

**THE POPE NEEDS AMERICA, BY JAMES T. FARRELL**

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**The New**  
**INTERNATIONAL**

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**FEBRUARY • 1946**

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**THE CRISIS IN FRANCE**

**THE FALL OF DE GAULLE AND A POLICY FOR THE WORKERS**

*An Editorial*

**HENRY JUDD:**

**England's Labor Government**

*A Summary of Six Months*

**FELIX MORROW:**

**On the Tempo in Europe**

*A Letter to All Sections of the Fourth International*

**MIRIAM GOULD:**

**Women, Biology and Socialism**

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# THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

A Monthly Organ of Revolutionary Marxism

Vol. XII

No. 2, Whole No. 104

Published monthly, except June and July, by the New International Publishing Co., 114 West 14th Street, New York 11, N. Y. Telephone: CHelsea 2-9681. Subscription rates: \$2.00 per year; bundles, 15c for five copies and up. Canada and foreign \$2.25 per year; bundles, 20c for five and up. Re-entered as second class matter August 25, 1945, at the post office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879.

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## Business Manager's

# MEMO TO OUR READERS

The brief subscription drive has netted us a total of 252 new subs and a considerable increase in the bundle order sales. Branches of the Workers Party have been primarily responsible for the new subscriptions, but a considerable number came from readers of *Labor Action* who had received free sample copies of the December issue. These subscriptions are still coming in and we shall continue to honor them at the special price rate.

Most of the new subscribers took advantage of the special combination offer which included a year's subscription to the *NI* and a copy of the new book by Max Shachtman, *The Fight for Socialism*. The book will be off the press in several weeks and these new subscribers will receive their copies in the mails.

*Labor Action* readers have sent us letters of thanks for the December issue, of which the two published below are merely samples:

G. P. of Iowa writes:

"Your copies of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL received yesterday. Will try and take before the month is gone. Think it is wonderful."

P. F. of New York writes:

"I wish to subscribe to THE NEW INTERNATIONAL of which you have sent me the December issue. I thank you for this kindness and I learned much from the published articles. Also send a suscription to . . ."

The results of the drive follow:

New York .....	75
Detroit .....	33
Cleveland .....	20
Los Angeles .....	20
Chicago .....	18
Philadelphia .....	18
San Francisco .....	9
Seattle .....	7
Newark .....	11
Massachusetts .....	3
Colorado .....	2
Reading .....	1
Hibbing .....	1
Akron .....	1
Buffalo .....	1
Miscellaneous .....	9
<i>Labor Action</i> .....	19

TOTAL .....

252

Now that the drive is officially over, we want to remind our readers once again of the new subscription rates:

One year—\$2.00 (Bronx and Manhattan)—\$2.25.

Six Months—\$1.25 (Bronx and Manhattan)—\$1.50.

Many thanks to our readers and members of the Workers Party for their efforts in obtaining these subs. We know that this is only a beginning and that subscriptions will continue to roll in at the steady pace set by the drive.

Next month we hope to turn this column over to our readers who have a good deal to say about THE NEW INTERNATIONAL.

REVA CRAINE

# THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

*A Monthly Organ of Revolutionary Marxism*

VOLUME XII

FEBRUARY, 1946

NUMBER 2

## EDITORIAL COMMENT—

# THE CRISIS IN FRANCE

*The Fall of de Gaulle  
A Policy for the Workers*

The resignation of de Gaulle was a defeat for the French capitalist class. It was a new proof of the vitality of the French working class which, in spite of the collaboration of its party leaders with the would-be Bonaparte, had managed to put enough pressure on those leaders to make impossible de Gaulle's plan for a step-by-step establishment of a dictatorial régime. Needless to say, de Gaulle steps out only to attempt at a later stage to return over the broken bones of the French labor movement. Meanwhile, however, the French proletariat will have more than one opportunity to make forever impossible the return of de Gaulle.

De Gaulle's career since the fall of France, correctly analyzed, reveals the extent to which the French capitalist class has been shattered. It has not yet retrieved its power and can hope to do so only if the French proletariat permits the Blums and Thorezes to ruin this extraordinary opportunity to put an end once for all to French capitalism.

A royalist and a typical product of the Saint Cyr military academy—West Pointers are wild-eyed radicals in comparison—de Gaulle went to England in May, 1940, conceiving of continuing the struggle in purely military terms. But the main sections of the French capitalist class became Hitler's collaborators and the national resistance movement developed chiefly as a great mass movement of the workers, the youth and sections of the peasantry directed against both the Nazis and Vichy. Faced with this unforeseen development, the royalist donned the red cockade of a new, Fourth Republic and gave lip service to the socialist phraseology of the program of the National Committee of Resistance. In doing so de Gaulle may have often wondered whether he would not end up on the guillotine like Louis XVI, who also in his time donned the red cockade to keep abreast of the masses. Unlike the Jacobins, who swiftly put an end to the comedy, the Socialist and Stalinist leaders of the resistance assured the French proletariat that the royalist general had become transformed permanently into a democrat, indeed into a socializer of the French trusts. Thanks to the Socialist and Stalinist support, de Gaulle was able to play this risky game and return as head of the government to a Paris controlled by an armed proletariat which at a signal from its leaders would have turned de Gaulle's triumphal entry into his funeral.

### De Gaulle's Maneuvers

Backed by the great resistance movement led by the Communist and Socialist Parties, de Gaulle was able to liquidate the Darlan deal and other measures by which Anglo-U. S. imperialism had sought to turn French imperialism into a complete vassal of Washington and London. This was the period of the stormy clashes with Roosevelt and Churchill, of de Gaulle's pilgrimages to Moscow. It was also the period of the great betrayal perpetrated by the Socialist and Communist Parties: their support of de Gaulle's disarming and dissolution of the resistance militias.

Now came de Gaulle's reorientation: the pilgrimage to Truman, the end of his honeymoon with the Stalinists and Moscow, the end of the purge of collaborators (i.e., of the capitalist class), the first open attempts to follow up the disarming of the proletariat with its political disfranchisement. But the profound difficulty of de Gaulle's task lay in the fact that at no time could he free himself of the need of the support of the Communist and Socialist Parties; and these, in turn, were never free of the pressure of the proletarian masses who, full of old and new illusions, nevertheless put no trust in de Gaulle and pressed for the fruits which they had expected from liberation.

Hitler had decomposed the French bourgeoisie, had incorporated it into his "Thousand Year Reich," had thereby ruined it politically beyond the ability of a de Gaulle to reconstruct it in the short time at his disposal. Not one of the traditional capitalist parties had survived the fall of Hitler and Vichy. The new party of the French bourgeoisie, the MRP—Mouvement Républicain Populaire—was and remains a makeshift surreptitiously backed by the remnants of Vichy and yesterday's open fascists as well as by the Gaullist bourgeoisie. However, its leaders, signatories of the program of the National Committee of the Resistance, have neither the confidence nor any reasonable assurance that they will not lose their mass following—which in any event includes few workers—if they openly turn away from coöperation with the Communist and Socialist Parties. Without a strong bourgeois party, de Gaulle's attempts to rid himself of the need of Communist-Socialist support proved futile.

## The Constituent Elections

De Gaulle put off as long as possible the elections to the Constituent Assembly but finally had to yield. The results proved a death-knell to his hopes. The Communist and Socialist Parties, the former polling the most votes of any party but with the latter not far behind, together got over ten million votes and an absolute majority of the Constituent—57 per cent of the deputies. True, with the help of the Socialist Party, de Gaulle was able to get a majority for his "project" limiting the executive powers of the Constituent. What is not so well known, however, is that de Gaulle was compelled to rewrite his original "project" several times, so that the final version, for which he got a majority, unlike his original plan, made his government removable by the Constituent. After a series of crises and threatened resignations, de Gaulle was compelled to resign. In May the seven-months term of the Constituent expires and new elections are to be held. It is certain that had de Gaulle remained until then the elections would have been a resounding defeat for him. Undoubtedly he hopes that he leaves still possessing the prestige of the "first leader of the resistance," that the masses will forget in the coming months that he headed a government of inaction from August, 1944, to January, 1946, that in succeeding governments of inaction the Socialist and Communist parties will discredit themselves, and that he will be able to return again as a savior but this time with the full powers of a Bonaparte.

So far we have been describing the parliamentary reflection of the situation. It is a reflection of the terrible economic plight of the country. That plight was indicated by the inaugural address to the Constituent Assembly of the new President, the Socialist, Félix Gouin. In their own cowardly and treacherous way, the Socialist and Communist Party leaders understand very well that de Gaulle is banking on their continuing his policy of inaction and they are trying to initiate a new policy which will revive industrial and agricultural production. To do so they are compelled to begin by telling a little of the grim truth instead of continuing de Gaulle's boasts about "la gloire" of France. After more than six years of war and post-war suffering, Gouin warns the masses that they must "serrer la ceinture" (tighten the belt): "Less wheat, less meat, less wine, less potatoes." The second great problem is the financial situation: desperate measures must be taken to stop the rise in prices, to end the "inflationary rush which would reduce the working class, civil servants, pensioners and small investors to poverty"—he should have said to even worse poverty than is theirs at present.

## Condition of French Economy

What makes the revival of production so extraordinarily difficult today in France is not only the depredations of the Nazis and the destruction of war, but also—on this all the supporters of capitalism are of course silent—the weakened condition in which French economy stood before the war. France, unable to compete with England, Germany and the United States in mass production, leaned more and more on its luxury industries for export purposes after 1900. It entered the great depression which began in 1929 somewhat later than the mass-producing countries, but never got out of it before the war began, not even by the artificial means of armament production. As a result, it entered the war with an outmoded and old industrial plant; the average unit of industrial machinery is something like 25-30 years old! Industrially, therefore, France is at the end of its breath—the expression is current in discussions in France today—with most of its industrial plant,

railroad equipment, etc., so worn out that much of it must be replaced before a serious revival of production can begin and adequate transportation of agricultural produce from the countryside to the cities becomes possible.

There is a great and truly glorious French tradition to which the Communist and Socialist Parties could appeal in a struggle to provide an equal share of the available food for all, to prevent inflation and to rebuild the country. For under the Jacobin revolutionists, the French Republic during 1792-94 achieved the aim of feeding the country while draining it of manpower and goods in order to fight victorious wars against all reactionary Europe. The Jacobins provided the example of price-fixing which could serve today to lift France out of its impasse. They did it by revolutionary means: the ruthless control by the masses and their representatives over the whole of economic life, the supremacy of the propertyless masses over the owners of private property. As the great French historian, Albert Mathiez, describes it in part:

In order to feed the towns and armies, and at the same time to support the currency, the great Committee of Public Safety under Robespierre, by an ingenious system of requisitioning, had gained control over the whole of French production, which it distributed through the agency of a central commission. By exercising its right of pre-emption and requisition this Central Commission of Supply in effect dictated prices, which it fixed by means of the law of the maximum. . . . In order to carry out the requisitioning and ensure the observance of the maximum, strong measures of control and vigorous means of enforcing the law were necessary. The economic terror rested upon the political terror. In spite of all its faults and the vast bureaucracy which it necessitated, it held its own, worked, and to a large extent attained its object.

Nowadays, of course, those who inherit the Jacobin tradition would not nationalize distribution alone but would also nationalize production, as indeed the parties of the resistance committed themselves to do in their program, as the Communist and Socialist Parties promise to do, and as the proletariat demands they do. The fatal weakness of the Jacobin method was precisely the fact that nationalized distribution of goods was in the end broken down by the private owners of production, who are known in history as the Thermidorians. In 1794 that fatal weakness was unavoidable; neither the proletariat nor the forces of production had advanced to a point where nationalized production and a workers' government was conceivable. But today that fatal weakness is entirely unnecessary, as is exemplified by the fact that an absolute majority of the French people have voted for the Communist and Socialist Parties which are pledged to socialism.

## Result of Coalition

Yet this fatal weakness is now introduced into the new French government in two ways: (1) the participation in it of the MRP, the open watchdog of private property; (2) what logically follows from the presence of the MRP, an avowed cabinet program of rationing, price-fixing and revival of production by methods favorable to the big capitalists: ineffectual police measures against the black market instead of workers' and housewives' committees; wage freezing which means wage cutting, since prices will continue to rise via the black market no matter how much they are supposed to be fixed legally; ostensible nationalization of certain fields—electricity and gas, "certain big investment companies," "certain insurance companies and mining companies, the partial (!) nationalization of the merchant marine"—but in reality such completely free hand to private industry that, Gouin admits, selling government bonds "will become harder and harder because of the trend of savings toward private investment."

What will be the inevitable results of such a governmental coalition with the capitalists and such a pro-capitalist program? It will not be, like de Gaulle's cabinets, a government of inaction, but a government of action . . . in carrying out the program of de Gaulle and the capitalist class. If pursued to the end, it will so disappoint and demoralize the working class that de Gaulle will be enabled to return without worrying about the resistance of the proletariat and its parties. Economically, it will mean the revival of the French capitalist class at the expense of the workers and peasants, who will have footed the bill for industrial reconstruction without getting any of the benefits of it.

### **Role of MPR**

To return to our example from the French Revolution, the present government is simple opening the road to the Thermidorians, who destroyed the rationing system of Robespierre. As the historian Mathiez tells what happened:

As a rule the Thermidorians relied upon the support of the property-owning classes, who were interested in the restoration of commercial liberty. They expelled the lower classes from all posts and replaced them by people in comfortable circumstances. They put an end to the Terror or, rather, they turned it against their lower-class adversaries. The first result was that the economic laws of the Revolution lost their power. They could only be put in force by compulsion, because they were injurious to all private interests, and there was no longer any compulsion. . . .

The immense purchases for equipping the army and feeding the towns now ceased to be made at the prices fixed once and for all by law. In the future the state had to pay the prices demanded by the owners.

And now we come to the heart of the question. Even the Thermidorians eventually had to try to do something about the rise in prices; they passed a decree restoring the former penalties—prison, fine, etc.

But who (writes Mathiez) was to secure the application of the decree now that all the governing bodies had been purged and the "terrorists" replaced by fraudulent traders or their accomplices? . . . It was no use.

The MRP ministers and the numerous pro-capitalist elements in all the governmental bodies are the accomplices of the fraudulent traders of today, the Two Hundred Families. So long as they remain in the government it is obviously impossible to take one step in a progressive direction.

Hence the profound importance of the demand put forward by our comrades, the Parti Communiste Internationaliste, French section of the Fourth International: Break the coalition with the bourgeoisie! For a government of the Communist and Socialist Parties and the General Confederation of Labor (CGT)!

This demand serves to center the attention of the workers on the source of the difficulties: the capitalist control of the government and its program. The solution is already at hand: the parties which lead the proletariat have an absolute majority in the Constituent, they have only to will it and they can take the power alone.

Indeed, the well nigh unprecedented character of the present situation is illumined by the fact that the leaders of the Communist and Socialist Parties cannot even pretend that any power in France stands in their way. Until yesterday they still pretended that at present they could not oust de Gaulle and the forces he represented. Now, as an indirect result of the pressure of the masses against de Gaulle's reactionary policies, he has departed. There is no force that could resist a Socialist-Communist government by legal means. And as to extra-parliamentary means—civil war—what force would politically and

economically bankrupt French capitalism have at its disposal compared to the great masses who were steeled and hardened in the resistance movement? Nobody could resist the will of a Communist-Socialist government if it chose to mobilize the masses for the reconstruction of France.

### **Question of American Aid**

But if the miserable bureaucrats who mislead the labor movement cannot find somebody to halt socialism inside France, they find it outside: Uncle Sam. Not the military might of Uncle Sam: that would be too unconvincing to the European masses who have just seen the American soldiers demonstrating and demanding to be evacuated forthwith from Europe. But the benevolent Uncle Sam, purveyor of the machinery and goods which France needs. During the days of the formation of the present government, when the advanced workers were indicating their desire for a Socialist-Communist government, the Socialist leader André Philip, who is now Minister of Finance, wrote January 23 in *Cité Soir*:

The food crisis can be solved only by a strong appeal to the outside world, and this appeal cannot be made by a combination having only a small majority in the Assembly and led by a party of the extreme Left.

Put more plainly, Uncle Sam won't send food if there is a Communist-Socialist government.

It is a very dishonest, but very effective argument. Great illusions about American imperialism still pervade the French masses. They no longer embrace American soldiers, indeed they want to be rid of the last of them. They have learned since August, 1944, that Uncle Sam doles out his bounty at a very niggardly rate. Nevertheless there remains the stark reality that France is short of food and its machinery is worn out, whereas these things are arriving from the United States in some measure. Perhaps Blum, now ambassador extraordinary to Uncle Sam, will be able to speed the trickle into a flood? Still terribly preoccupied not so much by politics as by the day-by-day hunt for enough food to live on and something to warm a cold room, the French worker yields to the argument of André Philip, not so much because he believes it as because he hopes against hope that it will prove partly true.

He yields, however, also because he thinks that meanwhile the government will do something about the black market, price fixing, real equality in rationing, jobs for all. In the coming months he will find that the one immediate reality in the government program is wage freezing. Whatever Blum may get in Washington, the lion's share of it will go to industrial reconstruction, i.e., to the capitalists.

With each day, therefore, our French comrades will find an ever-greater response to their demand: Break the coalition with the bourgeoisie! For a government of the Socialist and Communist Parties and the Confederation of Labor!

### **Basis of CP-SP Slogan**

Will such a government actually come into being? No one can say. Obviously the Socialist and Communist Party leaders are resisting it with all their might. They will be forced to do so only by a tidal wave of working class pressure which is still the music of the future.

Are not our French comrades spreading illusions about what the Communist and Socialist Parties would do if they formed a CP-SP government? The reality, however, is that the illusions are already there. Today the main sections of the French proletariat and not a few peasants follow the Communist Party, the rest of the workers and a large part of the lower middle class of town and country follow the Socialist

Party. To arouse these masses to demand that their parties take the power, when their parties obviously resist doing so, is the best way now to arouse these masses against the treacherous leaderships of their parties. This policy affords the masses the experiences necessary to end their political impasse resulting from the preëminent position of the CP at the head of the proletariat.

But isn't there a danger that tomorrow the Communist Party leaders, at a signal from Stalin, will decide to take the power and turn France into another Poland or Yugoslavia? If that were so, it would mean that Stalin had decided to extend his new empire to the Atlantic. It is inconceivable for many reasons. Obviously we are now living in the aftermath of World War II, in a period of peace, uneasy, unstable, but nevertheless destined to last for a whole historical period in which Big Three collaboration will go on with ups and downs. Stalin on the Atlantic would mean a complete end to Big Three relations, would immediately precipitate World War III, for Anglo-U. S. imperialism could never permit it. The Kremlin has neither the resources nor the will for such an unequal combat. Even more important, a Stalinized France is conceivable only in one of two ways: (1) Like the Stalinization of Eastern Europe, with the direct aid of Russian military occupation, something which could only happen after the outbreak of war between Russia and the Anglo-U. S. bloc, and that is now excluded. (2) If by Stalinization of France is meant totalitarianization as in Poland—nationalization of industry, Stalinist dictatorship, liquidation of free trade unions, etc—and *without* the aid of the Russian army, then obviously it would have to be the proletariat which would first have to be called into action to expropriate the French bourgeoisie. But that would mean a Stalinist-led *proletarian* revolution—and the whole history of Stalinism demonstrates the extreme unlikelihood of such a possibility, to say the least. All the instrumentalities which the proletariat would have to create for such expropriation—soviets, factory committees, workers' militias—would constitute a mortal danger not only to the Stalinist party but to the Russian empire. For a successful proletarian revolution unleashed in France would either be defeated by the bourgeoisie or it would extend throughout Europe. And the proletarian revolution, as we have always said, would mean the deathknell of the Kremlin's oppression of the Russian proletariat.

### The Stalinist Danger

What is true is that any considerable measure of Stalinist participation in a government represents a further increase of danger of repressions and assassinations of anti-Stalinist workers and revolutionists, above all a danger to our French comrades. Stalinist cabinet ministers have already used their posts to instigate arrests of Trotskyists. This risk would increase in a Communist-Socialist government, particularly at moments when the great mass of the workers might be preoccupied with big events and Stalinist ministers and assassins might feel free to operate with impunity against their revolutionary opponents. But this risk obviously operates within certain limits—in the first place, the maintenance of bourgeois democracy and a free labor movement. On the other hand, there is the burning class need to push the French proletariat forward by daily agitation for a break of the coalition with the bourgeoisie.

Our French comrades must explain to the French proletariat the danger of Stalinist repressions against their revolutionary opponents. Our answer to this danger is a positive one:

a widespread agitation in behalf of our own program for such a government. A Socialist-Communist government is of no value to the proletariat without the widest possible democratic rights for all political groupings within the French working class; unless the government is coupled with elected factory committees exercising full authority in all enterprises; the right of the workers to recall deputies to the Assembly and elect new ones at any time; the arming of the working class under the authority of factory committees, workers' district committees, etc. Where the great masses of the workers will feel and be masters of France, there will be little risk of the Stalinists wreaking vengeance against their revolutionary opponents. Rather it will be the Stalinists who will be increasingly called to account, along with the Socialist fakers, for failing to carry out the manifest desires of the working class for a new social order in France.

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# England and Its Labor Government

## A Summary of Six Months

Ernest Bevin, England's top labor leader, stated the facts—but only half the truth—when he admitted, over a year ago, that England was broke as a result of the war. Actually, the current \$14 billion indebtedness of the mother country to the dominions and colonies of its empire—a dramatic reversal of England's traditional position—is a far more accurate description of the situation than Bevin's admission. England is "broke" and deeply in debt, with the island's historic markets threatened as never before. The Marxist contention that the war would immeasurably speed the general decline of the British Empire is clearly verified.

To pay for her imports and maintain her living standards even at their present and war level, Britain "must increase her exports by sixty per cent—which means that her exports of manufactured articles must expand by no less than one hundred per cent," according to the journalist Pertinax. In other words, an England in desperate need of housing, its factories hit by bombing, and its railroad and plant equipment seriously worn out and deteriorated from six years of strain—this tired England is called upon to redouble its exports of precisely the things it needs most—machinery and textiles; raw and finished products vital for solution of its rehousing problem, etc. This is the obvious and insoluble post-war problem of the empire's mother country.

This classic land of capitalism, whose crucial problems of social life and history are always expressed and concretized in economic terms (exports, imports and their financing; investments, foreign shares and securities; invisible items and the balance of payments, etc.), is now hard up against the most crucial of its problems. How does the British bourgeoisie propose to tackle it? Nothing could further bring home to us the seriousness of the matter than the crisis within the British Tory Party itself, the party of modern British imperialism. Not only did its great war leader, Churchill, suffer a smashing defeat but the party's present internal crisis, again directed against Churchill, reflects its inability to devise a sound bourgeois program, in the classic Tory tradition, and its inability to answer questions. On the issue of the American loan to Britain (that "bitter pill for Britain"—*The Economist*)—a question of such magnitude that one might have expected a real and great debate in Parliament—the Tory Party could do no more than whine, criticize the terms of the loan, and then abstain from the vote! An admission, in effect, of political bankruptcy; that it too was helpless before England's general predicament and would have done what the Labor Party did, except for some secondary details. Hence, our conclusion that the British bourgeoisie has entered a deep crisis of uncertainty and insecurity in which it seeks to adjust itself to new conditions and prepare a conspiratorial solution to impose upon the British people and working class.

### Policies of the Labor Government

Meanwhile, the Labor Party has consolidated its election victory, taken over the responsibility of government and post-war Britain has its Labor Government. From the viewpoint of the British bourgeoisie, as it prepares its inevitable counter-attack upon the people, its capitalistic interests are in safe

hands. The Labor leadership, in foreign affairs, simply carries on the Tory policy of "not presiding over the liquidation of His Majesty's Empire"; while, in internal affairs, it stems and blocks the social aspirations of the British workers, creating the necessary atmosphere for the ultimate attack by the British ruling class. In general, the policies of the Labor Government may be summarized as follows:

(1) To continue to hold the Empire together, by all means and methods that may be necessary (Palestine, Java, India, etc.); to continue the unending series of rear-guard, defensive battles launched by British imperialism twenty-five years ago in an effort to slow up the rate of the Empire's disintegration. This is the first and principal objective of the Labor Government.

(2) To speed up the process of industrial reconversion so that England's position in the world market shall not become even weaker than it has; to revive trade and commerce within the Empire as much as possible, as well as with Europe; to sharply raise the volume of production available for export trade.

(3) To organize, in Europe, its conception of the "western bloc," comprising the nations and small states of western Europe together with the British occupied zone of Germany; to stand at the head of this bloc and to maneuver it successfully in its commercial, political and diplomatic war with Russia and America.

(4) To carry out the program of internal social reform on which the party came to power ("nationalization" and "socialization") only to the extent to which it is forced to, in order to quell the Labor Party ranks and retain its indubitable popular support; to shadow box with the British working class as long as possible.

But the Labor Government does not function within a vacuum. It was elected with a certain mandate and it is undoubtedly correct to say that, of all the existing governments today, it is the one most closely linked to the people supporting it and most sensitive to criticism and mass attacks upon it. As we shall see when we examine the "nationalization" measures of the government, the real class treachery of the Labor leadership comes into play when it specifically and deliberately attempts to cheat the British people out of the fruits of victory and to substitute a counterfeit program for the real content of the workers' program. It is in this sense that the Revolutionary Communist Party of Great Britain—the British section of the Fourth International—is correct in pressing upon the government its revolutionary transitional program for nationalization and workers' control of industry—the legitimate expression of what the British proletariat meant when it put its Labor Government in office.

### Post-War Living Conditions

We are all familiar with the story of the strain and sufferings endured by the British people during the six years' war. Likewise, it is not difficult to understand that the desire to gain a meaningful reward for these years, plus the even stronger desire to see that such a war would never happen again were the basic drives behind the Labor election victory.

But what is not so familiar is the actual condition in which England and its forty million people emerged out of the war; the wholesale shortages of all materials and commodities, the general low standards of living and recreation.

The British soldier who, on the average served *five* years (as contrasted with the American GI's *three* years) has been demobilized to confront an even worse housing shortage than his fellow American soldier. English housing suffered not only from a lack of new building, but also from the outright destruction of hundreds of thousands of housing units by bombing. Clothing is more stringently rationed now than during the war, accounting for the worn-out appearance of the suits, dresses, coats and shoes worn by the people. The food diet, as anyone who has spent any period in England is keenly aware of, is poor, monotonous, unhealthy and inadequate. General health standards are considerably below pre-war rates. Particularly among industrial workers, small middle-class people and children there is a considerable fatigue and weakness noticeable. In general, it is accurate to state that British living standards today are only slightly above those of France, a country victimized by outright conquest, pillage and occupation. Life is better organized and more orderly in England, but the wartime measures ("temporary," according to the English bourgeoisie) of rationing, shortages, brownouts, etc., are in full force under the government that proposes to solve shortages by increasing exports.

As for Britain's industry—the "workshop of the world"—it is clearly in bad physical and technological shape today. Many detailed studies have been made of Britain's coal, textile, metallurgical, chemical, railway, etc., industries, and their backward status. To this falling behind must be added the war's terrific wear and tear, destruction from bombing and overstraining, failure to keep apace with modernization and technological invention and a general inability (nothing new to English industry) to rationalize, properly plan and divide production. John L. Lewis is not exaggerating when he boasts that an American coal miner can triple the daily productivity of an English miner. The same deterioration has affected the railroad system, backbone of economic life. Trains average ten to fifteen miles per hour (six hours to travel between London and Oxford, a distance of about seventy miles) and experienced railroaders claim equipment and stock are badly worn. English industry requires, if it is to approach its American competitor, nothing less than a thorough overhauling, modernization, capital renewal and planned reorganization. But the British capitalist class—just like the French bourgeoisie—is incapable of such an undertaking, and can only resort to reactionary measures (that is, measures that tend to further lower production, both in rate and total volume) in order to artificially keep up its profits. Actually, it has turned the whole problem over to the Labor Government and we shall see how these successful labor careerists, led by the mouselike Mr. Attlee, go about handling the matter. Then we can fully appreciate the accusation of treachery and backsliding directed by the British Trotskyists against the entire Labor Government. For, instead of taking those stern measures demanded by the situation (and already approved of by the British people) that could lift British industry out of the slough of underproduction, backwardness and volume-planning for a *limited* market; instead of deliberately removing all these worn-out capitalist brakes upon production, the Labor Government is simply at-

tempting to fall in with the economic strategy of the ruling class.

### **Labor's Foreign Policy**

We are already familiar with the government's black record in the international field. Everywhere, without a single exception, its record is black and bloody. Greece, Palestine and the Near East, Indo-China and Indonesia, India and China. . . . Let us summarize and leave the matter by pointing out that not a single action or policy has failed to win the approval of His Majesty's loyal Tory opposition leader, Churchill.

Internal policy was most effectively displayed by the efforts of the government to break the London dockers' strike; by the constant speeches, articles and preaching on the part of Labor ministers to the effect that "one must go slow" and "stand behind" the government; by the efforts to slow down the rate of demobilization of the armed forces to as slow a pace as the public would stand for, and by a complete failure to advance through Parliament any of the social, reform legislation promised by the Labor Party leadership. But what of the nationalization measures, it will be asked? Has not the Labor Government pressed forward at least on this part of its program?

To begin with, it must be recognized that the nationalization program advanced by the Labor Party in its election campaign has, this time at least, proved to be something more than promises. Slowly and reluctantly the government has proceeded to action. Although to date only legislation nationalizing the Bank of England has been carried out, there are bills and measures, in various stages, preparing for the nationalization of the coal industry, public ownership of civil aviation, nationalization of cable and wireless communications and plans for drafting bills providing for public ownership of fuel and power, inland transportation (railroads, highways, canals, etc.), iron and steel industries, etc. Despite everything, it is clear that this Labor Government is subject to pressures unknown by its infamous predecessor, headed by MacDonald. The pressure of these ties to the people, plus their clear mandate for basic changes, have already pushed the leaders much further than they had intended. But, when we analyze the concrete terms of some of these actions, or proposed measures, the story is rather different. Then we see that they are, after all, tied down by the British capitalist class and have only adapted the methods of MacDonald to new historic conditions.

### **The Bank of England**

The plan to nationalize the Bank of England has already been passed and is being put into effect. Concretely examined, it is seen as a deception and not what it should be; that is, a measure to wrest control of England's finance, credit and money out of the hands of the ruling class:

(a) The British Government is exchanging for each \$400 worth of stock (formerly drawing twelve per cent interest), \$1,200 worth of government stock (drawing three per cent interest)! This switch guarantees the stockholders their prior interest rate, plus a neat profit, since the actual stock exchange value of the government bonds they will get is higher than their former Bank of England stock. This is a worthwhile "expropriation"!

(b) Lord Catto, governor of the Bank and a big-shot representative of finance in England, remains as chairman of the new Board of Governors.



(c) The Joint Stock Banks, which issue and control the bulk of new credits to industry, have large holdings already due to their loan powers and are considerably more important to industry, in an immediate sense, than the Bank of England—these are untouched by the measure. The relation of these commercial banks to the newly nationalized Bank of England rests in the hands of Lord Catto.

Such is the reality of the first "nationalization" measure to be adopted. It stands in true contrast with the simple measure proposed by the British Trotskyists, "Nationalization of the Bank of England together with the Big Five (commercial banks) and all financial institutions without compensation . . ." Let us examine another measure, the proposed nationalization plans for the coal industry, now under discussion.

Reuter's reports (Decemer 26, 1945), "The coal nationalization bill introduced last week into the British House of Commons has been fairly well received by the Stock Exchange—so far. Coal mining shares, which had risen appreciably since the first shock of Labor's victory at the polls last July, rose on the feeling that arrangements made in the bill for arbitration tribunals to assess the compensation the owners will receive are 'reasonable.'" What are these reasonable assurances?

(a) A National Coal Board, which is to have control of the entire coal industry, is to be appointed by the government on an "unrepresentative" basis. The government has rejected demands by the miners' labor organizations to be represented, as such, on the board.

(b) A special tribunal of two Supreme Court judges and one accountant is to determine the amount of compensation paid to the mine owners!

(c) The value of coal mines and attached properties is to be fixed according to the principle of what amount might have been expected "if the bill had not been passed and they had been sold on a specified date in the open market to a willing buyer." That is, their current market value, or compensation in full. As with compensation payments for the Bank of England, this money will be paid in government securities. Its total is variously estimated at \$4 to \$6 billions. This sum, we should add, is guaranteed by the government and its value (plus the interest it yields) are completely unrelated to the coal industry's future! Coal industry shareholders thus exchange uncertain, fluctuating shares of a declining industry for comparatively stable "gilt-edged" government securities.

(d) In general, the same group of managers, technicians, administrators (among them, ex-owners) will be retained to run the coal industry.

### **Nationalization Summed Up**

In summary, then, we may draw the following conclusions regarding the nature of the Labor Government's conception of "nationalization of industry."

(1) It has nothing in common with the socialist conception of nationalization under control of the British working class and its organizations (factory and mine committees, trade unions, councils of producers and consumers, etc.): the British people do not become the direct controllers, administrators or beneficiaries of this type of nationalization. It is capitalist "nationalization" as distinguished from the socialization of heavy industry and finance that a revolutionary government would enforce.

(2) The British taxpayers—that is, the masses of workers and middle-class people—are to have a super-burden imposed upon them; a burden that, in effect, is a subsidizing of the coal

industry, banking, and any other industry or service which the Labor Government intends to "nationalize" in its generous (with other people's money) compensatory style. The burden of these billions in government securities (their cashing-in value, annual dividends and amortization) must, of course, be paid for by the British people.

(3) Fundamentally, this type of "nationalization" falls into line and harmonizes with the basic trends of British capitalism—greater state control and intervention; further concentration and rationalization of heavy industries that now face stiff American competition; in a word, what the Germans called "*autarchie*." Weak industries (such as coal) are subsidized, modernized and better organized, with the people's money, while the same class of financiers, big industrialists and bankers still retain control from above. This is declining capitalism, squirming and maneuvering for new capital (its life-blood) and planning to pass off the costs of its decline upon the workers and middle-class; with socialism it has nothing whatever in common. To quote *Reuters* again, on the practical effect of "nationalization" of the coal industry, "In effect the government is taking only the shareholders' interest in the industry—retaining perhaps more power over the 'directors' than shareholders usually exercise though not necessarily more than shareholders should." In this respect, the Labor Government marches in step with British capitalism.

### **England and America**

Finally, in studying the actions of the Labor Government, we must consider the recently concluded loan agreement between America and England. We may safely pass over the ignorant statements of ultra-reactionary American Congressmen and their supporters who spread the stupid lie that kind-hearted America (Uncle Sucker) has again been sold down the river by our English cousins, this time to the tune of \$3¾ billions.

No, Uncle Sam drove "a hard bargain" (*The Economist*) and made clear the actual relationship that exists between the American and British economies. In accepting this loan, with its harsh terms, the Labor Government extended into the field of foreign commerce the same policy of class capitulation and service to the bourgeoisie that its domestic policies indicate. In effect, British industry has mortgaged itself to American imperialism, and the first great step toward penetration and undermining of the Empire closed market has been made. True, it was inevitable that bourgeois England must accept a subordinate status, but it was not inevitable that an alleged people's Labor Government should perform this task for its own bourgeoisie. However, this is what has occurred. Let us examine the principal points of the agreement.

(1) In return for its loan of \$3¾ billions, America is to receive (a) ultimate repayment of this sum in dollars, plus (b) *interest amounting ultimately to over \$2 billions!* It should also be understood that these dollars will never leave America, since they are credit dollars to pay for American exports to England and the Empire. So much for the fairy-tale of "giving billions to those Limeys."

(2) Britain agrees to remove immediately all exchange restrictions in its transactions with America, including all restrictions on imports. Do we agree to reciprocate? *No.*

(3) Finally, and most important from a long-range point of view, is the agreement affecting the so-called Sterling Area.\*

\* This area includes the British Isles, any Dominion, India, any colony or mandate, Egypt, Sudan and Iraq. Canada is not included.

Most important because it represents the means by which American imperialism hopes to break up Britain's Empire trade monopoly and penetrate into colonial fields. This agreement has various aspects:

(a) The Sterling Area wartime dollar pool is terminated and those Sterling Area nations having dollars in this pool may now spend them directly within the United States. . . . "the Government of the United Kingdom agrees that any sterling balances released . . . will . . . be freely available for current transactions in any currency area without discrimination." ". . . each member of the Sterling Area will have its current sterling and dollar receipts at its free disposition for current transactions anywhere."

(b) Britain is to take steps at once to "unfreeze, fund, and have cancelled" various parts of the \$15 billion indebtedness which it now owes to the Empire and Sterling Area, as a result of war purchases, etc. Such steps will raise the world value of sterling, facilitate its exchange and conversion into dollars and thus stimulate trade; specifically, trade between America and those Empire countries to whom England is now indebted. "The Government of the United Kingdom intends to make agreements with the countries concerned . . . for an early settlement covering the sterling balances accumulated by sterling area." This will indirectly stimulate trade between America and the Empire areas.

#### Dollar Imperialism

The real beneficiary, in summary, of the whole agreement is American imperialism, which clamps a strangle-hold on future British industrial profits and trade and, simultaneously, takes a long step forward toward replacing England as principal exporter and trader to the Empire. As Lord Keynes pointed out during the debate in Parliament, England had no other alternative, since other countries, to whom England might have turned, "we already owe more money than we can pay," besides not having any money themselves and therefore being unable to buy from England or anyone else, for that matter. The real shrewdness of "Uncle Sucker's" deal with England lies in the fact that with the dollars loaned England will have to pay (or settle up) her debts abroad, thus furnishing American dollars to those very countries whom "Uncle Sucker" wishes to seduce away from British competitive trade! Thus,

it is the Labor Government which bears the responsibility for accepting and signing this wily agreement baited by American imperialism. As we have previously indicated, the Tory Party in power would have had to do likewise, but it is the Labor leadership that accepted this dirty chore, in actuality.

Largely discredited by the war, sharply defeated in the July general elections, the British capitalist class and its Tory Party have accepted the temporary necessity of retreat and, even, a momentary hiding. During this period of eclipse this most reactionary and decadent of world bourgeoisies relies upon the Labor leaders and their government to hold power for them and retain the substantial props of imperialism and the Empire. We have seen that this confidence is far from misplaced; the Tories know what manner of men they are dealing with.

Meanwhile, the British bourgeoisie plans and plots for its return to direct ruling and governmental power. No one can predict what shape or form this inevitable attack upon the people will take—whether it will be a unique form of British fascism, organization of a new political party, etc. At the same time, the new Labor Government is still tied to, and susceptible to, the Labor Party masses. The British working class is now in the midst of its Labor Government experiment, with all the militancy, hopes, desires and illusions that such an experience entails. It would be mistaken to conclude there is already widespread disillusion, and a tendency by the people to seek out other ways. The experience still goes on, with its great possibilities and its great dangers.

It is in such a transitional situation as England finds itself today that we can see the profound and realistic value of Trotsky's revolutionary transitional program; a lever for the mobilization of the British people. The Revolutionary Communist Party of Great Britain, the English Fourth Internationalists, must succeed in their efforts to win popular support for the carrying out of this program. It is the only way to forestall and prepare for the conspiratorial reaction that the rulers of England will attempt to impose upon the English people.

HENRY JUDD

The next issue of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL will contain Part III of this series, "France in 1946."

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# The Pope Needs America

## Vatican Politics and the American Dollar

The following article by James T. Farrell, well known novelist, critic and political essayist, first appeared in *The Nation* of October 17 and 24, 1936. We reprint it with the author's permission. Its subject matter assumes real contemporary significance in the light of the recent appointment of four American Cardinals as part of the Vatican's adjustment to the new post-war world relationships, above all, the dominant role played by American imperialism—Editors.

### I

The aged Pope recently appeared before 400 exiled Spanish refugees, spoke solicitously of the mystical Body of Christ and the ills and sorrows of war-torn Spain, and called benignly for a world-wide anti-red crusade in the spirit of Christian tolerance and charity. It was a scene rich in irony, but the Catholic press was too concerned with heralding the words of the Pontiff to catch the note of irony. The Jesuit weekly *America* drew a touching contrast between the Holy Father forgiving Communists who are raping Mother Church in Spain, and Joseph Stalin brewing new vials of hatred in the Kremlin. Stalin's adherents make him out to be infallible; the church attributes to him other characteristics of the early popes, one of whom wrote in the eighth century: "Do not the Franks know that all children of the Lombards are lepers? ... May they broil with the devil and his angels in everlasting fire!"

The Roman Catholic church has been built and defended not only with prayers and the will of the Almighty but also by means of blood and the sword. Neither the Holy Ghost nor Saint Peter ever contributed as effectively to the defense of the papacy as did, say, the Frankish King Pepin and his great son Charlemagne, who restored the weak Pope Leo III by force of arms. Down through the ages the Roman Catholic church has balanced prayers with the rack, canonization with the might of the sword, the power of wealth and oppression with appeals to the dreams and ignorance of the masses. It has, by the variety of its instruments, weathered the storms of centuries. Revolutions have come and gone, but Mother Church has remained the pillar of Christendom. In Spain today she stands with gun in hand defending churches which have been turned

into arsenals. Her priests lay down their weapons to grant absolution to those who are about to be massacred by rebels wearing the badge of Mary on their sleeve and by those great defenders of Christianity, order and authority—Mohammedan Moors. And the Vicar of Christ gently restrains them, forgives the "reds," and tacitly gives his benediction to the slaughter. The American Catholic press backs up the rebels. Thus *America* recently commented: "With such an enemy [communism] there can be no compromise; the Americans with liberal ideals will join the Bishops of Pamplona and Vittoria in calling down a blessing 'on those who at the moment are sacrificing themselves for religion and country.'" And when Michael Williams rather mildly dissented from this kind of rabidness in a recent issue of the liberal Catholic weekly, the *Commonweal*, a priest took the trouble to write in to correct him.

### Church Investments

The Catholic church in America has never been more alert, more militant, more on the offensive than it is at present. E. Boyd Barrett, an ex-Jesuit, has written in the opening pages of his excellent and well-documented book, *Rome Stoops to Conquer*: "From an insignificant group of 25,000 adherents, shepherded by thirty poor priests, in 1789, the Catholic church in America has grown to be a congregation of 20,000,000 led by 30,000 priests. From being propertyless, she has become a rich institution, whose wealth exceeds two billion dollars. From being a despised and scattered flock, she has become the most perfectly organized body in the world, enjoying immense influence and power." In an article in the *American Spectator* (January, 1936) entitled "The Finances of the Catholic Church," Ferdinand Lundberg furnished detailed and illuminating corroboration of Barrett's statements. Quoting from the New York State banking records and "selecting items at random from the portfolio of the church's investments," he presented a half-page list of the corporations in which the church has invested its funds—Pure Oil, Commonwealth Edison, Goodyear Tire & Rubber, Baltimore &

Ohio, and so on. The list is a directory of the industrial United States.

Many commentators have mistakenly appraised religion in terms of individual piety, the attendance records at church services, and the like. They have failed to realize that religion is an institution and that it must be studied in terms of its influence as such. Among religious institutions the Roman Catholic church is the richest, the most solidly organized, the most cohesive. The strength of its organization gives it a position in our society which no other church possesses and makes it potentially a threat to progressive forces, despite the fact that piety in American life is on the decline, that many individual Catholics disregard the church's doctrines on birth control, and that many of the enrolled twenty million Catholics do not partake of the sacrament regularly. Also, its organization is strictly authoritarian and anti-democratic.

These facts are interesting, particularly at a time when Mother Church has again come forth as the Church militant, flying the banner of Catholic action. The center of its offensive under the leadership of the Pope is, and must be, America. America is the citadel of world capitalism. Christendom is one of the spiritual bodyguards of world capitalism. Protestant Christianity was, of course, a reflex of the rise of world capitalism. It furnished the religious ethics which served as part of the rationalized explanation of the aims and ideals of the rising middle class. The connection between the rise of capitalism and the Reformation is close. In due time Mother Church swung into line. Part and parcel of medievalism, dependent for her strength upon her land holdings in the Middle Ages, she shifted her emphasis and adapted herself to the new capitalist world economy. Today the church remains the rock of Christianity even though it does not possess the sweeping power which it once held, even though a Hitler does not come crawling, even though a Nossia. It is only logical that Roman Catholicism should seek to conquer in America. The death of capitalism will be the death of Mother Church. She will then be divorced from Caesar, and forced to practice her platitude of rendering unto Caesar his due, and giving unto

God His due. The church will become a purely religious organization. Its power will be founded on prayer, superstition, and its ability to sell the promised joys of the kingdom of heaven. Its economic basis will be shattered. And no institution whose economic base has crumbled can survive as a social force.

Rome has lost other countries. It is now faced with the loss of Spain. Whoever wins in Spain, the church will emerge with lessened power. Fascism will reduce it to the position of a subsidiary ally. In order to retain its position, it must conquer America to compensate for its losses in other parts of the globe. Today a considerable proportion of the income of the church comes from this country. If the annual American contribution to Peter's Pence were subtracted from the income of the Vatican, that income would be shrunken indeed.

### Attitude Toward Fascism

For financial and other reasons the Roman Catholic church does not prefer fascism, despite its alliance with Mussolini. Monarchism, Bonapartism or capitalistic democracy is better suited to its intentions. Fascism is an expensive venture for the church, just as it is for capitalism. Fascism is a desperate attempt on the part of capitalism to save itself by hiring political Capones. These gangsters must be paid. Capitalists have to fork over some of that payment. If the church wants to survive, it also must contribute. Before Mussolini signed a concordat with the Vatican, the Black Shirts destroyed and outlawed Don Sturzo's Catholic Party, and they attacked the Catholic labor organizations as viciously as they attacked the socialist trade unions. Even after the concordat, official attacks upon Catholic Action brought forth a papal encyclical in which the Pope complained of attacks on the youth of Catholic Action and protested repeatedly that Catholic Action was non-political. The experience of the Catholic church in fascist Germany is similar. Thus the church repeats its own history. It opposed the rise of capitalism and the bourgeoisie. It aligned itself with the aristocracy in the period of the bourgeois revolutions, and even down into the nineteenth century the papacy was anti-democratic. We are now entering a period of new wars and revolutions. The defense against revolution is fascism. If that defense is successful there follows a new distribution of power, wealth and executive control, in

which Rome does not propose but must accept terms. In order to survive, Rome must compromise and pay. For that reason the church does not prefer fascism.

In America there is no strong likelihood of fascism in the immediate future. American capitalism has not yet been forced to draw upon its reserves. The American working class has not yet become a direct revolutionary threat to capitalism. The American form of government as an instrument of capitalist state power has not yet broken down. Now is the strategic time for Rome to offset its losses in Europe by gains in the United States—before fascism unleashes all those vile and obnoxious anti-Catholic prejudices which are smoldering in the Bible belt.

## II

The instrument with which the church hopes to conquer America is Catholic Action. The present Pope has defined it as follows: "Catholic Action is nothing else than the apostolate of the laity under the leadership of the bishops." Michael Williams in *The Catholic Church in Action* states that "primarily, Catholic Action . . . may be described as both the *intensification* and the more highly organized *collective* direction of the apostolic mission of the church to the world, built upon the 'participation of the laity in the apostolate of the hierarchy.'" E. Boyd Barrett defines it thus:

Catholic Action is best described as the new phase of Catholicism. . . . In theory, Catholic Action is the work and service of lay Catholics in the cause of religion, under the guidance of the bishops. In practice it is the Catholic group fighting their way to control America. . . . In medieval times the church gained supremacy in various countries through her influence over nobles and soldiers. Today she aims at the old supremacy by mass action of her organized subjects and by systematic penetration of various groupings.

Barrett's description of Catholic Action is a satisfactory one if we apply two corrections. In his reference to medieval times he neglects to indicate the economic basis of the church's supremacy, namely, its vast land holdings. Secondly, he speaks of the aim of the Catholic church—to regain its quondam supremacy—as if this aim were achievable in the present era. The church cannot turn back the clock of history, the late Gilbert K. Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc to the contrary notwithstanding. It can only defend itself by becoming a staunch ally of capitalism, whether the latter takes the form of bourgeois democracy or fascism.

### The Apparatus

In America, then, Catholic Action is working systematically to permeate the life of all Catholics. Christ instructed his apostles to go forth and teach all nations. The Catholic laity is ostensibly organized for a crusade to intensify Catholicism, to further the spiritual and material aims of the church. For this purpose the church has its Knights of Columbus, Holy Name societies, Catholic alumni organizations, Catholic Youth Clubs, Newman clubs in the universities, guilds for doctors, writers, actors, and nurses. It has a powerful formal and informal apparatus of education, and it even fights bitterly to force the appropriation of public funds for the assistance of private—read Catholic—institutions. Through such papers as the *Catholic Worker*, which offers saints and radical phrases to the proletariat, it bids for stronger support from the worker. Its journals now reflect plans for the conversion of the Negro, whom it has long neglected, in order to neutralize his radical and revolutionary potentialities. The church commands a fighting press, manned by militant mediocrities of the type of Michael Williams and Father Talbott, S.J. It has organized the Legion of Decency with ten million members—and this organization is able to dictate to supine producers in Hollywood what the American public, including its millions of non-Catholics, shall see in motion-picture theaters. It lobbies against child-labor laws on the theory that such laws would give the state control over the child, who, according to the will of God and natural law, belongs to the Deity, the parent, and the parish priest. It attacks the dissemination of birth-control information. In some of its organs, notably *America*, we occasionally find expressions of anti-Semitism which might well have emanated from Nazi Germany. Likewise the Catholic press conducts a consistent and continuous red-baiting campaign, which is supplemented with speeches by prominent Catholic laymen and clergymen. This theme dominated the recent convention of the Holy Name Society in New York City. The alumni of Notre Dame University are now planning to add bolshevik hunts to college cheer-leading as an occupation for adults who have never fully grown up. Meanwhile the church demands of President Roosevelt that he interfere in the internal affairs of Mexico. In a recent issue of *America* one Thomas S. Hunter writes:

"The Mexican issue is not a Catholic issue, it is not a politico-religious issue; it is a fundamental issue in which our own essential liberties are involved. If freemen, irrespective of creed and color, fail to respond to Rome's appeal, Mexico will perish, and we who have stood by impassive and watched her agony, will we escape?"

Here is an open call for intervention. But where is Rome's appeal to "freemen" to halt Mussolini's invasion of Christian Ethiopia? What effective policies did Rome introduce to achieve liberty and social justice in Spain? What did the church ever do to alleviate the abject poverty and complete illiteracy of the Mexican peons?

Since this is the formal rôle which Mother Church is playing and seeking to play in America today, it is pertinent to summarize her apologetics. I have already suggested the biblical justification of Catholic Action, the command to the apostles to go forth and teach all men and all nations. Further, the church contends that since the disruption of the feudal and medieval era materialism has been growing in the world. Today neopaganism has gained such a foothold that it threatens civilization unless the spiritual forces of Christendom, guided by the firm hand of the Pope and led by the church, organize to stem the tide. Today the world suffers grievously from the heresy of materialism, which generates a false science. This causes class war, irreverence for authority and order, and immorality. And further, materialism as a heresy has become organized in the movement known as communism, which operates from Moscow, the red Rome. Communism persecutes religion and gloats over the murder of priests and nuns. It promotes atheism and class war; it threatens to destroy liberty and disrupt the family. Coeval with its threat to the family is its attack on private property. Private property is an institution justified by natural law. Its defense was framed in the writings of Saint Thomas Aquinas. Evil does not flow from the institution of private property or from the profit system which is constructed upon it, but is the result of the failure of those who own private property to make the right use of it. Thus the solution of the economic problems of the world is not socialism, which places the ownership of the means of production in the hands of the proletarian state. Rather, it lies in the employer's acceptance of a moral obligation to give his employees a just and fair wage.

### Catholicism and Democracy

In America the church now insists that it accepts democracy and asserts that the Constitution of the United States must be defended. And who is to be its defender? That 100 per cent American institution, the Roman Catholic church, whose Pope lives in the Vatican and is always Italian and whose College of Cardinals is also preponderantly Italian. The entire structure of the church is anti-democratic. Its theology is dogmatic. It permits no error, no deviation in conduct, and it carries its dogmatic control to the extent of maintaining a papal Index of Books. The church insists that it accepts the principle of the separation of church and state. The Dogma of Papal Infallibility, which was log-rolled into acceptance in the last century over the arguments and protests of the more intelligent Catholics, gives the Pope final authority on matters of faith and morals, and it holds that on such matters the Pope cannot err when he speaks *ex cathedra*. The only catch is the fact that faith and morals manage to become intermingled with political and economic questions. While the church professes belief in the separation of church and state and in liberty of conscience, it insidiously attempts to eat up the state and organize conscience within the framework of an unrelenting set of dogmas. The democratic pretensions of the church are a front and a heresy. They will be used as long as they are needed, and when they become cumbersome, they will be Jesuitically refined, refashioned, and placed on file in the Vatican until they are again needed.

In its appeal to proletarians, many of whom are nominally or actually its religious subjects, the church is beginning to assume pseudo-radicalism. Up to now Father Coughlin has served well on this front. His doctrines of social justice are indubitably modeled upon the famous encyclicals of Pope Leo XIII and Pius XI. However, Father Coughlin is an out-and-out, acknowledged fascist, and in his paper, *Social Justice*, he is even now beginning to speak favorably of the new Germany. A Catholic priest as a fascist leader in a preponderantly Protestant country is too much for the Vatican. But Father Coughlin has expressed the ideas and sentiments of the famous "red paragraphs" of the encyclicals issued by the present Pontiff. To quote Pius XI, "The immense number of propertyless wage-earners on the one hand and the superabundant riches of the fortunate few on

the other are an unanswerable argument that earthly goods so abundantly produced in this age of industrialism are far from rightly distributed and equitably shared among various classes of men." Hence there is a need of social justice. The laborer must be worthy of his hire. The rich must not abuse their gifts and goods. "Every effort must be made that at least in the future a just share only of the fruits of production be permitted to accumulate in the hands of the wealthy and that an ample sufficiency be supplied to the workingman. . . . Entirely false is the principle widely propagated today that the worth of labor and therefore the equitable return to be made for it should equal the worth of its net result. Thus the right to the full product of his toil is claimed for the wage-earner. How erroneous this is appears from what we have written above concerning capital and labor." This last is obviously an attack on Marxism.

As Adam Smith has said, there is a lot of ruin in any system. There remains a lot of ruin in American capitalism. There remains a lot of ruin in world capitalism. The policy of the Catholic church is to intrench itself in that ruin. In a world on fire the policy of the church is to ally itself both with God and with those who have economic power. The church must retain its income from America. And it must remain on good terms with American capitalism. The Holy System of Profits and the Holy Ghost are lining up side by side to save what privileges they can in an era of worldwide decay.

JAMES T. FARRELL.

October 1936

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# Women, Biology and Socialism

## Mothers as Revolutionists

Dr. Helene Deutsch's latest work\* has presented me with the long-awaited opportunity for clearing up certain out-dated ideas about femininity that still hang on in our movement, and for re-stating once again the basic position of socialists on the woman question. First, as to that misconception of woman-kind that lurks among us under the guise of a Third Period ultra-radicalism. It is hard to put a finger on this attitude, though we have all run across it. It is based on the *assumption*, always unstated, that motherhood, i.e., biology, and socialism are in some way incompatible. This fallacy I hope to disprove historically, with the aid of Mr. Robert Briffault, and psychologically, with the assistance of Dr. Deutsch.

Few will admit holding such ridiculous views when they are put baldly, as above. Yet, we hear their echo in the suggestion that if a couple has a child, one of them—obviously the woman!—should drop out of the party. And in the idea that no woman revolutionist should have children (she must always be on call for the post of a female Lenin or Trotsky in the approaching American revolution). If a woman revolutionist does have a child, proceeding from the above-mentioned assumption, it is assumed she intends to drop out of political life.

This thinking stems from a complete misunderstanding of the relationship between women, motherhood, and socialism. Obviously, we can never become a mass party if we exclude all the women in America who are mothers. It is equally clear that not every woman revolutionist can become a Lenin, or even a Krupskaya. Each socialist woman, like every other comrade, must find her own best way of contributing to the movement: more often than not, it will not preclude motherhood. It would be impossible to complete the list of mothers who have made valuable contributions to the socialist cause—Clara Zetkin and Natalia Trotsky are two.

\**The Psychology of Women*, by Helene Deutsch, M.D.; Grune & Stratton, New York; Vol. 1, 1944, 399 pp., \$4; Vol. 2, *Motherhood*, 1945, 498 pp., \$5.

It is no secret that the women in the revolutionary movement are rebels, often against the treatment accorded their sex in our patriarchally-organized society. Truly, as the old mountain ballad puts it,

"Hard is the lot of poor womankind,  
Always controlled, always confined."

Twentieth Century American women certainly lead frustrated, monotonous, drudging, uncreative lives that *should* arouse resentment in every thinking person. The mental and spiritual emptiness of our women is abundantly revealed by the mass audiences of the soap operas, the multi-million circulation of vapid romance magazines, and the almost-equally-unwholesome slick-paper ladies magazines.

### Economic Roots of Drudgery

Family and children are the most important real factor in the average woman's life. Here especially, she is hampered at every turn by the criminal injustice and inequalities of capitalist society. 81 per cent of all American families earned less than \$3,000 in 1942; 61 per cent earned under \$2,000; and 47 per cent less than \$1500.

Those facts alone tell us that at least 81 per cent of the nation's mothers engage in a continuous struggle to give their children proper clothing, school needs, nutritious food, and a decent home environment. Translated into real life, those facts mean for most women the endless round of housekeeping drudgery, the useless duplication of effort in millions of homes as housewives slave away on antiquated washing, cleaning and living equipment in obsolete, inefficient houses. All these conditions often add up to harassed, overworked mothers, forever unable to make ends meet, who create the worst kind of home atmosphere possible for their impressionable, growing children.

Mothers who try to add to the family budget by working must accept many injustices. They can seldom attain skilled jobs in industry. Underpaid white collar jobs, selling jobs, or unskilled factory labor fall to their lot. They usually get less pay for doing the same work as men. Today, in the reconversion period, they

are being indiscriminately laid off in favor of men.

We all know the picture, and we know the kind of women this set-up produces. Personalities limited to the minutiae of housewifery, and the "Escape-world" of popular culture. Women without a worthwhile idea in their heads. No person of any imagination, intelligence or understanding wants a life like that—including many of the working class women who are caught up in it!

But in reacting against this situation, our socialist women must not rush to the other extreme of denying (in greater or lesser degree) that they, too, are women. There is a lot to be said for women (they are here to stay!) even if they do continue so resolutely to devote themselves primarily to their families, ignoring, by and large, the temptations of success in artistic, literary, intellectual and political endeavours.

### Socialism and Motherhood

It is our job as socialists to show American women that only by fighting for and achieving socialism can they give meaning and dignity to their family life; only thus can they secure for their children the advantages and opportunities that make motherhood worthwhile. It is particularly futile for us to try to win the masses of women to our ranks by intellectual and theoretical appeals that will always remain secondary until the basic feminine biological needs are satisfied. We must recognize, and accept the fact that unless women (socialist women too) can find good and sufficient ways of expressing their biologically-rooted feelings of motherliness, they are apt to become no good to the socialist movement, or anybody else, including themselves!

Why should socialists be afraid of motherhood? Historically, it is synonymous with those very human values we are trying to make prevail in the social and economic organization of society.

This fact emerges very clearly from a study of Robert Briffault's massive book, *The Mothers*. This work is an anthropological survey of the "origin of sentiments and institutions"; particularly the institutions of matriarchy, the family, religion, marriage, romantic love, etc.

I must warn readers at the outset that Briffault's work is not too well thought of by most bourgeois American anthropologists. He practices a kind of comparative anthropology that strips present-day capitalism of its claims to superiority over earlier cultures, and undermines the idea that capitalism is the inevitable culmination of the march of human progress. Briffault conducts an all-out assault on patriarchy which, like Engels, he ties up with the emergence of private property.

Mothers and motherhood, however, find an ardent partisan in socialist Briffault. He traces the emergence of mankind from animality, to the biological group created by the mothers. It was not the male-dominated herd, he proves, but the mother and her family who were responsible for "social organization itself—the associated group to which humanity owes its mere existence."<sup>1</sup>

### Early Origins

The first human societies, the primitive communes discussed by Engels, were organized, molded and dominated by the instincts of mothers. (Mark this, you ultra-revolutionaries!) The first social ties were between mother and offspring: affectionate protection on the one part, dependence on the other. Inter-dependence, group loyalty, social solidarity developed among the children. These sentiments, says Briffault, passed through various transformations: loyalty to mother, priestess, tribe, priest, kings, nations. They have been the cement that held human society together, and made possible that complicated division of labor, and cultural development, which has "flowered" into Twentieth Century Civilization.

Those early matriarchal groups presented in many respects, a superiority to the capitalist barbarism of today. They were completely equalitarian. Although women carried on all the most important economic activities (agriculture, weaving, housebuilding, medicine, etc.) there was no trace of economic domination, or exploitation of any sort. Group solidarity and esprit sufficed to secure enforcement of all group decisions. No coercion was needed. The rise of patriarchy, according to Briffault, resulted in the growth of centralized authority vested in the military chief, and the emergence of the tyrannous kingships of antiquity.

"Upon the rude foundations which (the mothers) laid," says Briffault,<sup>2</sup> "the restless energy of man has reared a mighty structure; but the loftier and more complex the structure, the greater the danger in which it stands of crushing the realities of existence." He is right there: the economic and social structure of present-day industrial capitalism is no longer fit for human habitation. (And if we women do not have to take the responsibility for it, so much the better!)

It is becoming clearer every day, in face of the certain destruction promised us by capitalist barbarism and its atomic bomb, that another set of values must replace the "free competition," private monopoly system of today. The human race is doomed unless ideals of sympathy and compassionate humanity, the standards of socialism (i.e., values originally derived from the most primitive of feminine biological instincts) reorient and reorganize society.

### Briffault's Conclusions

Briffault concludes on this theme:<sup>3</sup> "Women have to learn that all racial ideals that are worthwhile are ultimately identical with their own elemental instincts, and are the outcome of them." And, "upon women falls the task, not only of throwing off their own economic dependence, but of rescuing from the like thralldom the greatest realities of which they were the first mothers . . . Honor to the women who can be mothers, not in the flesh alone, but in the spirit, who can choose, praise, and encourage a right . . . the selections of what is truest and best in the complex ideals and efforts of humanity."

Thus Robert Briffault on the relation between women, and altruism, humanity, socialism. He demonstrates clearly that socialism is certainly not *incompatible* with the unselfish love of mothers. Just the opposite: it is the essence of motherliness, sublimated and intellectualized.

\* \* \*

So much for the historical angle. What about the women of today, and the socialist movement of today? Is there some fundamental antagonism between participation in socialist activity and motherhood?

Obviously, the socialist movement needs women. We have already touched on the economic and social reasons why

women, especially those with children, should join. As mothers, as the continuers of the human race, they have a vital stake in creating a secure, happy and wholesome environment for their children, and their children's children. There are other reasons, of a personal, psychological order, why women should be socialists. They need the socialist movement to grow and develop as normal personalities, and good mothers, in the insane world of today. For evidence to back up this assertion, let us turn to Dr. Helene Deutsch's *Psychology of Women*.

Dr. Deutsch, a pupil of Freud's in Vienna, Associate Psychiatrist at the Massachusetts General Hospital, and lecturer at the Boston Psychoanalytic Institute, approaches the woman question from the viewpoint of clinical psychology. This highly subjective, individual orientation, is removed as far as possible from the broad perspective of revolutionary sociologists and economists, yet she comes to the same conclusions we do. "All roads lead to Rome"—in this case, socialism.

### Refers to Socialist Movement

Not, let me hasten to add, that Dr. Deutsch is handing out party membership cards. She does not specify what brand of "social idealism" or "ideologic movement" women need in order to develop normally. Although she gives these terms the concrete content of the European social democracy, and the early Russian revolutionary movement. As students of, and participants in the struggle for social emancipation, we can prescribe from our own experience the logical organization to fill the bill, in line with Deutsch's general diagnosis.

Before starting her study of the normal development of feminine personality, Dr. Deutsch notes<sup>4</sup> "the increasingly strong tendency to explain the differentiated psychologic behavior of the sexes on the basis of educational and cultural factors, and to reduce the part played by biologic and anatomic factors to a minimum."

She declares:<sup>5</sup> "All those to whom the ideals of freedom and equality are not empty words, sincerely desire that women should be socially equal to man. However, the experiences presented in this book show that woman's achievement of full social equality will be bene-

1. Briffault, *The Mothers*, Vol. 3, p. 509.

2. Same, Vol. 3, p. 520.

3. Same, Vol. 3, pp. 519-20.

4. Deutsch, *Psychology of Women*, Vol. 1, p. x.

5. Same, Vol. 2, p. 487.

ficial to her and to mankind as a whole, only if at the same time she achieves ample opportunity to develop her femininity and her motherliness."

These basic biological components of woman's personality, Deutsch says, can be expressed either in the direct act of motherhood, or in some other altruistic, self-sacrificing activity. In this connection she studies the lives of various revolutionary Russian women to prove her point that the revolution does not eliminate biology, and that the main-springs of feminine personality remain the same *before* as *after* the revolution. Chapter Ten in Volume One, "The Influence of Environment," based largely on a novel by Mme. Alexandra Kollantai the famous Bolshevik, will prove interesting to the women socialists of today.

To treat the problem of women and society, Dr. Deutsch divides her work into two volumes, according to the "fundamental duality of women."<sup>6</sup> Volume 1 covers the individual personality development, Volume 2, women as the "servant of the species."<sup>7</sup>

### Problem of Adolescence

In the first volume, Dr. Deutsch considers, among other things, the problem of adolescence. How can the emotional storms of this period, the necessary break with the parents, be resolved in a normal fashion, and one conducive to the youth's adjustment with the real world? One of the best ways is through participation in the socialist movement. The psychological mechanism works somewhat as follows.

First, says Deutsch, new ideals replace the parent in the child's eyes. "As adolescents grow more mature, however, their place is taken by an abstract ego ideal, the realization of which is reserved for the future. The identification with

6. In the matriarchal communes of *The Mothers*, this duality did not exist: There were no social obstacles to the operation of any feminine instincts. There was no social life apart from them. Only subsequent material and cultural developments, which opened new horizons for human personality, brought conflict between woman's biological duties and her socially-conditioned ego. It is to be hoped that after the economic and social emancipation of women under socialism, this conflict will disappear.

7. A great part of Volume 1 is devoted to an analysis of the "basic feminine personality types." Deutsch works out a classification of all women into feminine-passive, masculine active, and the in-between feminine-active-moral type. This section, while interesting because of the author's profound understanding of people, did not strike me as important as her **general appreciation** of feminine problems.

heroes, leaders, etc., made in a group or ideologic movement are valuable, but they cannot satisfy the need for a personal relation."<sup>8</sup>

Later, discussing the ambitious dreams that develop around the adolescent's ideal goal, she says:<sup>9</sup> "The content of the fantasies is doubtless determined by the girl's cultural milieu . . . The daughter may see herself as an orator inflaming the masses to revolutionary deeds or leading an ideologic movement that is of public interest at the moment. The attempt to realize such fantasies is the expression of a maturer stage of development. Even though the motives for this idealistic aspiration are of a selfish ambitious nature, the activity that expresses it forms a bridge between the youthful ego and the surrounding world. The realization of such fantasies can be of great social value and simultaneously exert an educational influence on the further development of the young person. If the fantasies are not ideologic or social, but purely egocentric in character, their realization in most cases leads to disappointment."<sup>7</sup>

### Woman's Second Crisis

Once the problems of adolescence are surmounted, woman's second great crisis develops. How will she manage the relation between her own now-largely-formed personality, and her biological drive toward motherhood? Here again, Deutsch points to one Verinea as a prime example of the successful resolution of this conflict.

Verinea is the heroine of a novel whose action takes place during the Russian revolution. Married to a revolutionist, she is expecting a child, and is in charge of other comrades engaged in some action. She bears her child, and leaves to fulfill her revolutionary duty. Returning later to nurse her son, she is killed by the Cossacks.

"Verinea," says Deutsch,<sup>10</sup> "who was once a prostitute, loves. She loves the revolution because she loves suffering humanity and wants to help it. She loves her husband because he has given her an opportunity to express herself. She loves her child with instinctual, elementary force, 'like a she-wolf.'"

Now Verinea is no primitive woman, capable solely of maternal instincts. She is a product of the class struggle of the 20th Century. "She not only grasps the

8. Deutsch, Vol. 1, p. 93.

9. Same, Vol. 1, p. 98.

10. Same, Vol. 2, p. 284.

revolution emotionally, but knows its goals, and methods. Verinea is a woman of insight and understanding. But because she is capable of love, and free from fear, she is free of conflict between her ego and her motherliness."<sup>11</sup> Other women have so many problems reconciling biology and ego because "their social goals and individual strivings are too far removed from the sources that give motherliness its strength."

### Gorky's Heroine As Example

The last major crisis of women is what Deutsch calls "the tragedy of motherhood": the inevitable necessity to let go her children and find other outlets for the emotions hitherto tied up in them. In treating this period, she once again holds up as a model a revolutionary Russian woman, Pelagia Vlassova, heroine of Gorky's novel, *Mother*. Pelagia<sup>12</sup> achieves "the mother's deepest life purpose—to preserve her son, or have the illusion of preserving him. Pelagia Vlassova is the only one . . . who goes further by making her son's ideals her own, and really helping him in his hard and dangerous struggle: 'The words of my son are the pure words of a worker, of an incorruptible heart! Learn to recognize the incorruptible by his fearlessness!'"

Again, "Pelagia Vlassova perhaps found the most reliable method: she entered into her son's life interests and through her love for him learned to love something impersonal, the ideal of social emancipation."

So we see that, according to one of the leading workers in the field of human personality, at each step along the road to normalcy (if we can speak of such a thing under capitalism!), the socialist movement stretches out a helping hand to women.

It is no accident that the road to psychological normalcy, just like economic, and social normalcy, leads through the socialist movement. The new sciences, psychology, social architecture, are merely trailing in the footsteps of their older brothers, philosophy and political economy, when they rediscover the need for a socialist, idealistic and intelligent organization of human environment. Modern research is giving us new tools to use in our task of bringing the promise and potential of socialism to American women.

MIRIAM GOULD.

11. Same, Vol. 2, p. 285.

12. Same, Vol. 2, pp. 316-317.



# On the Tempo in Europe

To All Sections of the Fourth International

TO ALL SECTIONS OF  
THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL:  
Dear Comrades,

The dispute in the SWP during the past two years has not been in any sense a dispute peculiar to the American party. It has been from the first a dispute over questions which are far more important to Europe in the first instance than to America. In the end the errors of the SWP majority will also have catastrophic consequences in America; but the political situation in this country moves so slowly that serious consequences of the errors (i.e., serious not merely for the internal party situation but also serious in the sense of their failure to solve the problems of the masses) may not be glaringly perceivable for a long time. In Europe, however, the questions on which we have fought have a burning importance. And Europe is the continent where the fate of mankind for a whole historical epoch will be decided in the next few years by the capacity or incapacity of the Fourth International. It is in this very direct sense that we declare that the aim of our faction is the re-arming of the Fourth International.

Although not affiliated with the Fourth International, the SWP was ideologically the political center of the Trotskyist movement during the war. Operating under incomparably more favorable conditions than our European comrades, the SWP was in a position to study and clarify the tasks of the movement. Had the SWP done this work, it might have saved the European movement years of groping, errors and painful reorientation.

Instead the SWP evaded its responsibility. Comrade Logan's attempts to involve the SWP leadership in a discussion of the tasks of the European movement under Nazi occupation were evaded and resisted.

We of the minority share the blame for this de-politicalization. We permitted this situation to develop for several years without openly and directly resisting it. In 1943, however, we did begin to resist. As a result we initiated the discussion on problems of the European movement which resulted in the dispute which still continues.

## Minority Resolution Suppressed

The October 1943 Plenum resolution of the SWP was a piece of ultra-leftist braggadocio which could serve only to disorient the Fourth International. It did serve to disorient it. Published in the September-November 1944 issue of *Quatrieme Internationale* as the views of the largest Trotskyist party on "Perspectives and Tasks of the European Revolution," it buttressed the position of the ultra-left tendencies in the European movement. This could have been alleviated had the European comrades also had the opportunity simultaneously to study the views of the SWP minority. But the SWP majority leaders not only prohibited publication of the SWP minority documents in *Fourth International* following the Plenum, but also prohibited their distribution to the party membership. The pretext was that since the majority and minority leaders were shortly to go to prison, the documents should not be issued until the principals to the dispute returned. The documents were finally made available to the SWP membership on the eve of the November 1944 convention. Nor was this done because the party regime yielded to the entreaties of the minority; it was only because one of the documents had reached the Workers Party which had published it. Even then the minority documents were not sent to Europe. When I returned from prison at the end of January 1945, I found that the minority's views on the European questions were still unknown on the continent. Meanwhile, as I have said, the publication of the majority's resolution in the September-November 1944 *Quatrieme Internationale* had contributed to the support of the ultra-left tendencies and the disorientation of the European movement.

Nevertheless it must be emphasized that the SWP leadership's false views were not peculiar to it. Peculiar to it are its vile methods: its suppression of the minority documents, its falsification of the view of the minority, its later shifting of its position without admitting its errors, its redoubling of its abuse against the minority which had forced it to shift, its miseducation of the membership by

these methods, etc. In "The Balance Sheet of the European Discussion" (May 1945), I have explained these methods of the Cannon faction.

It is extremely important, however, to understand that the political views expressed by the Cannon faction were also shared by the ultra-left tendencies in Europe. In publishing the SWP 1943 Plenum resolution in the September-November 1944 *Quatrieme Internationale*, the editors introduced it by a note which stated:

The members of the European sections of the Fourth International will not fail to note the striking coincidence of the general line of this text with that of the resolutions of the European Conference of February 1944. This is a further proof of the solidity of the programme of the Fourth International and of the organic ties that unite all the sections in their thought and action.

And in the following number of *Quatrieme Internationale* (January-February 1945) appeared a new Resolution of the European Executive Committee of the Fourth International which declared that events had confirmed the perspectives of the February 1944 resolutions.

I shall not repeat here my criticisms of the European resolutions of February 1944 and January 1945, which I analyzed in my letter of July 10 to the European Secretariat, and copies of which I sent to the European sections. I attach herewith a copy of that letter.\*

The fact that the European line of the Cannon faction was shared by the European Secretariat makes even more clear that the aim of the SWP minority is nothing less than the re-arming of the Fourth International.

## On the Perspective for Revolution

The "clever" polemicists of the SWP will say (have already said of it of us during the Plenum and Convention disputes, are saying it of the Workers Party and will soon enough say it again of us) that in speaking of re-arming the Fourth

\* The letter referred to appeared in our January issue under the mistaken title of "To the Secretariat of the Fourth International." The letter was addressed to the *European Secretariat* of the Fourth International.

International we are proposing to abandon the perspective of proletarian revolution. This is a deliberate lie.

There is no need to repeat here the views of the SWP minority on the perspective and tasks in Europe. You have them in our documents of the October 1943 Plenum; our pre-convention and convention documents of the November 1944 convention; our writings since then. From these you know that there is no basis whatever for the lie of Cannon that we are abandoning the proletarian revolution. With this brazen lie Cannon is trying to cover up his responsibility for disorienting the Fourth International.

Whence the disorientation? There is a common source for both Cannon's *political* (not his organizational) errors and those of the European Secretariat. That source is the clinging blindly to old prognostications long after events have demonstrated that they are no longer valid.

At the outset of the war we all held in common with Trotsky a perspective which had two principal ingredients:

1. That in the course of the war the Soviet Union would either be regenerated or would become capitalist. In either case we would be through with the problem of Stalinism.

2. That, thanks to the ravages of the war and freed of the incubus of Stalinism, the European proletariat would surge forward in a wave of proletarian revolution in the course of the war (the first revolution, Trotsky thought, would come early in the war) on a greater scale than in 1917-21. This did not necessarily mean immediate establishment of Soviet power, but it certainly meant the emergence of great mass parties of the Fourth International. (By 1948, Trotsky was sure, the Trotskyist membership would number in the millions.)

Trotsky himself tried to teach us that it is impossible to guess in advance the tempo of development for a long period and that in the course of events it is necessary to introduce the necessary correctives in our estimate. Trotsky himself, had he lived, would have been the first to introduce such correctives. He was never afraid to say he had been wrong. He laughed at those who turned his tentative estimates into Holy Scripture.

Just this, however, is what the Cannonites here and the European Secretariat abroad did—they clung to Trotsky's 1940 estimates after events had

made imperative correcting those estimates.

### Need for Re-Adjustment

By 1943 it was clear to us that this concept of the revolutionary tempo was erroneous. Hence at the October 1943 Plenum we insisted on adjusting the movement to the existing reality: the masses in the hands of the traditional workers' parties; the bourgeois-democratic development in western Europe; the democratic illusions of the masses; the small groups of the Fourth International; the burning need to readjust ourselves by means of the struggle for democratic and transitional demands as the road to the masses. You have the documents which record how viciously the Cannon faction fought against this re-adjustment. You know how even such a simple Marxist idea as the democratic demand for the republic in Italy and Belgium met with vilification and falsification.

Now Cannon would like very much to forget the intervening two years. His lieutenants write in the latest *Fourth International*: "But the revolutionary tempo has proven slower than Trotsky anticipated. Therefore? Therefore it is necessary for the revolutionary vanguard to adjust its sights and regulate its tactics in accordance with the facts." (November, p. 324.)

Just this is what we have proposed since 1943—to regulate our tactics in accordance with the facts. In order to conceal his own mistake of 1943, Cannon prefers to place the blame on Trotsky's 1940 estimate which we all shared and which was justified at that time. Cannon takes good care in the above-quoted editorial not to indicate what kind of tactics are now dictated by his belated recognition of the mistake in tempo, for they are precisely the tactics advocated by the SWP minority."

Instead Cannon proceeds to redoubled abuse of the Workers Party (which shared our views on the European tempo) and of "other disoriented ex-Trotskyites," meaning by this snide reference the SWP minority. Here again, as in the December 1944 *Fourth International* editorial, which we analyzed in "The Balance Sheet of the European Discussion," the Cannonites redouble their abuse against those who were right and who (but only after events made it imperative) forced the Cannonites to formally abandon their ultra-left braggadocio.

But this kind of adaptation of line

without recognition of the Cannonite errors of 1943 and of why the errors were made is worse than useless. In 1944, still resisting the correction, Cannon enunciated his mad theory of the "objectively revolutionary" consequences of the Red Army's advance into eastern Europe and his proposal that the Warsaw guerillas subordinate themselves (i.e., deliver themselves) to the Red Army. Cannon wants to slide out of all this. But to permit him to do so would be to abandon the Marxist education of the membership of the Fourth International.

### Cannon Adheres to Formula

It is not merely a matter of acknowledging old errors, but of preventing new ones. Cannon's acknowledgment of a mistaken conception of the revolutionary tempo turns out to be a purely perfunctory gesture, while in actual fact Cannon insists on sticking to the formulas of 1940. To what fantastic lengths this leads him is now to be seen in Cannon's address on the anniversary of the October revolution, in which he says:

Trotsky predicted that the fate of the Soviet Union would be decided in the war. That remains our firm conviction. Only we disagree with some people who carelessly think that the war is over. The war has only passed through one stage and is now in the process of regroupment and reorganization for the second. The war is not over, and the revolution which we said would issue from the war in Europe, is not taken off the agenda. (*The Militant*, November 17, 1945.)

Comrades, Cannon's formulas are not the exaggerations of an agitator in the heat of arousing workers to understand that war is inevitable under capitalism. No, Cannon's formulas are part of a programmatic speech, carefully designed in the light of the internal dispute in the SWP.

The formal party position is the opposite of Cannon's latest speech. The November 1944 convention resolution recognized that the war was coming to a close, that the reality for a whole historical period would be collaboration of the Big Three despite their differences, that this meant that the question of the defense of the Soviet Union recedes into the background and that the paramount task is the defense of the European proletariat against the Big Three. In line with this estimate, an editorial in the October 1945 *Fourth International* declares that Big Three collaboration would continue "for a whole period of time."

Still more explicitly, party policy was stated in the November 1945 *Fourth In-*

ternational in an article by William F. Warde, "The Big Five at London":

Nor is Washington in a mood to wage war. The tide of events is now running in the opposite direction. Reckless militarists and impatient mouthpieces for imperialism are agitating for an attack upon Russia before it acquires the secrets of atomic bomb manufacture. But the people here and throughout the world are not only sick of war but shudder at the thought of unleashing a third world war which can demolish civilization and destroy humanity. This growing revulsion against war bridles the war-mongers.

Moreover America's capitalist rulers have their own material reasons for wishing peace. The recently concluded war was a costly as well as risky enterprise for them. They have not even begun coping with its consequences. They look forward longingly to the *Pax Americana* in which they can rule and exploit the world to their pocket-book's pleasure. They want now to cash in on the imperialist peace . . .

But there exists an even stronger brake upon the war-making propensities of the powers. That is their common fear of the world revolution. The colonial slaves in Asia and Africa are rising up as an aftermath of the war. The peoples are restless and poised for revolutionary resistance. This fear of the rising revolutionary temper of the masses unites the Big Three in an unholy counter-revolutionary alliance. It restrains their representatives from accentuating differences too deeply and pushing their conflicts toward the breaking point. Stalin remains a firm ally of the Anglo-American imperialists in stamping out the revolutionary movements of the masses.

### The Russian Question

Scarcely was this in print, however, when Cannon heard that the SWP minority had opened a discussion on the Russian question. In his own inimitable way, therefore, Cannon proceeds to create an appropriate atmosphere in the party for a Russian discussion. Just as Stalin—the analogy is inescapable—beat the drums of the war danger whenever the Left Opposition wished to discuss, so Cannon declares in his speech:

A tremendous wave of public sentiment against Russia, reminiscent of the early days of 1917-19, is being set into motion. The present agitation recalls again the days of the Soviet-Finnish war when every democrat, every liberal, every Russophobe, every anti-Stalinist, was waving the flag for war against the Soviet Union in the service of American imperialism. It was a little difficult, and it took some courage and independence of judgment, to stand up against that terrific anti-Russian wave of sentiment and propaganda at the time of the Soviet-Finnish war. We see the same thing developing again today . . . (*The Militant*, November 17, 1945, p. 7)

This miserable fabrication is directly refuted by the line of the October and

November issues of *Fourth International*, but that has not prevented the editors, including William F. Warde, from hailing Cannon's new line as a masterpiece (incidentally, it is Cannon's first political venture since his proposal to the Warsaw guerillas to subordinate themselves to the Red Army).

That the imperialists are already preparing for the next war is of course a truism, just as they began preparing World War II the day after World War I. But before a new war can take place, a whole series of economic and political pre-conditions must come into existence. I shall shortly write a separate article on this question. Here it must suffice to say that any serious Marxist knows that the preconditions for World War III have not matured, that World War II is over, that between it and the next war is the obstacle of the war-weary and politically-awakening masses of Britain and western Europe, that even the American masses cannot for a whole period be driven to war, that the next war can take place only after new crushing defeats of the European proletariat. Yet Cannon, driven by his blind factionalism, dares to say World War II isn't over, that war against the Soviet Union is imminent, that therefore the fate of the Soviet Union is still to be decided "in the war" and that "the revolution which we said would issue from the war in Europe" is yet to come in "the second stage" of World War II.

Cannon is driven by his blind factionalism but also by something which is even more important for us to struggle against: *he represents today the crassest example in the Fourth International of those who cling to outworn formulas at any cost.* Trotsky said the fate of the Soviet Union would be decided by the war; Cannon is determined to save that formula and in that mad venture is ready to make still greater errors, errors indeed which approach the outer limits of sanity: "We disagree with some people who carelessly think that the war is over."

The Trotskyist movement would become a madhouse if it followed Cannon's line. The movement must reject Cannon's insane attempt to save the formulas of 1940. We must openly and explicitly correct previous errors in order the better to formulate our policy for the present and future.

### Conduct of European Secretariat

And at this point we must call attention to the conduct of the European Sec-

retariat. It shared the errors of the Cannonites, and underlined this fact by its note of September-November 1944 calling attention to their identity of views. However, in the March-June 1945 issue of *Quatrieme Internationale* a very different line begins to be enunciated by the European Secretariat, both in recognizing the actual tempo of events and in positively advocating the democratic and transitional demands appropriate to the actual situation in Europe. But neither in the programmatic editorial in the March-June 1945 issue nor elsewhere in *Quatrieme Internationale* does the European Secretariat explain that it is changing its line. Had it done so, and explained honestly why it did so, it would have contributed to the education of the membership of the international. But this unannounced shift in line can only miseducate the membership. Moreover, such an unannounced shift inevitably is accompanied by an attempt to maintain continuity with the (unadmittedly) wrong resolutions of the past, so that the March-June editorial is still permeated by much of the old nonsense.

In a private letter to me of August 8, 1945, the secretary of the European Secretariat, Patrice, writes urging me not to publish my letter of July 10 to the European Secretariat: "If it is an 'attack' I strongly urge you not to issue it until it is possible to consult upon it, and clear up any misunderstandings, since it is my impression on the spot that the European Secretariat's position and the position of the SWP minority are in about seventy-five per cent agreement. In any case, it is the fact that the European Secretariat's position and that of the SWP majority are in practically total disagreement."

Where had the European Secretariat recorded the fact that it is in "practically total disagreement" with the SWP majority? The last recorded statement on its attitude toward the SWP majority's views is that of January-February 1945 when it declared the views of the SWP majority and the European Secretariat to be identical. Does not political clarity demand that a complete reversal on this question likewise be recorded, and at the earliest possible moment, in the same place—the *Quatrieme Internationale*?

To this day the SWP membership believe that the position of the European Secretariat and that of the Cannon leadership is identical. And how, indeed, shall I argue the question? By waving

Patrice's private letter as proof to the contrary?

The August 1945 Conference of the British party adopted a quite comprehensive resolution on the European situation. In the pre-conference discussion inside the party, the leadership verbally indicated that the resolution was in agreement with the views of the SWP minority. But neither in the resolution itself, nor anywhere else in writing, has the leadership indicated the relation of its views to those of the SWP majority and minority or of the European Secretariat. Can such a method serve the education of the International? An SWP member reads one after another the SWP majority's views, the changing views of the European Secretariat, the contrary views of the British party—and thinks he is reading documents all belonging to one line.

### The Belgian Party

One of the brightest spots in Europe is the work of the Belgian party. At least since January 1945 (I have not seen its previous literature) it has quite sure-footedly followed a policy in realistic consonance with the situation. It was a little belated in raising the slogan of the republic, but when the Leopold crisis developed it plunged into the struggle for the republic with great success. As early as January 1945 it recognized that the scattered workers' councils which had arisen (Liege, Charleroi) had reduced themselves to trade union bodies and that the democratic illusions of the masses necessitated concentrating on the struggle for immediate elections to Parliament. The Belgian party press has been a model of revolutionary agitation under the present conditions in Belgium.

But these conditions are also the conditions of the rest of western Europe. Meanwhile, next door, in France, our comrades until the very eve of the elections to the Constituent Assembly conducted themselves very differently than the Belgian comrades. Did the Belgian leadership intervene as was their right and duty, to correct the policy in France? Did the Belgian leadership propose a new resolution of the European Executive Committee to replace the wrong ones of February 1944 and January 1945? We have heard nothing of such proposals.

Under these conditions, can one speak of the Fourth International existing as a centralized political body? Certainly it did not exist politically during the war. After the war, the European Secretariat

should have become in actual fact the center.

But this has not happened.

What are the views of the International on the European situation? Those of the European Secretariat's February 1944 and January 1945 resolutions or those of the March-June 1945 editorial in *Quatrieme*? Those of the SWP majority or minority? Those of the British resolution? Nobody knows.

What are the views of the International on the so-called national question in Europe—i.e., revolutionary tactics under the Nazi occupation? In passing, a signed article in *Quatrieme* indicates serious errors were made on this question. But what are the views of the European Secretariat? This is not a question of the dead past; it is impossible to formulate tactics for occupied eastern Europe today without a correct position on the national question.

What are the views of the International on the defense of the Soviet Union? According to the last statement of the European Secretariat, our views remain what they always were. But the SWP (under Comrade Natalia's pressure) adopted a resolution in November 1944 saying that the question of defense of the USSR has receded into the background; something similar was adopted by the French party. Nobody challenges Comrade Natalia's declaration that the question of defense of the USSR has "fallen away." But without a fixed position of the International, Cannon bends his line to his faction needs, as we have already explained. Cannon cynically violates the majority's own resolution of November 1944 and it is true enough that he is quite capable of equally violating a resolution of the International. But if the International existed politically, it could then call a Cannon to order.

The re-arming of the Fourth International is not a simple matter of calling a World Congress. The existing disorientation necessitates a serious discussion in every section on all the questions indicated. A World Congress is urgently needed, to organize the discussion, if possible to adopt some draft resolutions on some of the questions and submit them to the sections, to accept the adhesion of the Trotskyist parties which have arisen during the war, to elect a functioning Executive Committee as broadly representative as possible, etc. But such a World Congress, urgently important as it is, will merely begin the re-arming of the Fourth International.

The subsequent discussion alone can complete the re-arming.

In preparation for the World Congress, we make the following specific requests of the leadership of each section:

(1) To discuss and take a position on the line of the February 1944 and January 1945 resolutions of the European Secretariat and on the line of the SWP majority.

(2) To discuss and take a position on the line of the SWP minority documents on Europe.

(3) To endorse the position of the SWP minority documents on unity with the Workers Party; pending unity the World Congress will accept the Workers Party as a Trotskyist Party.

Our proposal (3) explicitly means that we wish the Workers Party to participate in the task of re-arming the International. We believe that the Workers Party on its side has contributions to make to this task, contributions which, despite our disagreements with a number of its positions, including that on the Russian question, we believe will be very valuable. Cannon's opposition to unity means also of course to exclude the Workers Party from the international discussion. We cannot believe that the comrades of the International will agree with him.

### The Trotskyist Tendencies

Cannon denies that the Workers Party is a Trotskyist tendency. He is blind to an understanding of the fact that Trotskyism would not be a living movement if in its twenty years of existence, it did not give rise to several different tendencies which, however, remain Trotskyist. Events—and such events!—inevitably evoke more than one answer from various comrades who, nevertheless, remain equally revolutionary. If proof were needed, Cannon provides it: he has now changed places with Shachtman on the question of unity. In 1940 Cannon was for unity when the defense of the Soviet Union was a burning question; now, when the formal position of the SWP is that the question of defense of the USSR has receded into the background, Cannon is against unity, whereas Shachtman has taken an entirely correct position for unity.

The comrades abroad must understand clearly that there are three Trotskyist tendencies in the United States: the SWP majority; the SWP minority; the Workers Party. The original ties binding together the SWP majority and minority were above all the question of

unity and the defense of the Soviet Union. These ties have been dissolved. The defense of the Soviet Union has receded into the background and the whole Russian question is posed for re-evaluation by the International. On unity we are in complete agreement with the Workers Party. We are far closer to the Workers Party than to the SWP majority on the question of democratic and transitional demands and other tasks in Europe. There are other questions on which we would vote with the SWP majority against the WP tendency in a united party; perhaps indeed, numerically, these other questions are more numerous than those on which we agree with the WP. But the questions on which we agree with the WP are today of such decisive importance that they mean that our tendency is closer to that of the WP than to that of the SWP majority.

For, as we have explained in our previous documents, the question of unity has profound political and organizational implications. Unity means a democratic-centralist party as against the mon-

olithic tendency of Cannonism. Unity means an attitude toward differences of opinion which recognizes that those who differ with us remain our comrades. Unity means to welcome attempts to go beyond what has already been said and to find what is new in the changing situation. Unity means a rejection of the notorious formula of E. R. Frank, spokesman for the SWP majority, that "we have a finished program." Unity means a living, thinking Trotskyist party which openly and honestly corrects its mistakes in order the better to avoid new ones. The refusal of the Cannonites to consummate unity is a crime against the revolutionary movement, as great if not greater than the crime of the WP comrades in splitting in 1940.

With this letter, we propose to open a continuing discussion with all sections. In the discussion, we are anxious to discuss all phases of the dispute in the SWP. But this dispute must be understood in its correct context, as a subordinate phase of the general task of re-arming the Fourth International. Under the existing conditions in the SWP, where

not a single question is discussed in good faith, we find it quite useless to address ourselves exclusively to the SWP majority. We prefer to discuss with all those who really want to discuss. We shall send you our letters and articles and await your replies.

With comradely Greetings,

FELIX MORROW

for the SWP Minority

November 15, 1945

(Reprinted from the Internal Bulletin of the Socialist Workers Party.)

A paragraph was inadvertently omitted from Felix Morrow's "Letter to the European Secretariat" in the January NEW INTERNATIONAL.

It was part of the section of the letter which proposed to investigate possibilities of entry of the Fourth Internationalists into some of the reformist parties. It read as follows:

"In France, the problem is perhaps more complicated. But instead of looking at the difficulties, look coldly at the fact that the membership of our party is pitifully small. Perhaps direct entry into the SFIO will not be possible, but there can be found another way, for example, through an understanding with Malraux's wing of the MLN (Mouvement de Libération National)."

## Book Reviews . . .

**BIG BUSINESS IN A DEMOCRACY,**  
by James Truslow Adams. Charles  
Scribner's Sons, 1945. \$2.75.

The direct subservience of American colleges and scholars to the needs and interests of the ruling class is amply demonstrated by the latest production of James Truslow Adams, *Big Business in a Democracy*. Adams is always boosted in the newspaper reviews as an eminent American historian. The only basis for this judgment is the quantity of Adams' production and the large sales of his works, assured by the official support of college boards of trustees, school boards and the like. Adams acquired this status, not by scholarly attainments, but by hewing strictly to the line of complete and uncritical support of American capitalism.

*Big Business in a Democracy* is a defense of big business that surpasses in crudity and candor the pronouncements of the National Association of Manufacturers. The NAM defends monopoly capitalism by pretending to defend "little business," competition and free enterprise. Adams makes no such pretense.

He defends big business as such and even as against small competitive business, using General Motors, the largest aggregation of monopoly capital in the country, as a typical example.

Two features of the book, apart from the contents, have special significance. One is the timing. It was published several months ago at a time when both capital and the organized labor movement were preparing for the inevitable post-war showdown. What could the book be but part of the arsenal assembled by America's Sixty Ruling Families to beat back the present labor offensive? This is borne out by a second consideration, the style in which it is written. In this respect the book departs radically from the usual academic work written for students and intellectuals and even from Adams' manner of writing other of his books. It is slangy, full of personal anecdotes that are as often as not totally irrelevant and is written generally in the manner of a ten-year-old trying to make things simple to a youngster of five. Obviously the book was written, not as an analysis of the history and significance of big business but as a propa-

ganda tract directed against the widest possible middle class audience. Its aim is to mobilize the middle class behind the very power that is grinding it into the dust.

### How GM Gives Facts

Adams' argument is developed on the basis of lies, half-truths, distortions. The chapters on General Motors, which deal with matters that are familiar to most workers, particularly today when the relation of GM to its workers and to the country as a whole has been brought under the floodlight glare of the GM strike, would provide endless amusement to a GM worker. A few samples are sufficient to damn the whole book. "GM has," says our Mr. Adams, who never lets the facts stand in his way, "throughout the years, conscientiously observed a policy of 'giving the facts . . .'" (p. 179). And a GM executive says publicly: "Open the books? Hell, no! We don't even open the books to our stockholders."

Or this little gem: "I do not hesitate to say that there is today infinitely more chance for the intelligent hard-working worker to become president of a mam-

moth corporation such as GM than there was, in the old days, for the ablest workman to become even a minor executive of a small family-owned and family-run mill in some obscure New England valley." (P. 218.)

A bit of the flavor of the book can be gleaned from the following, which follows a vicious attack on the "criminals," "thugs" and "lawless elements" that led the great Michigan sitdown strikes for recognition of the union. "Not trying to make out a case but just trying to see for myself, it does not appear to me that a large part of the labor troubles of the past few years, including the sit-down strikes in Michigan, have been the fault of Big Business. A bad labor policy, or none, on the part of the New Deal, and internecine feuds among labor unions, as well as bad leadership in labor, have been just as much, and I think more, responsible for the difficulties. I have read over the agreements made between GM and the CIO in 1940, 1941 and 1942, and although I am far from a specialist in labor relations, I cannot see that GM could do more than it is doing to satisfy both government and labor." (Pp. 232-233.) This paid hack gives GM credit for union contracts which had to be fought for bitterly, at the cost of tremendous sacrifices, including the sacrifice of life itself, in the very sitdowns that so horrify our Mr. Adams!

What the whole thing amounts to, and Adams says it explicitly, is that anything good that ever happened—not just under capitalism, but throughout human history—was done by big business. He starts his book with the formation of the first living cell from inert matter and it is with considerable restraint that he refrains from crediting big business with even that development.

#### **Significance of the Book**

The whole book might be dismissed as trash which no one could possibly fall for. But there seems to be a special value in discussing it. The very crudity of the book states the arguments for capitalism in their simplest and final form. Tear aside the involved arguments and infinite rationalizations of the liberals and you have—Adams. In essence, every defense of capitalism boils down to Adams' defense. And in Adams' defense of monopoly capital there is a central thesis that is much more significant than the lies and distortions that clutter up his book, a thesis that, in the final analysis, is the only real defense that capitalism has—or rather, had. This is the proposi-

tion that the ruling classes today and in earlier, pre-capitalist societies, with all their faults and weaknesses, have nevertheless succeeded in continually raising the living standards of broader and broader masses of people.

Every social system finds its historical justification in the development of the productive forces and the increase in the physical goods and comforts of society as a whole and, flowing from this, the social and intellectual advance of mankind. All humanity has been fundamentally moved by the struggle to conquer nature, to make nature subservient to man. In this struggle man has moved ahead. That is, he has constantly developed his productive forces, built new tools, improved his instruments of production, ferreted out the laws of nature. These productive forces at any particular level require a social organization that corresponds to its needs. The social relations of men are determined in the final analysis by the level of development of the means of production. The totality of these social relations, economic, political, cultural, etc., form a social system. The social system, in turn, of course, spurs the further development of man's productivity. But in doing this it raises the productive forces to a new and higher level and insures its own doom. The social organization becomes a fetter on the productive forces and must give way to a new system that corresponds to the new needs and possibilities of society.

What part does the ruling class of a society play in this? A part that is determined for it by the total social relations. It can only conform to the laws of the society which it rules. It is not the ruling class that develops the forces of production, consciously and planfully or even accidentally, but society as a whole. The ruling class can play a progressive rôle in history when the social system that it represents and is a part of plays a progressive rôle. When a social system has outlived its usefulness it must be discarded. First and foremost this means that its ruling class, whether feudal nobility or capitalists, must be overthrown.

#### **How Productive Forces Developed**

During most of its history a social system assures social stability precisely because it results in the development of the productive forces. In essence every defense of a system in which a minority class rules, ideological, military or otherwise, must be based on the satisfaction of the material wants of the people.

When the organization of society interferes with the further satisfaction of these wants no defense can long remain effective. The brevity of this presentation permits of touching only the broadest and crudest outlines but, realizing the importance of a host of additional factors, the outline is essentially valid.

It is this which Adams does not see and cannot see, for he accepts the rule of capitalism as eternal. In the years of its growth and development, capitalism, despite all resentments, disturbances or revolts, did retain the allegiance of the masses of the people, in particular of the working class, because it did assure the development of the productive forces and with it, no matter in how distorted and restricted a form, the raising of the living standards of the people. But this capitalism can no longer do. It has become a fetter on the productive forces and a brake on the future development of mankind. It is in a period of decay and decline, of permanent crisis, in which it can no longer assure to the people the satisfaction of their minimum needs—work, food, shelter, life. It is this historical fact that is the refutation of Adams' book. Adams can point to the past as much as he likes. It will do him no good. The working class is concerned with the present and with the future. And the future is socialism.

MARTIN HARVEY.

### **NOTICE**

The publication of *The Fight for Socialism* by Max Shachtman has been delayed by reasons beyond our control.

We regret this inconvenience to the readers of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL who have ordered the book. Upon publication we shall immediately forward copies of the book.

# Goldman's Replies to Questions

## A Discussion at the SWP Plenum

(The following discussion on the proposed unity of the Workers Party and the Socialist Workers Party took place at the October, 1945, Plenum of the National Committee of the SWP. It is reprinted from the *Internal Bulletin* of the latter party.—Editors.)

*Note:* After the opening report on behalf of the majority, made by Comrade M. Stein, some comrades asked questions of the minority representatives. I did not answer all of the questions then and am not doing so now. I am replying to the serious ones and consider all others either answered or not deserving a reply. I am also answering some arguments I had no chance to answer at the Plenum.

### Right of Tendency to a Bulletin

*Question by Comrade Cannon:* In point six of the resolution submitted by the minority, here is a statement that the right of any tendency in the Trotskyist party to have a bulletin of its own is taken for granted. In the PC meeting, two weeks ago, Comrade Goldman expressed himself as opposed to the whole idea of internal bulletins. I would like to ask if, by the right of a tendency to have a bulletin of its own, is meant a bulletin that can be distributed on the outside as well as inside of the party, if the tendency so desires.

*Answer:* It is not correct to say that I am opposed to the whole idea of internal bulletins. It is correct to say that I consider it wrong to look upon the party as a sort of Masonic Lodge with rituals, rules and secrets.

The party is a party of the working class and its internal life—its discussions and methods of arriving at decisions—should be open to all advanced workers who are interested. Every political discussion, and this includes discussion on important organizational questions, should be made available to all who are sufficiently interested in the party to desire knowledge about them.

It is significant that Lenin, writing some years before World War I, gave as his criterion for the democratic nature of the Social Democratic Party of Germany, the fact that the party had no secrets and that its conventions were open to the public.

Every experienced political person understands that it is impossible to keep important discussions in a large party a secret. Why did the Stalinists recently have a bitter public discussion on the differences between Browder and Foster? They certainly do not believe in public discussion as a matter of principle. They simply took it for granted that they could not keep a discussion involving the ranks of the party a secret. I do not claim that this is the only reason for their public discussion but by

itself it would have been a sufficient reason.

It must be taken for granted that in a large party everything that is known to the members is also known to the people who are interested in the life of the party. It follows therefore that practically it is useless to try and keep any discussion a secret by means of an internal bulletin. I insist, however, that our policy with reference to keeping discussions secret, must not be based merely on the practical ground that in a large party it is impossible to keep secrets. It must be based rather on the idea that our party life should be an open book to all advanced workers and others who are not members of the party but close sympathizers and are interested in its life. I repeat: the party is a party of the working masses and not a secret society.

Some of you remember that in the factional struggle of 1939-40 the question came up of permitting the minority to publish articles expressing their viewpoint in the *New Internationalist*, at that time our theoretical organ. Comrade Morrow and I voted to have the discussion articles printed in the magazine.

At first Trotsky agreed with us but later changed his mind. It is important to understand however that he considered the question as purely a practical one. If I am not mistaken he expressed the idea, in one of his letters, that publication of minority articles in the *NI* would make it more difficult for the minority to retreat because they would then have committed themselves before the public. I considered that reason totally inadequate. I argued that to refuse publication would furnish the minority with a new issue, intensify the struggle and, in spite of Trotsky, set a precedent. And so it turned out to be. Later on Trotsky also gave as a reason that the minority should not be permitted to appeal to the petty-bourgeois intellectuals outside of the party.

Whatever one may think about these reasons, it is clear that Trotsky did not decide the question as one of principle. From the remarks of Comrades Stein and Cannon one could conclude that it has become a principle to allow minority articles in the theoretical organ *only after the discussion is over*. We must then notify the world that a discussion has taken place and the result of that discussion.

It should be carefully noted that in 1939 I limited my motion, to permit the minority space for discussion, to the theoretical organ. I was then opposed and am now opposed to carrying on a discussion in the agitational organ. Some discussion is of course permissible and necessary even in the agitational press but it should be confined to a point made by some writer with which some reader may disagree.

Am I in favor of publishing all discussion articles in the theoretical organ? By no means. I am in favor of publishing only the

best on either side of the controversy. Articles published in our theoretical organ should have a certain tone and, at all times, a high standard of quality. What tone and what quality must necessarily be left to the editorial board.

A discussion in the theoretical organ would itself tend to modify the tone of factional articles. One conscious that he is writing for a magazine read by the wide public, would be careful to avoid all factional dirt.

There should of course be a party discussion bulletin where articles not good enough to be published in our theoretical organ should find a place. But even this discussion bulletin should not be kept a secret from the outside world. There is a difference between an internal party bulletin the giving of which to one outside of the party is considered a crime against the party and a discussion bulletin for the purpose of giving all party members a chance to write and for articles of inferior tone and quality.

Who will decide which articles should go into the theoretical organ and which into the discussion bulletin? I am perfectly willing to submit the matter to an editorial board—competent or incompetent—provided at least the principle is recognized that it is the quality and tone which should determine whether an article should be published in the theoretical organ or in the discussion bulletin.

\* \* \*

I have stated that every tendency in a Bolshevik party has the right to its own bulletin if it desires to have one. I do not propose that as an immutable principle but I would insist that it be stated as a general rule, recognizing that the rule can be violated only under the most exceptional circumstances. Under Lenin and Trotsky the Bolshevik party, at its Tenth Congress, prohibited factions and factional organs. Whether this was correct or not need not be discussed. It was necessary only to remember that Trotsky has always insisted that this was done under the most exceptional circumstances and that the general rule is that in a Bolshevik party the right to organize factions, groups and tendencies must be taken for granted.

In my article in the last issue of the *Internal Bulletin* I quoted from an article of Trotsky, published in the October 1939 issue of the *New Internationalist*. In it Trotsky speaks only of factions and groups but it would indeed be a piece of scholasticism to make a distinction between factions and factional organs.

This does not mean that it is correct for comrades to publish their own organ whenever they feel like it. It is to be accepted as a principle that publication of a tendency organ is to be resorted to only under exceptional circumstances. A party discussion bulletin and the theoretical organ of

the party should suffice and satisfy all comrades, under normal circumstances.

But if a group of comrades wrongly and foolishly decide to issue their own bulletin there should be no prohibition against it. It is up to the leadership of the party to discredit them for taking a wrong step.

The general rule stated above is also applicable to the comrades of the WP who have indicated their intention to publish a bulletin for their tendency if and when there should be fusion. We must recognize their unconditional right to do so. Should we refuse, then, to be logical, we must also prohibit those now in the party from publishing their own bulletin if they see fit to do so. It would mean in fact the prohibition to publish factional organs, a serious step in the direction of monolithism.

If the present minority should not be prohibited from publishing its own organ and only the comrades of the WP should be forbidden to do so, then two classes of membership are created—one class prohibited from doing what another class is permitted.

In recognizing the right of the WP comrades to publish their own organ when and if unity is achieved the minority does not intend to say that the WP comrades *should* do that. It is obvious that unity will be aided if the WP comrades refrain from exercising the right to publish their own organ. Hence we shall strongly urge them to be satisfied with a discussion bulletin. But we shall insist that they have a right to publish a tendency organ and shall oppose any attempt to make the giving up of that right a pre-condition for unity.

### Distribution of Discussion Bulletin

*Question by Cannon:* If you give them the right to have their own discussion bulletin and, if you were in the majority, would it include the right to distribute it outside the party and a right to have their own editorial board? What possibility and right would the party have to censure or regulate the distribution of the paper?

*Answer:* The party has a right and a duty to control the bulletin of a tendency, if that bulletin goes beyond the legitimate purpose of convincing the membership of the party to its point of view and begins a campaign to get the workers to act contrary to party policy.

In every instance the action of the party would have to be determined by the question: Is it a tendency bulletin with the legitimate purpose of convincing party members or is it in reality a public organ agitating against party policy?

If it is a tendency organ then the fact that some copies reach non-members who are interested in the questions treated by the bulletin, is immaterial. It may well be that a tendency bulletin has a large circulation outside the party. That would simply mean that a large party has many sympathizers interested in the discussions of the party.

Naturally every group in the party must abide by the decision of the party with reference to the distribution of discussion bulletins to non-members. If the majority insists that party discussion bulletins should

not be made available to non-party members or if the majority insists that there be no discussion in the theoretical organ then the minority must abide by that decision no matter how foolish it may be. So long as the minority is granted the right to publish its own bulletin then the minor question of distribution is one which the minority can afford to submit.

It is possible, of course, to reduce the concept of the right of a tendency to publish its own organ to an absurdity. With the growth in the size of the party we may have a tendency organ for every thousand members, some wisecrack will argue. But let me point out that under Lenin and Trotsky the right was not questioned and before and after the October Revolution there was no split because the right was recognized.

A correct policy of the leadership is the main factor in preventing a situation where the party is nothing but a group of factions. In a healthy party, factions will exist temporarily and will disappear with the disappearance of the issue that brought them into being. A tendency may exist for a long time but only in exceptional cases. I can readily see where a tendency, such as the present minority represents, basing itself on the concept of a Bolshevik party, can last for a long period but even in such a case ultimately the differences will disappear or become so sharp as to make it impossible for the different tendencies to live in the same party.

The ideal is not to have factions and factional organs. By this I do not mean that the ideal is to have no differences of opinion but to have such a healthy party that differences are discussed and settled without factions and factional organs. But the point we are discussing is not some abstract ideal but the attitude of the leadership of a party to the formation of factions and the publication of factional organs. *The general rule should be recognized: no prohibition of factions or factional organs.*

Cannon gave us a dissertation on the looseness of the Socialist Party in this country prior to the First World War and to the organization of the communist movement. He told us that whoever wanted to and had the resources could and did publish a paper. He did not expressly say so but the conclusion is that we must now not permit the existence of tendencies and tendency organs in the party. For what is the purpose of Cannon's dissertation? Is there anyone proposing that an individual or a group in the party should be given the right to issue public organs? Cannon has that habit of creating a straw man and then valiantly knocking him down.

The problem for us is to avoid the looseness of the socialists and the monolithism of the Stalinists. It is not difficult to get an admission from us that there are dangers inherent in freely permitting the existence of tendencies and tendency bulletins. But these dangers are far outweighed by the dangers of prohibiting factions and factional organs, that is, by the dangers of monolithism.

When we come to the question of unity and the demand of the WP comrades to

have a tendency bulletin, it is first of all necessary to realize that this question cannot be settled at present when neither the majority of our party nor the WP is enthusiastic for unity — to put it very mildly. Both sides fear unity because they fear a bitter factional struggle following union. In such an atmosphere of lack of confidence it is impossible to solve the problem of a tendency bulletin.

It is first of all necessary to create the proper sentiment for unity before a calm and objective discussion can be carried on, on the question of a tendency organ. It is first of all necessary to cooperate and prepare the membership of both parties for unity before taking up the question of a tendency organ. At this time it is only necessary to recognize the right of any group to have its own organ if it so desires.

After a period of sincere cooperation there will either be a real desire for unity, in which case the question of a tendency organ can be solved either way without difficulty, or the suspicions and fears will still prevail and there will be no unity.

We of the minority would vote against immediate unity if such a proposal were made. For we know that the members of our party have been terribly miseducated on this question. In the history of our movement there has never been such a case of miseducation as has occurred in the discussion on unity. Our members were taught that the political differences between us and the WP are irreconcilable and unity impossible because of them. Not so long ago Cannon sneeringly asked me what there is to discuss with the WP. Now he wants only discussion.

There are members in the majority faction who want unity; others are opposed to unity; still others do not know and are waiting to follow the leadership. Most of the majorityites think that unless the WP gives up its ideas with reference to the Soviet Union we cannot have unity. They are in a condition of confusion worse confounded. And that is only natural because the leaders whom they follow have succeeded in confusing them.

The ranks of the majority are bitterly hostile to the demand of the WP for a tendency organ. Cannon himself is unwilling to state definitely that unity is impossible because of the demand of the WP for a tendency organ. Because he would find himself in an embarrassing position were the WP suddenly to decide to give up the demand and be satisfied with an internal bulletin.

The resolution of the majority says nothing about the question of the tendency organ. It thus permits the secondary leaders of the majority to go around and agitate the ranks against unity because of the demand for a tendency bulletin, while Cannon does not commit himself on the question.

Does a tendency organ mean a bitter factional fight? Not necessarily. The desire to have a tendency organ is not the sole indication of the degree of factionalism. The minority tendency at present has no organ of its own and yet the factional bitterness in the party can hardly be greater. An edu-



cational tendency organ is just as possible as a bitter factional fight without a tendency organ.

At this time the only solution for a cessation of the factional atmosphere is unity. The only unity that is worth while is unity without a factional struggle. To achieve that unity it is necessary to re-educate the membership to prepare them to see in unity a strengthening of the party and to realize that the political differences are compatible with membership in a united party.

### Loyalty

*Question by Andrews:* Did you, Comrade Morrow and Comrade Goldman, turn over to the Shachtmanites your resolutions for fusion which they printed even before we had it in our *Internal Bulletin*? Have you had meetings or discussions with them since the occasions mentioned in the minutes that all the comrades received? If so, what was the attitude of the WP leaders? What did they have to say and what did you have to say in those meetings? Have you made reports on these meetings to the Political Committee and if you didn't, why didn't you? Have you discussed with them just prior to this Plenum or during this Plenum? Tell us all about it.

*Question by Wood:* Comrade Goldman dismissed the questions that Andrews asked him. He says they are not serious. I want to ask the very same questions. You will admit that the circumstantial evidence is against you. You are going behind the back of the party. Why then do you stand on your dignity and refuse to answer? We want to know. The membership in the field wants to know. Are you loyal to our organization?

*Answer:* Yes, I said the questions were not serious and I would not take the time of a Plenum ostensibly called to discuss unity with the WP to answer them. But I see that if the questions are not serious to me they are serious to you and I shall therefore answer them. I shall answer you only, however, on the general proposition of loyalty. It is too difficult for me to answer some of the questions put to me by Comrade Andrews. They are on the lowest possible intellectual level. It is sad and extremely discouraging that all of our controversies have revolved around such questions as the propriety of talking with opponents and whether a letter written by a friendly critic should be published in the *Fourth International*. Since the death of Trotsky the intellectual level of our discussions has fallen close to zero. Even such an important discussion as the one on the problems of the European Revolution has been dragged down by the majority to an inconceivably low level.

What does loyalty to an organization mean? In the last analysis, for a revolutionary Marxist, it means loyalty to ideas which the organization has been created to struggle for.

When one considers the history of the socialist movement in the last thirty years it is clear that simple loyalty to an organization can result in the victory of the counter-revolution. The hundreds of thou-

sands of sincere workers who were loyal to the socialist and Stalinist parties had the same idea of blind loyalty to an organization that is suggested by the questions put to me. It is the conservative but natural loyalty to an organization on the part of sincere workers that makes it so difficult now for our parties in Europe to grow. Did we not expect that the European workers after all the betrayals would rally to a revolutionary party? But they did not. They cling to the parties they created and are loyal to. The revolutionary vanguard needs a different type of loyalty, a loyalty to ideas and not to an organization, which, in the last analysis, means the leadership of an organization.

A comrade old in the movement, in a conversation with Comrade Morrow, told him that it was useless for the minority to fight. He said that the workers like to be told what to think and what to do. This comrade did not understand that he was giving up the very basis of our struggle for socialism, the creation of a critical and independent group of workers who *cannot* be told what to do and how to think.

Some of you have interpreted my remarks to mean that I blame the failure of the revolution on the workers. What shallowness! When I say that the workers are naturally conservative and follow the leadership of an organization they built, that immediately shows that I consider the problem of leadership the all-important problem of our generation. And the highest duty of a revolutionary leadership is to create a critical and independent spirit, a phrase which always gives a laugh to the philistines.

In this controversy about unity the question of loyalty has been raised in a manner which completely miseducated the membership. Form has been raised above substance. What has been emphasized are mere insignificant formalities as against the real substance of loyalty, the loyalty to the idea of building a revolutionary organization where legitimate differences are expected and discussed on their merits.

The minority starts from the fundamental proposition that the comrades of the WP are devoted revolutionists, that they have proved themselves to be such in the period of the imperialist conflict. We start from the proposition that they belong to the Fourth International.

It is inevitable that we should have very friendly relations with the comrades of the WP and that we should discuss the question of unity and urge them to favor unity. Were we to do otherwise we would have been disloyal to the party that we want to build.

At present the minority goes further. When the WP indicated its willingness to unite with our party and to submit to discipline in action whenever they found themselves in a minority, we had to consider them not only as devoted revolutionists who made a mistake by splitting but as a tendency in the Fourth International. We now recognize three tendencies in this country—the Cannonite tendency, the WP tendency and ours. I shall not now go into the differences between the tendencies. It is sufficient when I state that they exist as far as we are concerned.

Truth compels me to state that right now the bond that ties us with the WP tendency is stronger than that which binds us to the Cannonite tendency. The questions of the nature and the defense of the Soviet Union are now remote and the questions of unity and the struggle against the creation of a monolithic party are the important issues. On those issues we see eye to eye with the WP comrades. Another important question is the utilization of democratic demands to mobilize the masses of Europe for the socialist revolution and on that issue the WP is closer to the minority.

It is only because there are formally two parties that the bloc of the minority with the Cannonites exists. It is only because we are so interested in achieving unity of all three tendencies in the Fourth International that we adhere to the formal rules which bind us, by virtue of the fact that there are two parties.

What some of the majorityites consider disloyal, we of the minority consider loyal. We consider it our duty to talk to and convince the WP comrades that they should be for unity, without any strings attached and without making any maneuvers. We are certain that we have succeeded and that the WP comrades are sincerely for unity, although they fear it because they know the attitude of the Cannonites.

Since our concepts of loyalty clash it is incumbent upon the majority to lay down specific rules of conduct. If the majority thinks that to discuss the question of unity and all its ramifications with the WP comrades is disloyal let them say so specifically and forbid such discussion. The minority will then decide whether to abide by the rule or leave the party. Leaving the party is an alternative because we would consider such a rule as an indication of the party's degeneration.

Comrade Frank contends that no such rule is necessary. Just as we do not pass a rule against crossing a picket line so do we not pass a rule against talking or discussing with the WP. And we expect that no comrade will cross a picket line. As usual, Frank's analogies limp. If some comrade contended that to cross a picket line is perfectly justifiable and would demand a rule against it before he would submit, then I for one, hating formal rules as I do, would not hesitate to pass such a rule. The very hesitation of the majority to pass a specific rule prohibiting the minority members from discussing unity with the members of the WP shows on what weak ground the majority stands.

The members of the minority will continue to regard and treat the members of the WP as devoted revolutionists and will discuss with them all aspects of unity. Let the majority take such action as it deems right to prevent it. But it is downright dishonesty to call the minority "disloyal" without taking some action against its "disloyalty." To hide behind the proposition that during a discussion on a political question it is not correct to take action against disloyal people is another dishonest statement.

This is not a question of breaking discipline. It is a question, according to the ma-

majority, of disloyalty. Disloyalty should be dealt with under all conditions.

Here I want to repeat the charge I made before, that during the period just prior to the entry of Trotskyists into the Socialist Party, Cannon, Shachtman and Burnham secretly held conversations with leaders of the SP, at a time when the majority of the Political Committee was against entry. Cannon denies that. I have the statements of three people who were in a position to know from personal knowledge that such is the case. One of the Oehlerites actually accused Cannon of doing that very thing. I raise this point simply to show that Cannon is sometimes capable of subordinating form to substance.

## Los Angeles

A question that has nothing to do with unity but which I answer because so much confusion has been created around it, is the one asked by Comrade Adler with reference to my article on the refusal of the Los Angeles leadership of our party to organize a united picket line with the WP at the time of the meeting of the fascists.

What was the main burden of my criticism of the Los Angeles leadership? *That it refused to picket the fascist meeting jointly with the Workers Party.* That the decision was not to picket *"unless the labor movement or the CP should do so."* Since it could have been foretold with certainty that the labor movement and the CP would not picket then it was the duty of our party to join the WP on the picket line.

The leadership further stated: "The main line of our campaign should be to get the labor movement to act." This is all to the good but in its context it could mean only that until the "labor movement" acted our party would not act. (See Internal Bulletin No. 6, July 1945).

The article of Murry Weiss as an answer to my criticism should confuse politically immature people but not those with any experience and intelligence. He told us all about the efforts of the Los Angeles leadership to arouse the labor movement after the WP comrades aroused him from his slumbers. Who has any criticism to make of those efforts? No one. Who says that we should not mobilize the masses? No one.

We shall even ignore the trickery which Weiss uses to give inexperienced comrades the impression that our efforts were solely responsible for the calling of the subsequent united front meeting against the fascists. We shall assume that we were responsible. It is clear that it was a meeting which was completely in the tradition of the Stalinist Peoples' Front meetings.

*But, does that meeting exclude picketing?*

Even if we believe that the WP comrades were insane and said that they are not interested in mobilizing the labor movement, does that mean that we should not join in picketing a fascist meeting with them?

All of the innumerable pages written by Weiss cannot and do not answer these simple questions.

I said in my criticism that we would correct the line of Los Angeles. And we did.

And Detroit proves that we did. Did we wait for the labor movement to mobilize the masses in Detroit before we took the initiative to picket the fascist meeting? Unless one is a thorough-going formalist and considers the motion of the Wayne County Council as a mobilization of the labor movement. We correctly took advantage of that motion to try to get more workers on the picket line. We correctly got the executive board of some unions to favor a picket line. But the party would have and should have gone out on the picket line even if those motions had not passed. And in reality that is what happened.

We did not follow Weiss's original prescription—to wait for the labor movement or the CP to take the initiative. And this is correcting his line.

## Unprecedented Nonsense

Cannon has been repeating with an air of great profundity that the situation is unprecedented—the situation of unity between two parties that are in disagreement on some important political and theoretical questions. We shall grant for the sake of argument that the situation is unprecedented. Surely this is no obstacle to Bolshevism.

We speak a great deal about Bolshevism tradition but we forget that the most important tradition of Bolshevism on organizational and tactical questions is that we do not feel ourselves bound by tradition. (Comrades who were present at the Plenum say that I actually said that we have no traditions. I of course spoke nonsense. *We have traditions but we are not bound by them.*)

If the situation is unprecedented then it is up to us to set a precedent. If the situation is unprecedented it not at all complex.

The members of the WP split from us in 1940. They were wrong. We said then that the differences were compatible with membership in one party. The split was based on the question of the defense of the Soviet Union and the question of the regime. More than five years have passed and those who are now in the WP showed that they have been loyal to the fundamental principles of the proletarian revolution. For political people who are not motivated by fear of differences the question of reuniting the forces that were once together presents itself immediately. Especially since the question of the defense of the Soviet Union is no longer the burning issue that it was.

Two separate questions present themselves. One is whether the political premises for unity exist. That simply means whether we have the same fundamental program and the same program of immediate action and whether the differences that still exist are compatible with membership in one party. The second question is whether the two groups can work harmoniously in one party in spite of the political differences. The first question can be answered by an analysis of the program and activities of the Workers Party plus the differences that divide us. The second question can be answered only by a preliminary period of close cooperation.

As a matter of fact the minority is certain that it can live harmoniously with the WP comrades because it has made an estimate of them as devoted revolutionists and thus has indicated confidence in them and acquired their confidence in us.

With the majority it is an altogether different question. The majority has designated the WP as renegades, betrayers of Marxism, petty-bourgeois adventurers and by other choice names. Naturally this does not result in an atmosphere conducive to unity. We therefore say that a period of cooperation to prepare the membership of both parties for unity is essential.

The majority answers: The question whether or not the political premises for unity exist is an abstract question. We cannot answer it by yes or no. We must probe the differences and see the attitude.

But what will the majority answer after they know that the differences are what they are claimed to be by Cannon and others? They have already listed the differences. No answer is given to that question except the formula: it is an abstract question.

A picture of real political bankruptcy was furnished by Comrade Graham who spoke at the Plenum on behalf of the majority. Since he is the most serious and honest of the majority he presented the picture in all its nakedness. He said that the discussion which the majority resolution provides for is *for the purpose of educating the rank and file.* The leadership knows the differences but we must educate our membership.

Thereupon I interrupted and was permitted to ask the following questions:

"As a leader do you know the differences between us and the WP?"

"Yes."

"In your opinion are they compatible or not compatible with membership in one party?"

"I cannot answer that question. I stand by the resolution . . . blah . . . blah . . . blah."

When the leaders of the party say that the purpose of the discussion is to acquaint the rank and file with the differences and, at the same time, claim that they know the differences and do not want to say whether those differences are compatible with membership in one party, then it constitutes an abdication of leadership.

A leader of a revolutionary party is in duty bound to give his opinion on any important political question before attempting to "educate" the rank and file.

Not so long ago Cannon and his leading followers not only claimed that they knew all about the differences and did not want to discuss them but were ready to tell the rank and file that unity was out of the question.

They did not wait to discuss the differences and educate the rank and file before they made up their mind that unity was undesirable. Why is it that now it is all-important to educate the rank and file without telling them whether they should be for or against unity?

The reason is simple. They did not want unity before and were not afraid to say

so before any discussion. They do not want unity now but do not want to say so in so many words after discovering that leading comrades of some sections of the International are definitely for unity.

It is perfectly true that the great majority of the members of our party do not know the nature of the differences between us and the WP and it would be very good to discuss those differences with the WP in order to clarify the minds of the members.

But in the first place it is the duty of the leadership to take a position on the question whether those differences are compatible with membership in one party. And in the second place it is necessary to discuss them with the WP after taking a position in favor of unity.

A discussion is in order but it should be one that is carried on through joint discussion bulletins and joint membership meetings. What the WP stands for can be found out much better from the WP members themselves in joint discussions. Such discussions will serve not only to educate our members but also to eliminate misunderstandings.

After the Plenum we found out that Cannon contemplates a "discussion" where we write articles for our press and the WP answers in their press. This is in reality not a discussion but one of the old-time "enlightenment campaigns" carried on by the Stalinist leadership to "educate" their followers.

The leadership of the majority claims that the question whether the differences between us and the WP are compatible with membership in one party is an abstract one. Will it become less abstract after we hold the discussion? The majority of the members were taught up to a few weeks ago that our differences on the Soviet Union, on the national question and other

questions made unity impossible. The discussion will not abolish the differences; will unity be possible or impossible when we discover that the discussion does not eliminate the differences?

It is a question, say some of the majority leaders, of the attitude of the WP to our party. But how will the discussion on the theoretical and political differences reveal the attitude of the WP? It will simply reveal what every leader already knows: that there are differences and that they cannot be eliminated by the "discussion" contemplated by Cannon.

The attitude of the WP to unity is a very important question. But the WP has already come out in favor of unity on the basis of recognizing the political differences and agreeing to abide by discipline in action. Shall we say that the WP is dishonest? But the very fact that it is willing to give up its own party, its own leadership and its own public press is or should be conclusive proof that they are sincere.

Some comrades naively (and some not so naively) claim that the WP wants to enter our party for a raiding expedition. What foolish people they would be to do that under the present circumstances. And besides, they are demanding the right to publish a tendency organ. And that of course is an almost insuperable obstacle. The WP comrades know that. If they are dishonest would they not agree to anything we want in order to "enter" our party for raiding purposes? The majorityites jump from one argument to another—all equally bad—in order to avoid unity.

By raising the question of attitude Cannon furnishes himself with a pretext to come out openly against unity at any time he sees fit. What will follow is not so difficult to foresee. When the comrades of the WP find out the nature of the "discussion" they will be asked to conduct, they will undoubtedly characterize it as we do: a piece of fakery. This will of course show a hos-

tile attitude. When the comrades of the WP publish an unflattering review of Cannon's "History" this will also show a hostile attitude. Cannon and his followers will then say: see, we told you. The attitude of the WP makes unity impossible.

The truth is and it must be said over and over again: the attitude of the majority leadership makes unity impossible.

### Cannon, Unity and Arithmetic

The picture has become clear after the Plenum. Cannon intends to prevent unity by aimless discussions on questions that have almost been relegated to history. The reason for his fear of unity is also clear. It is a question of arithmetic.

We were told by Cannon that if our party had five thousand members and the WP three hundred, unity would be a good risk. We could then take care of an obstreperous minority. But Cannon knows now that the WP has close to five hundred and our party has about twelve hundred. That is not a big enough majority for Cannon. Arithmetic tells Cannon that the WP comrades together with the present minority would be too large for him to handle easily.

In reality Cannon's attitude means: I cannot meet ideas with ideas; I must depend upon a certain majority. I must get a few thousand more raw workers and train them to follow me and then I can afford to have a minority of four to five hundred, if I have to make unity.

In the resolution which the minority first introduced on behalf of unity it is stated: "The question of unification with the comrades of the WP is thus of enormous symptomatic importance in determining the kind of party we want to build. The party's decision will be a touchstone indicating the direction in which we shall henceforth move."

The Plenum has answered: in the direction of monolithism.

ALBERT GOLDMAN.

## Historical Retrogression or Socialist Revolution?

### A Discussion Article on the Thesis of the IKD

#### PART II

#### THE TEST OF EVENTS

I propose now to test the retrogressionist theory by analysis of the events in Europe. The history of Europe in 1914-39 ensured rapid catastrophe for the bourgeoisie and therefore the immediate emergence of the socialist proletariat. There is where to begin. The first shock was the defeat of France, which, coupled with the subsequent collaboration of the bourgeoisie, drove out the last illusions about the rotten fabric of bourgeois democracy and gave an indication of the tempo of development. The defeat of the air blitz against Britain meant that in the course of the next three or four years modern production would unloose on one side or the other or on both such a weight of steel and lead and explosive as would make any long war impossible. The same would also loosen every bolt of the bourgeois structure. The performance of the Russian armies in front of Moscow, Leningrad and the great battle at Stalingrad not only proclaimed the defeat of Germany but posed to the workers the imminent reckoning be-

tween themselves and the bourgeoisie who had tortured them so long. But it did more. It underlined the bankruptcy of the European bourgeois-democracies and posed for the European workers the question of a "planned economy," of state-ownership, of an end to private property. In all the voluminous writings of the retrogressionists, there has appeared no connected conception of all this, the fundamental Marxist analysis of the war. German defeat being on the order of the day, throughout 1943, the resistance movements all over Europe and Asia and in France and in Poland in particular, were elaborating a *social* program. Thus they were fundamentally posing the question of class rule and state-power. Thus the masses showed as clearly as possible that they did not want any "democratic-political revolution." They wanted Fascism destroyed. But they wanted, in France for example, (1) a complete purge of the Administration so that the almost hereditary caste of officials who had betrayed France should be forever removed, (2) they wanted the property of the trusts, the banks and insurance companies "returned to the nation," (3) they wanted the old official army abolished and a new army based on the popular militia, (later the FFI, and the Maquis), (4) they wanted democracy.

It was, for any Marxist, a most moving experience to see the socialist future thus concretely and courageously emerging, as a result of the ruin and catastrophe of the bourgeois barbarist war. It was also in its way one of the most dramatic demonstrations of Marx's dialectical method that history has yet given us. For he is incapable of understanding revolution who does not see that what the proletariat in its empirical way was demanding was nothing less than the smashing of the bourgeois state-machine, the abolition of the bourgeois army, the substitution of collective property for bourgeois property and democracy, not bourgeois democracy but a democracy based on this overturn of the fundamentals of bourgeois society. That the democracy was not the democracy of the Third Republic they made clear by naming their new republic the Fourth Republic.

In the rest of Europe, the general situation was more or less the same; for example, more advanced in Poland, less in other countries. There is no space here to give evidence, but who wishes to deny this has my very warmest invitation to do so. The overwhelming majority of observers of Europe today report that the masses want the abolition of trusts, state ownership, plus democracy. That, in any language, even Stalinese, is socialism. Everybody knows this except those who wear retrogressivist spectacles.

### The Counter-Revolution Takes Charge

The resistance leaders, and chiefly the Stalinists in every country, countered by promising socialism or at least, abolition of the trusts, in equivocal programs *that meant one thing to the workers and something else to the writers*. In France, for example, the dishonest program for socialism was combined with a relentless propaganda for a de Gaulle government. To the masses this government was represented as being determined to institute the new social order without delay. In March, 1944, the united French resistance movement endorsed a program which, twist and turn as it would, could not avoid the demand for the return of the great sources of wealth to the nation. And when workers with arms in hand say that, the question is posed in actuality and concretely related to the actions of the masses. After the "liberation" of France in August, 1944, the de Gaulle government, as in duty bound, sought to disarm the workers. Civil war, i.e., the socialist revolution, was averted only by a hair's breadth. The Stalinists accomplished it in 1944 in circumstances far more dangerous for bourgeois society than in 1936 when the workers were ready enough. Enjoying enormous prestige from the victories of Russia and their devoted work (on behalf of the USSR) in the resistance movements, they intervened, and one authority ought to be quoted here. Earl Browder in the *Daily Worker* of the United States defended his reactionary class-collaborationist policy in the U. S. by pointing to this notorious counter-revolutionary act in France. As he said complacently, "The facts are known." I hope they are. When Max Lerner returned from France, he reported the bitterness among some resistance leaders that they had missed the opportunity to create the new socialist order immediately on the expulsion of the German troops. Their self-criticism is not important. The thing is that social revolution was posed.

Since then the Consultative Assembly has repeatedly called on de Gaulle to nationalize the great industries, as he promised. Knowing that they are more terrified of the masses than he, he refuses. In May, 1945, on the morning of the municipal elections, the Socialist and Communist Parties issued a joint manifesto calling the de Gaulle government to fulfill the promise of the resistance program and nationalize the property of the trusts. Striving to stifle the revolution in France, these organizations and their resistance counterparts called a conference (which they had the impudence to call the States-General) for the week of July 14, 1945. Over 2,000 delegates attended. Chief result was an oath full of the most asphyxiating democratic verbiage. But there in the heart of it are the words "the fundamental rights of economic and social democracy...to wit...national economic sovereignty incompatible with the existence of private groups such as trusts, whose means of production and property must be restored to the national heritage." The Stalinists dared not leave it out. Many millions of French men and women have no doubt repeated and subscribed to that oath. The big bourgeoisie trembles for its property. That is the temper of France. The CGT has four and a half million members. The Stalinist Party and the Socialist Party are more powerful than ever

they were in 1936. The phenomenon is European. Yet we are to believe that all this is the mark of a great historical retrogression of workers just emerging from slavery.

The proletarian masses all over Europe know and declare that political democracy is not enough. "Economic democracy" is their own phrase. So also is: the confiscation of wealth from the trusts which ruined and betrayed the nation. Since 1942 this has been their steady cry. In France the Popular Republican Movement, a Catholic organization and the great hope of the bourgeoisie, has come out for nationalization. All the moderate parties can only hold their own by raising the demand for nationalization. And it is since 1942 that the retrogressionists have declared for their "democratic-political revolution." For the past year they present the amazing spectacle of revolutionary socialists bringing to the front democracy while bourgeois and Stalinist parties win elections on popular leaflets demanding the abolition of trusts. While even counter-revolutionary parties can exist only by shouting nationalization (which *for the workers* means socialism), the vanguard of the vanguard sees the main task as the propaganda of democratic slogans owing to the historical retrogression.

### Constituent Assembly, Bourgeois or Proletarian

I look back to more than a nodding acquaintance with our movement during the past hundred years. I cannot find its equal. And yet they can only get out of it by a radical break with the whole past of their theory and practice. From the moment they put forward their theory the retrogressionists were in an inescapable dilemma. Others have found themselves in it. In 1905 Lenin, facing a *bourgeois-democratic revolution*, posed this problem before his vacillating opponents. "And if we are in earnest in putting forward the practical demand for the immediate overthrow of the autocratic government, then we must be clear in our minds *as to what other government* we want to take the place of the one that is to be overthrown." (*Selected Works*, vol. III, p. 21.) The retrogressionists have never answered and to this day cannot answer this question. In France, in Holland, in Belgium, etc., they proposed to enter the resistance movements. They proposed seriously to take part in the overthrow of the Nazi or collaborationist governments. But "*what other government*" was to take its place! They had nothing to say, they could have nothing to say, owing to their great historical retrogression. Their "democratic-political revolution" was a revolution of a bourgeois type. The Stalinists and the rest knew what they wanted—a bourgeois government, and fought fiercely to get it. On this point the retrogressionists could not distinguish the French proletariat from the French bourgeoisie in the traditional manner of the Fourth International. Somehow the relation of bourgeoisie and proletariat in the process of production had altered. On this all-important question of a government—silence.

But maybe their slogan was "the democratic-political" slogan of a Constituent Assembly to decide the form of government. If anything could awaken the Marxist dead, this would. Half of Lenin's struggle against the Mensheviks in 1905 was over this very question of a Constituent Assembly. And this, mind you, was a bourgeois-democratic revolution. Lenin did not object to the slogan as a slogan. He wanted a Constituent Assembly, but an "assembly which would have the power and force to 'constitute.'" He wanted a provisional revolutionary government. "By its origin and fundamental nature such a government must be the organ of the people's rebellion. Its formal purpose must be to serve as an instrument for the convocation of a national Constituent Assembly." But, and here the great revolutionary speaks, "Its activities must be directed toward the achievement of the minimum program of proletarian democracy." This program for Russia, 1905, was the destruction of Czarism, formation of a republic and *abolition of feudal property*. Lenin continued: "It might be argued that the provisional government, owing to the fact that it is provisional, could not carry out a positive program which had not yet received the approval of the whole of the people. Such an argument would be sheer sophistry, such as is advanced by reactionaries...and autocrats." (*Selected Works*, III, p. 51.) Compare this with the "democratic-political revolution." Its maximum demand was—restore democracy.

Trotsky in 1931 solved this problem for Spain by calling the Constituent Assembly a Revolutionary Constituent Assembly,

thereby cutting it off at one stroke from the petty-bourgeois chatterers and fakers. He demanded that the *Assembly itself* confiscate the railways, mines, etc. No fooling the people with writing academic constitutions à la Weimar. The armed people should institute *their* government, and *their* assembly which would act. (This is not merely past history. Later I shall again expose the retrogressionist "Constituent Assembly" slogan.) But the fact remains that instead of boldly posing to the revolting workers, and peasants, in their factory committees, resistance committees, peasant committees, the formation of a government to carry out immediately—but to carry out what? There the retrogressionist thesis hung at their feet like a ball and chain. There was no feudal property. The only thing a revolutionary government could do was to drive out Pétain, institute a workers' government and seize the bourgeois property. But to say that meant the collapse of the whole retrogressionist thesis. So retrogression kept quiet.

Let us return to events. In Greece, for three whole days, the power lay in the streets. It could have been seized, big capitalists tried and shot, their property confiscated, with incalculable consequences for Eastern and all Europe. Revolutionists should have prepared the armed masses to seize precisely such an opportunity and to set themselves up as the government. As far as it could, retrogression said—retrogression, and when the British and Greek reaction massacred the Greek masses, said, "You see, we said so. Everything and everybody is retrogressive."

North Italy is perhaps the most striking refutation of retrogression. There, as we have seen, during the last months of the war, the workers had to be appeased by decrees (no doubt phoney but yet significant) which "socialized" industry. Great strikes shook the Northern provinces and the workers collaborated with armed partisans. I ask the retrogressionists. Wasn't it here that the revolutionaries should have said, "Remember Greece. See what de Gaulle and Pierlot are doing. At the first sign of German retreat we shall confiscate these factories, our resistance committees will deal with the Germans and the bourgeoisie and establish a workers' government?" But for the Stalinists, they would in all probability have done just that. As it was, not knowing that they were in a great retrogression they negotiated with Mussolini, executed numbers of fascists and capitalists, purged the government and, from the latest accounts, not only seized the factories but are still running them. Thereby they showed in practice what they thought of the "democratic-political revolution."

Innumerable examples can be given to show without any contention or doubt that the objective movement of events in Europe imposed upon the working masses both the need and the opportunity to seize state power. Historical development has placed objectively before the nation the necessity of leadership by the proletariat. This is *the* historical movement of our times—not retrogression. The "screwed-back development" and the "democratic-political revolution" are in no way substantiated by events.

### Retrogression Today

The whole retrogressionist thesis compelled it to confine itself to the concept of the "democratic-political revolution," i.e., demanding the *restoration* of the bourgeois-national state. The terrible thing is that this is their program for Europe today. Look at what they think of the contemporary European proletariat. "Political consciousness," they say, "lives only in... groups and individuals ('isolated and decimated propaganda groups,' i.e., a few hundred Trotskyists). (P. 240.) The European proletariat *today* has no political consciousness. Obviously, then, there is no use talking of socialism.

According to retrogressionist accumulation: "The proletariat has again, as formerly, become an amorphous mass, the characteristics of its rise and its formation have been lost." Just pause and contemplate for a few awed minutes the historic sweep of that statement. Who says A says B. "Before Europe can unite itself into 'socialist states,' it must first separate itself again into independent and autonomous states." The retrogressionists have no conception of revolutionary dynamics. They adhere to fixed and formal stages which have no application to contemporary Europe. Must Esthonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Poland set up free and independent bourgeois states again before they can become socialist? Are we, the socialist revolutionaries of the twentieth century, to become sponsors of bourgeois states created by a "democratic-political rev-

olution"?' And, concretely, what Europe are these comrades looking at?

At Yalta and at Potsdam, an American, an Englishman and a Georgian living in Moscow *settled the fate of all Europe*. The rulers of the "independent," "autonomous" states, like you or me, read what these three Titans had for lunch, what music they listened to after dinner, and then learned their own fate in the lying communiqués. During World War I it was one of Lenin's basic arguments on self-determination that economic domination did not mean political domination. Today, and that is the new stage, economic and political domination go hand in hand. With trifling exceptions (e.g., Norway and perhaps Denmark), every single European government in existence was established by imperialist power, could not have been established without it and is maintained by it. Stalin maintains the bourgeois states in Eastern Europe. With the possible exception of France, Truman is responsible for the maintenance of every government in Western Europe. That is the new Europe. And today, we, the Marxists, are to call on the workers to revolt to substitute new bourgeois governments "independent" and "autonomous" in order then to prepare for socialism. There is a case where in the phrases of Blake, the embattled angels must throw down their spears and water heaven with their tears. For even they could not establish an independent bourgeois Poland! It would take a volume to show the ruin which the retrogressionists make of Marxism. For example, a bourgeois-"democratic-political" revolution in Poland? Which class is to lead it? The Polish bourgeoisie? In Greece, is the Greek bourgeoisie to lead the revolution against Britain? Is it? If, in France, the bourgeoisie moved from German fascism to Anglo-American imperialism, as it did, is there the slightest reason for thinking that any revolution anywhere in Europe would not have to fight against its own bourgeoisie which needs the protection of one imperialism or another? Are the workers so stupid as to be unable to understand the simple truth of Europe today? The proletariat must lead the revolution for national independence, so that the revolution must be a socialist revolution. The retrogressionist analysis of nations expropriating other nations drives them, by implication, to give a revolutionary rôle to the bourgeoisie which it is incapable of playing. This is where you land by tampering with the fundamentals of Marxism. The retrogressionists say with pride that now everybody repeats their thesis that Europe is Balkanized. What self-delusion! Everybody says exactly the opposite, that Europe is *not* Balkanized. Everybody sees that one power dominates Eastern Europe and one power or rather a major power and satellite dominate the other half. These comrades cannot see the difference between Versailles and Potsdam. Finally let us compare these bold innovations with the Marxism we still believe in. This was written during World War I by Trotsky:

"If the German armies achieved the decisive victory reckoned upon in Germany at the outset of the war, then German imperialism would doubtless make the gigantic attempt of a compulsory war tariff union of European states which would be constructed completely of preferences, compromises and heaps of every kind of outworn stuff in conformity with the state structure of present-day Germany. Needless to say, under such circumstances, no talk would be possible of an autonomy of the nations, thus forcibly joined together as the caricature of the European United States. Let us for a moment admit that German militarism succeeds in actually carrying out the compulsory half-union of Europe, what then would be the cardinal formula of the European proletariat? Would it be the dissolution of the forced European coalition and the return of all peoples under the roof of isolated national state? Or the restoration of 'automatic' tariffs, 'national' coinage, 'national' social legislation, and so forth? Certainly not. The slogan of the European revolutionary movement would then be the cancellation of the compulsory, anti-democratic form of the coalition with the preservation and zealous furtherance of its foundations, in the form of the complete annihilation of tariff barriers, the unification of legislation and above all of labor laws. In other words, the slogan of the United Socialist Europe—*without monarchy and standing armies*—would under the foregoing circumstances become the unifying and guiding formula of the European revolution." (*Proletarian Revolution in Russia*.)

Trotsky never moved and never would have moved one inch from that. A few months before Stalin murdered him he wrote in

the Manifesto: "The shifts in the battle lines at the front, the destruction of national capitals, the occupation of territories, the downfall of individual states represent from this standpoint only tragic episodes on the road to the reconstruction of modern society." Not historical retrogression to the Middle Ages but an episode on the road to socialism. After Stalingrad the masses saw it more or less that way too.

### "The Unifying and Guiding Formula"

This is no thesis on Europe today. I have no space for that. But a few things have to be said, and Germany offers a more than excellent example. Here the proletariat, if anywhere, is "an amorphous mass." Here presumably we must have an "independent, autonomous state" before the struggle for socialism begins, and this, if you please, by a revolution. The retrogressionists presumably propose for Germany as the first slogan: withdrawal of the occupation armies. Good. Next. Freedom of press and right to organize. Agreed.

Now what next? Constituent Assembly? Constituent Assembly for what? That is the question. To have some more German professors write another Weimar Constitution? What do the retrogressionists mean by a "democratic-political revolution" for Germany? Do they mean the resurrection of a democratic German capitalism? Here is a new chance for you to clarify us, comrades. If Germany is to be free, then production must be free. Are Marxists to give the slightest countenance to the idea of capitalism once more being given free scope in Germany? We await your answer.

Marxism in Germany today demands withdrawal of occupying troops, right of free press and the right to organize. That has not one whiff of retrogression. But it demands today a revolutionary provisional government elected by the people to *destroy capitalism in Germany*. (And we might say boldly also that if the occupying armies were to withdraw tomorrow, we would summon the people to arm themselves and carry out this program in a revolutionary manner.) A superb slogan, of deep historical significance, has already come out of Germany. "Not National Socialism, but the Socialist Nation." This in the light of their dreadful past has meaning for all Germans. This is the appeal the German workers must make to Europe. This must be coupled with slogans embodying ideas such as: Do not take away the factories. Do not limit our production. Let us join the European working class in a new European socialist order.

Nothing else but this will counter the bourgeois propaganda that a free Germany means war once more. This is the way to pose now before the German people and the rest of Europe a unified Europe, the Socialist United States of Europe.

The retrogression thesis on Germany today, ridiculous as it is, merely continues its policy of yesterday. It is obvious that this thesis could see no sort of proletarian socialist revolution in Germany or Italy. There, in excelsis, the proletariat was "amorphous mass," etc. The European Trotskyist movement saw Germany as the key to the European situation and to its eternal credit and honor never for one moment drew back or equivocated on its belief in the capacity of the German workers to make a revolution in the manner envisaged by Trotsky in 1938. The retrogressionists, however, in full accordance with their theory, obviously had abandoned the German revolution, even after the altogether magnificent revolution of the Italian workers, which should have wiped away all doubts about the recuperative power of the proletariat under fascism. For them the Socialist United States of Europe was no unifying slogan but a phrase. Their revolution in the occupied countries was "democratic-political." But the formation of factory committees and soviets for Germany or Italy, the beginning of the socialist revolution, as Trotsky envisaged it in 1938, that their conception of the proletariat did not allow them to see at all.

### The Failure of the German Workers

The German workers failed to achieve a coordinated revolt. The exact reasons for this we do not know and doubtless before very long they will tell us for themselves. But this much the present writer has always believed and does not waver from it. After Stalingrad the German bourgeoisie was doomed. As the climax approached it was obvious that no class would be able to hold the German nation together except the proletariat. It has turned out

that such was the destruction and ruin of Germany that the nation, including the proletariat, collapsed completely. Germany is held together today by occupying armies. But if tomorrow the occupying armies were to leave, the proletariat would, as in Italy, reassert itself with the utmost rapidity. Had there been a revolution in Germany, despite the fact that invading armies would have entered, the whole European situation would have been altered. Not only would the German proletariat have started with a clean slate in its own eyes. It would have won sympathy and support from the European workers at one stroke. And this revolution would have immensely altered the relation of forces in the hitherto occupied countries. As it is, the German failure hangs heavily not only over Germany, but over Europe also.

Churchill can write and Attlee sign at Potsdam with no reaction from British workers. The European workers are apathetic in regard to Germany. The conception of the Socialist United States of Europe did not get that final reinforcement from the German revolution. The German workers, in the popular mind, share the responsibility for Nazi crimes as the Italian workers do not.

The defeat hangs over us all, but on no revolutionary current does it hang so heavily as on the retrogressionists. What kind of defense can they make of the German workers today which would square with their theory of the "amorphous mass"? None that can hold water. They do not say that the German workers were fascist-minded, but all they can do is to apologize. Where the petty bourgeois democrats claim that the German workers must be educated for democracy, the retrogressionists claim that the German workers must be organized with democracy and educated for socialism. It is better, but not much better. *For to this very day* they consider the German workers incapable of a socialist proletarian revolution until they have passed through the school of democracy. They can only hold up before them their labor-camp revolution for democracy, the restoration of bourgeois society, of an "independent, autonomous" German bourgeoisie.

### The Bourgeoisie and the Constituent Assembly

History repeats itself as farce, says Marx. It needs the pen of the *Eighteenth Brumaire* to describe the shameful farce that is being played around this slogan of Constituent Assembly in France today. France had a constitution, free elections and all the bag of bourgeois tricks—the hated Third Republic. Now de Gaulle proposes elections to decide whether France should have the constitution of 1875 over again or whether the newly elected body should be a Constituent Assembly to draft a new constitution. The debate is rich. Two chambers or one! Will the executive have *more* power, as in the U. S., or will the cabinet be irremovable until a general election, as in Britain? Will we have proportional representation? Yes, say the socialists, *firmly, very* firmly. No, says some other party, equally firmly. Will Catholic schools be state-aided? And so on and so forth. This the professors will babble about for seven months after October and then produce another Weimar Constitution in French. Then we shall prepare for some real constitutional elections. Meanwhile de Gaulle asks that during this time his government have the power. "No," says the Consultative Assembly, "you can have it, but—the Constituent Assembly in the intervals of its constitution-writing will keep an eye on you and if it doesn't like what you are doing it will have the power to turn you out."

Was ever a device more patently calculated to do what de Gaulle has done for one year—do nothing, secretly consolidate his power inside the administration and outside it, and wait for the fatigue and disgust of the masses?\*

Can we summon up a little revolutionary imagination or rather memory and think how Marx, Engels, Lenin or Trotsky would have torn into this! Are Marxists to lend themselves to it? This is what we should say. ["We do not want any talking shop" (as Engels called the constitution-drafting assembly at Frankfurt in 1848.)] We do not want any Constituent Assembly to *write any bourgeois constitution*. We want a Revolutionary Provisional Constituent Assembly or a Revolutionary Provisional Government which will first and foremost arm the whole people in a national

\*The actual word Constituent Assembly is not in question here. I would raise Trotsky's slogan the Revolutionary Constituent Assembly. In France the slogan of a Convention might have a tremendous historical appeal.

militia to ensure its own defense. We want it to carry out the program of the resistance and socialize the property of the trusts. We want it to appoint people's courts to complete the purge. We want the FFI and the Maquis to become the nucleus of a popular army. We want the representatives of the CGT, the Socialist Party, the Communist Party, the peasants' associations, the Radical-Socialist Party, etc., to formulate a plan of economic action to save France from the present ruin. We want the workers in the factories to control production according to this plan. The planners and the workers will establish universal labor discipline to rebuild France. What we want is a second revolution.

"We propose freedom for the colonies and a joint economy with them. We propose the same to the British government. Europe can never recover as isolated states. Leave the German factories to the German workers. Atomic energy means that we in Europe shall live forever in terror and end by being blown to pieces unless we unite. A workers' France in a Socialist United States of Europe."

Concrete slogans are not my business here. But the above is what we should say. One cannot call today for workers' power. That opportunity was presented at the moment of the "liberation" and should have been prepared for. *Today* that would be madness. If an election for a nasty, stinking bourgeois Constituent Assembly should intervene, then most certainly we take part. But in the present period we link the concrete demands and concrete organizations to an incessant socialist propaganda. How long will it take before the masses mobilize for direct action? What a question! After World War I the general strike in France came in 1920. After November, 1918, in Germany the Kapp Putsch came in 1920, the March Action in 1921. Trotsky has more than once told us that but for the war the 1917 crisis in Russia would have been delayed for one or two years. Truman prepares to suppress "desperate men" this winter. We prepare by mobilizing the masses. Europe is ruined. It has to be rebuilt. Only the united efforts of the workers can rebuild it. History will take its course. That course will never be charted by those who believe that the European proletariat nowhere has any chances of seizing power in the course of the next five years. The revolutionary explosions may be delayed. They may come with striking suddenness and spread like a prairie fire. Trotsky wrote many times about this. Take up your copy of the *History* and read the first paragraph of Volume III, Chapter XI, page 250.

What is the retrogressionist view? We must, they say, study Lenin's writings in 1908 in order to know how to act in 1945. Here is the quintessence of retrogression. Lenin in 1908 was seeking to rebuild a movement and lift a proletariat which had just been *defeated, after* a tremendous revolution. For the retrogressionists, the would revolution has failed to come. No "if" here, and the proletariat is in ruins. In the "Materials for Revision of the Party Program," May, 1917, Lenin says that precisely because of "the enormous obstacles in the path of the economic and political struggles of the proletariat, the horrors of the imperialist war and the disaster and ruin caused by it, all these factors transform the present stage of capitalist development into an era of proletarian socialist revolution. That era has begun." May, 1917. Isn't it ten times worse today?

This was Lenin's perpetual cry in 1917. Russia is ruined. Europe is ruined. The ruin continues. The misery of the people grows. The only way out is by moving to socialism. What other way out is there today? We may have to go underground. We go. Messrs. Retrogressionists, hat in hand and on my knees, I beg of you. Tell us. Are you prepared to pose socialism to the European people today? If not, why not? And so that there can be no fooling, is your proposal this: That as the French proletariat is an "amorphous mass," lacking "political consciousness," all that we can do is to propose the "democratic-political" slogan of a Constituent Assembly to decide the form of bourgeois government, so that the masses might have time to be educated by the few politically-conscious people, the isolated and decimated Trotskyists? Again! Where do you stand on Italy? There the government does not overcome a crisis in order to function but functions solely by overcoming crises. Are the Italian workers such an "amorphous mass" so lacking in political consciousness that Marxists have in 1945 to shout for a democratic republic? Or do we tell them that nothing, nothing but the destruction of bourgeois property and their own class actions can save the nation from ruin? That will take care of the

King? A famous observation of Trotsky during the Spanish revolution was that we fought willingly in Negrin's armies, but not even then would we sponsor the bourgeois republic or any of its works, even its budget for war against Franco. In India and colonial countries, says the Founding Conference, we tie together "indissolubly" the Soviets, the Constituent Assembly and agrarian reform, which means in reality agrarian revolution. In Europe today what do we tie indissolubly to the Constituent Assembly? Right of free press and right to organize or abolition of bourgeois property and workers' militia? But if you say abolition of bourgeois property and workers' militia, then where is the retrogression? The more one considers the retrogressionist theories, the more incredible they become. It seems that they are firmly convinced that absolutely the greatest mistake a revolutionary party in Europe can make is to say: "Form soviets, organize to overthrow bourgeois society. Only socialism can save us." You can sum up their whole thesis thus. Above all, no socialist agitation.

### The Role of the Party

The retrogressionists made a pronouncement which has caused a vast amount of confusion. The task they said and still say was to rebuild the labor movement. Whereupon proponents and opponents alike took this to mean labor parties, trade unions, co-operatives, etc. These were destroyed; obvious retrogression; therefore they had to be rebuilt. Socialism? Afterward. But, as it was so easy to foresee, the workers in many countries were rebuilding them even before the Germans got out. They did not consider themselves defeated as in Russia of 1908. They seized bourgeois printing houses and printed their papers. The CGT has four and a half million members. In Italy the CP and SP have a million and a half members between them.

Now the retrogressionists say that they did *not* mean the labor movement, social-democratic parties, etc. They meant scientific socialism—the revolutionary party. What a mess! But let that pass (for the time being). They say that since the treachery of the Stalinists in Spain (1938) there has been no revolutionary party. Isn't this pathetic? Since 1934 the Fourth International has as one of its basic doctrines that there was no revolutionary socialist party except ourselves. In 1935 Trotsky wrote in *Whither France?*

"But it is a fact that there is no revolutionary party in France." Yet in the same article he says: "*Victory is possible!* Comrades... the Bolshevik-Leninists summon you to struggle and to victory." (Page 117.) The Bolshevik-Leninists! Those were our few comrades in France. I doubt if they were more numerous than today. Today the cadres are certainly stronger. The whole thesis ends in a grandiose zero and multitudinous explanations. Push the retrogressionists on their "amorphous mass," they say "no labor movement." Push them on "the non-existence of the labor movement," they say "no party." Show them Trotsky and the small French party in 1934 onwards summoning the workers to socialist revolution, they say—*Christ only knows what they say.* We ask the retrogressionists: What is new about scientific socialism and the labor movement in France, Italy, Belgium, Spain, Britain, since we declared for the Fourth International in 1934? What has happened to justify a new political orientation "because there is no party"? They announce with a luxuriant verbiage that the task is to build the party. We are to link scientific socialism to the labor movement? Wonderful! How do you propose to do this? By giving classes? Or by teaching the workers to preserve democracy! As if the desperate class struggle will wait. What, comrades, do you think Trotsky was trying to do between 1934 and his death? What do you think he was doing in France when in the name of our little party he was putting forward the revolutionary socialist program and calling the workers to victory. Strange as this may seem to you, he was building the party, building it with a correct policy in the concrete circumstances. *He didn't ask history to wait while parties were being built.*

### Scientific Socialism and the Labor Movement

In 1934 there was an armed clash in the streets of Paris. How did Trotsky meet it? All the retrogressionists should either read *Whither France?* or give away their copies. In March, 1935, seeing in the clash of 1934 bourgeois reaction and the instinctive socialist demands of the French proletariat, he writes: "The working masses understand what 'the leaders' do not understand, that un-

der the conditions of a very great social crisis, a political-economic struggle alone, which requires enormous efforts and enormous sacrifices, cannot achieve any serious results." When was France ever in such a social crisis as today? When the great strikes broke out after the elections, Trotsky saw: socialist revolution. "When one and a half million voters cast their ballots for the Communists, the majority of them wish to say: 'We want you to do the same thing in France that the Russian Communists did in their country in October, 1917.'" Three months ago the CP had 900,000 members which today with the YCL and periphery organizations must make them almost equal to the votes of 1936. What have these people joined for? Because they have retrogressed into an "amorphous mass"? Or for Revolution? How are the Stalinists to be defeated? The people flock to them for revolution and we counter by saying: "They are counter-revolutionary. Come to us. We shall save you from the Middle Ages by democracy."

Trotsky calls for committees of action of striking workers and a congress of all the committees of action in France. "This will be the new order which must take the place of the reigning anarchy." (Page 148.) And seven pages later he calls for an organization to reflect the will, the "growing will" of the "struggling masses"—the Soviets of Workers Deputies. According to retrogressionist logic (today) all this was madness. Trotsky should have said: "The labor movement does not exist. It is divided between bourgeois parties, Stalinist and Menshevik. There is no party. We must struggle to maintain democracy until we once more have the labor movement linked to scientific socialism." Is this unfair? Then show me.

Thus the great revolutionary. What would we not give for ten lines, just ten lines, from his pen today?

This spinning out of empty theories about linking scientific socialism to the labor movement is the sum total of retrogressionist wisdom and its last refuge against the interminable contradictions in which it increasingly finds itself. It heaps all its mistakes upon the heads of the workers. In January, 1938, Trotsky wrote on Spain: *The Last Warning*. Of the Spanish revolution he says: "Throughout the six years its social setting was the growing onslaught of the masses against the régime of semi-feudal and bourgeois property."

Compare this and a thousand other statements like it with the retrogressionist analysis of the proletariat during the last forty years.

No man ever insisted upon the importance of the party with greater urgency than Trotsky. Yet he continues:

"The hounding of the Trotskyists, POUMists, revolutionary anarchists; the filthy slander, the false documents, the tortures in the Stalinist offices, the murders from ambush—without all this the bourgeois régime, under the republican flag, could not have lasted even two months."

Is this clear?

"The GPU proved to be the master of the situation only because it defended more consistently than the others, i.e., with the greatest baseness and bloodthirstiness, the interests of the bourgeoisie against the proletariat."

Compare this with the long list of lamentations of the retrogressionists, their view of the modern proletariat, their concentrated hostility to any idea of socialism as a living concrete alternative to capitalism. Europe seethes with ruin and unrest. Workers have hidden their arms. The main prop of bourgeois society is Stalinism, which opposes and demoralizes the revolutionary desires of the masses. How to meet it? Listen to Trotsky again:

"The renunciation of conquest of power inevitably throws every workers' organization into the swamp of reformism and turns it into a plaything of the bourgeoisie; it cannot be otherwise in view of the class structure of society."

Today, in the terrible crisis of Europe, with the workers looking for a way out, the retrogressionists renounce the bold posing of the socialist solution to the workers. For them the workers are defeated as in Russia of 1908. No, now is the time to remember the Lenin of 1905.

"Revolutions are the locomotives of history, said Marx. Revolutions are the festivals of the oppressed and the exploited. At no other time are the masses of the people in a position to come forward so actively as creators of a new social order as at a time of revolution. At such times the people are capable of performing

miracles, if judged by a narrow Philistine scale of gradual progress. But the leaders of the revolutionary party must also, at such a time, present their tasks in a wider and bolder fashion, so that their slogan may always be in advance of the revolutionary initiative of the masses, serve them as a beacon and reveal to them our democratic and socialist ideal in all its magnitude and splendor, indicate the shortest, the most direct route to complete, absolute and final victory." (Vol. III, p. 123.)

Translated to today that means the socialist program. Of the retrogressionist thesis as applied to the United States, there is regrettably no space to speak. It is a credit to our movement that the retrogressionists are almost completely isolated among all currents which embrace the program of the Fourth International. It is only a matter of time before their theory and the ruinous politics which flow from it will only be an unpleasant memory. If, as appears from statements in their document, they should make any attempt to apply it to America, then its exposure in the American movement would only be swifter and surer.

J. R. JOHNSON.

September 10, 1945.

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