph in Europe, even if it is possible in the course of the current year, as the most uninhibited optimists expect, leaves the war in the Orient still to be fought and won. In the second place, the problem of the division of the spoils, already acute and generative of schism, can only become more difficult as the war wears on.

If the assumption is made that the war in Europe can end in Allied victory over Germany this year, the prospect of destruction, death, suffering, sacrifice and expenditure of effort, life and material positively staggers the imagination. (The assumption is a "purely" military victory, that is, of a defeat of Hitler not occasioned by revolution.) Exactly how greatly the imagination will be staggered must be left to the events themselves. A sufficiently impressive suggestion, however, is offered by an authority of the caliber of Major General

George V. Strong, assistant chief of staff in charge of military intelligence (G-2) of the United States Army. As released by the California congressman, George E. Outland, the Strong report says:

That the Germans now have three hundred well trained divisions. This year alone they re-formed or re-equipped or raised more than sixty new divisions, each of which has approximately six hundred machine guns and three hundred heavier weapons.

That the Germans have raised and equipped armored, motorized and infantry divisions to replace each of the twenty lost at Stalingrad last winter.

That the number of workers employed in war industries in Nazi-dominated territory has risen from twenty-three million at the outset of the war to thirty-five million at the present time, and that the weapons they are making are in some cases better than any the United Nations yet have.

That there is nothing in the German economic picture to justify confidence in the immediate downfall of the Nazi structure. For example, German food rations today are higher in caloric content than they were at the outbreak of hostilities.

That no serious break in German morale has been apparent thus far as a result of the bombing from the air, but increasingly long Allied casualty lists must be expected from this as well as from other types of attacks.

[And further] the vast network of fortifications which the Germans have prepared around their homeland proper has made the job ahead a tremendous one... further advances will be contested yard by yard and foot by foot, and by well trained veteran troops.

Reflection upon these sober paragraphs does not conjure up a picture of an impending end of what has gone before, but more of the same, much more or it, with Dieppes, Stalingrads and Tarawas multiplied many times over.

As for the war with Japan, the Strong report describes it "to have only begun." But for this intelligence the otherwise valuable and expert opinion of the major general was not needed.

### How Can the War Be Shortened?

Can the length of the war be shortened? Is the question of interest and concern to the revolutionary socialist? Although he neither bears nor takes the slightest responsibility for the outbreak of the war, or the social system and the politics that brought it about, the socialist is decidedly interested in the question of the war's duration. It is a problem he cannot, nor desires to, wash his hands of. The sufferings of the people are not a matter of indifference to him, nor is the appalling destruction of wealth and property. The new society cannot be built out of rubble and by corpses.

The bourgeoisie and its military leaders have a simple formula for ending the war quickly: Shut up, work hard and shoot hell out of the Hun. An equally simple formula provides for preventing war's recurrence: Make the war-making Germans (and/or Japanese) pay and pay and pay for the war, and reduce them to tenth-rate positions in the world.

General Marshall's attack upon "striking labor" for being responsible for delaying the victory—the attack was one of a thousand like it; this one was indirectly echoed by the President—breathes the spirit of the first formula. The Moscow, Cairo and Teheran conferences breathe the spirit of the second.

It would not be easy to figure out a more effective way of prolonging the war and all that goes with it.

We are committed, and have been for more than two decades, to an uncompromising struggle to destroy fascism, root, stalk and branch. Not being big financiers, we never loaned it money to bolster its precarious régime. Not being merchants, we never sold it oil and scrap iron. Not being Stalinists, we never sealed a compact of comradeship with it "in

blood." Nobody, and nothing, was needed in recent times to convert us to the *ersatz* that passes currently for anti-fascism.

But we are utterly out of sympathy with the idea of destroying Germany, or any other country, for that matter. We cannot too strongly condemn, as an antiphonic version of Nazi anthropology, the idea of the "blood guilt" of the German *people*. The imperialists plumb the very depths of hypocrisy when, after doing everything they could for years before the war to fasten Hitler's hold more strongly upon the prostrate German masses, and to render these masses increasingly helpless, they now seek to hold these very same people responsible for the unspeakable crimes of their Hitlerian traducers.

That is not all that is wrong with the "strong" ideas of the Anglo-Russian-American imperialists. If Hitler is still able today, after the collapse of the castles in the air he built for the German people, to keep a hold upon them, to maintain a degree of morale, to keep them fighting with such bitter tenacity and against increasing odds—it is because the Allied statesmen and propagandists are providing him with his main weapon. The Allies are planning a super-Versailles, he tells the Germans, and there is ample material put forward in the Allied camp from which all he needs do is quote accurately. They are planning to strip our land of every ounce of its material wealth and power, he tells the Germans—and the memory of the promises he made to strip the lands *he* conquered does not alleviate either the bitterness or the apprehension of the average German. They are planning to send ten million or more Germans as slaves of Stalin, he tells the Germans, and to prove his point he has but to quote directly from authentic Stalinist declarations. And if Hitler is able to add to all this—all this which is enough by itself—that his régime cannot be so bad in prohibiting strikes, for example, when the "democracies" themselves are doing the same thing, or what amounts to the same thing, or are preparing to do the same thing, then, even though there is an element of exaggeration in the comparison, the effect upon the factor of "morale" should not be hard to estimate.

Hitler is of course prolonging the war. Allied imperialism does all it can to aid him in it.

### Why Japan and Germany Fight On

Much the same can be said in the case of the war with Japan. Colonel Carlos P. Romulo, MacArthur's former Filipino aide, has only recently repeated what others have seen more clearly and said more emphatically. The continuation of the traditional imperialist "white-man's-burden" policy in the Orient is a godsend to the Japanese in tightening their grip on the conquered territories. British imperialism's teeth dug firmly into the throat of India—they are worth at least twenty divisions to the Japanese. The Cairo conference's conspicuous omission of reference to Hong Kong, with the implication that this former crown colony of England is to be restored to her, and not to China, by the joint efforts of the Most United Democratic Nations, is worth at least another few divisions to the Japanese. The positive declaration from Cairo that Japan is to be stripped of every single colony and possession, not in order to free them, but in order to divide them for exploitation, as colonies and possessions, among the Allies, is worth several more divisions.

The bitter-end fighting of the Japanese which has aroused such universal comment is not a matter of anthropology; it is not even primarily a matter of religious indoctrination and fanaticism, although they play their part. It is first and foremost a political question. It is the result of an imperialist

and chauvinist fanaticism; its inculcation into the Japanese people and soldiers has been enormously facilitated by the racial-superiority theories and practices and the imperialistic policies and pretensions of the Anglo-American ruling class. If, after two years of war with Japan, the United States has succeeded, according to the recent statement of Under Secretary of War Patterson, in taking a total of less than four hundred Japanese prisoners—utterly astounding figure!—the fighting determination and capacities of the Japanese soldier are to be traced, not to Shinto and Emperor-worship, but primarily to cunning Japanese imperialist exploitation of the theories and practices of the Dutch Mynheers in the East Indies, the *pukka Sahib* in India, Standard Oil in China, and American imperialism in the Philippines and Hawaii.

The war can be brought to an early end, and to such an end as satisfies the universal longing for security and peace. Not by offering the German masses imperialist domination and dismemberment thinly covered with *ersatz*-democracy to replace the *ersatz*-socialism which Hitler feeds them, but by offering them adequate guarantees of freedom and plenty. These are the basic objectives for which millions of German workers organized and developed their class movement for generations, for which they fought with all the strength at their command in the face of a leadership that thwarted them at every crucial moment.

How can these assurances be “offered” them, and who is able to do it? The ruling classes of the Allied countries, Russia notably included, are deeply discredited among the German masses, and for good cause. Hitler did not invent this discreditment; he merely distorted it for reactionary ends and exploited it with considerable success. It is from the working class of the Allied lands that the German proletariat awaits encouraging signs. The Allied labor leaders who haughtily demand that Hitler first be overturned by the German workers—workers who live under the most thoroughgoing and murderous police terror ever known in the world, with the possible exception of Stalin’s Russia—are beneath contempt. They inspire mighty little confidence or hope in the German workers, who are not unaware of the action of the British labor-imperialists who recently adopted a vicious Vansittartist resolution at their Congress. The working classes of England and the United States—that is a different matter. It is they, and they alone, who can bring the war to a speedy and happy conclusion which would permit a veritable rebirth of the world. No less a prospect is open to them! No smaller achievement is at their command!

### A Way Out of the War

The most important single force bringing an end to the First World War was the revolutionary working class of Russia. Once they overturned the Czar and then the bankers, monopolists and landlords, the German workers-in-uniform could not be persuaded to continue the war against them for any length of time. Instead, they began turning their guns upon the Kaiser and the Junkers. How long would the Hitlerites and the Junkers last in Germany if the Reichswehr had to contend with a genuine workers’ government in England and the United States? How long would they last in face of a government that could and would say to the German masses, in all sincerity: “We are the intransigent enemies of Hitlerism, but we are the brothers of the German people. All we ask of them is unity with us, comradeship in the struggle for peace and against oppression, equality in a new world.”

Romanticism! Rhetoric! Utopia! That is what all the

“practical” people, the “realists,” will reply. But it was just this sort of “rhetoric” that Trotsky employed at Brest-Litovsk in 1918 with such deadly effect a few months later upon the whole Hohenzollern dynasty in Germany. The “practical” and “realistic” statesmen brought us . . . a Second World War!

The magnificent energies, and the doubly magnificent militancy of the American working class are being slowly frittered away by a band of labor leaders whose vision ends at the boots they lick, whose incurable romanticism leads them to pursue that most preposterous utopia of the reconciliation of irreconcilable classes in the hope of thus achieving that other most preposterous utopia—democracy, security and peace under decaying capitalism. This cannot go on forever. It must not. Labor must become aware of the immense social responsibilities resting upon it and which it alone is capable of discharging. How picayune the whole hide-and-seek game of lobbying in Congress and lobbying in the fourth antechamber of the President is in face of the huge task labor has to perform and is able to perform with its own forces!

Not the least important and pressing side of this task is the fight to end the war, to end it before much more carnage and chaos have been wrought, to end it on a progressive basis. For us, in this country, this means concentrating all efforts on those immediate steps that are required for the speediest establishment of a workers’ government. A workers’ government here that understands its job, that concerns itself not at all with maintaining the *status quo* or the property-interests of capitalist monopolism, can produce a genuine people’s peace virtually overnight.

Impractical! Remote! What, if not that, is “practical” and immediate? Such devastation, such tidal destruction of human life, such suffering as the world has never seen. There is the alternative. Right now the choice—“socialism or barbarism”—appears concretely as the fight for a workers’ government, indispensable step to socialism, or the continuation of the war, which brings us step by step deeper into the jungle of the new barbarism. Still more concretely, the fight for a workers’ government in the United States is now the fight for the organization and victory of an independent working class party.

## The Meaning of the Fight Over Poland

The imperialists, meanwhile, are not inactive. If they offer nothing to the masses of the people, it is because they have reserved everything for themselves. On this score, there are no differences among them. The differences occur exclusively over which of them is to get what and how much. These differences led to World War I; they brought about World War II; they are laying the basis for World War III;

The advance of the Russian army into former Poland is the clearest case in point right now, not so much for what it is in itself as for what it represents and symbolizes.

The war with Germany was justified by the Allied spokesmen, among other things, on the ground that Hitlerism violates the national sovereignty of nations and peoples, does not allow them to live as they see fit and to rule themselves. There

is no need to prove this case against Hitlerism beyond the use of facts which are known to every child.

Now that the Allies are beginning to speak of an early victory over the Axis, the question rises: what is to become of the countries overrun by the Nazis once the latter have been put to the sword? Is their national sovereignty to be restored, at least to the extent that they enjoyed it before the war began?

If we are to judge by the fight developing over Poland, there is no reason to believe that the Allies hold out any such hope.

The fight over Poland is not just a battle over the eastern territories of the former Polish Empire, it is a fight for that part of Europe which is unmistakably and unchallengedly Polish by tradition, common language and culture and all the other recognizable traits of a nation.

So far as the eastern territories are concerned, the claims of the government in exile are as notoriously fraudulent as they are old. They are today's remnants of the old dream of a Greater Polish Empire "from sea to sea"—from the Baltic to the Black. Inhabited principally by non-Polish peoples—White Russians, Ukrainians, Lithuanians and Jews—who have neither cultural, linguistic nor even religious characteristics in common with the Poles, the only claim that the Polish *Pans* and their colonels ever had to rule over them was the need to sate an imperialist greed. The persecutions these peoples underwent from the day the Versailles map-makers concocted an "independent" Poland constitute one of the cruellest and bloodiest chapters in the annals of modern oppression. Nobody can say exactly how many of the people in these lands were murdered, how many sent to rot in prison. What can be said, because it is common knowledge, is that the cultural aspirations of these peoples were trampled under foot with the same cynicism and the same methods employed in the days of the Romanovs, their religious feelings and institutions were systematically offended (the anti-Semitic outrages of the Polish ruling class preceded Hitler's), their political rights were never taken off paper, and above all their economic status was kept at the lowest possible level. Only the most rabid Polish imperialist could expect any allegiance from these peoples. The blusterings and stutterings of the government in exile, a gang of authentic reactionaries and pupils of the colonels, plus a handful of social-democratic house-pets, will be pointed out to future generations as typical of imperialist effrontery and hypocrisy.

### Stalinist "Liberation"

It does not follow in any way from this that the territories properly belong in what is sardonically known as the "Soviet" "Union." By virtue of what right? The fact that these territories once formed part of the Czarist Empire? Or the fact that they once were part of the Soviet Republics—without quotation marks—and were wrested from the workers' state by the superior force which Pilsudski's armies imposed upon the weak and exhausted Red Army? Such a right would exist and be valid, provided the incorporation of these territories into the Union meant the liberation from oppression, or the beginning of such a liberation, of the people inhabiting them. That would have been the case in 1920. It is in no sense the case today.

The torments suffered by these peoples under Polish despotism are so widely known that even the bourgeois press refers to them, however discreetly. But they pale beside the organized, systematic, centralized, totalitarian terror against the "blood brothers" of these peoples who have lived for the

past decade and more under the rule of the Stalinist autocracy. The Ukrainian and White Russian "Soviet Republics" are nothing but national fiefs of the Kremlin bureaucracy. They have neither independence in the "Union" nor autonomy. Their rulers are picked and unpicked by this bureaucracy, whom they serve in the same capacity and with the same rights and privileges as the Czar's governor-generals. Their economic strength has been sapped so that the bureaucracy might batten on it; their economic position has been reduced to the status of serfs of the régime. The Polish knout stings no more brutally than the Stalinist knout. The cemeteries of the Western Ukraine are less numerous than those of the "Soviet" Ukraine, filled as the latter are with the corpses of millions of peasants condemned to death in the Stalinist "collectivization drive" alone. It is not without significance that in their initial drive Hitler's legions encountered less resistance from the native population of the Ukraine than from the people of the northern part of the "Union."

The fact that "even" the Anglo-American bourgeoisie has given its sanction to Stalin's demand, should cause only a shrugging of the shoulders and not a bending of the knees. What else could it do? Stalin's "moral" position is flawless, *from the imperialist standpoint*. What could Churchill, for example, possibly say in reply to a blunt accusation from the Kremlin statesmen: "You want us to give up our Poland, but you cling to India like a leech." You want your colonies? We want ours. You have your amusing elections in India? We have our funny plebiscites in the border states. More important than the "moral" position is the military position. Neither Churchill nor Roosevelt has as much as a toe-nail on Polish or ex-Polish soil. Mikolajczyk & Co. are better off only in so far as the Polish underground gives them reluctant and suspicious support. Stalin, however, not only has good, solid boots on more and more Polish (or ex-Polish) soil, but has the power to extend a friendly hand to Hitler if an Allied attempt is made to challenge the rights of his boots.

Stalin is not, however, interested in Western White Russia and the Western Ukraine alone. Those territories are taken for granted, and he leaves it to Eden and Hull to find a convenient formula—diplomatic archives are filled with all kinds of them, like the "Curzon line," which can be tapped for each particular occasion—to justify his seizures and to make the Mikolajczyks toe the mark—or else. Stalin wants Poland as well, if he can—directly; if he cannot—then indirectly. If he gits thar fustest with the mostest men, Mikolajczyk might just as well retire to Cleveland, like the recently-deceased Smetona of Lithuania. Then, *finis Poloniae!* There is no question about it: the Polish government in exile is worried far more about Poland itself than about her former eastern territories. More accurately, its apprehensions over the eastern territories are due to its apprehensions over Poland.

Stalin's great advantage lies, as indicated, in the military force at his disposal, and the position it has gained. But political preparations are also at an advanced stage. There is not only a Polish armed force in the Russian army, a force that has undoubtedly been politically organized and "worked on" for some time, but also a half-government in the form of the Union of Polish Patriots. This immaculate creation of the Kremlin is headed by Madam Wassilewska, Führerin of the so-called Polish Communist Party, who arrived at this Kremlin appointment by standing by in prudent silence (or in clamorous approbation?) while the finest heads and hearts of the genuinely communist movement in Poland were stilled by pistols fired in the cellars of GPU prisons. The latest Kremlin

proposal on Poland, which proposes some trifling wiggle of the "Curzon line," makes no mention of the government in exile but takes good care to recognize the status of the Wassilewska Quislings.

Does this mean that if Stalin reaches Warsaw, the GPU will install a Wassilewska government right off the reel? Not necessarily. All sorts of mutations and transitional arrangements are possible for Stalin. Everything depends upon the relationship of forces. It is possible, for example, that Stalin may, temporarily, and under pressure, reconcile himself to a "friendly" government in Poland, that is, a government operating at one or another level of vassalage to Moscow. The most reluctant vassal would then find itself under constant pressure to make room for the Wassilewskas and other GPU puppets, until the point is reached where the reluctant vassal gives way entirely to the zealous and most subservient tool.

### The Role of the Polish Masses

Is there a substantial flaw in the Stalinist scheme of imperialist expansion? There is, but it is not to be found in the Anglo-American allies. England is already orienting toward an acceptance of a division of Europe between herself and Russia. Her imperialist press has spoken for some time in favor of such a partition, with an eye toward excluding the dominant influence of the American colossus. The *London Times* is in the forefront of this agitation, and its strong advocacy of Stalin's "rights" in eastern Europe, especially in connection with the fight over Poland, is neither accidental nor isolated. So astute and influential an Empire statesman as Smuts has recently spoken out bluntly in the same spirit. The imperialists are carving up the Old World again, this time with even deeper and bloodier incisions than ever before.

The "flaw" is—the Polish masses. Mikolajczyk has no power to speak of, but the workers and peasants in Poland have a strength and a determination to be free which not even the GPU could easily master. What is more, they are organized into one of the best and politically most advanced underground movements in Europe. If Mikolajczyk & Co. should capitulate to Stalin, in the hope of gaining a few concessions that would make it possible to keep body and soul together, this would in all likelihood have an effect upon the underground movement opposite to the one calculated. Such a capitulation would most likely result in deepening the gulf that divides the common people, whose aim is not imperialistic but liberationist, from the remains of the Polish bourgeoisie and its social-democratic aides-de-camp. It would enhance the growing realization in the ranks of the underground that the struggle for national freedom is intertwined beyond separation with the struggle for social freedom, and that the only worthy and reliable banner-bearer of both is not Stalin or Churchill or Roosevelt or Mikolajczyk, but the Polish proletariat allied with the proletariat of the rest of Europe.

The fight over Poland underlies what may be called the two most important ideas of our time:

The struggle for national independence and freedom cannot be conducted in a progressive spirit and with consistency and honesty except by the proletariat and its peasant allies. The others are interested in anything but national freedom for all peoples. Conducted by the proletariat, the fight for national freedom must be linked with the fight for social freedom, in which it would find its highest realization. Its highest realization, finally, can come in Europe only in the form of a Socialist United States of Europe, freely entered and equitably and jointly ruled by the independent workers' gov-

ernments that alone can save Europe from the disintegration, subjugation and chaos to which capitalist barbarism is dooming it.

And second, the seeds of the Third World War are being sown already. World War II is not yet over, decidedly not yet, and the conditions for speeding World War III are being laid. This idea is not peculiar to the revolutionary Marxists. Many bourgeois understand it. Many even fear it, for the bourgeoisie does not *want* war, and especially does it not want the revolutions that come with it. But it is helpless to prevent it, as utterly and completely helpless as it proved itself to be in 1939. The military struggle between the two big camps is accompanied by a feverish political struggle inside the Allied camp. The attempts made in it to come to an agreement on the division of the spoils are condemned in advance to the failure which the essentially temporary character of any imperialist agreement bears from the moment it is adopted. They agreed before, once, twice and ten times. Their very agreements contained the germ of conflict. The agreement over Poland simply injects one of the many germs of tomorrow's conflict.

The two most important ideas of our time are simply the reverse of each other. The continuation of capitalism means war and barbarism. The struggle of the proletariat, consistently developed, means peace and socialism. The time for the choice was long ago. But even now, it is not too late.

## The "Liquidation" of the Communist Party

Socialism or barbarism! With the whole world hard pressed by advancing barbarism to make the choice of socialism that it must make for civilization to survive, if not to flower, the Stalinists have found it fitting to announce the dissolution of the Communist Party and the abjurement of the program of socialism. We, too, find it fitting. It clears the air, helps make the truth appear as simple as it is, removes one of the more deceptive masks from the ugly countenance of Stalinism.

Browder's announcement that there is no room or reason in this country for the Communist Party is one of the most astounding confessions of political bankruptcy in modern politics. All the years of sweat and blood, literally, that went into the attempt to build up the Communist Party in this country, all the astounding efforts and sacrifices made by the nameless tens of thousands of rank and file workers in the misguided belief that they were building the indispensable instrument for ushering in a new social order in this country, are now dismissed with bureaucratic disdain as futile, superfluous, unnecessary and even reactionary.

"It is my considered judgment," said Browder jokingly, for everybody knows that his judgments are considered for him by others, "that the American people are so ill-prepared, subjectively, for any deep-going change in the direction of socialism that post-war plans with such an aim would not unite the nation, but would further divide it. And they would divide and weaken precisely the democratic and progressive camp, while they would unite and strengthen the most reactionary forces in the country."

This kind of stammering Jabberwocky is almost beyond sober analysis. The urge for criticism is almost obliterated by a feeling of compassion evoked for a poor lackey who has been instructed to argue that one plus one equal a disordered liver, or something just as incomprehensible.

### The Objective Factor

The American people are not prepared for the program of socialism *subjectively*. But that is no great discovery. It required no considered judgment on the part of Browder or any other sage, but only a pair of eyes and fair hearing equipment. If this pretty well known fact is an argument against the advocacy of the socialist program today, it was just as valid, if not more so, an argument when Browder, along with others, first helped form the Communist Party in this country; and a hundred times more valid when the first socialist party was established in the United States, or, for that matter, in every other country of the world.

The implication in the emphasis on "subjectively" is that the American people, or rather American society, is ripe for the socialist program *objectively*. That is, industry has been developed and centralized to the point where capitalist ownership and appropriation are sharply incompatible with social production, where private ownership of the means of production and exchange are binding fetters on the further development of the productive forces, where the capitalist class has become an utterly reactionary social force, where a modern proletariat exists in sufficient numbers and with sufficient economic and social experience to replace the bourgeoisie as the ruling social class. If that is the case, and it is, then *all* that is lacking is the "subjective" ripeness of the masses, that is, their class or socialist *consciousness* of the objective maturity of capitalist society for socialism. To imbue them with this consciousness is precisely the task of the working class revolutionary party, which achieves it by putting forward and fighting for its socialist program. Therefore? Therefore Browder announces that this is *not* the time to put forward the socialist program!

There once was a socialistic group in Russia, known as the "Economists," who declared, in effect, that because Czarist Russia was not objectively ripe for socialism, but only for bourgeois democracy, it is necessary to put forward, primarily, economic demands to the workers and not the political, or the general socialist, demands. That was wrong and Lenin fought them tooth and toenail. But at least it made *some* sense in the framework of the time and place. Browder's argument, which implies that the United States is ripe for socialism *objectively*, but the people are not ripe for it *subjectively*, and *therefore* we must not put forward to the people a program that would help them mature subjectively, and make them conscious of the objective possibilities and needs of society—makes no sense on God's green earth, none whatsoever.

Continuing, Browder argued before his ice-cold audience in Madison Square Garden that the "Marxists [Ugh!] will not help the reactionaries by opposing the slogan of 'Free Enterprise' with any form of counter-slogan... we frankly declare that we are ready to cooperate in making this capitalism work effectively in the post-war period with the least possible burdens upon the people... Even such elementary measures as nationalization of the banks, railroads, coal and steel, although they would obviously make American capitalist economy much stronger and more capable of solving its problems, would be resisted desperately by powerful circles [circles unnamed!] in America. Such measures would not now have even the united

support of the labor movement. Therefore they cannot be the program for national unity."

Marxian analysis and criticism are powerful instruments enabling their users to probe to the heart of even the most complicated social and political problems or arguments. Browder's arguments, however, are the kind of outpourings that do not even require such fine instruments; a rake will do as well.

Socialism, you see, is not advocated because it "would not unite the nation," and if there is one thing, more than any other, which this "Marxist" blanches to think of, it is a divided nation. A divided nation might even mean class struggle, and that, of course, the Marxists have always been against. What, then, will unite the nation? Free enterprise, that is, the freedom of capital to exploit labor, that is, capitalism.

But if capitalism is objectively ripe for replacement by socialism, that is only another way of saying that capitalism has become reactionary, that it is an obstacle in the path of social progress, that it stands in the way of the welfare of the people upon whom it places, and must place, increasingly heavy burdens. In that case, it does not matter how much Browder may be "ready to cooperate in making this capitalism work effectively in the post-war period with the least possible burdens upon the people." The situation is objectively ripe for socialism precisely because capitalism can no longer work effectively, regardless of what is done or who "cooperates" in the doing of it. It can not longer work effectively in a double sense: it cannot work effectively for the social progress of the masses, as it once did; and it cannot even work effectively for the social *progress* of the capitalists. If it works at all, that is, if it is maintained at all, it can only produce a continual social deterioration, of which crises, fascism and the war are authentic expressions.

### Adopting the Program of Reaction

Oddly enough, Browder involuntarily acknowledges this fundamental socialist truth when he speaks of nationalization. "Such fundamental measures..." he says, "although they would obviously make American capitalist economy much stronger and more capable of solving its problems"—that is, would make it "work effectively"—"would be resisted desperately by powerful circles in America," or, less anonymously, by the big bourgeoisie.

Correct! The contradictions of decaying capitalism have reached a stage where the bourgeoisie stands in the way of capitalism itself, so to speak. Browder is ready to cooperate in making capitalism work effectively by... giving up even "elementary measures" aimed at making it "much stronger and more capable of solving its problems." Why? Because these measures would be "resisted desperately." Resisted, and desperately? Okay, let's forget about it! If this is how easily Browder gives up on "elementary" measures to make capitalism work, he is not very likely to insist on more than elementary measures.

So it appears that a socialist program today is reactionary because it "would unite and strengthen the most reactionary forces in the country"; and even a "good" capitalist program is no good because "powerful circles," that is, the reactionaries, would resist it. Conclusion: the way to gain "support from all classes and groups, with the working people as the main base, from the big bourgeoisie to the Communists," as Browder puts it, is to advocate only what is suitable to the big bourgeoisie. Browder's audacious plan is: launch the war against reaction by adopting reaction's program!



The program of socialism, renounced by Browder, is not, and must not be understood as, an abstraction, a blueprint for reorganizing society at some future, and very remote, date. Socialism itself is an ideal, the fullest realization of which is a considerable distance away. The *program* of socialism, however, is immediate and pressing. It means the defense of the position and interests of the proletariat in the irrepressible class struggle because it is the bearer of social progress. It is a socialist program because the defense of the working class now, today and tomorrow, leads to deepening its consciousness that capitalism is incompatible, not alone or even primarily with an abstract socialism, but with the improvement and extension of the standard of living and political position of the working class; that the struggle for its economic and political rights cannot but mean a struggle against the economic and political power of the bourgeoisie culminating in the seizure of state power by the working class; that the working class in power cannot but take such economic and political measures as mean laying the foundation of a new, socialist society. In a word, the struggle for socialism, the program of socialism, is a highly concrete program of struggle for the working class today.

That is the program Browder formally abandons. He proposes to approach "the common path of dealing with economic problems on the basis of unity of different classes." Class unity, as it has always been called hypocritically (for genuine unity of the classes is an utter impossibility under capitalism), is the basis of the program of capitalism. This has been proved a thousand times over in history. If specific proof is needed in Browder's case, he himself offers it.

Take a concrete, illuminating, characteristic example, the question of wages. The capitalist criterion in this question is, essentially, the criterion of "production." Capitalism is production for profit. No production, no profit. If wages are to rise, then only in dependence upon production (not productivity, it must be emphasized, but production!). In other words: If you want more wages, work more hours and produce more commodities. The working class criterion in the question of wages is a rising standard of living for all the workers on the basis of the higher productivity of labor which makes this possible. Browder has the former criterion: "Any sensible wage policy must be designed to promote maximum production... it must expand earnings in some established relation to expanded production." In other words, again: You will get more wages if you work more hours and produce more commodities.

Suppose the "powerful circles" do not agree to "a sensible wage policy"? Should the workers *then* fight? No, not even then. "The absence of such a common-sense wage policy is no justification for strikes... we are opposed to all strikes as a matter of policy." This is not Captain Rickenbacker nor Congressman Smith of Virginia talking, but Mr. Browder. That is, this is Mr. Browder translating from the original Russian the instructions he has received.

This brings us to the heart of the new Stalinist turn. Like every other consequential action taken by the CP in this or any other country, it originates in the needs of the Kremlin's foreign policy and is dictated by them.

### Stalin's Real Aims

In every country, Stalin seeks to have a strong pro-Russian political force, not only in the labor movement but among the bourgeoisie. In every case, his strength in the ranks of the former facilitates the acquisition of strength in the ranks of

the latter. Right now, Stalin is playing a daring game in world politics. He has a program of imperialist expansion which is almost breath-taking. The relationship of forces in the war are such that he feels himself in an exceptionally good position to realize his program, at least so far as his allies are concerned. So far as working class resistance to his program is concerned, he expects to deal with it adequately by means of the GPU and counter-revolutionary suppressions carried out jointly by him and his allies.

To facilitate the achievement of his program, Stalin requires the maximum of assurances against his allies putting obstacles in his path. Allies means, primarily, England and the United States, which means, above all, the United States. The dissolution of the Communist Party as a party is calculated to provide double assurances.

First, it continues to enable the Stalinists to operate as before (even more effectively, they hope) inside the working class movement, as "mere" members of Browder's new "American Communist Political Association," with the plan of tying the labor movement to Kremlin imperialism and gagging any voice of criticism against Stalin & Co. inside labor's ranks. A foretaste of what is ahead is the impudent intervention of the Stalin government in the internal affairs of the American labor movement, by means of the recent denunciation of Dubinsky, Woll and others in the pages of the Kremlin sheet, *War and the Working Class*. The American workers must, and we hope will, settle their own affairs, and the question of their leaders, by means of their own efforts—and by their efforts we mean also the efforts of labor in other lands, too. They do not need, and must resist tooth and nail, the interference into their affairs of any government, be it the Roosevelt Administration or the reactionary Stalin government, even when the latter takes on the guise of its totalitarianized "trade unions." By the same token, it must resist the even more insidious penetration of its ranks by the American agents of the Kremlin.

Second, however, the dissolution frees the Stalinists for organized penetration of the bourgeois parties, particularly the Democratic. Browder's philosophizing about the two-party system as a great "old tradition" in the United States is a reactionary and cynical fraud. Call it what he will, the Stalinist party remains. What Browder means is: labor must not organize a party of its own. Labor must not declare its independence from capitalist politics. It must continue to participate in capitalist politics as in the past, *but* with this difference, it must participate as a tool of the Kremlin.

Will the Stalinists join the bourgeois parties? God forbid! "We are not endorsing either of the major parties, and we are not condemning either of the major parties," says Browder. *But*, "I don't mean we have any objections to our individual members registering in one or other of the parties when their local community life calls for it." Why? Because under our wonderful two-party system, we have the direct primary system. This system is still more wonderful because it "gives all voters the opportunity to enroll under one or other of the two major parties and participate in choosing its candidates, as well as party committees and delegates to conventions."

There it is. Wherever possible, and not too damagingly conspicuous, the Stalinists will henceforth seek, with the aid of their highly-organized machine which has stood them in such good stead, to capture both the primaries and the bureaucratic machinery of the old parties. This is not an absolutely new scheme with them. In California, during the Sinclair days, they did succeed in capturing whole sections of the

machinery of the Democratic Party. Now the same plan is to be employed on a far more organized and national scale, and, they hope, with an effectiveness comparable to their successes in the American Labor Party.

Toward what end? To maintain capitalism? Bah! That is only an easily modified or even repudiated *function* of their main aim: to maintain and extend the power of the Stalin bureaucracy, to assure the maximum support of its policy in the ranks of American bourgeois politics. Is the Democratic or Republican candidate anti-Stalin or anti-Russian for whatever reasons? All the strength of the Stalinists will be brought to bear to defeat him in the primaries or in the elections. Is he in any way critical of the Kremlin or its policies? Does he, like Willkie, make the slightest, vaguest, friendliest criticism of Stalin's plans? He must be dealt with the way *Pravda* dealt with Willkie, with this difference—*Pravda* cannot vote in the Republican primaries, or in the presidential elections, but Browder & Co. can. This simple but important fact is known, we assume, to Mr. Roosevelt. How much satisfaction it gives him is another matter.

### The Extreme Right Wing

We are thus enabled to place the Stalinists more definitely than ever before. They constitute the most dangerous and the most reactionary wing of the labor movement. No intelligent

or intelligible criterion warrants the designation of "left wingers" for the Stalinists, as the press continually calls them. They are the *extreme right wing* of the labor movement, albeit the most singular right wing in its history, considering that they serve not their own bourgeoisie (that is, not primarily) but the Stalin régime in Russia. The idea that the Stalinists are in any way at all to the left of the "native" American labor bureaucracy—of Green or Lewis or Tobin or Murray or Dubinsky—it is an absurdity, based upon an outlived tradition, a mistake in identity, a confusion of names; in other words, upon the fact that there once was a Communist Party in this country which *was* to the left of the dominant labor officialdom.

What we have now is this: a *totalitarian* right wing of Stalinism and a conservative *labor* bureaucracy. There is a left wing, too. But it is unorganized and even disoriented in large part. It must be reoriented and properly organized if it, and along with it the whole labor movement, is not to succumb to the capitalist offensive or to Stalinist enslavement. The new left wing must be imbued with the spirit and principles of socialism. The fact that the Stalinists have formally renounced these principles is highly commendable if only because it helps destroy a myth, and thus clears the air. It also clears the road for the building of a genuinely revolutionary socialist party. All the efforts of the Workers Party will be bent in that direction.

# In the International Tradition

## Tasks Ahead for American Labor

We believe that the years immediately ahead are the most critical we have faced—"the years of decision," when new patterns will be formed.

In man's long years there come short periods of time which profoundly influence his way of life for centuries thereafter. We are living in such a period today.—Philip Murray in *The American Magazine*, February, 1944.

The statements quoted above come from an article recently published by Philip Murray and widely advertised in the bourgeois press. It is a sign of the times. There is obviously going on in all thinking heads an examination of the present in preparation for the pregnant future which lies ahead. In *THE NEW INTERNATIONAL* of November, 1943, some attempt was made in an article entitled "In the American Tradition" to outline the special national characteristics of the American proletariat as evinced in its history up to the organization of the CIO. The following article proposes to continue the analysis. It will attempt (1) to trace the growth of social and class consciousness in the American proletariat from 1929 to the present day; (2) to observe the manifestations of this growth in the programs and pronouncements of the leadership; (3) to place this relationship and its probable development in its historical and international setting; (4) to reaffirm some practical conclusions in the light of the above.

The most striking development of the great depression of 1929 is a profound skepticism of the future of contemporary society among large sections of the American people. It is most easily recognized in the widespread fear, if not conviction, of a tremendous and inevitable depression after the present war. The most concrete reaction of the proletariat to the

breakdown in 1929 was the organization of the CIO, one of the greatest and most significant chapters in the history of labor anywhere at any period. Any estimate of the American working class in action during the coming period must base itself upon that "colossal energy" of the American masses which was the driving force of the CIO.

### Labor in Europe and in the United States

The late development of mass industrial organization in the United States has both stimulated and retarded the political development of the American working class. In foreign countries the rights of labor, social legislation, etc., were the obvious result of mass pressure organized by labor leaders. In the United States, the Roosevelt government cleverly presented itself as the originator, initiator and organizer of these developments. Thus, whereas in Europe the winning of these advantages fortified the class consciousness learned in the industrial struggle, in the United States all these gains seemed to fortify the ascendancy of one political organization of the bourgeoisie over the working class. In reality this is only half the truth, and the lesser half. Organized labor in America, in so far as it supported (and still supports) Roosevelt, did so in a manner far more class-conscious than otherwise. *It considered the New Deal as essentially a New Deal for the working people.* To the great masses of the people, Rockefeller, Morgan and Wall Street, the "rich," did not need any New Deal. They were getting on well enough. It was the starving third of the nation that wanted it, and however niggardly the New Deal administration might have been in fact, it handed out copiously to the workers in words.

While this inhibited the emergence of a national political party of organized labor, it has had inevitable and profound consequences in the working class. It has developed a conviction that unemployment and social suffering are no longer questions between the industrial worker and the private capitalist. The working class by and large believes that society is responsible. By society it means the government and it looks to the government to take whatever measures are necessary to repair what has become an intolerable state of affairs. How rapidly this sentiment has spread has its most eloquent testimony in the vigorous response of the bourgeoisie. The freshness, formidable militancy and confident expectations of the American proletariat gave it a power fully recognized by the state. In 1936 the highly developed political organizations and political experience of the French proletariat could force from the French bourgeoisie less than the purely industrial actions of the proletariat of America from the American bourgeoisie. The great wealth of the country, the national tradition of plenty, both of them complementary sides of the special American tradition, played and will continue to play a powerful rôle.

In 1939 the National Resources Board reported to the President as follows on the "basic characteristics" of the American economy:

Moreover, as people become increasingly aware of the discrepancy between rich resources and poor results in living and as the ineffectiveness in the organization of resources becomes more clear, a sense of social frustration must develop and be reflected in justified social unrest and unavoidable friction. Individual frustration builds into social frustration. And social frustration is quite as likely to work itself out in socially destructive as in socially constructive way... The opportunity for a higher standard of living is so great, the social frustration from the failure to obtain it is so real, that other means will undoubtedly be sought if a democratic solution is not worked out. The time for finding such a solution is not unlimited.

Such was a brief but exact representation of the complex social relations in the United States of America in 1939. And all the more convincing because of the source and circumstances from which it comes.

### **The Influence of the War**

The influence of the war has merely accentuated these developments which were already so powerful in the decade before its outbreak. And if, as is inevitable in war, their full fruition has been retarded, the result must be their outburst with renewed force at some stage in the coming period. To begin with, the war has prepared the population for a social crisis to a degree that was impossible except by the state organization of the economy. By the millions, men have been torn from their homes and passed through the military machine. By the millions, the more backward elements have been dragged from rural stagnation, women from their homes and petty bourgeois from offices, and hurled into the discipline of large-scale capitalist production. Never has there been such an uprooting in American life. The country has undergone a profound social upheaval, the greatest the proletariat has ever known.

Not only has the war disrupted normal existence to this unprecedented degree. Side by side with this it has compelled a growing consciousness among all ranks of the proletariat that production is a social process in which labor has both rights and responsibilities. In 1929, in the minds of the workers, organized labor was a small section of the population, the capitalists another, and government a third, three different entities. The breakdown of the system of "free enterprise" in 1929 resulted in a steady growth in social and

class consciousness. By 1939, "free enterprise" had disguised itself as "management" in order to emphasize its social rôle in production. Organized labor now looked upon itself as entitled to a voice in the management of the productive process and looked to government as the responsible mediator of conflicting social claims. Already, however, by 1940, as was shown by the Reuther Plan, the UAW, one of labor's most advanced sections, opposed itself to "management" as a candidate for the organization of production in the interests of society as a whole. The last three years have seen a truly astonishing development of the social consciousness of organized labor. This development of social consciousness has been as powerful as it is because of the special rôle of the state. Directly and indirectly the government has interfered in and controlled every aspect of economic and social life, from wages working conditions, food and clothes, to the date of the conception of children and, in the Army, even the right to marry.

After World War I the resentment of the working class against all that it had to suffer was directed more against Morgan, Wall Street and private capital than the government. In World War II the hostility and the exasperation resulting from the statification of the economy and the strain of the war have been directed as much against the government as against private capital. The course of the miners' strike, undertaken against the full power of bourgeois society and its state during wartime, shows how deep is the current dissatisfaction among the workers with the existing state of affairs and their consciousness of the center of responsibility. The government recognized this early and has not spared its efforts to counteract the deep anti-war feeling, the skepticism which was the aftermath of World War I, and the sufferings of the people during the depression. Through its highest officials, the President and the Vice-President, it has stimulated the masses by vague but constantly reiterated promises of repayment for the sacrifices of the war by the abolition of what the workers endured in the pre-war period.

The culminating feature of the whole experience, however, while it permeates the consciousness of the great masses of the people, is as yet being held, as it were, in solution. But it will break forth with irresistible force as soon as the masses feel upon them the inevitable pressure of capitalist bankruptcy.

*To the many-millioned mass already skeptical of "free enterprise," the war effort of the state indicates that a government by planned use of the American productive system can create a society of full employment and plenty for all.*

At the present moment the proletariat is in a state of sullen suspiciousness directed toward the capitalist class in general and the Roosevelt government in particular. Like the bourgeoisie, it confidently expects that the war, at least in Europe, is near enough to its conclusion to justify intensive preparations for the post-war period. The end of this phase of the war can be the signal for the outbreak of the sharpest class struggles. It may even be impossible for the bourgeoisie to suppress them before the actual end of hostilities in Europe. It is not impossible that a break with Roosevelt may come before the 1944 elections. Such events are quite unpredictable. The decisive question, however, is that, although contradictory currents move among the working class, yet, as a whole, it knows what it wants and in millions, in its advanced groups, is determined to have it. It is conscious of great changes ahead in society both at home and abroad. It knows that labor is destined to play a great part in these changes. Such at least is the opinion of the present writer.

## The Labor Leadership

One of the surest signs of the estimated changes in the consciousness of the American proletariat is to be found in the character of the demands now being put forward by the leadership. Let us take three of them.

William Green of the AFL has frequently expressed himself as being hostile to government interference in industry. He accepts it as a war measure but, fundamental class-collaborationist that he is, he claims that "free" political institutions must be based upon "free" enterprise. Permanent government control of industry, according to Green, means permanent government control of labor. There, Mr. Green is perfectly right within his own limitations, which are the limitations of capitalist society. If the capitalist government organizes industry, then, modern production being what it is, it is compelled to organize labor as well. And for capitalists, the organization of labor is merely a phrase for the control, the limitation and the ultimate suppression of the rights of organized labor. The solution, obviously, is the organization of industry by the working class itself.

However, even a Green cannot be blind to the inexorable tendencies which are working themselves out in the process of production today. And on December 3, 1943, in an interview in Washington, Green recognized that the post-war reconversion program will inevitably be guided by the government. Green has discovered a new "friend of labor," no less a person than the discredited Donald Nelson. He proposed Nelson as leader of a "top policy council" in which Congress, management, labor and farmers would be represented. Thus, even in the mind of this most backward-minded labor leader, it is perfectly clear that the old days of free enterprise are gone, for the time being, that production is a social process for which government is responsible. More important, however, is the frank recognition that labor must actually be represented in the production councils of the nation. The old maneuvering, the intrigue and the barter in the corridors of Washington which go under the name of lobbying, this is no longer sufficient. Labor must take its own place in the councils of government.

The second example that we propose to take is the post-war program of the UAW. This program bases itself on international coöperation.

Organized labor of all United Nations must coöperate to assure the application of the principles of the Atlantic Charter and to establish a world-wide system of collective security, eliminating trade barriers and establishing minimum labor standards in all lands.\*

The immediate question is that of reconversion.

Speediest reconversion for peacetime production must be carried out with maintenance of labor standards and job protection for workers who have transferred to war work. Returning members of the armed forces must be guaranteed jobs, bonuses, education and protection for dependents.

The aim is:

*Full Production and Full Employment*—The government must operate monopolies and regulate other industries to guarantee full employment and production in the public interest. Small business must be rehabilitated. A gigantic construction program must be inaugurated by the federal government. Farm production must be geared to an economy of abundance, with elimination of absentee control and market insecurity.

*Health, Education and Security*—A nation-wide program must eradicate disease and malnutrition; education must be equally available to all; and full social security must be guaranteed from cradle to grave.

\*All quotations are from the summary printed in *Ammunition*, September, 1943, the educational journal of the UAW.

The means is the necessary climax to such a program.

Democratic planning for peacetime economy is only possible with full participation of organized labor at all levels.

## Murray's Manifesto

Infinitely more important, however, is the pronouncement recently made by Philip Murray, extracts from which stand at the head of this article. It is obviously a kind of New Year Manifesto and we reprint some of its most important passages:

... Events have convinced us that labor must become a more influential factor in the future than it has been in the past.

For the first time in American history, the forces of labor are now setting up a nation-wide organization to protect the rights of the working man, as well as the rights of the returning soldier, the farmer, the small business man, and the so-called "common man."

This is not a "Labor Party" or a "Third Party." There is no present intention to form such a party.

This is something new in American politics... We were impelled to action by the happenings of the last year or two, by a growing reactionary trend, and by the critical prospects raised by the elections in 1944 and the eventual reversion to a peacetime economy.

... When public apathy allows ignorant, selfish, and short-sighted men to get into Congress... it makes us dread to think what might happen if such men should be in control when the terrific problems of the war's end arise.

It was bad enough last time. This time, with a far greater war on our hands, and consequently with far greater problems of converting back to peace, such reckless courses might shake the foundations of the very democratic system we have been fighting for.

We believe that the years immediately ahead are the most critical we have ever faced—"the years of decision"—when new patterns will be formed.

Having helped to conquer tyranny abroad, the United States in peace must conquer unemployment and poverty at home. We have proved in war that this nation can produce a Niagara of armaments and materials.

Disaster comes by accident, but prosperity today comes only by planning.

In man's long history there come short periods of time which profoundly influence his way of life for centuries thereafter. We are living in such a period today.

No one knows to what extent a democracy can plan its future in advance.

We shall draw up and present to the American people a specific set of principles for the general welfare.

One thing immediately stands out. Murray is under no illusions whatever as to the easy transition in the United States to the world of the Four Freedoms and the Century of the Common Man. He is aware, on the one hand, of the tremendous capacity for planned production in America which has been demonstrated to the masses. He is equally aware of the determination of the bourgeoisie to wreck the democratic system if need be and to maintain its power and privileges at whatever cost to the nation. A deep fear for the future can be discerned in this serious analysis addressed to the American people as a whole. Yet this labor leader omits what everyone knows to be one of the fundamental constituents of the "years of decision." He omits all reference to the independent action of the working masses. He omits it because, like all his kind, he is afraid of it.

The ideological figleaf of reformism of this type is that if even the labor leadership is aware of the perils ahead, the workers are so backward that it is impossible to take the drastic measures necessary for a radical working class solution of the crisis. As we follow Murray and look into the future, the first thing to do is to destroy this illusion of "advanced" labor leaders and backward workers.

Now estimates as to the particular stage of development reached by a working class will always differ widely. Precision on such a question, difficult at all times, is particularly

difficult when the working class in question has no independent political organization of its own, carrying on a specific political education and in turn acting as a barometer of working class development. But even where, as formerly for years in Europe, that difficulty did not exist, the extent to which social ideas or programs have penetrated into the minds of the workers cannot possibly be told until the workers take action, and mass action in which they feel their united strength. When the French proletariat moved into the factories in May-June, 1936, only the events themselves showed how far the workers were consciously permeated with distrust of the ruling régime, and a deep determination to insure that their demands were carried out. Yet on the surface it could appear that if only the workers saw as clearly into the future as Murray and the leaders of the UAW, then it would be possible for labor to begin, *now*, to make great efforts and achieve great progress on its own behalf. This is "proved" by the fact that the American working class has not yet felt the necessity of an independent political organization of its own. Until then we must wait until the workers are more educated. In reality, such an estimate, true on the surface, is fundamentally false. The whole course of the development of labor in Europe and Asia, the history of the CIO in America shows that the labor leadership at the decisive moment is always lagging behind the working class. We have to see this to the end.

To see into the future, however, and visualize trends of social classes and groups requires first and foremost a clear concept of the past. The American proletariat has its own national characteristics. In the previous article we tried to indicate these by a rough comparison with the development of the proletariat in Great Britain. But the American proletariat is a part of the international working class. We can see best into its future by some comparison with the growth and distinct stages of the developing proletarian struggle.

### Stages of Proletarian Struggle

The international proletariat first appeared on the scene in the early Thirties of the nineteenth century, and its first great action was the French Revolution of 1848. Since that time every great individual action of the proletariat has marked a stage in the development of the proletariat as a whole. Engels has outlined this movement for us. In his introduction to Marx's *Civil War in France*, he notes that the workers in 1848 themselves designated the Republic which followed Louis Philippe as the "Social Republic." Yet, "as to what was to be understood by this 'Social Republic,' nobody was quite clear, not even the workmen themselves." In 1871 came the Paris Commune. There we had much of the confusion which existed in 1848. Lenin, who followed Marx and Engels very closely, notes that "there was no workers party, there was no preparedness and no long training of the working class, which, in the mass, did not even clearly visualize its tasks and the methods of fulfilling them. There were no serious political organizations of the proletariat, no strong trade unions and coöperative societies." On another occasion, speaking to the Seventh Congress of the Russian Communist Party, Lenin gave a belligerent interpretation to the original idea expressed by Engels in the above-mentioned introduction: "The Commune was not understood by those who had created it. They created with the instinctive genius of the awakened masses, and not a single fraction of the French socialists realized what they were doing."

Was the immediate object of the Commune a complete

socialist revolution? "We can cherish no such illusions." Lenin says that when Engels called the Commune a dictatorship of the proletariat, he had in view "only the participation, and moreover the *ideological leading* participation, of the representatives of the proletariat in the revolutionary government of Paris." This lack of consciousness in its revolutionary leadership helped to ruin the Commune, apart from the objective difficulties. Yet the progress from 1848 was immense.

Europe was then quiet for nearly thirty-five years. In 1905 the Russian proletariat took the advanced position. It established the general political strike as one of the great weapons of the proletariat in its struggle against capital. From out of its own instinctive response to the objective development of capitalist production, it organized the soviets. The international significance of this for the proletariat was soon seen. When the end of World War I brought to a head the gathering crisis of capitalism all over Europe, the general political strike and the organization of the Soviets became fundamental weapons of the proletariat in revolutionary struggle. In backward China in 1925-27, we see the same phenomena. The year 1936 is a very important one in the history of proletarian struggle. The workers developed a new weapon corresponding to the high stage of the struggle with the capitalist class. In France they go into the factories and threaten to stay there until their demands are satisfied. In Spain, in Catalonia, the *first* thing the workers do is to take hold of the property of the bourgeoisie. Never was a proletarian revolution so violent and decisive in this respect as was the revolution in this most important province of Spain in the *first seventy-two hours*. Had there existed in Spain anything like a revolutionary party the proletariat would have been able to consolidate itself over large areas in Spain even more rapidly than the extraordinarily rapid revolution in Russia between February and October, 1917. *What we have to note is that in America the proletariat, though far less conscious politically and far less aroused than the proletariat either in France or in Spain, used precisely the same basic method of struggle.* It went into the factories. John L. Lewis, the militant labor leader, fought splendidly for the CIO. But the American working class, once it was aroused, showed itself ready to adopt the most advanced methods of proletarian struggle current at the time. At the decisive moment these apparently backward workers were far in advance of their most advanced leaders.

The lesson to be drawn from this is plain. When the American proletariat, as we confidently expect it will, does move into action, it will take steps which will correspond to the general stage of development of proletarian class struggle at the time. The Murrays, the Thomases and the Reuthers will be found at the tail of the mass movement. So it always has been. So it always will be. We agree entirely with Murray as to the fateful character of the years ahead. We only add our confidence that the American proletariat will show in the moment of action that all of its present leaders are fumbling behind it.

### Reaffirmations of Practical Conclusions

Certain practical conclusions\* can now be reaffirmed:

1. The propaganda and agitation for a Labor Party which revolutionists will advance must serve first and foremost as a means of educating the working class to the perils of the hour, the fatefulness of the days ahead, and the need of drastic

\*See Workers Party resolution on The Struggle for the Labor Party, *The New International*, December, 1943.

solutions to the social problems presented. Wherever the workers wish to form an independent Labor Party the revolutionists today support them and actively cooperate. But the revolutionary program for a Labor Party goes far beyond what appears to be the immediate political consciousness of millions of workers. If our previous experience proves anything, it is that the explosive forces which are gathering in the working-class movement during the past years will drive it forward at the moment of decision far beyond the imagination of Murray and his brother bureaucrats. It can conceivably happen that the workers may face a very sharp stage of the class struggle even before an independent Labor Party is formed. A genuine mass Labor Party may be stifled, as Murray obviously intends to stifle it for 1944. The crisis may unloose a torrential movement for an independent Labor Party. Such things do not concern us here and in any case are unpredictable. But the revolutionists under all circumstances hold before the workers a program for the reconstruction of society. *The American working class has not suffered the destruction of the American economy by war. It is outside the international complications of the European proletariat. It has had hammered into its head from all sides the corrupt origins and fundamental bankruptcy of fascism. It has learned a great deal both on a national and international scale from the intensive political education which war brings and the fortunate position in which it has been placed in relation to the actual conflict. It has suffered none of the drastic blows which have fallen upon the European proletariat during recent years. It is conscious that its great battles are before it.* Any kind of political analysis which thinks that a bold political program is too "advanced" for the "backward" workers completely misunderstands that sharp transposition of rôles between masses and the labor bureaucrats at the moment that the masses move in action. And, in the United States in 1944, to talk about "years of decision" without visualizing mass action is the escapist fantasy of a frightened bureaucrat.

2. The second practical conclusion is the recognition of the necessity of the revolutionary Marxian party today. A

Marxian party is always necessary but a frank recognition of struggle for the organization of an independent Labor Party does not in the least mean subordination of the struggle for a revolutionary party. Exactly the opposite is the case. It is clear from Murray's article that the labor bureaucracy which he represents does not see labor's political participation in the "years of decision," except as giving its votes to be used at the dictates of its "leaders." Any illusions about the labor bureaucracy on this score will be paid for at heavy cost. The labor bureaucracy is a social phenomenon with certain social and political characteristics. That it does not wish a Labor Party is not in any way surprising. Tomorrow it may or may not be of the same opinion. But if even a dynamic development of the working class should push the caste of Murray, Green and the rest of them, or others of their type, into the leadership of an independent Labor Party, then these gentlemen will do substantially what all their colleagues in Europe have been doing for the past fifty years. They will try to use the party as an instrument of class collaboration and suppression of working class militancy. The more powerful is the urge of the masses to come to grips with their oppressors, the more certainly will our labor "statesmen" maneuver to suppress the workers. The struggle, therefore, for the as yet unborn Labor Party and the struggle to make the Labor Party, if and when formed, an instrument for the organization and education of the workers, that is a task that will have to be performed *against* the labor bureaucracy. In other words, it is a task of the revolutionary party.

Finally, when we watch the horizons of Europe, Asia and Africa and see the vast explosions of the class struggles which impend, it becomes clear that the American working class needs its revolutionary party not only to assist it in its struggles with the quaking bureaucrats who lead it only to stifle its growing aspirations for independence. It needs such a party to help it draw the lessons of the great international class battles ahead so that these lessons can be applied to the national field.

J. R. JOHNSON.

# Problems of the Italian Revolution

**Timely Observations for Discussion Today**

## INTRODUCTION

It would be hard to find a more timely and important contribution to the discussion of the problems of the Marxian vanguard in the revolutionary struggle against fascism and for workers' power than Trotsky's comments in 1930 on the coming revolution in Italy.

The relevance and perspicacity of Trotsky's contribution are underlined by two things: the applicability of the views he expresses about a revolution which occurred only thirteen years after he wrote about it, thirteen years of the most tumultuous and complicated events in modern history; and their applicability in face of the recent events in Italy, which could not possibly have been foreseen in their *concreteness* by anyone, especially not thirteen years ago.

Now that the captains of the "Anti-Fascist Concentration" are actually back in Italy, they are proving to be even more miserable Punchinellos than could have been foreseen thir-

teen years ago. The Stalinists, the Social-Democrats, the Sforzas and the Croces do not even reach to the hips of a Kerensky. Kerensky held power of a sort in a great state; his facsimiles in Italy hardly have the power of speech. Kerensky declaimed and shouted and strutted; the Italian Social-Democrats look inquiringly to Amgot, Sforza whines and Croce moans unintelligibly. Under Kerensky, the Czar was under arrest and a democratic republic was proclaimed—more or less; the "six anti-fascist parties" earnestly implore the Allied commanders to do them the great favor of lifting the crown from the anointed head of the King, with the minimum of pain to all concerned, and of granting them a democratic régime, plus a few democratic liberties when and as it suits the military requirements of their patrons.

Meanwhile, the popular revolution which began in Italy has not succeeded in developing to the point of the seizure of power by the working class. Apart from the difficulties which the military situation in Italy presents to the revolution, this

frustration is due primarily to the absence of a well-organized revolutionary vanguard party capable of leading the workers to a socialist victory.

This is another way of saying that after almost a generation of fascist rule in Italy, the working class, with all the remarkable powers of recuperation it has once more disclosed, is still deeply affected by all sorts of democratic illusions, is greatly confused and disoriented. Neither Sforza, the Social-Democrats, nor the Stalinists, who are allowed to operate after a fashion in Southern Italy, are expending any efforts to dispel these illusions and introduce clarity. That is not their rôle. The masses will have to learn from events. Fortunately, there will be no lack of events, events that will be very instructive as to the real rôle of Anglo-American imperialism and of the "anti-fascists" of all stripes who cling to its caissons.

The masses will learn most speedily, and most effectively, if the Marxists in Italy organize their forces well, and understand how to teach the masses by whose side they fight. That there are revolutionary Marxists in Italy, who can and will re-unite on a national scale, even if they are now isolated, not overly numerous and scattered, is, in our opinion, a certainty. That they unite and adopt a fighting Bolshevik program, is *the* urgent task in Italy.

It is impossible to consider this task without frankly expressing the same apprehensions that really underlie Trotsky's comments in 1930. They were made in reply to a number of queries addressed to him by a group of Italian Communist-Oppositionists. Trotsky could not be—and he was not—unaware of the strong influence still exerted among the Italian Marxists by the doctrines and prejudices of the early left wing in the Italian communist movement, commonly referred to as the Bordiguists, after their leader, Amadeo Bordiga. His observations about the Italian revolution were obviously aimed not merely and perhaps not even so much against the Stalinists, the Social-Democrats and the bourgeois liberals, as against the doctrinary ultra-leftism of the Bordiguists which could only result in isolating the Marxists from the main stream of the coming revolution, and reducing them to ineffectualness.

Trotsky's admonitions against the juiceless and brittle leftism which does not understand the significance of democratic slogans in connection with the struggle for workers' power, especially in the period of struggle against political despotism, were flawlessly valid in 1930. Today, in light of the way events are actually unfolding, it can be said that his admonitions are not merely valid, but that to ignore them would be a first-class disaster for the revolutionary vanguard and, correspondingly, for the revolution itself.

Nobody could ask for a clearer confirmation of the wisdom of Trotsky's views than is offered by the situation in Italy today. The advocates of a revolutionary workers' government need a political instrument with which to expose the hollowness of bourgeois democracy, and particularly of the bourgeois and petty bourgeois democrats, with which to shift the masses from the tutelage of the enemies of socialist power—ranging from Amgot, through Sforza and the Social-Democrats, to the Stalinists—to the conscious struggle for socialist power. There are no better instruments than the "transitional slogans," the democratic demands which, as Trotsky put it, "always open up the road for the proletarian dictatorship," the dictatorship that "cannot be *imposed* upon the popular masses."

If some still living leftists look down upon "democratic demands" because "we are in a revolutionary situation," it is because the experiences of at least thirty years have left them blissfully unaffected. The fact that Sforza, the Social-Demo-

crats and the Stalinists (and their similars in other countries of Europe) also mumble something about free speech, free press, free assembly, elections, etc., is important only in that they find themselves compelled to reflect the aspirations of the masses who were so long without any semblance of these rights. The fact is that they only *mumble* about these democratic rights. They "caution" the masses to subordinate the struggle for them to the interests of private property, or the interests of imperialism, or the interests of the imperialist war. Or they tell the masses that the way to gain these rights is by lying quietly in bed until some gracious personage or personages condescend to grant them to the people.

These are only added reasons why the revolutionists should become the most ardent and uncompromising champions of these demands, investing them, as Trotsky writes, "with the most audacious and resolute meaning." It was precisely by acting in this way that the Russian Bolsheviks demonstrated to the masses that the only way of achieving their simple and legitimate democratic aspirations was to break from the democratic poseurs, the promisers and the compromisers, and take power into their own hands.

In this connection, we call attention to the resolution of the Workers Party on the situation in Europe, with special reference to the revolutionary struggle for national liberation, which was printed in the February, 1943, issue of *The New International*. In it will be found an exposition of the Marxian policy in Europe today which is inspired by the same approach to the problem of the socialist revolution that marks Trotsky's contribution of thirteen years ago.

Trotsky's article was first published in the September-October, 1930, issue of *The Bulletin of the Russian Opposition*. It was translated by John G. Wright and published in *The Militant* of August 7, 1943, from which it is reproduced here in full.—The Editor.

• • •

You deny the possibility of a bourgeois revolution in Italy, and in this you are absolutely correct. History hasn't the capacity for turning back a considerable number of pages, each denoting a decade. The Central Committee of the Italian Communist Party used to try to skate around this question by declaring that the revolution would be neither bourgeois nor proletarian but a "people's revolution." This is a mere repetition of the answer given at the beginning of our century by the Russian Populists [Narodniki] to the question of what will be the nature of the revolution against czarism. This is the same answer that the Comintern has given and continues to give with respect to China and India. It is a pseudo-revolutionary rehashing of the social-democratic theory of Otto Bauer and others, a theory proclaiming that the state can rise above the classes, i.e., be neither bourgeois nor proletarian. This theory is fatal for the proletariat and for the revolution. In China it turned the proletariat into cannon fodder for the bourgeois counter-revolution.

Every great revolution in history is a *people's* revolution in the sense that the entire people enters into the channel of the revolution. The great French Revolution and the October Revolution were people's revolutions in the full sense of the term. But the former was bourgeois inasmuch as it established private property, whereas the latter was proletarian inasmuch as it abolished private property.

Only hopelessly belated petty bourgeois revolutionists are still capable of envisaging nowadays the perspective of neither bourgeois nor proletarian revolutions but a "people's"

(i.e., petty bourgeois) one. But in the imperialist epoch the petty bourgeoisie is utterly incapable not only of leading the revolution but of playing an independent rôle in it.

[With regard to the "transitional" period in Italy after the downfall of fascism, a question closely linked with the foregoing, Trotsky wrote:]

### Two Diametrically Opposed Conceptions

First of all it is necessary to pose clearly the question—a transitional period from what to what? A transitional period between a bourgeois (or "people's") revolution and the proletarian revolution—that is one thing. A transitional period between the fascist dictatorship and the proletarian dictatorship—that is something else again. In accordance with the first conception, on the order of the day is a bourgeois revolution and one must fix the place of the proletariat in it, and only after this will there open up the transitional period to the proletarian revolution. According to the other conception, at issue is a series of battles, social shocks, changing situations, and partial turns which comprise the stage of the proletarian revolution. There might be several such stages. But between them there cannot and will not be either a bourgeois revolution or the mysterious hybrid of a "people's" revolution.

Does this mean that Italy might not again turn for a certain time into a parliamentary state or become a "democratic republic"? I consider—apparently in complete agreement with you—that such a perspective is not excluded. But it can manifest itself, not as the product of a bourgeois revolution, but as the abortion of the proletarian revolution, which had not fully matured and which had not been brought to its conclusion. In the event of a profound revolutionary crisis and mass battles, in the course of which, however, the proletarian vanguard proves as yet incapable of coming to power, the bourgeoisie might restore its rule on "democratic" foundations.

### A Phase of the Counter-Revolution

Is it permissible to say, for instance, that the existing German [Weimar] Republic is the conquest of a bourgeois revolution? Such a characterization would be absurd. What took place in Germany in 1918-19 was a proletarian revolution which for lack of leadership was deceived, betrayed and crushed. The bourgeois counter-revolution, however, was forced to adapt itself to the situation created by the crushing of the proletarian revolution and to assume the forms of a parliamentary "democratic" republic.

Is something similar (within certain limits, of course) excluded for Italy? No, it is not. The enthronement of fascism came as a result of the 1920 proletarian revolution which was not carried to its conclusion. The fascists can be overthrown only by a new proletarian revolution. Should this again not be carried to its conclusion (owing to the weakness of the Communist Party, the maneuvers and betrayals of the Social-Democrats, the Free Masons, the Catholics), then the "transitional" state which the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie would be compelled to create after the foundering of the fascist form of its rule could not be anything else but a parliamentary and democratic state.

What in reality is the political aim of the Anti-Fascist Concentration? Foreseeing the collapse of the fascist state, as a consequence of the rising of the proletariat and, generally, the oppressed popular masses, the Concentration is making preparations to check this movement, to paralyze and rob it by passing off the victory of refurbished counter-revolution as the victory of the democratic bourgeois revolution.

If one does not constantly keep in mind this dialectic of living social forces, then it is possible to become hopelessly confused and lose one's way. As I see it, there are no disagreements on this score among us.

### Marxist Attitude to Democratic Slogans

Does this mean that we communists reject in advance any and all democratic slogans and, generally, all transitional and preparatory slogans, and limit ourselves solely to the slogan of the *dictatorship of the proletariat*? This would be hopeless sectarian doctrinairism. We do not at all think that the proletarian dictatorship is separated from the fascist regime by a single revolutionary leap. We do not at all deny a transitional period with its transitional demands, including democratic demands. With the aid of these transitional slogans, which always open up the road for the proletarian dictatorship, the communist vanguard must conquer the entire working class to its side, while the working class as a whole must rally around it all the oppressed masses of the nation.

I do not exclude even the slogan of a Constituent Assembly which under certain conditions can be imposed by the course of the struggle, or, more correctly, by the process of the revolutionary awakening of the oppressed masses. On the broad historical scale, i.e., from a perspective of a whole number of years, the fate of Italy is undoubtedly concentrated in the alternative: *fascism or communism*? But to assert that this alternative has already today become the conscious attainment of the oppressed classes in the nation is obviously to indulge in wishful thinking and to consider as solved the colossal task which still fully confronts the weak Communist Party.

Should the revolutionary crisis unfold, say, in the course of the next few months—under the influence of the economic crisis on the one hand, and under the impact of the revolutionary impulse from Spain on the other—then vast masses of toilers, not only peasants but also workers, would undoubtedly advance, alongside of economic demands, democratic slogans (freedom of assembly, of the press, coalitions, unions, democratic representation in Parliament, municipalities, etc.). Does it mean that a communist party must reject these demands? On the contrary. It must invest them with the most audacious and resolute meaning. The revolutionary dictatorship cannot be *imposed* upon the popular masses. It can be realized in life only by conducting the struggle—the entire struggle for all the transitional demands, tasks and needs of the masses—at the head of these masses.

### Bolshevik Policy in 1917

Let me recall that Bolshevism by no means came to power under the abstract slogan of the dictatorship of the proletariat. We fought for the Constituent Assembly much more resolutely and boldly than all the other parties. We said to the peasants: "You demand equal distribution of land? Our agrarian program goes much further. But no one except us will assist you peasants in realizing the equal use of the land. For this you must support the workers." In regard to the war we said to the popular masses: "Our communist task is the war against all oppressors. But you are not ready to go so far. You are striving to break out of the imperialist war. No one but us Bolsheviks will help you achieve this task."

I do not touch here at all upon the question of what should be the central slogans of the transitional period in Italy, right now in the year 1930. In order to outline the proper slogans, and to effect correct and timely changes, it is necessary to be far better acquainted with Italy's internal life and to be far closer to her toiling masses than is possible for me. Here, in



addition to the correct method, it is also necessary to be able to *listen to* the masses. I want here simply to indicate the general place of transitional demands in the struggle of communism against fascism and, in general, against bourgeois society.

While advancing one or another set of democratic slogans, we must irreconcilably fight against all forms of democratic charlatanism. Such low-grade charlatanism is represented by the slogan of the Italian Social-Democracy: "The Democratic Republic of the Toilers." The toilers' republic can be only the class state of the proletariat. The "Democratic Republic" is only a masked rule of the bourgeoisie. The combination of the two is a naïve petty bourgeois illusion of the Social-Democratic rank and file (workers, peasants) and deliberate treachery on the part of the Social-Democratic leaders (all these Turatis, Modiglianis, and their ilk). Let me once again remark in passing that I was and remain opposed to the formula of a "National Assembly on the basis of worker-peasant committees" precisely because this formula approaches the Social-Democratic slogan of the "Democratic Toilers' Republic" and, consequently, can render extremely difficult for us the struggle against the Social-Democrats.

### **The Threat of Social-Democratic Betrayal**

The assertion of the official leadership [of the Comintern] to the effect that the Social-Democracy no longer exists politically in Italy is a consoling theory for optimistic functionaries who see ready-made conquests where it is still a question only of great tasks. *Fascism did not liquidate the Social-Democracy but on the contrary has conserved it.* In the eyes of the masses the Social-Democrats do not bear the direct responsibility for the régime whose victims they are to a certain extent. This gains them new sympathies or strengthens the old ones. At a certain moment the Social-Democracy will coin political currency from the blood of Matteotti just as proficiently as Rome coins Christ's blood. It is not at all excluded that in the initial period of the revolutionary crisis the leadership can turn out to be concentrated chiefly in the hands of the social-democracy. If large masses are drawn immediately into the cri-

sis, and if the communist leadership conducts a correct policy, then the Social-Democracy can be reduced to a cipher within a brief period of time. But this is a task and not a conquest already attained. One cannot leap over this task: one must solve it.

Let me recall in passing that Zinoviev, and later the Manuilskys and Kuusinen, have already announced on two or three occasions that the German Social-Democracy no longer exists in essence. In 1925, in a statement to the French party, written by the flighty Lozovsky, the Comintern announced that the French Socialist Party had completely departed from the scene. Against this lightmindedness the Left Opposition protested resolutely each time. Only boobies or traitors will seek to instill in the proletarian vanguard of Italy the idea that Italian Social-Democracy can no longer play a rôle analogous to that played by the German Social-Democracy in relation to the German revolution of 1918.

It may be objected that inasmuch as the Social-Democracy has already deceived and betrayed the Italian proletariat [in 1920], it will not succeed in repeating its treachery. Illusions! Self-deception! In the course of its entire history the proletariat has been deceived many times, first by liberalism and then by Social-Democracy.

Apart from everything else, it is impermissible to forget that since 1920 a decade has passed; and since the victory of fascism—eight years. Ten and twelve-year-old boys and girls, who witnessed the fascist activities of 1920-22, comprise today the new generation of workers and peasants who will struggle most selflessly against the fascists, but who lack, however, political experience. Communists will come in contact with the masses themselves only in the course of the revolution itself, and in the best case they will require a number of months in order to expose and abolish the Social-Democracy, which, I repeat, was not liquidated by fascism, but, on the contrary, conserved.

LEON TROTSKY.

May 14, 1930.

# From Inside Stalin's Prisons

## **The Political Life of the Left Opposition**

This story first appeared in *Au Pays du Grand Mensonge* ("In the Land of the Great Lie"), by A. Ciliga, published in Paris in 1938. Anton Antonovich Ciliga was a leader of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia and a representative of its left wing. After a period of time spent in Moscow, he became one of the militants of the Trotskyist Opposition. The police persecution of the Opposition which began in 1928 did not spare the non-Russian Communists. Along with others from his native land, Ciliga was forced to share the fate of the Russian Trotskyists—exile, prison, torture and all manner of persecution. In 1935, he succeeded in obtaining a visa and the permission of the GPU to leave the country. Upon reaching France, he devoted himself to telling the truth about Stalinist despotism. His attachment to the Trotskyist Opposition continued to wane and he finally broke with revolutionary Marxism. We did not share all his political opinions then, nor do we now. We do

not know Ciliga's present whereabouts. But in his book, which recounts all his experiences and gives a vivid picture of the situation in Russia during his stay there—both voluntary and enforced—there are several pages which, to our knowledge, give the only detailed account of the *internal* political life and discussions of the Russian Trotskyists in prison and exile that is available to us. The fight of the Trotskyists against the Stalin régime is well known. The internal development of the Russian Trotskyist movement itself is not so well known. The reader cannot fail to be impressed by the graphic and highly informative picture of this development drawn by one of the active participants in it. This chapter begins with Ciliga's arrival in November, 1930, after previous prison experiences, in one of the most notorious centers of confinement of oppositionists, the Isolator—precious name!—of Verkhne-Uralsk. Other chapters from the book will appear in the coming issues.—The Editor.

What interested me most in the Isolator was its political life and ideas. In the USSR, so long as you are "at large," the political life of the country can be followed and discussed only in a small committee. It is an

arduous task, where more problems can be posed than resolved, above all if you are a foreigner who came to Soviet Russia ten years after the revolution. But to find yourself among two hundred prisoners who represent all the political

tendencies of vast Russia in their uninterrupted development—that is a precious privilege that enabled me to acquire a knowledge of Russian political life in all its aspects.

When I arrived in the Isolator, in November, 1930, the era of the “capitulations” that demoralized and disorganized the Russian Opposition for eighteen months was drawing to a close. But the echoes of the tempest that swept away four-fifths of the Opposition could still be heard. “Capitulator” or “semi-capitulator” was still the worst insult that could be hurled at an opponent in a discussion. These echoes began to die out little by little, no new capitulations took place and six months later they even began to send back to the Isolator the former capitulators who had not proved to be firm enough partisans of the General Line.

### The Divisions Among the Prisoners

The vast majority of the communist prisoners were Trotskyists: a hundred and twenty out of a total of a hundred and forty. There was also a Zinovievist who had not capitulated, sixteen or seventeen members of the “Democratic Centralism” group (extreme left), and two or three supporters of the “Workers’ Group” of Myaznikov. Among the non-communists there were essentially three groups, each about a dozen strong: the Russian Menshevik social-democrats, the Georgian social-democrats and the anarchists. In addition, there were five left Social Revolutionists, some right Social Revolutionists, some Armenian socialists of the “Dazhnak-Tsutiun” group, and one Maximalist. Finally, there were a few Zionists.

Such was the division into traditional parties, but in reality, each of these parties comprised sub-groups of various nuances or even factions produced by deep splits. The reader may exclaim: twenty groups or sub-groups among two hundred prisoners! But it must not be forgotten that these were not ordinary prisoners, but the representatives of all the left-wing tendencies of a vast society, a truly illegal “parliament” of Russia!

The burning problems posed by the revolution, and particularly by the Five-Year Plan at its current stage, produced the deepest stirrings in this milieu, creating a state of ideological crisis favorable to the extreme fragmentation of the political tendencies. It was only later, when the social and economic results of the Five-Year Plan had revealed themselves clearly, that a new political regrouping could take place in the Isolator.

Five years of prison and exile had bound me closely to the Opposition, be it communist, socialist or anarchist, and I would like to see this book serve not only as information, but to arouse the conscience of democracy and the western labor movement in behalf of the victims. But it is nevertheless my duty to give a sincere and objective picture of this Soviet opposition, of what is good in it as well as of what is bad.

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The political groupings in prison represented not only ideological tendencies but also constituted genuine organizations, with their committees, their handwritten journals, their recognized leaders—who were either in prison, in exile or abroad. The prevailing system of repression, which included frequent transfers from one prison to another, from one exile to another, assured contact between the members of a grouping better than any clandestine correspondence could.

What interested me primarily was the Trotskyist Opposition, to which I belonged at the time and which is today still the most influential group in Russia. The Isolator of Verkhne-

Uralsk sheltered almost all the most active members of the Trotskyist faction.

### The Trotskyist Group

The organization of the Trotskyist prisoners called itself the “Collective of Bolshevik-Leninists of Verkhne-Uralsk.” It was divided into a left wing, a center, and a right wing. This division into three fractions existed for the three years of my sojourn, although the composition of the fractions and even their ideology underwent certain fluctuations.

Upon my arrival in Verkhne-Uralsk, I found three Trotskyist programs and two journals:

1. The “Program of the Three,” set forth by three Red professors: E. Solntsev, G. Yakovin, G. Stopalov. It reflected the opinions of the right wing fraction, the strongest Trotskyist fraction of the time;

2. The “Program of the Two,” written by Trotsky’s son-in-law, Man-Nevelson, and Aaron Papermeister, was the credo of the small center group;

3. The “Theses of the Militant Bolsheviks” came from the left wing fraction (Pushas, Kamenetsky, Kvachadze, Bylenky).

These were documents of considerable proportions, embracing from five to eight different sections (international situation, industry, agriculture, the classes in the USSR, the party, the labor question, the tasks of the Opposition, etc.).

The program of the right wing dealt in a particularly elaborate manner with the economy, that of the left wing contained good chapters on the party and the labor question.

The right wing and the center jointly published the *Prison Pravda* (“Truth in Prison”), the left wing the *Militant Bolshevik*. These journals appeared once a month or once every two months. Each number contained from ten to twenty articles in the form of separate folios. The “number,” that is, the package containing the ten or twenty folios, passed from hall to hall and the prisoners read them in turn. The journals appeared in three copies, so as to provide one copy for each wing of the prison.

In 1930, the discussion among the Trotskyists dwelled above all upon the attitude toward “the party leaders,” that is, toward Stalin, as well as toward his new “left policy.”

### The Three Fractions

The right wing fraction opined that the Five-Year Plan, in spite of all its deviations to the right or the extreme left, corresponded to the essential desiderata of the Opposition; hence it was necessary to support the official policy while criticizing the methods. The fraction hoped for “a reform from above”: the increasing difficulties would compel the party and even the leaders to change policy. The Opposition would be restored to its rights and once again participate in power. As for appealing to the action of the people, of the masses, the right wing fraction deemed that extremely dangerous: the peasants are opposed to the dictatorship of the proletariat, they are “against us”; the workers are wavering, the “Kronstadt spirit” is permeating the whole country, “the Thermidorian front may include the working class.” Wherein then consisted the reproaches that the right wing Trotskyists directed at Stalin?

First of all, like all the Trotskyists, they did not acknowledge the régime that Stalin had established inside the party. Then, they deemed that Stalin was exaggerating in the application of the Five-Year Plan, that its pace was much too rapid, that the country could not stand it. In sum, they wanted the same thing as Stalin, but only in a somewhat mitigated, a little

more human, form. They feared but one thing: that Stalin, by his excessive policy, by his "ultra-leftist adventure," might compromise completely the régime, the salvation of which was their primary preoccupation.

The "Militant Bolshevik" fraction made a great clamor by taking a position diametrically opposed to that of the right wingers. Its essential idea was that the reform would have to be carried out "from below," that a split in the party must be anticipated, that we must base ourselves upon the working class. The hostility that the fraction manifested toward Stalin contrasted with the attitude of the Red professors on the right, and attracted to itself the sympathy of the workers and the youth. The weak point in its program was the summary character of the judgment it made of the economy of the Five-Year Plan. They clung to a phrase of Trotsky which had only a polemical value: "The Five-Year Plan is only an edifice of figures," and declared that the whole Stalinist industrialization was nothing but a bluff. As to international politics, the left wing fraction not only denied the existence of a conjuncture favorable to the revolution but even—in order to denigrate Stalin—the existence of a world economic crisis. All this clearly denoted the bohemian spirit that reigned among the "Militant Bolsheviks" and especially in the young journalist Pushas. The most thoughtful members of the fraction began to understand that its program must be established on a more serious foundation.

The Center fraction opined that two possible reforms must be taken into consideration: from above and from below. The Center was soon reënforced by two Red Professors—F. Dingelstedt (who arrived from exile at the beginning of November) and Victor Eltsin (who had been located previously at the extreme right wing because of the support in principle that he gave to the bitter-end collectivization). Igor Poznansky, former secretary to Trotsky, shared the views of the center, without belonging to any fraction.

It is worth while noting that the five Red Professors mentioned above, Solntsev, Stopalov, Yakovin, Dingelstedt and Eltsin, had formerly collaborated with Trotsky in editing his *Complete Works*. Trotsky's organ abroad called them the "young theoreticians of the Opposition" (*Bulletin of the Opposition*, No. 19, 1931).

#### **Error of Oppositionists**

The majority of the Opposition thus sought the road of conciliation; in criticizing the Five-Year Plan, they put the accent, not on the rôle of exploited class reserved for the proletariat, but on the technical mistakes of the government as "boss," on the lack of harmony of the system, on the poor quality of production. . . . This criticism led to no appeal to the workers against the Central Committee and against the bureaucratic power; they seemed to confine themselves to proposing amendments to a program they approved. The "socialist" character of the state industry was taken for granted. The exploitation of the proletariat was denied, for "we are living under the régime of the dictatorship of the proletariat." The very most that was admitted was that there were "deviations" in the system of distribution. I myself had thought so two years earlier; but how could one continue to believe this in 1930? I attribute this retardation to life in prison.

\* \* \*

I made my début in the political life of the prison by writing two articles: "Some Theoretical Premises of the Struggle of the Opposition," and "The Theses of the Militant Bolsheviks." There I developed the following ideas: the moment has

come to give a more serious theoretical foundation to the struggle against Stalin; in the criticism of the Five-Year Plan the accent must be placed upon its anti-socialist and anti-proletarian character instead of speaking of "bluff" and of criticizing mere details.

We members of the Opposition—I continued—had seen in the Stalinist clique the clique of Robespierre and had predicted for Stalin the fate of his illustrious French predecessor. But we had been mistaken, for we had forgotten that the "communist" bureaucracy had in its hands a weapon that Robespierre did not have at his disposal: the whole economy of the country. Uncontested master of all the essential means of production, the communist bureaucracy is gradually becoming the kernel of a new ruling class, whose interests are just as much opposed to those of the proletariat as were the interests of the bourgeoisie. We must organize in Russia the economic struggle of the proletariat (demands, strikes) exactly as is done in the countries of private capitalism. It is even necessary to join with the socialists and the anarchists who may be found in the factories. We must put forward the slogan of a new revolutionary workers' party. The moment has come to abandon the attempts at reform inside the party in favor of a revolutionary class struggle. This struggle of course demands a theoretical basis. "Without revolutionary theory, no revolutionary movement," I said, by way of epigraph to my first article.

While I was still at liberty, I looked in vain for the "dictatorship of the proletariat" in the USSR; all I could see was the enslavement of the proletariat. But neither did "Thermidor" come, and Stalin remained in power. What did that mean? I learned what Trotsky's judgment was of the situation: the bureaucracy, "rushing past" Thermidor, was preparing its eighteenth Brumaire. "The preparation of Bonapartism inside the party has been completed," wrote Trotsky in connection with the Sixteenth Congress of the party, in his letter from Constantinople of August 5, 1930. I perceived at last the beginning of the explanation I sought. Other more radical groups I met in prison—the "Decists," the Myaznikov group—asserted that Bonapartism had already triumphed. That seemed to me to be still more correct. Didn't Stalin represent a veritable oriental Bonaparte? Didn't that explain the scope and the crimes of the Stalinist régime?

In my hall, there was a Trotskyist from Kharkov named Densov, a good economist, former head of the business-cycle department of the Ukrainian Gosplan (State Planning Commission). He was, so to speak, the only Trotskyist to consider the Soviet economy as state capitalism. On this score he quoted certain affirmations from Lenin, dating back to 1918-22, which Trotsky had made the mistake of neglecting. Densov had arrived in Verkhne-Uralsk a week before me; he took a stand at the left wing of the Trotskyists, without, however, joining the "Militant Bolshevik" group. He was the one who asked me to write the articles I spoke of, "in order to strengthen the position of the left wing."

#### **A Criticism of the Opposition Line**

The nihilism of the Opposition, its pettiness toward the Five-Year Plan, disturbed Densov. "The Opposition risks finding itself high and dry," he said, "for not having understood in time that the charge to level against the immense Stalinist effort is the charge of anti-socialism. Today, all that Solntsev and Pushas see in the Five-Year Plan are disproportions or bluff, but what will they say two or three years from now, when the disproportions of the plan will be eliminated,

when production will be improved, when the bluff will become an undeniable economic reality? Rakovsky wrote this spring that nothing would be left of the bitter-end collectivization by fall. Fall has come, the collectivization continues and grows stronger—what will Rakovsky say now? To be sure, there are people who pass all their time in self-contradiction; but the others, the serious people, what internal crisis won't they have to undergo if they don't succeed in getting a coherent picture of events in time!"

Densov, while considering my conclusions a little hasty, shared my opinions. So we acted in concert; while I wrote articles on politics and sociology, he wrote economic reports that bore them out. The question—"Is the Five-Year Plan gaining successes or not?"—was thenceforth inscribed on the agenda of the prison.

My conclusions met with a fairly favorable reception in the left wing Trotskyist fraction. The right wing and the center, on the contrary, attacked them, declaring that they were premature and represented the mistakes of the "ultras" ("Decists," "Workers' Opposition" and Myaznikov group). One of my adversaries wrote:

"Richard [that was my pseudonym] has no need of discovering America, for Columbus has already discovered it." "The light from the first floor North [where Densov and I lived] is not a beacon but a will-o'-the-wisp," wrote another. Solntsev, the real leaders of the bloc between the right wing and the center, declared that "these ideas do not belong to our movement." To which I retorted that "a movement cannot remain on one spot, it must enrich itself by experience. Once the struggle against the bureaucracy has been started, we cannot stop half-way."

The left wing extremists shared, at bottom, the judgment of Solntsev. They deemed the Trotskyist movement incapable of breaking completely with the bureaucracy, for it was nothing but "a left, more liberal, wing of this same bureaucracy." Tyunov, a supporter of Myaznikov, wrote: "It is an opposition of high functionaries. Trotsky represents, in relation to the autocracy of the bureaucrats, an opposition just as rotten as was that of Milyukov at the time of the Czarist autocracy." The Decists esteemed that Trotsky remained undecided between genuine revolutionary Bolshevism and its official and bourgeoisified caricature, just as he had remained undecided before 1917 between genuine Bolshevism and the Mensheviks. In the spring of 1930, the rumor of a capitulation of Trotsky spread in the Isolator. One of the Decist leaders—V. M. Smirnov\*—who was there at the time and who incarnated the type of the old irreconcilable Bolshevik intellectual, wrote: "Trotsky has just capitulated. So much the better. This half-Menshevik will at last cease to trouble the authentic revolutionary movement with his presence. . . ."

It seemed to me that the Decists and the Myaznikovists were exaggerating. The Trotskyist Opposition—it seemed to me—was capable of evolving much more to the left than either the right wing Trotskyists or the extremists of Decism or of Myaznikov supposed. Moreover, Trotskyism was the only oppositional grouping that had any weight in Soviet society, the others being politically negligible. If Trotskyism is incapable of expressing the needs of the working class, Russia will be condemned to go through an epoch of "political void" until the day when the popular masses will have worked out a new movement, today unforeseeable. . . . It was therefore

\*V. M. Smirnov must not be confused with the former Trotskyist, I. N. Smirnov, who was shot during the Zinoviev trial, nor with A. P. Smirnov, who was part of the right wing opposition with Rykov and Bukharin.

necessary, it seemed to me, to exhaust the experience of Trotskyism before coming to a conclusion.

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### Organizational Conflicts

To the struggle of ideas inside the Trotskyist "collective," was now to be added an organizational conflict which was to relegate ideology to second place for several months. This conflict is characteristic of the psychology and morals of the Russian Opposition, so I shall speak of it briefly.

The right wing and the center presented the following ultimatum to the "Militant Bolsheviks": either dissolve and suspend publication of their journal, or else find themselves expelled from the Trotskyist organization. In effect, the majority deemed that the Trotskyist faction ought not include any sub-grouping.

This principle of a "monolithic faction" was nothing, at bottom, but the principle that inspired Stalin for the whole of the party. But the principle also concealed a calculation of a practical kind: if they could rid themselves of the "irresponsible elements of the extreme left who doubt the socialist character of our state," the high personalities of the Opposition could more easily come to an understanding with the leaders of the party and above all with the Stalin faction.

Most of the personalities of the Opposition believed that the coming difficulties would force the party to come to terms with the Opposition; to be ready for this eventuality, they sought to finish with their own fractional opponents by methods that can only be qualified as Stalinist. As to the "Militant Bolsheviks," they refused to submit to the majority and believed it necessary to prove to Trotsky, by publishing their group journal, that a strong left wing minority existed inside the Isolator. They even sent Trotsky an article which he published abroad in his *Bulletin of the Opposition*.

A large number of the left wing Trotskyists—myself included—considered that the theories of the "Militant Bolsheviks" lacked solidity and in no way wished to solidarize themselves with them. But at the same time we protested vigorously against the ultimatum presented to them, for we deemed that each group had the right to publish a journal of its own. The arrival in prison of a renowned publicist, the elderly N. P. Gorlov, reinforced our group, which soon reached some thirty members, and hastened its rapprochement with the "Militant Bolsheviks," who numbered some twenty.

The ultimatum was discussed for months in all the groups of the Isolator, in all the meetings, during the walks. Debates, votes, resolutions, followed in succession. Our "Group of Thirty" proposed a compromise: a single organ would be published for the whole communist section, but a new editorial board would be designated, composed of one representative from each of the existing fractions. In fact, up to then the editorial board was comprised of two members of the right wing and one of the center, while the "Militant Bolsheviks" were not represented at all. But the right wingers waved aside the compromise on the pretext that "the majority has the right to designate anyone it sees fit." That was the favorite procedure of Stalin in his struggle against the Opposition: the dissolution of the "Militant Bolsheviks" and the suppression of their journal was demanded, while they were refused a representative in the central organ. Thus people who were in prison for anti-Stalinism found nothing better to do than to imitate Stalinism in prison. . . . An absurdity which is only apparent; it simply proves that between Trotskyism and Stalinism there are many points in common.

## The Split in the Group

In reply to this maneuver, our "Group of Thirty" declared that if the majority decided to expel the "Militant Bolsheviks," the Group of Thirty would break with this majority and would found a distinct left wing organization together with the expelled.

This caused the "center" (Dingelstedt) to hesitate. Poznansky (the former secretary of Trotsky) openly accused Solntsev of provoking a split with the criminal intention of conciliation with the party. But Solntsev would not be intimidated. The center yielded and the split was there.

It is thus that two distinct Trotskyist organizations were formed in the Isolator toward the summer of 1931: the "Bolshevik-Leninist Collective" (majorityites) and the "Bolshevik-Leninist Collective" of the left. At the moment of the split, the "majorityites" were seventy-five to seventy-eight strong, the "lefts" from fifty-one to fifty-two. Some comrades remained outside both organizations and formed a group that preached reconciliation between Trotskyists. For the rest, the two organizations subsequently underwent important modifications as to their membership and their ideology. The "lefts" began to publish a new journal, the *Bolshevik-Leninist*, edited by N. P. Gorlov, V. Densov, M. Kamenetsky, O. Pushas and A. Ciliga.

While we were disputing, the GPU was working. At first it promoted the split, then, once it had taken place, it sought to deepen it. The *agents-provocateurs* of the GPU who were among the prisoners sometimes acted with stupefying effrontery. Thus, one Savelich, a Moscow engineer, who had just made his appearance in our walking group, promptly joined the right wingers and began to argue flamingly that it was absolutely necessary to expel the "Militant Bolsheviks." His rôle was so obvious that at the end of a couple of days I could state that he "was fulfilling the mission confided him" (by the GPU, it was understood). A month later, after the split had taken place, we succeeded in wresting confessions from him, and he was driven out of the hall, for the GPU agreed to remove its *agents-provocateurs* once they were unmasked. Another time, a member of the Opposition named Bagratian came to us from Tashkent. He became an ardent "leftist." When a member of the center put out a funny sheet, Bagra-

tian was so "sore" at certain caricatures that he tried to provoke a brawl between lefts and rights, which was entirely contrary to the morals of the prison. He was restrained with great difficulty, without too much importance being attached to the affair: "He's hot-blooded, like all Caucasians." Some time later we had proof that he was an *agent-provocateur*.

Surnov, an old member of the Opposition, well known, distinguished himself by his impetuous attacks upon the "Militant Bolsheviks." He declared at a meeting that "if we were at liberty, they would all have to be shot." That was something unheard of. The left wingers demanded that Surnov be expelled from the ranks of the Opposition. It must be said that the left wingers already suspected him of being an *agent-provocateur*. As for the right wingers, they called these suspicious "leftist exaggerations," attributed the words uttered by Surnov to his over-active temperament, and refused to expel him. Soon Surnov succeeded, by flattering Solntsev, in having himself named a member of the right wing committee. The GPU then had him transferred to Solntsev's cell, and was thus able to get information from a good source and to influence the most prominent prisoner in the Isolator. But Solntsev would not be taken in for long; Surnov, seeing that he would soon be unmasked, gave up the game, "capitulated," and was transferred to Moscow, where he was placed at liberty.

One day, after the split had already occurred, two Trotskyist prisoners (one from the left, the other from the right) saw the door of their cell thrown open abruptly. An inspector enters, throws a sheaf of papers at them, and leaves the way he came. The prisoners examine the sheaf circumspectly: it contains old letters from Solntsev to Dingelstedt which speak of expelling the Militant Bolsheviks and of sowing discord in the camp of the left wingers. In view of the fact that the two correspondents lived in different wings of the prison and could communicate with each other only on rare occasions, Solntsev endeavored in his letters not to omit a single detail from his plan of campaign against the left wingers. He contemplated all that the left wingers accused him of. The GPU, having intercepted the letters, put them aside and used them after the split to widen the rift that had been created between the Trotskyist left and right. (*To be continued.*)

A. CILIGA.

# What Are the 'Community Councils'?

## A New and Important Stalinist Enterprise

The need for better organized expression of the political strength of the unions has long been recognized by many unionists, conservative and otherwise. The creation of union Community Councils by the New York City CIO is a move in this direction.

The Community Councils form a sort of union political headquarters in every area of a city, partly to deal with neighborhood and consumer problems, but mainly to decentralize the political activity so that as many as possible will be drawn into it. Just as a union is divided into locals—and often a single shop will have its own local—so on the political field, mass organization, to be effective, must be as widespread and all-inclusive as is consistent with efficient action. The shop is the best place to organize unions that fight for better working conditions; the working class neighborhoods are the best place

today to begin organizing these same union members as consumers and voters.

The idea of Community Councils was formally launched in May, 1934, in an announcement by the New York City CIO Council. The city was divided into blocs of election assembly districts, one Community Council to be set up in each area. Each Community Council was to consist of representatives of CIO union members residing within that area; representation was to be on the basis of one councilman for every twenty or twenty-five members of his union living in the area. The idea is ultimately to set up a Community Council in each assembly district.

Community Councils are a slightly new angle in union political activity. Organization of unionists along this or some what similar lines has been talked of often, but this is the

first time that a group of important size or influence has launched such a movement.

Not much publicity has been given to these councils so far because they are still in an experimental stage, but they bear watching. Among the minor resolutions passed by the recent CIO convention was a resolution supporting Community Councils. Nothing dramatic, just a sympathetic curiosity, a sort of ear-to-the-ground resolution. Readers may have noticed that a Community Council is playing an active part in the protestations growing out of the vicious anti-Negro meeting held in Brooklyn's "Little Harlem" section not long ago.

### Controlled by Stalinists

In New York City the Stalinists control the CIO Council and its Non-Partisan (1) Political Activities Committee (of which Michael Quill is chairman). In other words, the Community Councils are their idea, are being organized by them, and are completely dominated by them. However, as the fact that a resolution supporting Community Councils was passed by the CIO convention implies, there is no reason to assume that the idea will remain monopolized by the Stalinists, if it turns out to be a good one. There is no reason to assume, either, that the Community Councils will remain a New York City phenomenon. Already, in fact, beginnings have been made in Boston, Cleveland, Bridgeport, Conn., upstate New York, and California.

The Stalinists set about organizing the Community Councils in their usual fashion—from the top down. The CIO Council and its Non-Partisan Political Activities Committee instructed the leaders of those CIO locals that are Stalinist-controlled to get going, and within two months there were fourteen Community Councils set up, most of them at the same address as the largest Stalinist local in that section. No serious attempts were made to stir up rank and file support. The local union bureaucrats were instructed to make a list of their members, arranged according to the assembly district in which they live. Then bureaucrats of still lower grade were assigned to get themselves elected as representatives of the members in their community to the Community Council. At the present time they are all, big bureaucrats and small, engaged in a campaign to recruit (and appoint) 3,500 election district leaders, one for every election district in the city. (An election district is a few blocks, a sub-division of an assembly district.)

The literature put out on the Community Councils indicates that they are ostensibly to (1) elect pro-Roosevelt ("win the war") candidates to office, (2) enforce OPA price ceilings, (3) build up civilian defense organizations, and (4) put pressure on legislators, both state and national. This is pretty much the conservative, patriotic, hypocritical program to be expected of the Stalinists. That it is conservative and patriotic is "discovered by inspection," as mathematicians say; and anyone acquainted with the Stalinists in action will not be surprised to learn that the actual primary purpose of these servants of the Kremlin is to create a front organization, one of whose main functions is to expand their activities within the American Labor Party.

Inasmuch as the Stalinists' main orientation in the unions these days is to humble all men before Roosevelt, the preponderance of activity exhibited by the Community Councils to date has been one or another phase of electioneering. In June, the Non-Partisan Political Activities Committee announced a six-point program which the Community Councils were to use in deciding which candidates to support:

1. CIO organizations and members give all support—moral, financial and manpower—to those candidates for public office who are unqualifiedly for the war, who support our Commander-in-Chief and who endorse and actively support the program of the CIO.

2. CIO organizations vigorously oppose all candidates who are against the war or give only lip service to the policies of unity of the United Nations, who openly or covertly fight the foreign and domestic policies of President Roosevelt, who openly or covertly support the disruptionist tactics of John L. Lewis and the appeasement forces in our nation, who seek to destroy the unity of the American people through anti-labor legislation, through race hatred campaigns and through red-baiting or other forms of attacks on any force or minority group supporting our nation's war effort.

3. CIO members be entered as candidates for the county committees in all primaries in all boroughs and CIO organizations be active in the circulation of nominating petitions....

4. CIO organizations demand a voice in the selection of all candidates for public office to be nominated through the primaries or through county or other electoral committees....

The last two points tell all CIO members and their families to vote in the primaries (where the Stalinists were fighting the Social Democrats for control of the American Labor Party) and to register in the fall so that they can vote in "the all-important presidential primary elections in 1944."

Point 1 shows the typical lack of Stalinist restraint in these matters. Here is no critical support, no backing Roosevelt as a lesser evil against open reaction. We are in the realm of utter debasement—moral, financial, and manpower—until the line shall change again.

Point 2 is an amalgam, Stalinist variety. The victim in this case, of course, is John L. Lewis, who although he retreated four times under government pressure (and promises), nevertheless came near enough to indicating the correct road for labor to be lumped by the Stalinists with revolutionists, pacifists, politicians who are skeptical of sending aid to Russia, Republicans, liberals, militant unionists, pro-fascist "isolationists," labor-baiting congressmen, Southern reactionaries and misguided patriots who still think the Communist Party is communist.

The other points are all designed to keep labor's nose straight into the official political wind (that is, the Republican-Democratic wind) and so prevent any dangerous shying at an independent Labor Party.

Under the same "reward-your-friends-punish-your-enemies" heading belongs, also, the election leaflet printed jointly by the three Community Councils in the Bronx. No candidates are specifically endorsed or opposed, but short summaries of "how your legislators represent you" are given. A sample:

Patrick J. Fogarty and John A. Davany, Jr., acted for the interests of the people and labor by voting for increased state aid to education; for reapportionment. They acted against the interests of the people and labor by voting to continue the Rapp-Coudert Committee. Mr. Davany was absent on important vote to increase the sales tax in New York City.

### The Community Councils at Work

Although the Community Councils are still in a process of "sub-committee forming," it is already obvious that the main emphasis is to be placed on *house-to-house canvassing*, records being kept by each petty bureaucrat of who was visited, when, and "action taken" (postcards to congressmen, OPA complaint forms filled out, air raid warden activity, etc.). The idea is to "service the union members in their homes. If the members won't come to the union, the union will come to them."

The momentum so far (six months) has been furnished almost entirely by the top leadership; the Stalinist brain-storm is thus facing a critical test. If the campaign for election dis-

strict leaders does not widen their base, the Stalinists will be stuck with a "front" organization composed only of Stalinists. The November municipal elections over, the Stalinists are looking for other "issues," and there are plenty to be found.

Recent directives to Assembly District leaders, Election District leaders, union legislative directors and shop stewards list five "issues requiring immediate action":

1. Rents. Tenants should be informed of their rights under OPA rent regulations and all violations should be reported to Assembly District leaders.

2. Prices. Get all CIO members and neighbors to report sale of black market goods and price violations in local stores. (CIO complaint forms available now in Council office.)

3. Taxes and Subsidies. Pressure in form of letter or delegation to local congressmen on CIO tax program and support of President's subsidy program.

4. PR. Pressure by letter to newspapers and City Councilmen to retain democratic election method of proportional representation in New York City.

5. Literacy Classes. Get all CIO members who did not vote in last election because of literacy requirements to register now for literacy test classes to be organized by CIO next month.

Here, again, we cannot fail to notice the extreme modesty of the program. Point 2 might, under progressive leadership, amount to something, but we can trust the Stalinists to see that the complaint forms are used safely; that is, to guide and supplement "our" law enforcement agencies rather than to put them on the spot. Point 3 doesn't mean much because the CIO tax program is a milk-and-water affair, and the President's subsidy program is little more than a government bribe to manufacturers and merchants, paid out of the taxpayer's money. Point 4 is inserted because three Stalinists were elected to the City Council in the November elections, and the Republicans and Democrats are muttering angrily about the evils of proportional representation that permits large minorities to take representation away from them.

It is pretty obvious that this is a description of Stalinists engaged in building a new "front" organization. The programmatic spinelessness of the Community Councils stands contrasted with the detailed attention given to all organizational matters: that is, all the emphasis is being put on canvassing, getting lists, electing this or that officer or committee, visiting, keeping records of all unionists, etc.; while such things as getting out leaflets or other literature, holding public lectures, signing up the unorganized, etc., are never mentioned. The North Queens Community Council, for example, has formed a Committee on Discrimination and Fair Employment Practices. The only action contemplated is reminding other members of the Council that there is a problem. The suggestion of sending speakers around to get affiliated unions to pass resolutions of support was regarded as "good, but a little too, well, you know."

There is one exception to be noted, however. This regards all matters relating to the American Labor Party. Although officially non-partisan, the Community Council bureaucrats are specifically instructed to "get enrolled ALP members to become active," and there are special instructions, not freely passed out, relating to ALP activities. The Stalinists are very anxious to head off any third party, i.e., any anti-Roosevelt sentiment, and the Community Councils and the ALP are excellent nets for such butterflies.

### The Organization of a Community Council

In form, the Community Councils are democratic enough. Under other leadership, the same organizational set-up could be a source of tremendous strength to organized labor. The

first step in the organization of a Community Council is to get from each union a list of members, broken down according to the Assembly Districts in which the members live. Then the union calls a conference for all its members living in the same bloc of districts. This conference elects representatives to the Community Council, "in ratio of one council member for every twenty to twenty-five of the union's members living in that community. Important community organizations may have one representative each on the Community Council with voice but no vote."

The Community Council itself is thus formed of delegations representing each union. The Council meets once every two months. There is an Executive Committee, which meets once a month. The Executive Committee is composed of the chairmen of each delegation plus four officers (president, vice-president, etc.) elected by the Council as a whole.

Each committeeman (member of the Council) is given twenty to twenty-five names of fellow union members living in his neighborhood. He must visit each at least once a month (so the directives say). "Each committeeman must have with him on his visits the necessary information or literature on the issues on which he seeks action by his fellow union members." This is the familiar Stalinist Jimmy Higgins work, which gets them very good results.

The net was quite beautiful when first unfurled in the sunlight:

...the growth of government mediation agencies whose good faith must always be questioned and freshly reexamined; the superior advantages the employer has in obtaining access to the members of these government agencies and to the executive and legislative branches of government which, directly or indirectly, control them... The stark facts are that the shop forms of union organization, while basic and necessary, are inadequate today as defensive weapons and, when used alone, are obsolete as offensive weapons.

### COLLECTIVE BARGAINING IN THE COMMUNITY

Today, the same trade unionist who would not dream of taking up his grievance alone with boss or of fighting alone for a wage raise, is still an unorganized, helpless and weak bargainer as a consumer and voter... [He] sends his wife out alone to bargain with his grocer, butcher or utility corporation... [He bargains] with his legislator... in a private polling booth.

...He knows that his *real* wages are being slashed today, not by his boss in the shop, but by bosses who control or who are his grocer, butcher or gas and electric company. He is increasingly aware that his power to defend his economic gains and rights is being whittled away, undermined, or, as in many states, simply smashed by his "representatives in government." He is learning that at the same time his "bosses" of all varieties are an organized lobby or, more often, hosts and advisors to his representatives.

Good, eh? But how would you answer a good union man who recited this to you and then asked you to become active in your Community Council?

The question is not as simple as it sounds. The Stalinists have stolen progressive thunder. Should militants try to wrest the leadership from the Stalinists? Or refuse to cooperate with the Community Councils? Should they try to form their own Community Councils?

### The Community Councils and Working Class Politics

The Community Councils are (a) composed of class-conscious workers, (b) formed for political action, (c) based on the unions, and (d) independent of the Republicans and Democrats. The independence of the Community Councils from the Democrats must be qualified, since the Stalinists, and the ALP especially, are in many respects an out-of-power fac-

tion of the Democratic organization; nevertheless the Community Councils are organizationally separate, and ideologically their fountainhead is in Moscow, not Washington.

Marxists habitually ask certain questions concerning any working class movement: Where is it going? What is it against? Will its program, its composition, its leadership, its methods, its goal, bring it into conflict with the present political leaders of the workers (both inside and outside the union movement)? In brief, will the movement raise the class-consciousness of the workers?

To put these questions to the Community Councils is to answer them. Revolutionary Marxists have said many times that the Communist Party and all its works constitute one of the main brakes on the progressive development of the American working class. Marxists can no more help the Stalinists build their latest façade than they could help them build the American League Against War and Fascism.

How about forming progressive Community Councils? That depends on two things: how much sentiment there is for taking up this kind of political action—and militants must do everything in their power to stimulate such sentiment—and how well the Stalinists succeed in corralling the development.

It is not only the Stalinists who must be fought. The most important leaders of the workers today are within the union movement, and they are not Stalinists; they are the labor lieutenants of the capitalist parties, the AFL and CIO bureaucrats. Before the War Labor Board and its Little Steel formula can be smashed, before "incentive pay" can be stopped, before the Smith-Connally bill can be repealed, before a progressive Labor Party or Community Council movement can develop—in short, before labor can really rescind the no-strike pledge and begin to solve the problems that beset it on every side—the rank and file millions must clean house. Labor can-

not hope to engage in a successful struggle with its class enemy and the government controlled by that enemy until it finds militant leadership.

The Community Councils are developing from the top downward. They are not the spontaneous expression of rank and file sentiment. They are not the creation of a genuine, democratic leadership encouraging and leading the vague but growing conscious militancy of the rank and file. The present Community Councils are not what the rank and file requires at all, but only an imitation of what is wanted.

The Stalinists have launched the Community Councils to *stop* the movement of workers toward independent political action, to *stop* a class-conscious Labor Party.

The abortive development of Community Councils brings to the fore, more than ever, the need for a Labor Party. A Labor Party that starts among the opponents of the present policies of the union bureaucrats—such a movement is progressive. The fate of an independent labor political movement, be it as Community Councils or as a Labor Party, is like that of a union: if it goes to sleep after initial successes, it will wake up in bureaucratic chains. This danger, however, is hardly a reason for not forming unions. The point is that the initiative and the drive come from the rank and file—the reactionaries can only take hold when the militants leave off.

Far from being too late to try to form an independent labor political movement in America today, the task becomes daily more necessary. The Stalinists see it coming, and have started action; they must be overtaken. It is only mass political organization of union militants that can raise the class consciousness of the entire working class, lead them from bourgeois politics to proletarian politics, from bureaucratic conservatism to democratic militancy, from reformism to revolution.

JOSEPH LEONARD.

# Machiavellian Approach to Society

## Continuing a Critique of Burnham

In our first article, we demonstrated that the Machiavellian approach\* is grounded on the tacit foundation of a theory of human nature as immanent and static; and that once the latter theory is disproved, the Machiavellian assumption has its main prop kicked from under it. Nonetheless, we think it valuable to discuss the Machiavellian sociological approach in terms of its own propositions—again, if only because they are so much in vogue at present—reserving for our third and final article the political conclusions of Machiavellianism.

Burnham derives almost completely from Pareto in the realm of sociology. His mind is attracted by the system-making quality of Pareto's fuzzy dialectics: the formally rigorous logic of his classifications, the occasional instances of brilliant but strictly secondary analysis, the pious adherence to "science." Especially appealing to Burnham's present mood of blasé cynicism is Pareto's theory of "non-logical action" which is both a socialized restatement of the human nature theory

\*A number of readers have brought to my attention the possibility that in accepting Burnham's usage of "Machiavellianism" as the label for his theories, I allow to go unchallenged his identification of his theories with those of Machiavelli. It goes without saying that I do not accept such identification but use the term as Burnham does merely for lack of another handy label. We are really dealing with a form of pseudo-Machiavellianism or perhaps neo-Machiavellianism, but that is clearly too clumsy, so I'm afraid we'll have to tag along with "Machiavellianism" as the label for Burnham's approach, if for no other reason than convenience.

and the major operational concept of his sociology.

According to Pareto, there are two types of human action: logical and non-logical. Logical action is that in which the subject considers his needs and position, selects a certain goal as desirable and realizable on the basis of that consideration, and resultantly chooses adequate means to attain that goal. The action is logical in that the result corresponds to the motivation of the activity. Non-logical or irrational activity, on the other hand, contains goals and means which do not correspond; possibly the goal is unrealizable in the context of the situation in which it has been chosen and the means are therefore necessarily futile; or the goal is realizable and the means may be improper. In any case, it is the non-logical activity which comprises the prevalent social life of the great bulk of the masses and only a tiny, self-conscious minority—the manipulators of history, the élite—is capable of logical activity. It is obvious, of course, that there are innumerable irrational activities in both individual and social life.\* The entire science of psychoanalysis is dedicated to the attempt to discover

\*The observant reader may wonder at the continued reiteration in both this and our first article on the distinction between individual and social life. For surely they are intertwined and retroactive! This we would be the last to deny. We are, however, compelled to affect what at times may seem to be an overly fine distinction between the two because of the continued Machiavellian practice of congealing them, of failing to note the vital distinctions in analytical approach necessary to the individual psyche and the social class, even though no one could possibly deny that they are interdependent.



the significance of these non-logical activities in individual behavior; it labels them as neuroses, actions "to escape an unbearable situation. The strivings tend in a direction which only fictitiously is a solution" (Erich Fromm, *Escape from Freedom*). The social group acts irrationally, not merely out of a desire to escape an unbearable situation, but out of an immature or inadequate attempt to solve a pressing problem. But to state that such activities exist is not to solve the problem.

### Non-Logical Activity in Historical Context

Why are there certain non-logical activities at a certain time and another kind at another time? Out of what ingredients is the myth of the social group (or the neuroses of the individual) formed which composes the basis of the non-logical action? Pareto, and Burnham after him, make no attempt to answer this question. In this, they betray their non-historical approach. The primitive tribe which worships a totem pole and hopes thereby to be blessed with a bumper crop is engaging in a non-logical activity; when the European working class, as a result of an entire series of concrete experiences, continues to place its faith in its Stalinist betrayers, it also thereby engages in a non-logical activity. One can, if so inclined, construct a profound theory of history—with even a new vocabulary to gloss over its platitudinous ancientness—on this type of observation. But it contributes nothing to an understanding of either totem worship or the European working class.

One must attempt to explain, on the basis of a specific, unique historical analysis, what were the factors in the life of the primitive tribe which led it to totem worship. What was their cultural level which made it possible for them to believe that the worship of a totem pole would have efficacious results in as disparate a field as agriculture? What in their background let them to link the two experiences into a miraculous totality? How had their religious life developed in relation to their tribal organization, their mode of production, their geographical position? What contact with other groups, if any, helped enshrine the totem worship? These questions, placed in the concrete context of the social situation as it is (that is, inductive analysis together with theoretical construction on the basis of the knowledge gleaned therefrom and compared to similar inquiries) indicate the means by which to discover the relationship between the rational and irrational; not a mere *a priori* generality gleaned from a predilection about "human nature." The Machiavellian approach is concerned, however, not with analyzing the relationship between the logical and non-logical action, but merely in establishing the dichotomy. There it demonstrates its non-utility as a means of historical inquiry and its social bias as well.

### The Class Determination of Social Activity

For it is obvious enough that not only is the relationship between logical and non-logical action historically determined in the sense of being a resultant of specific historical situations, but it is also class-determined in that it is, within a given period, the resultant of class points of view and perspectives. When Burnham writes of logical activity as comprising a proper adaptation of means to end, he is dealing not with some neutral problem in abstract logic, but with the major societal problem of contemporary life. What one considers the proper means to reach a given end is largely determined by one's class outlook. Is the Leninist method proper for achieving socialism? No one can answer that question as if it were a problem in calculus or physics. Such questions can be an-

swered only from a position, as must all questions involving means and ends, social activity and class outlooks.\* The social bias in Burnham's conception of non-logical actions is in his equation of the élite with logical action and the non-élite with non-logical action—of course, once again asserting at the beginning that which he is supposed to prove at the end.

But not only is the Machiavellian concept of non-logical action without either historical or class reference; it is, as posed, contrary to elementary scientific methodology. The specific form in which Pareto poses his theory of non-logical action is illustrated by his most notorious sociological distinction, that between "residues" and "derivatives." Residues consist of the common underlying psychological element in different actions; they are invariable and incapable of further explanation. Social life is determined by a considerable number of these unchangeable entities which themselves have neither a function nor a meaning nor even an origin; they are simply there. Burnham lists as among Pareto's residues: the instinct of group-persistence, the sexual expression, the tendency of human beings to manipulate elements of their experience into systems, the need for expressing sentiments by external acts, and similar platitudes. From these basic causal factors come most of human activity; it is therefore non-logical. When men begin to develop rationalizations—what Pareto calls "the work of the mind in accounting for residues"—they are the derivatives. Though Burnham tries to wiggle out of it, Pareto clearly identifies his residues with "instincts" and thereby admits the psychological basis of his theory.

### Does Science Have a Place?

But the question arises: If the origin, meaning and development of the basic factors causing social habits is not determinable, then how can one speak of using the experimental, scientific method in sociology or history? If we must always refer to the unknown and unknowable—as in religion—then of what value are Pareto's (and after him, Burnham's) scientific pretensions? Science is concerned with cause, with explanation of one series of phenomena or sequences in terms of another. Pareto's method is directly contrary.

As the psychologist, Carl Murchison, very correctly says:

If Pareto means that human actions and thoughts are lawless and do not consist of events that follow inevitably from other events under restricting conditions, he has made a statement entirely unsupported by experimental science and impossible of verification. No lawless event can ever be verified, either experimentally or logically. (*Journal of Social Philosophy*, October, 1935.)

In other words, the profound discovery of Pareto and Burnham consists in the idea that the great mass of human actions are beyond the scope of scientific investigation. If that is true, there is—this is the sole consolation—little need for their tomes.

There are other appalling weaknesses in the Paretian construction. How does one prove the causal sequence from residue to derivative if the former is so hazy and vague and the latter so arbitrary in its development? How does one explain the vast sequences of change in human history? And what right do Pareto and Burnham have to rail against the rationalists who believed in the permanent goodness of mankind? For Pareto shares with the rationalists the belief in the essential identity of morals, religion and so forth throughout man-

\*Does this mean that objective investigation into history is impossible, that historical truth does not exist outside of class interests? This question, always posed by the anti-Marxists, is here irrelevant since we are dealing not with investigation but with activity, and no one has yet demonstrated the existence of any major social activity—logical or not—which is not in some way influenced by class interests (using the word "interest" in the broad sense Marx always did).

kind, with the sole difference that the rationalists choose to give an optimistic bias while the Machiavellians strike a pessimistic pose. Neither has much relation to science. But if they are to be compared, the rationalism of Rousseau is quite preferable to the negative rationalism of Pareto, if only because of the contrasting uses to which they have been put.

### "Real" and "Formal Meanings"

Behind all the metaphysics about logical and non-logical actions, residues and derivatives there lies a very vital historical problem. That is what Burnham calls the distinction between "real" and "formal" meanings. As he uses this distinction, it is a wiseacresish means of debunking rather than a weapon of analysis. His book is full of exposés showing that people didn't act out the motives they believed were behind their actions and of exposés showing that the ideological program of a social group was camouflage for diverse or contrary ends. But this kind of exposé has slight historical value; for the sophisticated student, aware of the fact that men do not always act out the motives they proclaim, it has no real value.

Burnham, for instance, cites the struggle between Dante and Machiavelli. Dante, though speaking in terms of the most noble platitudes, really represented feudal reaction; while Machiavelli, despite his cynical realism, spoke for the progressive town elements desiring a unified Italian nation. Dante then, hid his "real" meaning behind his "formal" one; Machiavelli expressed both congruently. But Burnham here again fails to use a historical approach. It is true that Machiavelli represented progressive forces\* in comparison with Dante; but it is only when the phrase "in comparison" is used that the sentence has meaning. To do so is to admit that the entire question of real and formal meaning is historically conditioned. Then it descends from the clouds of permanent residues and enters the reality of historical relations. For though there is a greater scientific value to Machiavelli's political writing than to Dante's, the former's are by no means free from "ideology." Machiavelli too appeals to generalized conceptions such as "justice"—only he can afford to be much more concrete than Dante since the cause of rising capitalism which he championed was more akin to the interests of humanity as a whole than was Dante's feudal society. Every rising, revolutionary class speaks in the name of humanity as a whole, in addition to championing its own interests; and this is not merely a device, it is almost always a genuine belief. It is there that the Marxian concept of "ideology" plays such an illuminating rôle—in demonstrating the concrete *relationship* between the true meaning (the class interest) and the formal meaning (the appeal to and in the name of humanity). The Machiavellian concept is little more than a sophisticated refurbishment of the old Platonic duality between substance and essence, between the phenomenon and the ideal; it is a form of statement rather than explanation.

### The Marxian Concept of Ideology

The Marxian concept of ideology, on the contrary, is historical and relativistic in its approach. It sees in each historical situation, ultimately in the mode of production, the major though by no means exclusive determining force for the rise of an ideology; it destroys the duality between real and formal

\*It is extraordinarily noteworthy that Burnham utilizes the concept of historical progressivism in relation to Machiavelli and Dante—and with quite valid results—but completely "forgets" about it when discussing the modern Machiavellians. But if it is proper to place Machiavelli and Dante in their class contexts, why not do so for Pareto and Mosca? Why not also examine the social use and the social purpose of their theories? Would the result be embarrassing?

meaning and establishes the concrete connection. A vivid description of the ideological process has been given by Engels:

Ideology is a process accomplished, to be sure, by so-called thought but with a false consciousness. This process does not know the actual motive forces behind it, otherwise it would not be an ideological process. Being a process of thought, it derives its content as well as its form from pure thought, either on its own part or on that of its predecessors. It works with mere mental material, which it assumes and accepts as the product of thought and for which it does not seek any more remote process that may be independent of thought, and all this is self-evident to this process, for it regards all action, since it works through thought, as also in the last instance based on thought... This illusion of an independent history of national constitutions, legal system, ideological conceptions in each special field of knowledge, is the element which leads most people astray mentally. (Letter to Mehring, July 14, 1893.)

The fact that a social group speaks in terms of generalized welfare in its formal platform and really represents a special interest does not necessarily disqualify it as either scientific or progressive, in the context of its times. The real test is: How much closer do the formal and real meanings coincide in the case of one class or group than in the case of the other? Social life is a problem in choice, within necessary limits. There is more scientific truth in Voltaire than in a defendant of the Bourbon monarchy, even though Voltaire speaks in the grandiose generalities of rationalism; Danton comes a little closer to scientific understanding of the historical process in which he acted than Voltaire; and in turn Robespierre more so than Danton.

The relationship between real and formal meaning, then, depends on the class relationships which they express and on the historical level within which they function; the *reason* for the particular configuration of the real-formal relationship is always specific, historical, relative. The Machiavellian attitude, on the contrary, merely establishes the dichotomy as a pernicious constant, pats itself on its back for not indulging in such fantasies, and attempts no explanation. The result is that Burnham's understanding of history is limited to a monotonous chant: "They didn't really mean it..." And not only that; he falls into an ideological trap which is supposed to be the special province of Marxism (in reality, of its vulgar traducers). He ascribes to the formal element a completely negative rôle: "the entire formal meaning, which has told us nothing and proved nothing..." (page 19). But this is precisely the vulgar approach of denying the importance of what Marxism calls the ideological superstructure in historical causation. It is not true that the formal meaning tells nothing or proves nothing; quite the contrary. In actual historical research, we must often proceed from the formal back to the real meaning; the former provides endless clues to the latter, and it often plays a great retroactive rôle in influencing the real meaning of a historical movement. Who would dare deny that the humanistic aura of the French Revolution was an important factor, even though it was basically a bourgeois revolution? Or any one of a million other instances. Burnham, driven by idealistic metaphysics of Paretian sociology, winds up with an extraordinarily mechanistic historical approach.

### The Theory of the Elite

We have dealt so laboriously with this whole matter of logical and non-logical actions, real and formal meanings because it is basic to the conception of the élite which is the central point in Machiavellian sociology. The concept of the élite, as used by the Machiavellians, is far from rigidly defined and contains considerable elements of confusion. Since Pareto and Burnham refuse to accept the Marxian analysis of

a ruling class as a social, historically-limited relationship based on a specific mode of production, and since they likewise refuse to accept any rationalist or normative wish-fulfilling theories, they must necessarily resort to one of two approaches: definition by external description or by an endowment of the élite with superior native qualities. Strangely enough, they utilize both. Typical of the first approach is Pareto's definition of the élite as consisting of "individuals who directly or indirectly play some considerable part in government." Mosca's definition is hardly more illuminating:

Political power always has been and always will be exercised by organized minorities, which have had and will have the means, varying as the times vary, to impose their supremacy on the multitude.

These tautological definitions form the basis for one of the two approaches which the Machiavellians have toward the élite conception. But the ground is shifted when Pareto sets up his "index of efficiency" as a means of distinguishing between élites and non-élites. For, clearly, to say that "X has a high index number of efficiency in some field of activity" is not the same as saying that "X is high in the social scale" . . . unless one attempts, as does Pareto (but Burnham shies away from this!) a correlation between the curve of stratification of society in intelligence, and the curve of distribution of income. But this assumption is patently unprovable, since the curve of income has changed in, say, the last two centuries in any number of ways, while the biological endowments with which élites are presumably blessed must have remained constant. It is not difficult to see the moral sanction afforded to the *status quo* and its élite by the theory that the governing élite is endowed with a high "index number." (The quaintness of phrasing is Pareto's, not ours.) They are on top because they're smarter; they're smarter because they're on top: is that a vulgarization?

Burnham, however, confines himself to the descriptive, tautological approach. He lists vague qualities which fail to clarify. Does the élite include the politicians, the managers, the capitalists, the landowners, the state bureaucracy? If so, what is the relationship between them? Who rules and who administers? Who drives and who is driven? But Burnham never once attempts to give substance to his definition of the élite by considering such questions. . . . It might even lead him back to the old Marxian concept of classes, from which he recently had such a narrow escape. All we are told is encompassed in the profundities: the élite . . . is the rulers. The rulers . . . are the élite.

We are given no indication of how the dynamics of a given society, its tensions and conflicts, its character and transformation, may determine the rôle and composition of a ruling élite. As Franz Borkenau remarks in his book on Pareto:

As art cannot be explained by the fact that there is a large differentiation in artistic talent between the members of a community, so political domination cannot be explained by the fact that different individuals are suited in varying degrees for exercising domination. Domination must be explained as a *social* need and not as a desire or intention of the *élite*. If the necessity for domination is understood, then and then only the function of the dominating group can be made intelligible. . . .

Pareto treats domination as a natural, quasi-biological fact arising out of the existence of a group specifically talented for domination. . . . [Consequently] the élite must have some natural features characteristic of rulers in common, which are lacking in the mass of mankind. If domination is mainly the result of natural biological differentiations, then the rulers must represent some sort of higher *race*.

### Why Do Elites Degenerate?

But—and now we reach the crux of the problem—if élites, by definition, are endowed with superior qualities, why, then,

in the course of history, do ruling groups so conspicuously degenerate? On this crucial question, as on every other, Machiavellian theory is unable to explain change in history. And if you can't explain change, what can you explain?

Pareto himself is puzzled by this problem. He writes that "aristocracies do not last. *For one reason or another* (our emphasis), after a certain time they disappear." This sentence, which Burnham does *not* quote in his book, reveals the complete helplessness of Machiavellianism before the factor of history. It can draw up long catalogues of surface similarities between different historical epochs; it can debunk idealist movements without understanding their significance; it can "explain" hosts of diverse actions under fuzzy categories; but it is helpless to explain change, that is, history.

Burnham attempts to wriggle out of the dilemma by dragging in Pareto's auxiliary concept of "circulation of élites." There is a change in the élite's makeup when the old élite has become stultified, corrupt and softened from power, and unwilling to admit new, fresh elements. Resultantly, a change of élites takes place. But there are here several contradictions. If, as Pareto claims, there is a constant correlation between the curves of social stratification and biological endowment, why should a free circulation of élites be desirable? Then, presumably, it would be desirable to keep the élite closely confined . . . to avoid, shall we say, racial poisoning. Secondly, how does the new, fresh élite that is to "circulate" itself (what a fantastic euphemism for revolution!) into the place of the old one, come by the qualifications required of the élite? Let us take the French Revolution as an example. Both the courtiers of Louis XIV and the cabinet of Robespierre constituted, in different ways, élites. But to lump them together under the one general heading clarifies nothing about the French Revolution. What were the residues that Robespierre possessed which made it possible for him to triumph where Mirabeau failed? Could it just possibly have had something to do with the class fluctuations, the rôle of Robespierre as a *representative* of the most revolutionary section of the petty bourgeoisie? When confronted thus with an actual historical situation the theory of the élite can serve no function except to offer the incredibly sage statement that the Bourbons and Jacobins both were élites, and the Jacobins acquired more of the necessary qualities needed by a successful élite than did the Bourbons, and therefore triumphed. This is what Lenin once called the "enrichment of history."

The question applies with even greater force to the present day. Why does the German élite (incidentally, who, according to Burnham, would be the German élite: the Nazi bureaucracy, the army leaders, the capitalists, or all of them jumbled up together?) show such greater durability and toughness than its Italian cousin? A Marxist would suggest that a glance at the industrial potentials of the two countries and their relation to the world market might supply a clue to the answer.

If the élite concept cannot explain past history, does it give any clue to the future? All that it can contribute on this score is the barren formula that élites are inevitable and classless societies impossible. Since our final article will concern itself with this question, we shall not discuss it here, except to note that it is the same James Burnham who broke with Marxism because he said it contained a philosophy of optimistic inevitability who is now trumpeting this inevitability, but in a socially retrogressive form.

In summary, then, the concept of the élite is of no particular theoretical or political value since: (1) it is too vaguely

defined to be of operative use and, in the Machiavellian scheme, has at least two exclusive definitions; (2) there is no evidence to demonstrate any natural endowment making for a social élite; (3) it makes impossible any explanation of change in history; (4) it fails to explain why certain élites are relatively more durable and successful than others and why all élites that history has known thus far have sooner or later disappeared from the scenes.

### The Interdependence Theory of History

All that remains to complete our discussion of the general concepts of Machiavellian sociology is a consideration of its formal theory of history.\* We have deliberately left this for last, since it plays a secondary rôle in Burnham's book. Formally, he adopts the popular theory of historical interdependence: a multiplicity of historical factors interact and the resultant is history. But the theory ends where it should begin. Granting that there is an interplay of historical forces—so what? The theory has no means of measurement or comparison. Why do certain historical factors play a decisive rôle and others a secondary one? Which provides the power and which cools the engine? To note that there are many factors in history is merely to create confusion unless one also provides a means of evaluating them. Historical materialism is one such means; it is a means of measurement (of at least an approximate nature) and evaluable. The simple interaction theory, however, provides no such tools; it is a means of evading historical analysis rather than indulging in it. To say "pluralism" is not to wave a magic wand, even if it gives the author a roomy feeling and relieves him of the requirement of historical specificity in his analysis.

But this is merely the formal historical theory of Burnham. In reality, he seldom uses it. His real historical theory is incredibly crude and mechanistic, for it is nothing else than a refurbished version of the force theory of our old friend, Herr Eugen Dühring.

Throughout his book, Burnham stresses the rôle of force as an arbitrary determining factor in history. "Force and fraud"—these are the means by which élites maintain their power and the latter is used primarily as a kind of substitute for force, which always stands in the background ready to exert its sovereignty. In Burnham's approach, the force theory—much as with old Dühring—is abstracted into a universal de-

\*Burnham disposes of the Marxian theory in brief. "Social and political events," he writes, "of the very greatest scope and order—the collapse of the Roman Empire, the rise of Christianity, the advance of Islam—have occurred without any important correlated change in the mode of economic production; consequently, the mode of production cannot be the sole cause of social change." In one brief sentence, Burnham has succeeded in accumulating the platitudes of a century of academic effort—and the dishonesty as well. To wit: (1) Marxism has never claimed that every social and political event must be "correlated" by a change in the means of production; (2) on the contrary, the belief in a one-to-one relationship between the mode of production and social and political superstructures is one against which Marxism has constantly polemicized; (3) Marxism has, as a matter of fact, explained social and political changes such as those Burnham mentions as the results of rising new classes which challenge the existing mode of production, or as a result of modifications within the mode of production, such as the change from industrial to finance capitalism; (4) Marxism has never claimed that the mode of production (does Burnham mean changes in the mode of production?) is the "sole" cause of social change; (5) Marxism has examined at least the first two of Burnham's examples in great detail, notably in Kautsky's *Foundations of Christianity*, with such success that subsequent historians have liberally borrowed from it, without, of course, acknowledging their source. Marx himself paid considerable attention to the rise of Christianity, as did his co-workers among the "Young Hegelians," during his early period; as witness the interest aroused by the publication of Straus' *Life of Christ*, an early attempt to explain Christ's life in natural, historical terms (see Mehring's *Karl Marx*).

But, most important, why does Burnham have to go back twenty centuries to prove the inapplicability of the Marxian historical method? Why not attempt to offer evidence from somewhat more recent historical experience? Or is it easier to "disprove" Marxism by vague references to the rise of Islam than by references to contemporary capitalist society?

terminant, without any ties to existing historical institutions and hence without historical limitations. That an élite may exist because of a certain set of productive relations rather than because it is in possession of the means of forces does not occur to Burnham. As Engels so appropriately wrote of Dühring:

Superior force is no mere act of the will but requires very real preliminary conditions for the carrying out of its purposes, especially mechanical instruments. . . . In a word, the triumph of force depends upon the production of weapons, therefore upon economic power, on economic conditions, on the ability to organize actual material instruments.

### Force in Social Life

Surely everyone knows that force has been an unremitting ingredient of social life, but we still must ask what has shaped this socially neutral means of action, what has bent it in one direction or the other? To say that force has always existed is to say that there has never been social equality, which is what the historical investigator begins with, rather than ends with. The very mechanisms of force are historically conditioned; the uses to which it is put are obviously so.

Writes Engels:

. . . Force is only a means to further an economic interest. . . . In order to be able to keep a slave one has to be superior to him in two respects, one must first have control over the tools and objects of labor of the slave and over his means of subsistence also. . . . Especially where private property arises it appears as the result of a change in the methods of production and exchange in the interests of the increase of production and the development of commerce and therefore arises from economic causes. Force plays no rôle in this. It is clear that the institution of private property must have already existed before the robber is able to possess himself of other people's goods, and that force may change the possession but cannot alter private property as such. (Anti-Dühring.)

But for Burnham, as a true Machiavellian, such historical considerations are not to be noticed; one reiterates constantly that force has always been used in social life, it is the ultimate determining factor in social struggles, and that it will always be so. Thus, from the "flexible" and "pluralistic" interaction theory of history, we come to a rigid, vulgar theory of force. This development is not unique. It is the outstanding characteristic of Machiavellian theory: the would-be anti-rationalists turn out to be rationalists. The champions of "science" turn out to be champions of metaphysics. The crude, unrelenting empiricists turn out to be sheer idealists. In a word, to use Burnham's argot, there is no relation between the real and formal programs of Machiavellianism.

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In the third and final article of this series, we propose to discuss the political conclusions of Machiavellianism, namely, the so-called Iron Law of Oligarchy, the problem of bureaucratic degeneration of organizations, and the possibility of achieving a classless society.

R. FAHAN.

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# A Letter from Uruguay

To the American Committee for  
the Fourth International.

Dear Comrades:

As you must already know, an accidental majority of the Revolutionary Workers League (LOR), affiliated to the American Committee, broke with you and adopted the social-patriotic position held by the pseudo-International Executive Committee.

The process followed by the LOR deserves an explanation. It came into political existence in 1941 as a result of the fusion of various comrades who had split from the Socialist Youth with Trotskyist militants. From the very beginning (February, 1941, up to June, 1943) it defended publicly the position of the American Committee, particularly with respect to the problem of Russia, of China, etc.

I suppose that, to the comrades of the American Committee as well as to those of the Workers Party, the unexpected resolution of the LOR, adhering to the Cannonites, caused some surprise. For this reason, I want to give you the truth about the events in Uruguay.

Ever since the LOR declared itself against the defense of Stalinist Russia, a violent campaign has been carried on against the LOR, directed by the representatives of Cannon. In spite of being aware of the true situation in Uruguay, as a result of the visit of T. P., official plenipotentiary envoy of the Cannonites, the so-called International Executive Committee, acting with complete irresponsibility, recognized as the "Uruguayan Section" the Bolshevik-Leninist League (LBL), an organization non-existent since 1939. Since the LOR was the genuine representative of the Fourth Internationalist movement, it was necessary for the Cannonites to liquidate it, using every means at their command.

In December of 1941, T. P. wrote from Ecuador to the "Bolshevik-Leninist League," urging it to destroy the "Uruguayan centrists of the American Committee." We thus carried on a discussion with T. P. over a period of months. He insisted on the necessity of unification, something which the LOR did not accept, since the LBL showed no signs of life. Meanwhile the discussions continued on the much-debated problem of Russia.

T. P. withdrew to Buenos Aires and, having artificially constructed a "section" of the Fourth International in the Argentine, the PORS (today vanished), the offensive against the LOR continued. We were attacked by the *Workers Front* of Buenos Aires, and at the same time we received "visits" from the Argentine and Chilean comrades, who, in spite of not having solved their own problems, came to Montevideo for the purpose of dividing our organization.

We struggled for a period of two years against the interference of the defensists. The conclusion of the struggle was reached in June, 1943. The members of the German group in Buenos Aires, old militants of the Red Front and others, succeeded in convincing a number of comrades that the position held by Cannon & Co. was correct.

Thus a defensist majority appeared in the LOR and prevented the minority from publishing its position with respect to Russia and China on the pretext that it would confuse the proletariat. . . .

We for two more months carried on the fight in spite of everything, until there was no more possibility of reconquering the LOR. We noted the discredit of the LOR by its pub-

lic adoption of the position of defense of the Soviet Union as well as in its support of compulsory military service at a moment when the entire working class was mobilizing, together with the students, against this reactionary law imposed by imperialism.

The minority fought against compulsory military service, considering fundamentally the characteristics of our country, the lack of a revolutionary party, etc. The defensists said that to oppose military service constituted "adventurism," that compulsory military service was inevitable, etc.

Experience has proved our position correct. In spite of everything, military service has not been put into effect up to this moment, due to the opposition that has developed.

In October of this year, we resolved to begin the work of building a new organization. We publish *Clarificación*, a discussion organ, which we have sent to the various Latin-American groups.

We have thus constituted the Revolutionary Internationalist League (LRI) on the basis of the judgment that the division begun in 1939 has served to separate us from the opportunism that corrodes the ranks of the Fourth International.

The LRI has a special interest in maintaining close contact with you. From now on we shall send you regularly news of the Fourth Internationalist movement in Uruguay and the neighboring countries.

Long live the Fourth International!

Hoping for your early reply, and with our warmest greetings,

L. DE V.

Montevideo, November 13, 1943.

## BOOKS IN REVIEW

### Significant Failure

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE, by  
Arthur Koestler. Macmillan. \$2.00.

Koestler's novel begins with the arrival in Lisbon of a refugee, an anti-fascist who is not deterred by his experiences in a concentration camp from continuing the anti-fascist struggle. He tries to enlist in the British army, but during the period of bureaucratic delay in acting upon his application, he falls in love with a refugee who shortly leaves for America. Unable to resolve the dilemma of continuing his political activity in Europe or in emigrating to America, he becomes paralyzed. A psychoanalyst fortuitously and very conveniently appears on the scene and cures him by making the significance of childhood impressions clear to him and by revealing that his interest in the oppressed does not derive from their condition but from his own intimate experience. As soon as he is cured, the psychoanalyst is obligingly withdrawn by a propitious visa to America, and he is confronted by the same alternatives in more explicit form. His own visa to America arrives simultaneously with his acceptance in the British army. Finally, repudiating the revelations of the psychoanalyst, he reaffirms his traditional anti-fascist allegiance—by joining the British army!

Perhaps the novel lacks drama because the alternatives are not significant enough. The moral dilemma is not really

so acute that it should result in physical paralysis. "Tut, tut, my boy," we are inclined to say, "there's no reason for getting your bowels into an uproar over going to America or to England. You'll do just as much good by going to America, meeting the girl friend, maybe marrying her, and settling down for a year or two until the draft gets you there also." It is hard to persuade oneself that one is serving the oppressed by joining imperialism's battle. The hero's unequivocal skepticism of his final choice makes his ultimate acceptance of it a *non sequitur*. The logic of the narrative demands that, since the hero's cure was effected by psychoanalysis, he follow a course of action—emigration to America and political abstinence—compatible with its findings. But Koestler's own political loyalties demanded a reaffirmation of the necessity of political action, and he accordingly places his hero in the absurd position of fighting in a hopeless cause that he knows is hopeless.

Koestler's work is particularly significant as the expression of a relatively large number of exhausted Marxists. These people are the backwash of the revolutionary movement, they are voiceless and without prestige. In Koestler they have found a voice. They had once regarded the Soviet Union as the exemplification of their values, and in repudiating the Stalinist régime they repudiated, so they thought, Marxism as well. They have nowhere attempted to analyze their identification of Stalinism and Marxism. Koestler has acquired, but not earned, the reputation of a profound thinker by merely asserting and not analyzing the identification. Their superficiality is nowhere demonstrated more clearly than in Koestler's limitation of political alternatives to these three, in order of abhorrence: fascism, Stalinism and capitalism. Such an oversimplification does not do justice to the complexity of the political process. Our problems demand more subtle and more sophisticated solutions than can be comprehended within these narrow choices.

But despite the fact that they have been neglectful or superficial in analysis, Koestler and his fellows cannot be lumped together with the worn-out liberals of our time. Unlike the liberals, they are not to be persuaded that all's right in the Stalinist heaven simply because the Russian armies are destroying the Nazi armies. They are not swayed by the importunities of the political moment, they do not yield to the concerted and organized pressures of Stalinism and its diverse allies. There is a somewhat more profound appreciation of Russia's rôle than is contained in the pages of the liberal or conservative press. It is more profound because their criticism of Stalinism, though they do not know it or else lack the courage to admit it to themselves, is based on Marxian methods and values.

They cannot become fascists for the same reason that they cannot become Stalinists. And although, by way of test, he tries to make fascism as appealing, as persuasive and as logical as possible, Koestler cannot give it allegiance. Alive as he is to the potentialities of fascism, realizing as he does the urgency of action, Koestler, although with a reluctant heart, joins the imperialist powers as the least of all evils. He realizes, as he puts it, that imperialism is only "tradition decayed" and offers no hope for the realization of his revolutionary values. Koestler might very well ponder the statement of Santayana, that to believe an illusion, not knowing it is an illusion, is pardonable, but to believe in an illusion, knowing it is one, is indefensible. To fight for an illusion on these terms is worse still.

But a thinking person, or a person who makes some pre-

tension to thought, must have some method of understanding society. And so these exhausted Marxists try to go outside the Marxist tradition. They attempt other techniques, and usually find themselves adopting some form of psychoanalysis, which is merely the thorough examination of the inner springs of individual action, the skillful probing into individual motivation. It attempts to relate one's present activities to an irrelevant past, to show that one is not *really* struggling against a current evil but against a previous experience, that one does not fight *for* ideals but *against* the impressions and personalities that dominated his childhood.

Psychoanalysis may have therapeutic value in mental illness, but it cannot be elevated into an instrument of social analysis or into a social philosophy. Granting its validity within its sphere, it is inadequate in handling social problems because, whatever the reason for one's activities, however obscure and far removed the motivation, the problems of the day are real just the same, and they would exist regardless of any psychopathic or obsessive interest in them.

Koestler attempts to demonstrate that the reason for fighting is one thing, the outcome another. It is true that the revolutionist, like everybody else, fights with a vision in his heart that action may modify and that force may change in a manner he never could anticipate or approve. But that is one of the risks one must take. It is true that ideas may be perverted, characters may be transformed, and reality may bear little resemblance to vision. That is a commonplace, and one cannot, as Koestler vainly tries to do, build a social philosophy on it.

Koestler's reputation as a "profound" thinker rests on his recognition of *some* of the political alternatives of our time, and, paradoxically, on a skepticism of Stalinism, fascism, capitalism and even Marxism itself that is based on Marxism. He has nothing to offer us but the hopeless and confessedly unsatisfactory alternative of capitalism in its Anglo-Saxon form. He has the alternative, though he does not appear to realize it, of reexamining Marxism, studying the Russian Revolution, determining when it was perverted, why it was perverted, and whether the perversion was logically necessary or historically inevitable.

I have treated this book as a political tract, not as a novel. Its value derives from its presentation of ideas and alternatives, not from narrative or character. Its characters are not realized, their individualities are not clear, they are mouthpieces rather than personalities. Koestler has given us an outline of a case study in psychoanalysis, not more exciting or dramatic than can be found in well known Freudian and other studies. The inevitable faint spice of sex and the easily anticipated suggestion of homosexuality that Koestler throws in, do not make the dull story exciting.

This novel is a failure, but, as sometimes happens, it is a failure that is more significant than many successes. It recognizes that the dominant theme of our time is political; it does present, although in truncated form, some of our most significant political alternatives, and it does attempt to probe into the motivation of individual political action. That is a large order, a very large order, and demands greater power than Koestler at this time possesses. The experiences of the next few years will be decisive for Koestler as political man and as artist. What he learns from them will determine his ultimate political and artistic stature.

RICHARD STOKER.

# A Self-Repudiation

**THE REPUBLIC: CONVERSATIONS ON FUNDAMENTALS**, by Charles Beard. Viking. \$3.00.

Although Charles Beard disclaims, modestly and rightly enough, any comparison with Socrates, the title of his book invites the comparison. Since Beard's book does not deal with ideal politics or with the structure of the *only* republic, it is an inaccurate title. While this book has received far more extravagant praise than the *Economic Interpretation of the Constitution*, Beard will be known by his earlier and better work. The people who condemned the writings of his youth will praise the writings of his old age. For this book frankly repudiates his early work, commends the superior wisdom of the Federalists led by Hamilton, doubts the validity of an economic approach to historical problems, and defends the powers of the Supreme Court.

Beard displays matchless erudition, and if we quarrel with him it is not with his scholarship but with his interpretation. His book is not an inquiry into fundamentals, it is only an exposition of the Constitution within a very well defined class framework. It is an inquiry carried on within a middle class orbit which cannot comprehend more than differences in detail. Beard's protagonists are doctors, professors, social workers, clergymen, business men and conservative labor leaders. In his attempt to present all points of view, Beard, includes, as a spokesman for labor, a leader whose radical and class-conscious suggestion is that, since labor and capital have identical interests, they ought to get together! Beard's circle does not include a fascist nor a communist, who would really compel him to examine fundamentals. As it is, the most radical proposal considered by his group is the suggestion that we adopt a parliamentary government on the English model.

This book is, in no inconsiderable measure, a polemic against a class analysis of society. The supra-class concept is emphasized in every realm Beard discusses. In politics, Beard asserts that the political party is creative because it unites diverse class interests. Perhaps he identifies creativeness with class peace, but have our supposedly non-class parties been able to maintain peace of any kind? Beard does not attempt to discover whether or not an openly class party, let us say a workers' party, gains in creativeness from its frankness, its carefully delimited membership, and its unequivocal objectives.

In stating the supra-class concept of truth and justice, Beard reopens the inquiry into Trotsky's activities by the Dewey Commission. Trotsky, he says, appealed to him in the name of truth and justice to become a member of the commission, thereby implicitly recognizing that truth and justice are supra-class concepts. We cannot dispute the view that truth is not a class concept. A fact is a fact, the truth is the truth, whether it be enunciated by a proletarian or a capitalist. All that we assert is that the working class is in the best position to discover social truths and in the best position to advance social truths because it does not fear them. But justice is a class concept. The justice of punishments in a class society that bear most heavily on the workers is not commonly regarded, outside of academic circles, as above classes in origin, content, direction or purpose. If we cared to press the matter further, we should not have too much difficulty in making a significant correlation between changing class structures and changing concepts of justice.

Beard gives the impression of defending the Supreme Court in the exercise of all its powers. This is a step backward from the far from radical philosophy of Justice Holmes, which asserts that the Legislature, elected by the people, is a better judge of the constitutionality of its own acts than a group of judges, no matter how omniscient they profess to be. Nor can Beard's view that the Supreme Court is the great defender of civil liberties bear historical investigation.

Historical interpretation is, for Beard, a matter of taste and temperament; one is either a pessimist or an optimist, depending upon intuitions too subtle for rational analysis. Beard has certainly not improved on Gilbert and Sullivan's equally profound political analysis in somewhat the same vein, that "every boy and girl born in this world alive, is either a little liberal or else a little conservative." Beard advances a concept of fate in history which probably reduces itself to the dictum that whatever is, is—a concept with which we shall not argue, but which doesn't help us very much in our attempt to understand men and events. "We cannot," he says, "master our fate. What is fated is fated and is beyond our control."

His aspirations are limited to the preservation of the American political structure and the limitation of American ambitions to this continent. He is opposed to foreign adventures and to grandiose schemes of international reform, against all of which he is able to present numerous objections of detail. Throughout the book he tries to maintain the traditional professorial objectivity, reconciling all interests, doing injury to none.

Finally, he states his faith in America in the following terms: "I do not believe that even in a great national crisis we shall necessarily subject ourselves to what you call a totalitarian government of some kind or other. . . . The idea of our repeating all the mental imagery, ideas, rhetoric, sentiments and hocus-pocus of totalitarianism in Germany, Russia or Italy seems to me so highly fanciful as to be purely speculative, for America has not been and never can be Russia, Germany or Italy, through whatever variety of untried being we may pass in the indefinite future."

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RICHARD STOKER.

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