

JAMES T. FARRELL: *Cain's Movietone Realism*

The New
INTERNATIONAL

DECEMBER • 1946

BEHIND THE HINDU-MOSLEM STRIFE

By HENRY JUDD

POLITICS OF THE INDIAN BOURGEOISIE

By SUREN MURARJI

THE QUESTION OF "PAKISTAN"

RESOLUTION OF THE BOLSHEVIK-LENINISTS OF INDIA

F. FOREST:

The Nature of the Russian Economy

A Contribution to the Discussion



EDITORIAL COMMENT:

Election Results -- Trieste -- France

ALBERT GOLDMAN:

The Basis of Workers' Democracy

An Answer to Ciliga



MEYER SCHAPIRO:

A Note on "The Open City"

SINGLE COPY 25c

ONE YEAR \$2.00

THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

A Monthly Organ of Revolutionary Marxism

Vol. XII

No. 10, Whole No. 112

Published monthly, except June and July, by the New International Publishing Co., at 114 West 14th Street, New York 11, N. Y. Telephone: CHelsea 2-9681. General Offices: 4 Court Square, Long Island City 1, N. Y. Telephone: IRonsides 6-5117. 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

Last month's issue of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL announced the launching of a campaign to obtain 500 new subscribers to the magazine by January 1, 1947, and also to increase the bundle order sales, based upon increased sales to individuals and increased coverage of newsstands.

Now, in December, we are at the half-way mark of this campaign and are able to report the following achievements.

(1) A substantial number of the 500 subscriptions and new readers sought have been obtained. At present, our agents in the cities of Chicago, New York and Newark (Herman Mies, Paul Bern and Sol Berg, respectively) are leading in the getting of subscriptions, with Herman Mies of Chicago in the lead with 14 new subs. Many of our agents are busy at work on this subscription campaign, but have not yet begun to turn in their results.

(2) New York City has led the way with increased sales and distribution of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL to its agents and on city newsstands. Over 700 copies (an increase of 250) were placed on the important newsstands of the Bronx and Manhattan last month, with prospects for further expansion into the borough of Brooklyn during December. As a result of this expansion, the press run of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL was the largest it has been for a long time during the month of November and the current month of December. Some 3,500 copies were printed and distributed.

Other agents have responded with increased orders of the magazine.

Typical of the work done by our NEW INTERNATIONAL agents is that of our representative in Cleveland, who writes us the following:

"I'm enclosing a postal note for the first three subs in our NEW INTERNATIONAL drive. Three down and twelve to go. A list of all our *Labor Action* renewal subscribers has been divided up and assigned to various comrades for obtaining New INTERNATIONAL subscriptions."

This activity of Comrade Douglas is typical of that carried on by many other agents of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL. Some cities, however, such as New York, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, etc., have fallen down on the job as of this writing and will have to perk up sharply if they want to fulfill their subscription quotas. This goes particularly for New York City, which has a quota of 175 to obtain.

(3) The overseas circulation of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL is now the highest it has been since the end of the war, approximating 600 copies each issue. New subscriptions are constantly coming in, together with requests for bound volumes, back issues, new bundle orders, etc. This foreign circulation promises to grow steadily henceforth, and will be further increased once it becomes possible for the European countries (England, France, Belgium, etc.) to engage in dollar exchanges for payments. THE NEW INTERNATIONAL, along with all printed matter, cannot as yet be sent to Germany, where it would undoubtedly have an excellent circulation if it were permitted entry.

Thus, at the half-way mark, the campaign of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL stands excellent chances of reaching its final goals, BUT much yet remains to be done.

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EDITORIAL COMMENT:

ELECTIONS—TRIESTE—FRANCE

The Republican Sweep

For the first time in fourteen lean years the hungry politicians of the Republican Party have won a major election. On November 5 of this year their vote gained them the substantial majorities in the Senate and the House and for the first time since 1930 they control both legislative bodies of Congress:

For hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions of the new generation, the defeat of what was once Roosevelt's party came as a shock caused by the sudden shattering of a fourteen-year tradition. If millions of youth knew no other President than Roosevelt, they also knew no other administration than that of the Democrats. A man of thirty reached consciousness about the time that the New Deal made its appearance. Older voters also came to regard Republican rule as a dim chapter in history while a Democratic majority appeared as a living tradition.

What was behind the Republican victory?

Given the two party system in this country, i.e., the complete domination of politics by two political parties having more or less identical programs, there is some justification for explaining electoral changes by cycles of rule: exchanging the "ins" for the "outs." But behind the cycles of rule are concrete economic and political factors which explain the victory of one party or the other. It is a crude mechanical materialism which simplifies an analysis of the conduct of the Democratic and Republican Parties with the affirmation that they are both capitalist parties. Unquestionably, they are. But they are also, in the very nature of American politics, coalition parties, i.e., parties which are made up of conflicting elements in the capitalist political superstructure. *Example:* The Republican Party has not only been the party of big capital, but also the party of isolationism, of small business, of the farmer. *Example:* The Democratic Party is not only a party of big capital, it is also the party of Southern reaction and the party of the urban population. *Example:* The Republican Party was the party of the Negro until Roosevelt either smashed or neutralized that alliance. *Example:* The Democratic Party was once the party of "states' rights," but, under Roosevelt, the Republican Party took over that mantle, at least as a propaganda instrument, while New Dealism became the highest form of federalist policy the country has ever known in peacetime.

Thus each party, in general, has represented specific capitalist interests to meet specific conditions as they materialized in the particular manner in which American capitalism developed (lacking a direct feudal background, the factor of slavery, capitalist development almost immediately on a large-scale, trustified basis, years of constant expansion and on a historical scale, a recent formation and solidification of the basic social classes).

Role of the Two Party System

The two party system in the United States has served as a battleground for intra-capitalist class conflicts and as a safety valve through which mass dissatisfaction finds an outlet. For the latter purpose especially, the two party system has been an ingenious device. When the crisis of '29 destroyed the hold of the Republican Party on the masses, the bourgeoisie was able to offer up the Democratic Party—Roosevelt and the New Deal. Thus, no matter how many changes have taken place in the administration of the country, at no time was the bourgeois domination threatened by the victory of one or the other of the parties. At most, it could be said that one section of the bourgeoisie triumphed over another.

It is true, however, that the New Deal did serve to change the heretofore placid course of American politics. Roosevelt came to power at the depth of the severest crisis in national economic and political history. The shattered economy required correspondingly severe measures to keep it from disintegrating totally. The course open to Roosevelt was more or less ordained: he had to organize measures of state intervention to prevent a complete economic collapse, to begin the operation of the machinery of production once more, and to give succor to the masses, lest the dissatisfactions of the millions of unemployed give way to rebellion against the very social system itself.

Historically speaking, the New Deal was nothing more than the enactment of social legislation for sound economic and political reasons. Its main purpose was to save American capitalism. The reformism of the New Deal not only signified that American capitalism was critically ill, but also that it had reached a point European capitalism passed many years ago. Reformism, and the social legislation it produced, came late to this country because the youthful American capitalism had hitherto been strong, its resources enormous, its wealth tremendous—a combination of factors that permitted it to overcome crises with relative ease. European capitalism was already old when the American was reaching its young manhood. But the inexorable laws of capitalist decline finally reached these shores and required a "savior" in Roosevelt and the New Deal.

The New Deal, however, served only as a blood transfusion for the dying capitalist organism, to prolong its life. After eight years of the most elaborate plans and the expenditure of an immense amount of money, the system remained chronically ill. Production rose a little, but did not reveal organic strength. Not until the war broke out in Europe and the United States became the "arsenal of democracy" did the economy begin to make strides forward. But even then, in 1940, when production reached its highest peacetime level, there were still from eight to nine million unemployed. The inability of capitalism, with all the assistance given to it by the state,

to overcome this symptom of permanent economic illness, indicated that the future social relations in this country would take on European forms. A sharp change occurred when the United States entered the war, for the requirements of a new and total war, with its terrifying destruction of materials, created an unusual situation for the economy: there were not enough production facilities, raw materials, or labor. From too much to too little, overnight! American capitalism then began an expansion that surpassed the expectations of even the most optimistic, but this very expansion contains within itself the seeds of a more severe and lasting crisis in the future.

The war economy destroyed any possibility that the Republicans had of taking power from the "magician" in the White House whose "luck" seemed endless. But it wasn't merely a matter of "luck." Compared to Roosevelt, the leaders of the GOP gave the appearance of a lot of hardened old men who never woke up to the facts of modern life. Even Willkie, a "Republican Roosevelt," had to be forced on the party, riven as it was with inner disputes and conflicting interests. The fact that isolationism remained a strong current in the party throughout the war years illustrated the party's backwardness and guaranteed its wartime defeat.

The Republicans as Opposition

In contrast to Roosevelt's world approach, his understanding that the future of U. S. capitalism was bound up with a victory over German imperialism and its powerful economy in the war, the GOP hierarchy was still howling about the WPA, boondoggling, excessive bureaucracy in Washington and high taxes—all of them issues that carry weight only in normal times when the economy is more or less prosperous. That the GOP finally caught up with what was really important expresses not so much its astuteness as the penetrating effect of the larger economic and political problems which face the United States.

The end of the war offered many opportunities to the Republican Party. The death of Roosevelt stripped the Democratic Party of the one person who could lead it in a vigorous political struggle. His authority inside the party was immense. He alone kept its centripetal force in check and if in recent years he could not always command Congressional support for his measures, he could always unite his brethren in an election campaign. The trough of patronage and the strength of unity kept his party of Southern bourbons and northern city bosses together. Both of these wings knew that with Roosevelt they could win; without him they were lost. For despite the abuse heaped upon him for years by the press of the country, the chief of the New Deal reforms maintained his great hold on the support of labor and, in large measure, the lower middle classes.

When one recalls the vigorous administration and the colorful campaigning of the Roosevelt machine, the Democratic Party of Truman and Hannegan appears positively ludicrous. Can one imagine Roosevelt, the leader of his party, remaining silent in the most dangerous national elections the Democrats have faced in fourteen years? But that is precisely what happened in the case of Truman. The party hierarchy gagged the leader! Of his schedule of five major speeches, not one was delivered! Several of the state machines of the Democratic Party gave out the word: We do not want Truman. But we must confess that Truman did not ask for his post. It was thrust on him, an unwilling recipient. It is only necessary to recall his comment, "My God!" when the news of Roosevelt's death was brought to him, in order to grasp his feeling of futility.

It was Truman's misfortune to inherit Roosevelt's admin-

istration toward the close of the war and to find thrust at him the whole problem of administering the country through the reconversion period, the struggle for "peace," and the reorganization of the political program of American capitalism to meet post-war conditions. He is obviously incompetent in his post. Moreover, his party is today a shambles, similar in its decomposition to the Republican Party in 1932. In its present disintegration, produced by great inner schisms, the party proves itself incompetent to respond to the needs of American imperialism with the kind of unity and vigor necessary. There is truth to the charge that the party has grown old in office.

The war economy brought prosperity to America's ruling class. It not only raised its profits, but maintained them throughout the first year and a half of the post-war period at the highest level ever experienced. The continuation of the post-war boom with total employment meant that the demand by the bourgeoisie for an immediate relaxation of war measures would grow. The administration bungled its job there. It also played 'possum with the masses. It did not stop a reactionary Congress from making the masses pay for reconversion as they paid for the war economy. It did not halt price increases; on the contrary, it paved the way for them by lying to the people at large, insisting that it would keep price controls. It promised housing to veterans and workers and helped to pass legislation that prevents a meaningful housing program from being carried out. While it permitted uncontrolled price rises, it maintained control of wages. Admittedly, many other charges against the Truman administration were exaggerated. He was merely the mildly recalcitrant adjutant of a wild Congress hell-bent on answering its masters' voice.

Whatever the precise relationships between Truman and Congress in this period, the fact remains that all the responsibility for the post-war chaos in the country was successfully placed on his shoulders.

Taking advantage of war weariness and deep dissatisfaction, the Republicans swam with the tide. They did not have to campaign on a program. All they needed to do was to follow a negative line of attacking the Democratic Party. That was sufficient to win the "balance of power" vote, i.e., the overwhelming majority of the middle class. It was the labor vote plus a deep inroad upon the middle class that gave Roosevelt and the New Deal their victories. The middle class vote—above all, the farmers—was in the nature of a protest. Strangely enough, it was the war economy and all the difficulties that it created for the middle class which started its movement toward the Republican Party, beginning in 1942. It voted for the political representative of the most powerful section of monopoly capitalism, the most powerful economic enemy of the middle class. But no other political force was present to draw the middle class to it.

The Role of Labor

Labor's role in this election was pitiful in the extreme. The PAC failed ignominiously to bring out the vote in the same way that it did in 1944. The death of Roosevelt is only a partial explanation of this fact. Equally as important as this is the fact that the capitalist politicians whom the PAC helped to elect, treated the labor movement with the contempt it deserved for allying itself with one of the parties of capitalism. Large sections of the working class were simply weary of repeating experiences which showed them the absolute hopelessness of the political course pursued by their leaders.

Those who believe that the Republican victory will result in a complete overturn of the accomplishments of the New

Deal, of the basic foreign policy of the present administration and a wild transformation of labor laws are mistaken. The Republican Party comes to power today with full realization that it cannot turn the clock back without creating domestic chaos. The leaders of the Republican Party will adhere to the main orientation of the big bourgeoisie, now committed to an "internationalist" policy flowing out of its necessity to dominate the world market. Since the base of American capitalism has been transferred from a national to an international one, the Republican Party must go through a mutation and pursue an analogous political course. The American bourgeoisie cannot, for example, withdraw from the United Nations, which is the arena in which the "peaceful" stage of the new world competition is being fought out. Republican foreign policy will therefore continue along the main highway which this country traveled during Roosevelt's reign, and now Truman's. Undoubtedly this policy will be accompanied by different nuances, but it will be basically identical. To believe otherwise is to believe that the class interests of the two parties are antagonistic or that the Democrats followed a policy inimical to the interests of American imperialism.

Corresponding to international needs, the Republican Party will not and cannot destroy the main social legislation of the New Deal. The internal chaos which would ensue from such a policy would paralyze the imperialist program of the bourgeoisie. What the Republican Party will do, however, is modify some of the labor laws (the Wagner Act) and adopt more stringent anti-strike legislation in order to give the state a stronger hold on the reins in the class struggle. In contrast to the statements of their more militant comrades, the Senate leaders of the GOP have already declared that they will not engage in any "punitive acts" against labor and its union movement. The enactment of greater controls over the working class is quite different from a policy aiming at the destruction of the labor movement. That big business would like to return to the open shop conditions of the "prosperity period" is not to say that it is able or ready to achieve such a goal. No, it will proceed with considerable caution in this field.

Nor will the Republicans go in for a hazardous financial policy by a drastic alteration of the budget and an immediate rescinding of the tax laws. That they will seek to cut the budget and reduce taxes is without doubt true. But even now, before the new Congress has convened, they have warned the country at large (and some of their own die-hards) that the budget cut must be approached carefully, that taxes cannot be reduced simply across-the-board and that it is impossible at this time to reduce corporation taxes. The chief GOP leaders are really saying to their followers: let us take it easy, let us wait and see. After all, we don't want to be held responsible for another 1932; we are really only preparing for the elections of 1948. And the competition between the leaders of the party for the post of leader is so strong that each of them, Taft, Vandenberg, Bricker, Stassen, Warren and Dewey, necessarily engages in a great deal of shadow boxing in order to build up a record of constructiveness for himself in the next two years.

For a clear understanding of the meaning of the Republican Party victory it is only necessary to realize that what has happened is that the more conservative wing of the two major American political parties has taken power. Thus while its actions will be aimed at increasing the power of the bourgeoisie at the expense of the working class through legislative acts, no fundamental overturn has taken place in the country. That

labor will have to fight against the policies of the Republican Party goes without saying, but it cannot even begin this struggle without clearly understanding what it is fighting against, and even more important than this, what it is fighting for.

The Road for Labor

Here we come to the heart of the question. The lessons of the labor struggles of the past year are, we think, abundantly clear. It is not in the field of economic struggle that labor is weak; on the contrary, it has shown tremendous vitality, ingenuity and skill. But it is in the political field of struggle that labor has conducted itself with a sense of inferiority, defeat and hopelessness, which springs from its backward, conservative and often reactionary political policies. The labor movement is tied to bourgeois politics and it cannot and will not make any fundamental progress until it breaks decisively with this course. Its economic struggles will always be hampered unless and until the working class becomes a class unto itself. That means that it acts as a working class politically by breaking completely with bourgeois politics and its political parties. The need for an independent Labor Party in this country is to be sought in the economic and political conditions in the country. So long as the working class remains politically unorganized, its economic struggles will be characterized by its limitations, no matter how militant and "farsighted" they may appear to be.

The elections just held only emphasize the above. The great task which confronts the conscious and militant progressives of the union movement is to begin at once the work of creating such a working class political party. The PAC in its short period of existence has shown not only how fatal is the bourgeois political course it has followed, but also how relatively easy it would be to form a Labor Party if the union movement were to put all its resources behind it. The formation of a Labor Party will require a struggle against the conservative, bourgeois-minded labor leaders. This is in the very nature of things. But it is a necessary struggle. It arises because the Labor Party is an indispensable need for the working class to guarantee its first steps toward political progress and economic emancipation.

TRIESTE—CITY BETWEEN TWO WORLDS

As the Council of Ministers met at London's Lancaster House over a year ago in their first session on the post-war treaties, the disposition of the city of Trieste was one of the stalemated questions which deadlocked the conference. Since then the Ministers have moved their sessions to the Luxemburg Palace in Paris and, now, to the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York City. However, neither time nor change in locale seems to have reduced the importance of Trieste on the Ministers' agenda. Quite the contrary, the continued stalemate has elevated the question of Trieste to what appears to be a fantastically disproportionate importance. What is there about this port city on the headwaters of the Adriatic that invests such crucial importance to its control? An investigation reveals that more is involved than Molotov's intransigence, Bevin's belligerence or Byrnes's addiction to American prestige; that the importance which the question has assumed is rooted in reality rather than the diversionary maneuvers of diplomacy.

Trieste combines two features which have made it a coveted spot in Central European politics for nearly a century. The first feature is that it possesses an excellent harbor and

developed port facilities. This, by itself, does not distinguish it from a score of other Mediterranean port cities. It is only in combination with the second feature that its harbor gives Trieste an exceptional status. The second feature is its strategic location on the finger-tips of the long arm of the Adriatic which reaches up into the southern region of Central Europe. These combined features make Trieste the natural outlet to world commerce for an important section of Southern and Central Europe, especially Austria, Hungary and Yugoslavia. This important fact was discovered over a century ago by the land-locked Austro-Hungarian Empire when its capitalist development made it acutely aware of the need for an outlet to the sea and a naval base for a Mediterranean fleet. The development of Trieste into a world port dates from this period.

Were the issue of Trieste confined to whether it should provide Yugoslavia with a direct outlet or whether Italy should hold it as a key to the European hinterland served by the port, it would not transcend in importance the place it occupied at the close of World War I when an Italian coup settled its fate. Its transcendent importance today arises from the fact that it is the natural spot for the Russian world to open a new "window to the sea." Trieste has a tremendous economic and naval importance to the Russian world. In a sense it takes the place of the old Czarist dream of Constantinople. That Russian ambitions should center on the Adriatic rather than on the Dardanelles is by itself a measurement of Russia's changed status as a world power today as compared to the pre-World War I period.

The Anti-Russian Strategy

Like Constantinople, Trieste has only a negative—that is, an anti-Russian—importance to the Western powers. The importance of keeping the decadent Ottoman Empire astride the Dardanelles lay in holding Russia bottled up in the Black Sea. The importance of keeping Trieste out of Russian hands today lies in keeping Russia out of the Adriatic. (The mountainous Yugoslavian and Albanian coasts on the Adriatic offer no good harbors and but poor connections with the interior.) Trieste remains the last possible Russian break-through to the sea before the changed power relations set in flux by the war definitely jell. If Anglo-American imperialism succeeds in keeping Trieste out of Russian hands, it will have contained Russia in its essentially land-locked sphere despite its tremendous territorial gains. Petsamo on the open Arctic serves Russia little better than its own Murmansk. Danzig and Stettin are east of the Danish peninsula and, in effect, leave Russia as distant from the Atlantic as its own Leningrad. The bloody British excursion into Greece to "restore order" headed off the Russian push toward Salonika. Compared to other possible outlets, Trieste was not only more strategically located, but it offered greater possibilities of a Russian success.

All factors, therefore, seemed to combine to make Trieste a pivotal question in determining the future of Central and Southern Europe. Every form of military threat, political pressure and diplomatic stratagem was brought to focus upon this spot. Millions of words and tons of papers were expended in the arguments pro and con—none of which dealt with what was really at stake. Yet in the arguments of neither side appeared as much as a suggestion that perhaps the quarter-million inhabitants of the city and its immediate environs, which compose the province of Venezia-Giulia, should have a voice in determining what kind of government they desire. The inhabitants interested the contending imperialist camps only insofar as they furnished material for inspired demonstrations

in behalf of one side or the other, demonstrations which invariably ended with riots and bloody heads.

A revolutionary Marxist policy applied to this question must make the desires of the population of the area the starting point. Not the Kremlin nor the State Department in Washington, but the people of the disputed territory must decide its fate. The first demand must therefore be for a plebiscite by which the people can determine their own future. In this, as in all other questions, Marxists remain not only consistent democrats but Marxists reveal themselves to be the *only* political tendency capable of a consistently democratic policy today.

The demand for a plebiscite, however, only indicates *who* should decide the question. There still remains the question of *how* it should be decided. To speak of self-determination for Poland or Indonesia today is to speak of independence for these nations. All we demand is that they be given a chance to decide, for the outcome is a foregone conclusion. In the case of Trieste, more is needed. No one can seriously propose statehood for Venezia-Giulia. Aside from the absence of any historic or economic basis for such a demand, the mere fact that not one per cent of its inhabitants could be rallied behind such a proposal reveals that it is not a serious political solution. Nor has it standing as a propagandist slogan. In the sphere of propaganda the Marxists call for a Socialist Italy and a Socialist Yugoslavia in a Socialist United States of Europe.

The proposed solution of a "Free Territory" under United Nations trusteeship means only one of two things: either continued Anglo-American military government, regardless of how it is enforced, or a temporary "solution" while each side conducts the struggle at only slightly reduced tempo aimed at lining up strength for a final showdown.

For Adherence to Italy

The real choice is, therefore, between adherence to Yugoslavia or to Italy. Remaining consistent democrats, the Marxists favor adherence to Italy. Questions of ethnic majorities are not decisive in this instance. What is decisive is that Yugoslavia is a dictatorship that is rapidly becoming totalitarianized in the complete Russian pattern, while Italy is a bourgeois democracy, wretched and unstable, but a bourgeois democracy nevertheless. In Yugoslavia the new Stalinist hierarchy, with Tito at its head, rules through its own GPU and concentration camps, while in Italy a free labor movement lives and struggles and undergoes experiences which, we hope, will produce a mass revolutionary party adhering to the Fourth International. In Yugoslavia even clerical and conservative non-conformists are silenced, while in Italy even the Trotskyists have a legal party and press.

The Marxists of both Yugoslavia and Italy, opponents of both Italian and Yugoslavian chauvinism and of Russian and Anglo-American imperialism, need make no apologies for such a stand. The workers of Trieste are confronted with a choice between slow poison or the bullet through the head. Unfortunately, there is no realistic third alternative today. It is possible to resist the slow poison of bourgeois democracy and grow strong enough to conquer the poisoners. But to survive the bullet is another matter.

That the national composition of Venezia-Giulia is allegedly Slavic in its majority does not affect this demand. The democratic right to join their co-nationals in Yugoslavia is meaningless when this means placing their necks in the noose of Tito's police régime. Slavic nationality has not saved the thousands of inmates of Tito's concentration camps. The ap-

peal for adherence to Italy proceeds not from national or ethnic considerations but solely from the democratic needs of the workers, regardless of nationality. It offers the possibility of enjoying the freedom necessary to organize and struggle.

As with so many other living political questions, the question of Trieste permits no solution compatible with participation in political life for those who still cling to the position that Russia is a workers' state, regardless of how badly degenerated. Proceeding from the latter concept, it is impossible to favor adherence of Trieste to Italy instead of the Russian outpost and prototype, Yugoslavia. We hesitate to demand that the "workers' states" in the Fourth Internationalist movement break their silence on Trieste and give us their answer. The sight of these "Russian experts" prostrate on their backs as they desperately wrestle with the Polish question which we posed to them some months ago precludes such unsportsmanlike conduct on our part. We therefore modestly suggest that they may prefer to call it quits on the Polish question for the time being and make a stab at the Trieste issue. Do you favor solution of the Trieste dispute by plebiscite? If so, how should the workers of Trieste vote?

FRANCE'S "NO EXIT" SIGN

Jean-Paul Sartre, France's famous playwright and exponent of the *existentialiste* school of philosophy, is the author of a new Broadway play, *No Exit*. This sign might well be applied to the present French impasse, more strikingly than ever revealed in the elections of November 10. France now has a government, but the French people have "no exit," no way out, under the present régime. The revival of democracy in France after the liberation could have been, at best, limited in nature. Bourgeois democracy requires at least some flourishing of economic life, some health in the body politic, if it is to be anything but a formality. France has a new Constitution, a newly elected National Assembly, a renovated Luxemburg Palace for the Assembly's gathering hall, but it lacks the vitality and nourishment essential to feed these institutions of bourgeois democracy in its prime. Within one and a half year, and after no less than three elections and two referendums, it is clear that French democracy suffers from pernicious anemia.

Of all the "victor" nations of World War II, France is the most paralyzed, the most entrapped in the new world relationships. On the one hand, almost entirely *economically* dependent upon the good graces of American imperialism for any measure of recovery, the country is almost as entirely *politically* dependent upon the actions of the quisling column of Russian imperialism, the French Communist Party. In essence, the freeing of the French nation from its present bondage could only come about through its winning freedom equally from American economic dependency and from Russian-Stalinist internal political domination. The whole question of France is thus, in the broadest sense, lifted to the international arena; more accurately, to the rewinning of national independence in the European and world framework. Clearly, neither the democratic, pro-capitalist parties (leaning on America and England), nor the totalitarian, Stalinist party (leaning on Russia) is—by definition—capable of leading the nation toward such goals. The dwindling and pathetic Socialist Party (drooping and graying as Leon Blum's mustachios) is merely a symbol of the hopeless waning of "pure" bourgeois democracy and "pure" reformism.

Just as the two mighty monsters of world imperialism,

Russia and America, effectively paralyze French national independence, so does the internal division within the country effectively paralyze the revival and resurrection of the country. True, there has been a certain recovery in economic and industrial production, but entirely inadequate to lift the country even toward its 1939 standards. Black marketing, coal shortages, lack of housing, unemployment, absence of fuel for homes, monotonous and bleak diets, inflation, absence of commodities—all this plagues France in the winter of 1946-47 as profoundly as it did last winter. The same fundamental problem that has been driving French capitalism downward since the First World War—the narrow market straightjacket imposed upon the nation by the monopolistic ownership and control of the means of production—is still in operation. The country rots, while its political parties play with empiric solutions, driven forward by forces they are only half conscious of, toward actions they neither understand nor foresee.

Keep Eye on Each Other

At this writing, the uneasy three-party coalition exists and will doubtless continue indefinitely. But this is no coalition of partners or collaborators. It is a coalition of parties which hate and mutually distrust one another to an inconceivable degree. The coalition form is only a means by which the Catholic-bourgeois party of Bidault (MRP) keeps an eye on the totalitarian, power-seeking Stalinist party, while both carve hunks of flesh off the dying Socialist Party. As the *New York Times* (November 17) expressed it: "The three-party coalition... may be described as a general conspiracy to conceal the gravity of the French political division so long as the principal antagonists agree the time has not come for a show-down."

But there is a more positive reason for the temporary continuation of the coalition. That is the question of nationalizations, partly carried out but momentarily halted due to the hesitations of the MRP. In this coalition government, as the *Times* reports, "... a given party holds several Cabinet posts, which it tends to regard as branches of the party rather than as coordinate parts of a unified administration." This explains how the present coalition differs from prior ones, that of the 1936 Popular Front, for example. The coalition parties seek to root themselves deep into the state apparatus, to penetrate everywhere in preparation for an ultimate show-down. Since the state, under the already achieved nationalizations (coal mines, Bank of France, four largest deposit banks, etc.), exerts a direct power over important areas of production and credit, the control of the instrumentalities of the state (through ministerial portfolios) becomes highly important. Naturally, the Stalinist party, through its domination of the CGT (trade unions), has the inside track in this game of political, state-apparatus penetration. No party will willingly abandon this strategic struggle—thus, the coalition reveals an endurance far beyond legitimate expectations.

Into this intensely confused situation, fraught with the most tragic possibilities for the French people, only a party with clean revolutionary banners can penetrate. A party that grasps the impasse and the causes of the stagnation; a party whose strategy and tactics is not the mouthings of *formulæ*; a party that can clearly explain to the French workers the nature of the situation in which they find themselves, and the fact that only the utmost exertion, leading toward a regaining of its independence of class action and class initiative, can save the French proletariat from bourgeois reaction or Stalinist totalitarian entrapment.

Correct as it is, it does not suffice for the PCI (French section of the Fourth International) to demand of the Socialists and Stalinists that they break the coalition bloc with the bourgeois parties. The French Trotskyists must make Trotsky's judgment that the Stalinist movement represents the greatest danger within the ranks of the working class—that it is, to use his words, "the syphilis of the labor movement"—the inviolable principle for their political strategy and tactics.

The tactic of calling for a CP-SP government or, as today, of calling for a CP-SP break with the coalition government must not be carried out in such a manner as would associate the PCI as part of a CP-SP bloc or, even worse, as a "better edition" of the French CP. Offers of electoral blocs with the CP or endorsement of CP candidates cannot but result in the PCI appearing in this light before the French workers. The aim of the slogan "CP-SP government" or of "Break the coalition" is not to identify the revolutionary Marxists with a Stalinist-reformist coalition. Quite the contrary. Its aim is to distinguish the Marxist class program of the PCI from that of the Stalinists and reformists. The false position of the Fourth International in calling for the "unconditional defense of the

Soviet Union" already, unfortunately, compromises the role of the PCI as a party equally opposed to Russian as well as American imperialist domination of Europe. The PCI must bank, not upon the pro-Russian prejudices of the French workers today, but upon the anti-Russian feelings which disillusionment with Stalinism will create tomorrow. The PCI will grow, not by trimming its sails to avoid offending the pro-Stalinist worker, but by becoming the magnet which attracts all who begin to question and doubt the socialist character of the CP.

The continued growth of the PCI, the nomination of over 100 candidates in the elections, the increase in its total vote by nearly a third, are all factors that indicate that the revolutionary cadres of the French proletariat are far from completely dissipated. The gains of the PCI to date have but been the necessary preliminary nibbling at the outer edges of the Stalinist and reformist dominated masses. Out of these slowly but steadily accruing forces can be built the party which, with the proper tactics, can become strong enough and widely enough known to become the rallying point overnight when the masses shift toward a revolutionary solution.

Behind the Hindu-Moslem Strife

National or Religious Question?

[Within the colonial world, the problem of the relations between Hindu and Moslem in India has become of outstanding importance. A problem that, several years ago, might have been disposed of in the normal course of historic and nationalist development has more than redoubled in intensity and has become crucial for the cause of India's revolutionary struggle for freedom. The 5,000 corpses in Calcutta's streets, a result of a savage and tragic episode of communal rioting, testify to the intensity of the feelings involved, along with the fact that, despite the entry of the Moslem League into Nehru's Provisional India Government, the murder of Hindu by Moslem and Moslem by Hindu continues. In this issue of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL, Henry Judd, author of *India in Revolt*, analyzes the content of this problem. We also reprint a resolution suggesting the revolutionary solution proposed by the Indian section of the Fourth International.—Editor.]

These special features of the geography of India are reflected in her civilisation. To the variations in topography, climate, flora and fauna, and natural resources correspond wide differences in cultural patterns and social institutions, as evidenced by the richness and variety of art, literature, philosophy and religion in India. Nevertheless, the existence of facilities for communication within the greater part of the country has led to the growth of social relationships among different racial groups and created a profound cultural unity in the midst of diversity; and the comparative isolation of this great country from the rest of the world has preserved the conditions for the evolution of a civilisation that is unique and specifically Indian.—(Industrial Labour in India, published by the International Labour Office, Geneva, 1938.)

What are the basic facts of the Hindu-Moslem problem?

(1) India is a country with 6,000 known years of history, during the course of which countless migrations, conquests,

assimilations, divisions, unifications, etc., have occurred. The Ethnic-racial mixture of today is the consequence of these 6,000 years of inter-marriage and social relations.

(2) The first Moslem (Mohammedan, Mussulman) invasion took place in the year 664, into North India, but large-scale migrations did not begin until the year 1200, approximately 700 years ago, after which they took place regularly, leading to the foundation of the Mogul dynasties.

(3) The Moslems mixed freely with the Aryan peoples, assimilating their culture and proselytizing for the Islamic religious system among these people. To escape the rigid, pre-determining grip of the Hindu caste system, many of these Aryans became converts to Islam—that is, became Moslems. This, of course, also elevated them to the ranks of the ruling class officialdom.

(4) "Probably as many as 90 per cent of India's 90 million* Moslems are descended from Hindu converts to Islam." (Sir Frederick Puckle, "The Pakistan Doctrine," *Foreign Affairs Quarterly*, pg. 528.) Of the 12 million Moslems in the Punjab province, 10 million are of Hindu descent, having embraced the new religion to escape caste and Hindu laws.

(5) According to the latest census figures (1940), India is divided, along religious-communal lines, as follows:

Hindu	255 million
Moslem	92 million
Sikh	6 million
Christian	6 million
Tribal	26 million

TOTAL 385 million

Approximately two-thirds of the Moslem population of 92 million (59 million, to be exact) live in six of India's northern provinces. The remaining 33 million Moslems live scat-

*The 1940 India census records 92 million Moslems, rather than Puckle's figure.

tered far and wide in India's five other provinces, native states, etc., constituting enclaves within the broad Hindu population. In the six northern provinces of Moslem concentration (reading from left to right on the map: Baluchistan, Sind, Northwest Frontier, Punjab, Bengal and Assam Provinces), the 59 million Moslems constitute 56 per cent of the total six-province population strength of 108 million. The other 49 million people are, of course, almost entirely Hindus, except for the six million Sikhs who live in the Punjab.

Not Traditional National Question

Such are the basic facts. Now, what are the essential differences between Hindu and Moslem, from a social standpoint? These differences fall under the general heading of *religious-Communal* differences. That is, we are dealing with two *communities*, BUT communities that overlap in many fundamental respects: language, culture and tradition, racial and ethnic mixture, common conditions of life (particularly in the village-peasant areas), etc. In a word, the Hindu-Moslem problem is *not* a national problem in the traditional sense of the word. That is, the Moslems do not form a distinct national minority grouping, with a distinct culture, language, etc. We are dealing with a special form or expression of the national question—a problem in which the *specific* features of difference between the two vast communities are determined more by psychology, feelings and sentiment than by easily observable facts. The Moslem people are not a viable nation; they are an organic part of the Indian nation, but a part with viable differences and problems that cannot be dismissed.

As the resolution on "Pakistan" (the demand of the Moslem League for recognition of the Moslems as a separate nation) adopted by the Indian Bolshevik-Leninists asserts, the *real* national differences within India consist of differences between peoples residing in regions, or separate provinces, of the country. That is, regional peoples such as the Punjabis, the Bengalis, the Pathans of the Northwest Frontier, the Madras and Tamils of South India, etc., have far greater differences and points of division, with respect to language, race, history and customs, than do the Hindus and Moslems considered as abstract categories of people! For example, a Moslem and a Hindu living in the Punjab region of India (that is, Punjabis) have far more in common with one another culturally, linguistically, etc., than they do with a Moslem and a Hindu living in, let us say, Bengal or Madras provinces. To express it differently, their common characteristics as Punjabis are more apparent and significant than their characteristics in common with, respectively, a Bengal or Madras province Hindu; or a Bengal or Madras province Moslem. But this is *not* to deny a common *religious-communal* bond between the Punjab Moslem and the Bengal or Madras Moslem; or such a bond between the Punjab Hindu and the Bengal or Madras Hindu. Such a denial would, of course, imply that the Hindu-Moslem antagonism has no reality and as such would be nonsense. At the same time, we must again call attention to the general, all-pervading *Indian-ness* that reaches into every region and province of India and covers each religion, sect, community, caste and class with its all-embracing *national* qualities. This quality of *Indian-ness* is revealed in common origins of language and their deep inter-connection (not to mention the fact that Hindustani, the plurality language, is spoken by one-third of the entire population); common social and economic life; common traditions and historic experiences; elaborate communications, etc.

What is the specific nature of the Moslem community of

2 millions? The vast bulk of this community (over 80 per cent) are poor, illiterate peasants—either tenant farmers or small landholders. They live within the lower scales of the socially depressed Indian population. It is wrong to think that the Moslem community is not internally divided along economic and class lines. On the contrary, its top sector is an extremely reactionary and oppressive clique. In Bengal province, with which the author is most familiar, the Moslem castes are indistinguishable from the Hindu castes who occupy the other half of the province. The Moslem landlords, princes (Nizams) and feudal aristocrats are precisely symmetrical to their class brothers in the Hindu community. In Hyderabad, the largest and one of the most oppressive of the so-called native states, a Moslem ruling class of landlords and feudalists tyrannizes over a Hindu peasant population in exactly the same manner as do the princes in Hindu native states.

William Phillips, Roosevelt's personal envoy in India and the gentleman who was declared *persona non grata* by the British, declared in a report, "... the Moslem community as a political party has only an artificial unity. Like other religious groups it comprises various classes which have been more or less welded together politically by the device of separate electorate. There is already evidence to indicate that Moslem workers and peasants are becoming increasingly aware of their unity with Hindus of the same class." (*The Voice of India*, February, 1946, pg. 248.)

The Moslem community then consists of:

- (1) A small handful of landlords, princes and feudal rulers.
- (2) A small strata of petty bourgeois intellectuals, government officials, students, priests and religious teachers, unemployed college graduates.
- (3) A small strata of industrial workers.
- (4) A small strata of skilled handicraft workers.
- (5) An overwhelming strata of peasants and small land-owning farmers.

Unfortunately, we do not possess exact figures on the actual numbers of the above groups. It is important to note there are hardly any Moslem industrial bourgeois and comparatively few Moslem proletarians. In addition, since the Islamic religion frowns upon the garnering of "interest" and money-lending, the Moslems rarely are found among the commercial groups of the Indian population. The Hindu *bania*, the village money-lender and storekeeper, has a free field, thus providing a constant source of irritation in Moslem village communities and farming areas.

Sources of Moslem Communalism

The sources of Moslem communalism are not hard to uncover, once we grasp the basic facts outlined above. In general, the Moslem people occupy a lower place in the all-India community than other groups. They do not share proportionally in the general production or distribution of social wealth; nor do they occupy social positions commensurate with their numbers and significance. They therefore feel discriminated against. The ruling ranks of the Moslemic community likewise strive to share places with the corresponding ruling ranks of the Hindus. Moslem landlords and princes wish to retain their class privileges and powers; Moslems wish to become capitalists and share the profits of the Hindu textile, steel, iron and coal industrial magnates; Moslem intellectuals are in violent competition with the Hindu intellectuals and college graduates over jobs in the British civil service and administration, etc.

The Hindu-Moslem struggle is, then, a general struggle between rival communities for social and economic positions, within the iron-grip of British imperialism. It is a *real* struggle, having its own objective reality, despite the undeniable factor of British imperialism and its deliberate stimulation of conflict between these two groups.

Moslem communalism, with its separatist demands, is and has been led by the famous Moslem League of Mohammed Ali Jinnah. We must examine briefly the history and nature of the Moslem League. It was first founded in 1906, by a group of Moslem intellectuals, for "promotion of loyalty to the British Government"—to quote the original constitution—and the safeguarding of Moslem interests and the placing of Moslem "needs and aspirations before the Government in temperate language." (*Condition of India*, p. 121.) The original Moslem League was, in a word, a reactionary organization of landlords, princes and religious leaders who desired to conciliate their moderate demands within the British *Raj*. In later years, the League merely became the instrumentality through which the Moslem people, in distorted fashion, expressed their resentment against discrimination and their general suspicions of the Hindu community; as well as an organizational method by which the Moslem leadership could canalize Moslem popular sentiment without, at the same time, having to organize the Moslem masses into militant organizations of combat.

For many years, the Moslem League had an active united front with the Congress party, collaborating in many of its political campaigns against British imperialism. Membership in both the Moslem League and the Congress was a common occurrence and not at all surprising. It is not a generally known fact, but M. A. Jinnah—present head of the Moslem League—was, for a long period of time, one of the foremost Congress party leaders. But, as the economic and social factors that tend toward communal divergence became tighter and sharper, owing to the general economic depression that hit India, and suspicions of the Congress party among Moslems mounted (see below), the Moslem League gradually turned away from the Congress party nationalist policy and developed into the full-blown communalist, separatist organization that it is today.

League and the Moslem Masses

In no sense of the word can it be considered that the Moslem League speaks authoritatively for the Moslem peasant masses. Comrade Murarji has excellently summed up the class character of the Moslem League in explaining how "Moslem communalism was . . . the solution of the Moslem upper classes to the sharpening class antagonisms of Indian society . . . it was a piercing flank attack on the anti-imperialist mass movement." The Moslem League is the organization of the Moslem landlords, princes, intellectuals and petty-bourgeois. Jinnah, a wealthy Bombay lawyer, is a petty tyrant ruling over this organization in much the same fashion that Gandhi rules the Congress party. *The truth of the matter is that the great Moslem masses are still politically and organizationally voiceless; no one can pretend to fully voice their sentiments or know precisely what they are thinking.** Why is this the case? Be-

*It must be borne in mind that only a minute percentage of the Indian people can participate in any election. Franchise is based upon property qualifications, education qualifications and various special qualifications. The literacy qualification automatically eliminates 89 per cent of the Indian population! Perhaps 5 per cent (20 million), usually less, of the population participates in voting for the provincial legislatures. Furthermore, the reactionary electoral system compels a voter to vote according to his religion, or communal grouping. That

cause no one—neither the British Government, nor the Congress party, nor the Moslem League—have yet given them the opportunity of expressing themselves on any basic questions.

We have indicated some of the general factors underlying Moslem communalism, and leading to the struggle between the Congress party (the party of the Indian bourgeoisie and Hindu capitalists) and the Moslem League (the party of the Moslem feudalists, landlords, etc.). This is the essence of the struggle as viewed from above, from the standpoint of the top strata of both communities. Strictly speaking, the Congress party is not the exact Hindu counterpart of the Moslem League, but only appears so on the popular political scene. Behind the Congress party stands the infamous *Hindu Mahasabha*, the narrow, confined organization of the top Hindu bourgeoisie, in its own way, equally as fanatic and reactionary as the Moslem League. It is this organization that manipulates the top leadership of the Congress party (Gandhi, Nehru, Patel, etc.).

Below this top strata of both communities, the Hindu-Moslem antagonism is expressed in a variety of ways. We have already indicated some—the competition between intellectuals, college graduates, etc., over civil service jobs; the struggle between Moslem peasants and Hindu *baniyas*; the struggle between Hindu peasants and Moslem landlords, etc. And, suspended over all this, there stands the broad experience of both communities resulting from that period, in 1938, when the Congress party formed independent ministries in seven out of India's eleven provinces. This was an experience that the Moslem League has played up to the full. It was a test of "Hindu rule," and the Moslems didn't like it.

We cannot review that lengthy experience here, but will merely summarize the role of the Congress governments when they held power. ". . . the Congress ministries have done the bidding of the British; supported the employers as against the unions; the landlords as against the peasants. They have moved steadily to the right by ignoring the Election manifesto and have alienated the peasant and toiling masses." In many provinces where it held power, the Congress ministries "jailed and murdered Congressmen, Congress Socialists and above all, *kisan satyagrahis* (peasant leaders), dispossessed tenants and gave open support to terror organized by the landlords." (see *THE NEW INTERNATIONAL*, February 1939, pp. 61, 62). These actions against the peasantry fell equally, of course, upon Hindu and Moslem. As for discrimination measures against Moslem culture, even Mr. William Phillips is forced to reluctantly admit some basis for these charges. In his report he states, "The charges that the Congress Governments did their best to destroy Muslim culture rests principally upon a few isolated instances of the elimination of Urdu from school curriculums and such measures as the Wardha (Gandhi) Scheme of basic education, or the use of certain text books. . . ." (*The Voice of India*, February, 1946, p. 248.) A few "isolated instances," perhaps, but sufficient to furnish fuel for the Moslem League fanatics, who point out that if the Congress Ministries, with their limited powers, behaved in such fashion what would they stop at if they ever took real power, on an all-India basis? The Ministries were, in a word, political governments of the Indian bourgeoisie, carrying on its class warfare against the Hindu and Moslem workers and peasants and, at the same time, definitely exerting a "Jim Crow" pressure against the Moslem minority community. This experience is

is, a Moslem can vote only for a Moslem; a Hindu only for a Hindu and so on. It would be as if in America a Protestant could vote only for a Protestant, a Jew for a Jew, a Negro for a Negro, etc.

the most powerful basis for the present Moslem League campaign for Pakistan.

Bearing in mind the qualifying features that a Moslem can *only* vote for a Moslem, and that the great bulk of Moslem masses (at least 85 million out of the 92 million) are excluded from voting by various qualifications, the results of recent elections nevertheless indicate the trend toward Moslem separatism and communalism, as represented by the League of Jinnah. In the eleven Provincial legislatures, 512 seats were allotted to the Moslem community. The Moslem League won 445 of these seats (87 per cent), but, curiously enough, only got 73 per cent of the seats in the Pakistan area of India.* In the elections to the Federal Legislative Assembly, the Moslem League won 22 out of the 30 seats allotted to Moslems. While such results are in no way decisive, they certainly are indicative of Moslem League support among the top and petty-bourgeois layers of the Moslem community. What would be the attitude of the Moslem masses? This remains the great unknown in the whole situation.

The Proposed Solutions

In general, there are three proposed solutions to the Hindu-Moslem problem, none of which fail to violate basic democratic principles and none of which could conceivably achieve a harmonious resolving of the differences.

(a) *The British imperialist* proposal for a united, Congress-led India and semi-autonomous Moslem provinces can only be understood as the latest in a long history of constant effort to play off one community against the other, depending on the concrete tactical needs of the moment—that is, the given world situation of the Empire. We cannot, of course, review this lengthy history. Today, with the Empire weakened from the war strain, with added threats from American and Russian imperialism, the British are anxious for an agreement, a “deal” to stabilize the country. The Attlee government must, before all, have order and stability in India, so as to use its possession of that country's resources in Britain's struggle for the world market. This requires (1) an agreement by which the Indian bourgeoisie (Congress party) share ruling power with the British imperialists, and (2) an agreement for a new government in which the Moslem ruling class (Moslem League) shall have a satisfactory share. But British imperialism, if required, will make this arrangement only with the Congress leadership, excluding the Moslem League if the latter is adamant and insists upon Pakistan.

The British solution is, accordingly, proposed only within the arena of its imperialist mastery. It means arrangements with top leaders, deals, endless negotiations, etc. It is counterposed to a democratic Constituent Assembly; withdrawal of British troops from India; dissolving of all ties between master and subject nation. It is an adaptation of British imperialism to 1946 needs, and recognition that the British *Raj* cannot continue except by sharing power in some form with the Indian bourgeoisie.

(b) The solution of the Congress party of Indian capitalists and Hindu landlords is not fundamentally different from that of the British. It is motivated by the same desire—that is, sharing in the exploitation of India's resources and manpower. The Congress proposes a united India, in which it shall guarantee the Moslems and other minorities their democratic

*This is doubtless due to the fact that the Pakistan area includes the Northwest Frontier province which, although 90 per cent Moslem in population, constantly gives overwhelming support to Gandhi and the Congress party.

rights. “Every citizen shall enjoy freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess and practice his religion, subject to public order and morality. The culture, language and script of the minorities and of the different linguistic areas shall be protected.” (Congress Election Manifesto, January, 1946.) The Congress, of course, rejects out of hand the Moslem proposal for a clear division of India into two.

For the Congress leaders, the problem of India is *not* that of solving the communal question; that is secondary. The problem is how to satisfactorily share power, as a junior partner, with British imperialism; how to win room for the further expansion of Indian, native capitalism and its desire to directly exploit greater masses of Indians, Hindu and Moslem alike. But the Moslem areas and the Moslem masses are a significant part in India's economy, and the Hindu bourgeoisie will not let them go easily. Needless to say, these democratic guarantees of the Congress leaders are insufficient to still the suspicions of the Moslem peasantry, or to down the fanatic demands of the Moslem extremists. Indian capitalism, now trying to make a long-range settlement with British imperialism, would like to include in this arrangement the right to free exploitation of every nationality, community and group within the Indian population. This is the gist of the Congress proposal.

(c) The separatist, “Pakistan”* proposal of the Moslem League, demagogically supported by the Indian Communist Party, is a reactionary, utopian scheme calculated to perpetuate the position of the Moslem ruling strata at the expense of the Indian nation in general, and the Moslem peasantry in particular. It proposes to take the provinces of Assam and Bengal in the eastern part of India; along with the provinces of Punjab, Sind, Northwest Frontier and Baluchistan in north and western India, and from these two areas, separated by 1,500 miles, form an autonomous state, not only separated from the rest of India (Hindustan), but separated from each other! The social, economic and political objections to this reactionary proposal are too numerous to mention. Firstly, 49 million Hindus and 6 million Sikhs live within this Pakistan area—what is to be their fate? Secondly, the Pakistan area contains the major agricultural regions of India (Punjab grain), most of India's heavy industry and the nation's greatest port (Calcutta). Cutting it off from the rest of the nation, surrounding it by an artificial national boundary, etc., could only further depress the economic life of the nation as a whole and, ultimately, subject the Hindustan nation to the rule of the minority Pakistan section. Thirdly, what of the 33 million Moslems who live outside the area and are not covered by the Pakistan boundaries? Are they, at a later stage, to form separate states and then struggle for unification with Pakistan? In other words, is there to be constant warfare between a divided India, along national, communal and religious lines? This seems to be the meaning of Pakistan, as proposed by the League whose leaders have visions of the Mogul Empire days, when the Islamic conquerors ruled the entire subcontinent.

In short, from a democratic or socialist point of view, from the viewpoint of the development of a harmonious and balanced Indian nation, the Pakistan conception is disastrous and could only lead to sharper division. But at the same time, an outright rejection of the Pakistan plan cannot answer the question. Something positive must be proposed to the Moslem people.

*The name is derived from the initials of the Moslem provinces which are to constitute Pakistan.

Resolution Evades Issue

And here, in conclusion, we come to the program and resolution on Pakistan offered by the Indian Bolshevik-Leninists, the Indian section of the Fourth International. Insofar as it goes, this resolution—which we are publishing—proceeds along the correct line but, in our opinion, does not go far enough and, in a sense, evades the Moslem issue.

The resolution correctly describes the character of the Moslem League and its separatism, as well as the hopelessly retrogressive nature of Pakistan. It places India's national problem on a realistic level by pointing to the fact that regional divisions, according to nationalities (Punjabis, Bengalis, etc.), constitute the real problem. A united, socialist, *federal* India is the solution proposed, similar to the Leninist plan for the solution of Russia's national question. To quote from the original constitution of Soviet Russia, "The workers and peasants of each nation are free to decide independently at their own plenipotentiary Soviet congresses whether they desire, and if so, on what conditions, to take part in the federal government and other federal Soviet institutions." (Part II, Chapter 5.) The principle of socialist federalism assumes, of course, the right of secession from any Federated Indian state. As the program of the Indian Trotskyists states, only a democratically-elected Constituent Assembly can decide these questions of Indian independence, and create the broad outlines of the future nation. But the proposal of socialist federations is undoubtedly the correct answer to the basic aspects of the national problem.

But the Moslem problem and relations between the two major communities overlaps the national, or regional problem! In the present tense situation, it even tends to dominate the former and replace it. Moslems live everywhere in India, regardless of nationality, and form enclaves within the body of India itself, including the predominantly Hindu sections. And, since it evades this question, the resolution we publish can be considered satisfactory only insofar as it goes. It does not go far enough. It is not sufficient to characterize the reactionary Moslem League, nor lay bare its class motives, since *behind* the League stands the dispossessed and degraded Moslem mass, with its deep and justified suspicions against the Congress party and its leadership. This cannot be ignored without the charge of "pro-Hinduism" being leveled against the resolution and its authors.

If Lenin could consider that the Russian anarchists had the right to found a state, or community, of their own; if Lenin could believe that, in general, *any* group of people with a common set of beliefs and ideas, had separatist rights—then we cannot deny this same right to a group of people such as the Moslems. Not, indeed, merely because Lenin said so, but because we revolutionary socialists stand for the utmost of democracy, above all at a time when the entire bourgeois, Stalinist and reactionary world has discredited itself. The very tenacity with which the Congress bourgeois leadership opposes Pakistan and demands that the Moslem people subject itself to its tender graces, this alone would almost suffice to make us hold an opposite opinion, lest we be identified with Gandhi, Nehru, *et al.* Thus, we must clearly state that the Moslem people shall have the right to form independent states, including enclaves within Hindu territory, *if they so wish and so decide for themselves.* We will point out the general economic disadvantages of such separation and the greater advantages that lie in regional affiliation to a Federated India, but we cannot deny the right of the Moslem masses to attempt such

a separatist experience, *if they so wish.* Above all, the Indian Trotskyists must openly proclaim the right of the Moslem people to *vote* on such a proposal. Everybody, the British government, the Moslem League, the Congress party—literally everybody denies the Moslem people the right to vote, to express their sentiments. Shall we be among these opponents of elementary democracy? No, in a free India the Moslem masses must have the right to vote, after democratic consideration and discussion, on the issue of separatism. In our opinion, the program of the Indian Fourth Internationalists will not be correct or complete until this is added, in unambiguous form, to the resolution.

HENRY JUDD.

RESOLUTION ON PAKISTAN

(The following resolution on the slogan of Pakistan [separation of India into Hindu and Moslem states] was adopted by a majority vote at the First Representative Conference of the Bolshevik-Leninist Party of India, the Indian section of the Fourth International, at its September, 1944 gathering.—Editors.)

The Pakistan slogan epitomises the demand of the reactionary Moslem League "that geographically contiguous units . . . (be) . . . demarcated into regions which should be so constituted that such readjustments as may be necessary that the areas in which the Moslems are numerically in a majority, as in the North-Western and Eastern zones in India, should be grouped to constitute 'independent states' in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign."

The slogan is politically reactionary and theoretically false. It is politically reactionary in that it constitutes an effort through an appeal to communal sentiments to divert the rising discontent of the Moslem masses away from its true enemy, namely, British imperialism and its native allies, against the Hindus. It is theoretically false in that it proceeds from the indefensible contention that the Moslems in India constitute a Nation, which is declared to be oppressed (equally false) by a Hindu nation. There is no basis, whether of common historical tradition, language, culture or race, or in respect of geographical and economic factors, for the arising of a distinct Moslem nationality. Religion (together, of course, with any common element of culture which that may entail) is the only unifying factor, and is clearly insufficient, on the basis of all historical experience, to produce any sentiment which can constitute a national consciousness. The slogan of Pakistan is therefore purely demagogic and must be fought not only by laying bare its treacherous purpose but also by exposing the cunning attempt to give to its communalist nature a "nationalist" coloring.

It would be incorrect to believe that the growth in strength of the Moslem League in recent years is due to its support of a demand or demands for National self-determination. The principle reasons for its growth are the following:

(1) The opportunity presented to the Moslem League to turn to communal channels the discontent created by the reactionary policies of the Congress Ministries (all non-League) which came into office in the various provinces in 1937.

(2) The powerful backing given to it by imperialism during the period when Congress moved into open opposition and ultimately direct struggle, including the jockeying of Moslem League ministries into office in province after province.

(3) The utilization by the Moslem League of the fact that

a large majority of Indian capitalists and landlords are Hindus, in order to divert the class struggle into communal channels.

(4) The coming under its influence of layers of the masses (hitherto outside the influence of any political organization), coming to consciousness for the first time and turning to the Moslem League as the organization nearest to hand. With the turn of Congress once more toward cooperation with imperialism, and the progressively declining need of the Moslem League as an instrument for British imperialism, the Moslem League has passed the pinnacle of its strength, as is evidenced by the numerous splits and quarrels within the League.

The Indian nation consists of various nationalities (e.g., Bengalis, Punjabis, Andheras, Tamilians, Caneras, etc.) who are bound together by common language, culture, historical tradition, etc. British imperialism has drawn its administrative boundaries regardless of these distinctions, with the result that the demands for a re-definition of boundaries and the formation of new provinces, paying a due regard to the existence of these different groupings, has gained in strength in some areas. But nowhere have these demands gone beyond an aspiration for provincial autonomy, thus demonstrating the insignificance of such "separatist tendencies" in relation to the developing national consciousness of the modern Indian nation. The policy of the Bolshevik-Leninist Party of India in relation to these nationalities and their demand is clear. Not

only does the Bolshevik-Leninist Party of India stand for a federated India on the basis of these distinct nationalities, but it stands for their right of self-determination.

The Bolshevik-Leninist Party of India must, however, expose the misapplication of the principle of National self-determination by the Communist Party of India, which, while denying the existence of a Moslem Nation in words, recognizes it in fact in its proposed redefinition of provincial boundaries. It proposes to draw the boundaries in the Punjab and Bengal in such a manner as to separate West Punjab and East Bengal, where populations are predominantly Moslem, from East Punjab and West Bengal respectively, which are predominantly Hindu. In the absence of any genuine growth of a West Punjab or East Bengal national consciousness, this attempt to divide, on the basis of mere difference of religion, the territory occupied by two distinct nationalities, namely, the Punjabis and the Bengalis, is clearly a concession to the theory of a Moslem Nation.

Since neither the Moslem League demand for Pakistan, nor the Communist Party of India variation of it constitute genuine national demands, there can be no question of any support to these demands helping to bring the masses into the struggle against British imperialism. On the contrary, such support would only help to draw the masses away from this struggle by helping the Moslem League to divert the rising discontent of the Moslem masses into communal channels.

Politics of the Indian Bourgeoisie

Gandhi's "Constructive Program"

The center of the Constructive Program, says Gandhi, is "always the charkha¹ around which all activities revolve." Inasmuch as politics is in the final analysis governed by economics, Gandhi is undoubtedly correct. The charkha is the center of the Constructive Program because the charkha (in conjunction with all other implements in the primitive wooden family) constitutes, together with the land and the cow, the main means of production in Gandhian society. Charkha economics determines charkha politics. Hence "all other activities revolve around it." We, however, are reluctant to leave things at that. We perceive certain inconsistencies in the way in which charkha politics has been formulated. We suspect that this brand of politics has not been entirely spun on the charkha; that better spindles and more powerful looms have had something to do with its creation. While, therefore, we accept that the charkha forms the basis of the Constructive Program, we must pick out two other features of this program (Communal Goodwill and Social Service) which we regard as only of slightly less importance. These latter help us to decipher the real character of charkha politics. The other items in the Thirteen-Point Program are not of much significance—prohibition, scavenging, kindergarden literacy, chivalry toward women and *rashtra bhasha*.² These are the personal virtues we are abjured to cultivate. We are not much enamoured of them. We think more satisfying canons of conduct are still available for us in the good old homilies of Socrates, the Buddha, Confucius and Christ.

1. Spinning wheel.

2. All-India language.

Charkha and Gram Udyog³

It is not possible to foist a program on the masses which does not in some way assuage a fundamental mass urge. If, therefore, the peasantry of our country have in the past extended a welcome to the Constructive Program, the explanation of this must be found in their conditions of existence.

British imperialism has not only destroyed the balance of their little village economic structures and subjected them to cruel exploitation through rent-exaction and direct and indirect taxation. It has dragged the peasantry into the coils of the world market and subordinated them to its vicissitudes. Driving his primitive plough on his shrinking strip of land, the Indian peasant comes directly up against all the mechanized efficiency of the foreign capitalist farm. His prices are governed by world prices. This not only depresses his standard of living, but makes it fluctuate as wildly as a seismograph in an earthquake.

It is on this predicament of the peasantry that Gandhi has closed in with his charkha and gram udyog program. He seeks to counterpose once more the self-sufficient productive framework of the ancient village community to the all-pervasiveness of the world economy. He seeks to balance the instability of primitive agricultural production with the wooden prop of the charkha and other village handicraft.

Unfortunately, it is not imperialism alone that subordinates peasant production to the needs of the world market. Native machine industry has stepped in to consolidate the

3. Village reconstruction.

process. It is true that the native bourgeoisie aspire to shield themselves behind a high tariff wall. But that is essentially a shield—a device to ward off the unfavorable repercussions of production for the world market. Furthermore, it is not imperialism alone that exploits the peasantry. The native bourgeoisie have long ago matured in that act of ravishment. The internal market (i.e., largely the peasant consumer-population) is a great source of hope for the Tatas, Birlas, Kasturbhais and their kin [native Indian capitalists]—especially when relieved from the embarrassment of world competition. The charkha and the gram udyog immediately rush up against the electric power-looms of Ahmedabad and the giant blast-furnaces of Tatanagar. In such an encounter there can be no doubt on whose side the odds lie.

Thus not only is the charkha and gram udyog program reactionary in its aspiration to resuscitate the primitive village community with its medieval standards of life. It is sterile in that it sets out to match primitive handicraft with machine industry in conditions of capitalist competition. It possesses the rare distinction of being both reactionary and utopian.

The program, however, has deep-going political implications. In the first place it represents a carefully camouflaged endeavor to distract the attention of the middle and lower strata of the peasantry from the lands of the zamindar⁴ and rich peasant. This is a preliminary indication of its bourgeois counter-revolutionary character. In the epoch of capitalist ascendancy the necessity to unify and expand the internal market, as well as to release the productive forces from the feudal productive relations which fettered them, drove the bourgeoisie to liberate the peasants from the landlords and thus to convert both land and labor into marketable commodities. Today, in the epoch of imperialism, the epoch of capitalist decline, the bourgeoisie can no longer play this liberationist role. Capital and land, capitalist and landlord, are too closely intertwined for either to entertain homicidal intentions in regard to the other. The Indian bourgeoisie will not interfere with property relations on the land. The Indian peasant must not be encouraged to covet his landlord's land. If he does not have sufficient land to dig even a miserable existence from, he must be taught to look elsewhere for succor. And there, for the bourgeoisie, begins the messianic role of the Mahatma and his charkha.

But the charkha and gram udyog program plays a more positive role in the service of the bourgeoisie. "Khadi" [cotton cloth] says the Mahatma in his pamphlet on the Constructive Program, "means a wholesale swadeshi [independence] mentality, a determination to find all the necessities of life in India." The charkha is thus the political emblem of the Indian bourgeoisie in the same sense that the hammer is the emblem of the working class and the sickle that of the peasantry. Small wonder that it is so boldly emblazoned on the bourgeois "national" flag! The charkha and gram udyog program is a powerful political weapon in the economic struggle of the Indian bourgeoisie against imperialism. It is a *substitute* for the dangerous and incalculable method of the mass struggle. It established the native bourgeoisie on its feet especially after the boycott campaign of the early twenties. Can anyone wonder, that despite the yearly turn-out of hundreds of thousands of yards of the finest spun cloth in their own mills, the textile mill-owning millionaires are the most habitual wearers of the coarsest khadi? We will not of course mention that these dev-

otees of the charkha have even taken to the production of "khadi" in their mills!

What Gandhi calls the center of his Constructive Program (the little wooden machine that spins his webs for the imperialists, his sophistries for the intelligentsia and his clap-trap for the masses) is none other than the center of the bourgeois struggle for control over the internal market and the mass movement; a treacherous, reactionary and utopian device to frustrate a fundamental mass urge in the guise of pandering to it. That urge is the urge of the peasantry to overthrow existing property relations on the land as a means of emancipating themselves from the choking tyranny of the world market.

Communal Goodwill

The masses cannot wait until the Mahatma constructs his pattern of freedom for them on his charkha. Freedom, for them, is neither a mere slogan nor a desirable ideal. Freedom, for them, is an imperative necessity—to do away as speedily as possible with all forms of exaction, exploitation and tyranny. While the charkha spun on, the cauldron of mass revolt was on the boil.

The communal problem is in essence an expression of this phenomenon. Its very virulence is an index to the turbulence of mass discontent. Its distorted appearance does not negate the fact that, at root, it is an expression of the class struggle.

The land-owning upper classes of India and the more subservient section of the native bourgeoisie had no reason to conceal their alarm at the depth and power of the mass movement which the nationalist bourgeoisie attempted to harness to their class needs. The Muslim upper classes in particular (they were more parasitical in proportion as they lacked a big industrial bourgeoisie) feared the accumulating wrath of the Muslim peasantry in the countryside and the vast mass of unemployed and underemployed petty bourgeoisie in the towns. The powers and privileges they derived from their alliance with British imperialism were, moreover, endangered by the political aspirations of the nationalist bourgeoisie. It was necessary to attack the mass movement—for an attack on the mass movement would not only disorient the masses but would equally weaken the only sanction of the bourgeoisie against imperialism. That attack took the form of Muslim communalism, drugged with separatist demands, and delivered through the intellectual medium of the job-hunting Muslim intelligentsia.

Muslim communalism was in fact the solution of the Muslim upper classes to the sharpening class antagonism of Indian society. In form it was a piercing flank attack on the anti-imperialist mass movement. Every betrayal of the mass struggle by its leaders was a signal for a communal counter-offensive, leading to further disorientation and prostration of the masses. Communalism thus became a powerful weapon in the hands of the imperialists. Every defeat, every betrayal, every postponement of the anti-imperialist struggle widened the communal rift and strengthened the communalists. But inasmuch as the crisis of imperialist society in India cannot be solved under its aegis and every defeat of the masses is an education for the future, the gathering proportions of mass revolt had reduced the communalists to greater and more complete dependence on the imperialists. So complete is this dependence that the liquidation of the communal problem can only ensue on the prior liquidation of imperialism in India.

Muslim communalism also derived an initial impulse and sustained impetus from the reactionary politics of bourgeois nationalism. Rationalism was the philosophy of the bour-

4. Landlord.

geoisie needing to liberate the peasantry from the control of a feudal church in the period of capitalism's rise. In the epoch of the decline of capitalism the bourgeoisie need not to liberate but to harness the peasantry to their yoke. Hindu revivalism is the philosophy of one such bourgeoisie, for Hinduism has had no peer in its ability to inhibit the most fundamental urges of the masses. Hence, under Lokmanya Tilak, the real ancestor of hysterical Hindu communalism, bourgeois nationalism took on a decidedly Hindu coloration. In the hands of Gandhi the process was further extended and deepened. It was a simple sadhu⁵ that bourgeois nationalism dangled before the masses of the peasantry, who flocked in their hundreds and thousands to receive his *dharshan*.⁶ It mattered little to the illiterate, Muslim masses that the sadhu was able to recite the Koran or quote from the Bible. That sort of dope they could get in higher quality and greater quantity within their own mosques.

Himself responsible to a certain extent for the strengthening of Muslim communalism, the Mahatma aspires to solve by religious methods what is in essence an expression of the class struggle and in form a political counter-attack. His method is that of "unbreakable heart unity." The communal problem to him is not a strategical problem in the setting of the anti-imperialist campaign. It is not an imperialist counter-attack on the mass movement. It is a personal problem. The hearts of both Hindus and Muslims are somehow not in the right place. They have first to set their hearts right so that there may no more be "Hindu water or Muslim tea."

As always, the religious formulation conceals a political maneuver. The endeavor is to find an agreed formula between the landlords and princes of the Muslim League and the industrial bourgeoisie of the Congress—a formula which will divide the spoils of office under imperialist patronage and thus present a united front of the exploiters, in control of the armed resources of the State, against the accumulating forces of mass revolt below. One failure, or two, to win the Qaid-e-Azam⁷ does not discourage the Mahatma. While the masses keep straining to get their hearts into place he is at least certain that real unity will be prevented—unity of the masses against their exploiters along the lines of the class struggle.

Social Service

Neither the charkha maneuver of Gandhi, nor the communal maneuver of imperialism can halt for one single moment the process of the class struggle. And though the Mahatma may refuse to recognize the class struggle, the class struggle never fails to recognize the Mahatma. Kind and sensitive man that he is, he cannot ignore that recognition. He winks back at it, in the form of social service. Social service is Gandhi's answer to the class struggle. He continually warns against "violent and bloody revolution." He preaches (to the poor masses to be sure!) "voluntary abdication of riches and the power that riches give." Meantime he advises the masses to live at peace with their masters, i.e., to collaborate with their exploiters. To help the masses to accept his advice he has his program of social service.

We are not here concerned with the motivation of humanitarian social service. The Mahatma's heart may be as bottomless as the caverns of hell—in its sympathy for the poor. We are here concerned to demonstrate the reactionary social orientation of humanitarianism itself. Inasmuch as the class struggle

is fundamental to class-society and ineradicable within it, the attempt to moderate its harshness on the exploited classes, and by these means to distract their attention from it, is not only futile but is to enter into the service of the exploiters themselves. If Gandhist society is the same thing as the egalitarian society, the social objective must be not to subject the masses to less exploitation, but to free them from exploitation altogether. The latter is certainly not the object of the Mahatma. He thereby demonstrates how completely he is in the service of the bourgeoisie. Sweet faces and angel graces are not beyond "riches and the power that riches give."

Role of Non-Violence

One feature in common all three principles of the Constructive Program contain: in the guise of serving a fundamental urge of the masses, each of them seeks to frustrate it. The charkha pretends to serve the desire of the peasantry to emancipate themselves from the world market but fastens over them the strangle-hold of the native bourgeoisie and ultimately, of the very world market they were seeking to avoid. Communal heart unity pretends to lay down the basis for a united offensive of the masses against British imperialism, whereas in reality it deflects the masses away from the anti-imperialist struggle and fastens the death-grip of imperialism upon them. Social service aspires to elevate the economic and cultural level of the masses but in reality perpetuates the system of semi-feudal exploitation that holds them down. The common feature is not directly attributable to deliberate deceit on the part of the Mahatma. We do not know, nor do we care, whether even indirectly it is so. What is pertinent is that the manifest contradiction between object and result springs from the single unifying factor in the whole distraught philosophy of Gandhism—*non violence*. For, says the oracle himself "the constructive program may otherwise and more fittingly be called construction of Purna Swaraj or Complete Independence by truthful and non-violent means." The Constructive Program is the non-violent road to swaraj [independence]. The basic unifying force of the whole Constructive Program, as of the whole theory and practice of Gandhism, is non-violence.

Force or violence is the final sanction of law. The imperialist state is organized violence. To overthrow the imperialist state is to counterpose to its own violence a superior violence. This superior violence can only come from the intervention of a foreign state or by the intervention of the masses on the political arena. Revolution is the method of the defeat of the violence of the state by the superior violence of the masses. Truly does the Mahatma characterize revolution as "violent and bloody."

Non-violence is defined by the Mahatma as "a process of conversion." In other words, non-violence is concerned with the individuals, not with the system. To the violence of the imperialist state (the Mahatma once called it "leonine") non-violence replies with moral pressure on the state official. It tries to "change the heart" of the state official, i.e., to move him to pity, and thence to understanding, by self-suffering. Thus, non-violence does not challenge the authority of the imperialist state, but seeks to change its manifestations. By denying the right of the masses to counterpose their own violence to the violence of the state (the final sanction of all laws), non-violence subordinates the masses to the authority (i.e., violence) of the imperialist state. The method of non-violence (apart from its political content) is at best *reformist*, not *revolutionary*. That is to say, it operates *entirely within the im-*

5. Hermit.

6. Revelation.

7. Moslem League Leader.

perialist system. Whatever the phraseology of its advocates, non-violence cannot seek to overthrow the imperialist system.

The strategy of reformism is pressure strategy. Violence, or overthrow strategy, is the strategy of revolution. Whether for pressure or for overthrow the mass struggle is necessary. But should the mass struggle develop along violent lines (i.e., should it direct itself toward the overthrow of the state), the collapse of the imperialist state will be accompanied by the collapse of the property forms it maintained—the native bourgeoisie being too weak to maintain their property either against imperialism or against the masses. The mass struggle must, therefore, be forced into the strait jacket of non-violence, so that bourgeois property be maintained. Herein lies the basic contradiction, the double faced character of non-violence. It is clothed with revolutionary phraseology and purports to save the masses from imperialism. But it actually serves counter-revolutionary purposes, for it dams and deflects the mass struggle, and saves imperialism from the masses.

Saboteur Strategy

The mass struggle that began in August '42, despite nearly a quarter of a century of preaching on the part of the Mahatma, was openly and quite unashamedly a *violent* struggle. The masses, at the very outset of the struggle, sloughed off the straightjacket of non-violence in which the bourgeoisie had sought to imprison them. They thereby demonstrated to the world the scant esteem in which non-violence was held by them. That was their way of asserting that their road to the overthrow of the imperialist state was the road of violence, of class struggle, of revolution.

Who need wonder at the panic of the native bourgeoisie who quite early deserted the struggle and attempted to stop it, and of the Mahatma who today denounces it and disclaims all responsibility for it? Never again will they attempt to use the mass struggle to browbeat imperialism—not if they can help it. The Mahatma, therefore, puts forward his Constructive Program *not* as a preparation for civil disobedience, but "*as an alternative road to Swaraj.*" So important is this "alternative road," that he threatened to fast if his disciples did not accept it. So important is it, that behind its immense firepower has been also brought up the heavy artillery of the Rs 1½ crores [approx. \$350,000] Kasturba Fund (more social service!). To sabotage the revolutionary mass movement from *without* by forcing on it once again the strait jacket of non-violence which it had decisively rejected—that is the strategy of the Constructive Program.

But the strait jacket will stay on only so long as the masses do not enter the arena of direct struggle. Hence the Constructive Program seeks also to sabotage the mass struggle from *within*, to destroy the existing class organizations of the masses. The Constructive Program has, therefore, recently been extended. Separate programs have been prescribed for workers, for kisans and for students, so that each of them may contribute to the "construction of swaraj." It is not necessary here to deal with these in detail. Suffice it to say that "construction of swaraj" means today, in 1945, for the Mahatma:

- (a) the destruction of the class independence of the trade unions, through the "construction" of rival company unions (as at Ahmedabad) and the enticement of functioning unions away from the Trade Union Congress into the openly class-collaborationist Hindustan Mazdoor Sevak Sangh.
- (b) the smashing of the class independence of the kisan sab-

has [peasant unions] through the "construction" of a Kisan Congress, dominated and controlled by the National Congress, i.e., under the kindly patronage of the upper classes, both bourgeois and landlord.

- (c) an ideological offensive against Marxism under cover of a drive against Stalinism, and the reduction of student organizations to ideological servility to the bourgeoisie through the "construction" of a Students' Congress which will "keep all politics out"—except Gandhian superstition and utopian revivalism.

More immediately, the Constructive Program is designed to prepare the ground for the coming surrender-settlement with British imperialism. It is not the first occasion on which the Mahatma fled precipitate before a mass offensive on the imperialist state, to bury himself ostensibly in social uplift, and religious regeneration. At least one previous public performance has history been afforded of this identical stage-trick. Especially after the calling off of the struggle of the earlier thirties did the Mahatma appear to vanish from the political scene, under the pretext of devoting himself entirely to the cause of the Harijans [untouchables]. What he actually achieved every Indian in his 'teens already knows: the thwarting of the mass-struggle and the preparation, step by step, of the Congress for eventual coolie-service on behalf of British imperialism. The objective is no different on this occasion. While the Tatas, Birlas and Kasturbhais employ the aid of imperialist capital and technique in the more intensive exploitation of the masses, while the Munshis and the Rajagopalachariars [extreme right wing leaders of Congress party] employ the imperialist police to shoot down striking workers and bludgeon rebellious peasants, and throw militant fighters against imperialism into imperialist jails with the help of the imperialist penal code, the Mahatma will be pacifying the masses and shepherding them along the "constructive" road to swaraj—building "swaraj" within the imperialist system! The vision is almost idyllic. The reality reeks of rank insidious treachery.

The Constructive Program⁸ aims to sabotage the anti-imperialist mass struggle now and for good.

SUREN MURARJI.

8. There are those who say they have accepted the Constructive Programme because they regard it as the sole means (within prevalent conditions of imperialist repression) of restoring the brutally battered morale of the masses and thus of preparing for the next wave of mass struggle. It is not for us to point out that to entertain this belief is to doubt the veracity of a leader who proclaims truth as his most important weapon against imperialism. The Mahatma has explicitly repudiated even the thought of it. It is not merely that we believe him here. It is impossible for us to conceive how an overtly anti-struggle program, demonstrably reactionary in content, can either revive the morale of masses frustrated in open struggle, or prepare them for the struggles of the future. The task of reviving the masses for further struggle is the task of leading them along the road of their limited and most immediate demands and thus of helping them in the consolidation of their ranks.

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The Basis of Workers' Democracy

An Answer to Ciliga

Ciliga's purpose in writing the last chapter of his book, *The Russian Enigma* (published as an article in the August issue of *Politics*) was to prove that it was Lenin who laid the foundation for the betrayal of the Russian Revolution by Stalin. To prove his thesis he relies on certain specific policies adopted by Lenin. To answer Ciliga fully it would be necessary to take up in detail the specific policies he cites and to arrive at a conclusion as to their correctness or incorrectness on the basis of a thorough analysis of all the factors that prevailed at the time they were adopted. Such an analysis can be made best by a Marxist who is familiar with the Russian language and can go to the original sources. This task should be left to such a person.

It is, however, justifiable without waiting for such an analysis to reject Ciliga's central thesis because of his method and approach to the problem of workers' democracy. He approaches the problem in far too general a manner to be convincing. He does not tell us what specifically should have been done by Lenin; he relies simply on general principles. It is all very well to contend that the liberation of the workers should be accomplished by the workers themselves. Such a principle can be readily accepted but it does not inform us what exactly should be done at a particular time under specific conditions.

With Ciliga's proposition that we should discuss Lenin's policies in a critical manner there can be no quarrel whatever. Lenin could be and was wrong on many occasions. It is necessary to examine every policy and determine its correctness or incorrectness. It may well be that a certain policy followed by Lenin prepared the road for Stalin's betrayal but this is far from sufficient to accuse Lenin of betrayal.

That the critical, independent spirit which should be taken for granted in the attitude of every revolutionary socialist was almost completely lacking in the early days of the Communist movement is shown by Ciliga's own attitude. His emotional reactions, upon "discovering" that Lenin "betrayed the Revolution" indicates that he had more of a religious attitude to Lenin than a revolutionary-socialist one. This was true of practically all the followers of Lenin in the early days of the Communist movement.

The religious attitude prevails now among the Stalinists, although they have nothing to do with Lenin's policies. It also prevails to a large extent among "official" Trotskyists. It is disheartening to recognize that we must repeat over and over again that the religious attitude has no place whatever in the revolutionary socialist movement. Every idea and every act of the outstanding teachers and leaders of socialism should be subjected to a critical examination. Being a revolutionary socialist implies the acceptance of the critical approach of the great socialists.

One-Party Dictatorship

Three questions are raised by Ciliga as constituting the problems of workers' democracy. I shall deal with them separately though they are obviously very closely connected.

There was a time when even in the Trotskyist movement the idea was generally accepted that during the period of the dictatorship of the proletariat there can be only one party—the party under the leadership of which the workers take power. It was not until Trotsky showed that the one-party régime in the early days of the Soviet Union was the result of peculiar

conditions and was not the result of a principle enunciated by the Bolshevik leaders that the Trotskyists began to assert their belief that after the conquest of power by the workers the normal and desirable situation is the existence of competing parties presenting their programs to the masses.

Between the Trotskyists and Ciliga there can be no quarrel on the necessity of recognizing the principle that a one-party dictatorship is dangerous to the revolution. Here one must indicate that the actual practices of the "official" Trotskyists of the Socialist Workers Party can justifiably lead to the conclusion that the leaders of that party give lip-service only to the idea that there should be more than one party during the régime of the proletarian dictatorship. In reality we are safe in concluding that they would not tolerate any opposition to their rule—should the exceedingly improbable situation arise of the workers taking power under their leadership. One need only listen to arguments by major and minor leaders of the SWP to the effect that "we play for keeps" and that "we are monopolists in politics" to realize that there is at least a tendency to a one-party dictatorship.

Our opposition to a one-party dictatorship under the rule of the workers does not, unfortunately, guarantee that there will be no such dictatorship. For, whether or not such a situation exists, depends not only upon the party in power but the opposing parties. Opponents of the régime of Lenin and Trotsky place the whole blame upon them for the existence of the one-party Bolshevik dictatorship. An objective analysis of the role played by the opponents of Bolshevism during the period when Lenin and Trotsky led the Bolshevik party leads to the conclusion that the major part of, if not the entire, blame for the existence of the one-party régime lies upon the shoulders of the opponents of Bolshevism.

It is a matter of record that the Bolsheviks did not drive their opponents out of the Soviets when they gained a majority and the Soviets took the power; the opponents left the Soviets. The Bolsheviks worked amicably with those of their opponents—like the Left Socialist Revolutionaries—who remained in the Soviets and it was not until the Left SR's tried to gain power through a *coup d'état* that the régime became entirely a one-party one. Nor must it be forgotten that many of the opponents of Bolshevism in the ranks of the various groups of socialists took up arms against the Soviet régime. Trotsky's thesis that the activities of the Bolshevik opponents brought the one-party régime of the Bolsheviks into existence is proved by the historic record.

If Ciliga is correct in saying that Lenin in 1920 made a *principle* of the one-party dictatorship we should not hesitate to say that Lenin was wrong and by his act aided greatly in disorientating the Communist movement on that question.

In the light of subsequent events it is clear that Lenin and Trotsky erred greatly in prohibiting factions at the Bolshevik congress of March 1921. Stalin took ample advantage of that prohibition. The Civil War was over and, if anything, it was necessary to relax the previous prohibitions. Surely the who fought shoulder to shoulder with the Bolsheviks in the Civil War gained the right to an independent existence as a group and to criticize the reigning party. When one considers how Stalinism was aided by Lenin's action in prohibiting factions it is clear that any danger arising as a result of factional criticism could not possibly compare with the danger of aiding

the development of a monolithic party through the prohibition of factions. Not even the terrible conditions prevailing in the country at the time of the Congress justified the prohibition against factions.

Existence of Bourgeois Parties

Should bourgeois parties be suppressed by a government ruling under the dictatorship of the proletariat? It must be remembered that the Bolsheviks did not begin with suppressing any party—not even the most reactionary bourgeois party. A socialist party placed in power by the masses should not suppress any bourgeois party unless it attempts to overthrow the government by violence or to demoralize the masses by spreading falsehoods and thus prevent the smooth functioning of the economy and the government.

There is no general rule which can be formulated that will succeed in solving all of the problems connected with the suppression of parties during the period immediately following the taking of power by the workers. The only general rule to be followed is that the régime of the workers must be protected and at the same time the greatest possible democracy must be assured to the masses. Special circumstances may require certain limitations of democracy but the leadership of the party representing the workers must understand how dangerous any limitation of democracy is and should be anxious to remove it at the earliest opportunity. To limit democracy after the necessity for any limitation is over is to increase the danger of degeneration.

Democratic Vs. Bureaucratic Management of Industry

No socialist will argue against Ciliga when he asserts that democratic management of nationalized industry by the workers is absolutely essential. The real problem is how to apply that principle correctly in the period immediately following the taking of power by the workers; and in the solution of that problem Ciliga is of no great help to us. Does accepting the above principle mean that we must grant the right of the workers of every factory to determine all of the conditions of labor and all of the questions connected with production in their particular factory independently of the factories in the same industry or in other industries? Does it mean that the trade unions rather than the party should have control of industry?

There certainly can be no advantage whatever in permitting trade-union bureaucrats to run the industries rather than party bureaucrats. The problem of the democratic management of industry by the workers would still remain and the danger of excluding the workers from the management would be just as great.

We must start from the premise that it is essential to enlist the greatest possible participation of the workers in the running of industry. It is essential from the fundamental point of view of the efficient operation of industry. A bureaucratic régime in industry means inefficiency. Stalinist Russia is proving, if it has not already proved conclusively, that a bureaucratic control of industry cannot increase the productivity of labor as against a developed capitalism. It is altogether probable that nationalized industry under bureaucratic control offers, from the point of view of developing the productive forces of society, no improvement whatever over developed capitalism.

But workers' democracy in industry does not mean that the workers of a particular factory or plant are to have final say in determining conditions of production and labor. It will not be difficult to have the workers of every factory understand

that the factory in which they work is intimately connected with all other factories and that planning for all of industry excludes the possibility of permitting the workers of a particular factory to determine their conditions.

An over-all planning authority with plans to be fulfilled by the workers of a particular factory is essential. The management of a factory by the workers comes in when they examine and criticize the plans proposed by the planning authority. The workers of a factory know far better than the planners outside what their factory is capable of producing.

From what Ciliga says it can be deduced that he is more of an anarcho-syndicalist than of a Marxist on the question of workers' democratic control of industry. His vague philosophy about the immediate post-revolutionary period is revealed in his assertion that "modern revolutions must achieve socialism or inevitably become anti-socialist, anti-proletarian, counter revolutions."

When taken on an historical plane there can be no objection to the above statement. From Ciliga's assertion, however, one can conclude that modern revolutions must immediately achieve socialism or degenerate. It is taken for granted by Marxists that a transitional period must necessarily follow the taking of power by the workers and that during that period many of the standards existing under capitalism will still prevail. He is a utopian who thinks that socialism and all that socialism means to society and to the individual can be ushered in immediately after capitalism is destroyed.

Democratic control of industry by the workers is possible and absolutely essential even before socialism comes into existence but it should be understood that it is a control primarily through the democratic workers' state which owns the industries and which is in a position to plan for all of the industries. The workers in a particular factory must subordinate themselves to the needs of the workers as a whole. Neither the trade-union bureaucrats nor the party bureaucrats should control industry but the workers state, that is, the soviets, democratically controlled by the masses.

Nor must it be forgotten (and Ciliga does not mention it) that the basic premise for the existence of democratic control of industry, in the long run, is the existence of a developed industry which can satisfy the needs of the masses. We can confidently expect that the democratic traditions of the American workers will make it more difficult for bureaucrats to usurp authority. But what is decisive is the existence of a sufficiently high productive capacity to eliminate the need for a struggle for a decent livelihood. No rules and no determination to adhere to democratic forms will prevail against a long period of scarcity.

Lenin thought that the development of a bureaucracy could be prevented by decreeing that the payment of an official should be no higher than the payment of a worker and that the workers should have the right to recall their representatives any time they wanted to. But these measures turned out to be ineffective in the face of universal need. This does not mean that workers' democracy is ineffective; it simply means that it can not prevent degeneration when the economic conditions favorable to degeneration exist for a long period.

Control of the Government by the Working Class

Actually, if the workers succeed in controlling the government all of the problems of workers' democracy are thereby solved. If the workers have complete democracy in the soviets or workers' councils then through their control of the government they can determine the policies of the government.

Control of the government implies the right to vote the governing party out of power. Democratic control of the government by the workers exists if they have the right to recall the old and elect new representatives whenever they wish and if the main policies of the party in power are presented to the workers for their approval or disapproval through the means of elections at definite intervals where criticism is completely free and opponents of the party in power have an opportunity to present their criticism and their program. As a corollary to this proposition it follows that a minority is in duty bound to submit to the government until there is an opportunity to reverse its policies by an appeal to the workers in a general election.

That a revolutionary party in power may, under certain circumstances, deem it necessary to go against the will of the majority of the workers can be taken for granted by those who understand that we are not living in a world where a correct solution to all problems can be reached through pure democracy. Those who have been active in the labor movement know that it happens frequently that in the course of a long and bitter strike the overwhelming majority of the strikers become tired and demoralized. Inevitably a group of backward workers takes the lead in a movement to go back to work. If given an opportunity the majority of the workers would undoubtedly vote to end the strike. A conscious and militant leadership will not yield to the mood of the majority if it is convinced that in a short period there is a chance for a favorable conclusion of the strike.

A revolutionary party can permit itself the liberty of disregarding the will of the majority provided it realizes that to do so for a long period means inevitably the use of deceit and force against the majority and to do that for any length of time means to institute a dictatorship of the minority which must inevitably result in degeneration.

It is not at all sufficient, as Ciliga seems to think it is, to proclaim the principle that the emancipation of the workers must be accomplished by the workers themselves. All revolutionary socialists who have taken the lesson of Stalinism to heart realize how necessary it is to abide by that principle enunciated by Marx. But it cannot solve the problems that will confront a party in power. To follow that principle rigorously means to oppose the formation of a party. To see the necessity of applying that principle does not mean to idealize the workers who have been subjected to the demoralizing influence of capitalism.

Upon a revolutionary party lies the responsibility of educating the workers to think critically and independently and thus to enable them to guard against the would-be usurpers. Next to a favorable economic situation the best guarantee against degeneration is a revolutionary party composed of educated, critical revolutionary workers. Such a party will not for long act against the will of the workers; it will either win the majority to its point of view or yield to the majority.

When evaluating the role of Lenin and Trotsky during the extremely trying period of the Civil War and the period immediately following it one must not forget that they had no experience by which to be guided in their actions. It is obvious that of the two great principles—the necessity to guard the conquests of the workers and the necessity to guard the democratic rights of the workers, they placed the emphasis upon the first. We who have the lessons of Stalinism as a terrible warning can realize more clearly than any of the leaders of the Russian Revolution how important it is to stress the democratic rights of the workers.

Unfortunately history decreed that the first socialist revolution occur in a backward country. From our vantage point we can see that degeneration was inevitable if the revolution was not extended to more advanced countries. But giving precedence to the factor of backwardness we must nevertheless realize that an important contributing factor was the crushing of the democratic rights of the Russian workers by the Stalinist bureaucracy. This was part of the degeneration and at the same time hastened the degeneration. If together with Ciliga we realize the importance of the problem of workers' democracy it does not mean that we agree with his thesis that Lenin and Trotsky were partly responsible for the degeneration in Russia. We reject his thesis because it is not true but more than ever do we recognize the necessity of emphasizing the need of workers' democracy as a means to guard against degeneration.

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Cain's Movietone Realism

Novels Written for Hollywood

James M. Cain's novel, *Mildred Pierce*, might have been a very good novel; it might even have been a great one. Had this novel been properly handled, James M. Cain might even have lifted himself to the level of Dreiser in American letters. The story he told could have been a very representative one. It is some time since I read a book in which a real story was so wantonly squandered as is the case here. Because of this and because there are so many touches revealing how Cain has empirically grasped important details concerning the modern American scene, I winced again and again as I read this book and saw how it was disfigured into movietone realism.

The Pierce family is middle class, living on the lawn, bracing trees. The time opens impressively with the husband, a smallish man named Bert Pierce, working on the lawn bracing trees. The time is the depression. Bert Pierce had been an executive in a real estate company, Pierce Homes, which had built a group of standardized houses. One of them is the house in which he lives. The company had gone into receivership and Bert Pierce was forced out of the concern. His spirit is broken. He cannot find a job and he doesn't even seem to look for one any more. He is a decent man but his personality is disintegrating. He has lost his function in society and is no longer the provider. It seems as though it were profoundly symbolic that his personality disintegrates when he becomes bankrupt and can no longer play a role in Pierce Homes, Inc. His name was given to the company, to the group of houses it built, to a street in the community which is composed of these houses, and there also is a Pierce Drive. There is nothing left of Bert Pierce's activity in this work except the name; and there is little will left in the man. We see that his will, his very self, has deteriorated with his loss of function as the head of a family, as well as the loss of his business position in the community.

His wife Mildred is in her thirties; they have two girls, one of them in her teens. Mildred is not beautiful, but she remains very attractive and has lovely legs. Although she has been a housewife, she has definitely not lost her looks. She

is physically described by the author, cut to the pattern so that she could act the part of a movie star. An excellent cook, she is supporting the family by baking pies and cakes for neighbors. Bert is having an affair with a woman named Mrs. Biederhof. The marriage is broken up. It is clear that Bert gets comfort, consolation and sympathy from this vague Mrs. Biederhof. Mildred sometimes nags him. But even if she had not nagged him, the fact that she—the little wife—was providing for the family is, in itself, sufficient to unman Bert. The petty bourgeois American male who has skyrocketed to a position of affluence in the 1920's cannot be supported by his little missus. The personality of Bert Pierce had, we can easily deduce, been intermingled with Pierce Homes, Inc.

The older daughter, Veda, is an incorrigible snob. She is ambitious and wants to live among the rich. She has contempt for her middle class Glendale surroundings. The mother has fixed all of her ambitions on Veda's future. She wants her to be a great pianist and even now, in adversity, she scrapes enough money to provide for Veda's music lessons.

Commodities and Human Relations

The story then opens with a petit-bourgeois man on a lawn. What he does is described; but what he feels is not touched on by the author. The lawn is one of Bert's things. The life of this family has been a life of things. Here is his last thing, as it were. Then there is a quarrel and Mildred takes the initiative in driving him off to go and live with Mrs. Biederhof. Now she is alone, and the support of the two children depends on her. She has had no training in the business world. And in a depression when many trained people are almost on the bread line, what chance has she? She looks for work and the only prospect offered her is that of domestic service; she is repelled by this.

One of the striking and promising features in the early portions of this novel is that the two main characters are presented with reference to things, to objects and to conventional conceptions. They possess little individuality in the sense that many literary characters have individuality. The style of the book is objective, even a little flat in places: it

records movements, performances, the handling of things, such as Bert bracing the trees, Mildred cooking and the ingredients of what she cooks which go into the making of something that she will sell. This presents to us a world of private life in which *things*, commodities, almost become the protagonist.

But to continue, Mildred overcomes the revulsion she feels about doing menial work and becomes a waitress. She works diligently and in time she gets the pie concession in the restaurant where she has found employment. She gets a few other customers. Wally Bergen had been associated with Pierce Homes, and when the company had gone bankrupt, he had managed to wangle himself into a job as the receiver. He happens to call after Bert had left, wanting to see Bert concerning some business details. When he learns that Mildred and her husband have separated, he shows interest in her. He makes a date with her. Mildred talks about this with her neighbor, Mrs. Cessler, the wife of a man who is getting on by engaging in the illegal liquor business, hauling it from the boats which bring in booze along the Pacific coast. Mrs. Cessler tells Mildred how to behave in order to capture Wally. Instead of letting him take her out to eat, Mildred should cook for him, give him good drinks which Mrs. Cessler provides, tie him to her by being the person who provides the food and liquor before she lets him sleep with her.

Mildred acts on this advice. She cooks a dinner which Wally devours, gives him drinks that he couldn't get in speak-easies where the quality of booze is bad, and then, lets him seduce her. But Wally is smart enough not to be trapped. In time, however, Wally helps Mildred start a restaurant. She begins without capital, but Wally manages to help her get adequate credit. In order to protect herself financially she divorces Bert. Further, while working as a waitress, she has met a wastrel named Monty Bera-gon. His family is rich and socially prominent in Pasadena; he is a polo player. He picks up Mildred on her last day at the restaurant where she works, takes her to his little shack at the beach and they have a weekend together. While Mildred is away, the youngest daughter, who is spending the weekend with the

father, becomes fatally ill. Then, the restaurant opens, and Mildred quickly catapults to success. She has an affair with Monty. His family loses its money, and he has to depend on her financially. He is contemptuous of her. A kinship of social snobbery develops between him and Veda who is growing up into a desirable female of the Hollywood type. It turns out that she cannot play the piano well, but she becomes a coloratura singer. Mildred kicks Monty out just as she did Bert. She works energetically; her business expands and she is able to run several restaurants. The daughter, Veda, detests her mother, detests the fact that her mother earns money in a bourgeois manner and detests Glendale. With Wally's aid—he is a lawyer—Veda blackmails a motion picture family with whose son she has slept, and this enables her to leave home. Veda is the one substantial human relationship in Mildred's life.

With Veda gone, Mildred's life seems empty. Monty, in decay and with a spreading bald spot, has to sell his family home, an atrocious stone pile. Mildred buys it, and marries him in order to get Veda back. Veda returns and Mildred lavishes the profits and resources of her business in providing for Veda and Monty, with whom, however, she doesn't live as a wife. Veda becomes a famous singer and earns five hundred dollars a week in radio.

Mildred, wasting the money of her business, is going to be forced out by her creditors. It is when she learns this that she returns home late at night and finds her daughter in her husband's bed, naked. She almost kills her daughter. The girl pretends that she has lost her voice because of the way that her mother choked her. Monty leaves. Mildred is forced out of business. She divorces Monty. She takes Veda back. Veda seems changed. But it has only been a ruse on the part of Veda. She has pretended to have lost her voice in order to be able to get out of a five hundred dollar contract so that she can accept another one for twenty-five hundred dollars a week. She leaves home and goes off to New York with Monty. Mildred has, after all of her driving effort, now come to the point where she is thirty-seven; her looks are going; she is getting fat. She meets Bert. In the meantime, Bert's mistress, Mrs. Biederhof, has gone back to her husband who has gotten a good job. Bert and Mildred talk things over and come back together. Bert tells her that Veda is no good. She finally realizes this. She is

purged of her almost unnatural love for her daughter. And then the book ends, with Bert and Mildred reconciled, having each other, and Bert says: "Goddamn it, that's what I want to hear. Come on, we got each other, haven't we? Let's get stinko." And Mildred has the last line: "Yes, let's get stinko."

Cain—Hollywood "Realism" Master

I have only roughly and hastily told the story. But this account of the story should indicate how it has been Hollywoodized. The story, however, when presented in outline only suggests what is wrong with this novel but doesn't indicate what is the character of the opportunity that Cain has squandered. Cain is able to tell a story which has the merit that the reader doesn't have to spend too much time in getting on from the first to the last page. Shocks and violence punctuate his novels. They are written as a kind of literary movie. And, inasmuch as a greater latitude is permitted the novelist than the scenarist, Cain's books have the appearance of greater reality than most films do. Unrestrained by a production code, the pattern of a Cain story can be more like patterns of real lives than can those of a motion picture. *Mildred Pierce* is no exception here, but it could have been an exception. Cain began with a real problem, one relatively untouched in contemporary writing. *Mildred Pierce* could well have been an account of the middle class housewife. It could have been a poignant story which told what happens to many of these housewives so that in the fictional character, Mildred, there would have been particles from real life of hundreds of thousands of such women. At times there are suggestions of this. The opening portions of this book are highly promising. But then we see where James M. Cain has learned his literary lessons. Story values take the place of Mildred's problems. Plot involvements, relationships based on plot and story, falsify what has been begun as a story of people. Further, what is important in the promising portions of this book is that we see how things, objects, commodities have become the basis for the spiritual content of Mildred's life, and how Bert, having lost all of his things becomes a good natured and ineffectual person. And we see further the transformation of one of the roles of the housewife—as a cook—into a businesswoman. Things and money creep out of every page of this book and they become fetishes which are pressed into

the very soul of Mildred. She has affairs. She has scenes of anger and reconciliation with her daughter. She knows success and wins prestige. But one of her high moments is when she gives Bert a few drinks, cops the key to the automobile which he had taken when they split up, and then, by this means, she gets possession of the car itself. After taking Bert home, she drives rather wildly and she feels elated, almost ecstatic. At the wheel of the car she forgets herself even more than she does in sexual affairs with Wally or Monty. Much has been written about the standardization of human beings in modern American society. But here was the promise of a vivid, empirically grasped and well presented fictional account of the structure of American standardization. Here, in Bert and Mildred, were the beginnings of two characterizations which reveal how things take the place of human relationships. This was what made the novel so promising, and it, in turn, is the reason why I winced when this fine beginning was wrapped up in a package of cheap glamor and cynical melodrama.

Cain writes of valueless people who are cruel, violent, self-centered and who have a minimum of consciousness. In his world there is neither good nor bad and there is little love. People commit adultery and the wicked do not always go punished. If the wicked are punished it is purely fortuitous: punishment is a result of the needs of the story and not of the stern hand of Providence. This is a world in which the incapacity of an automobile to go as fast as the driver wants it to can send the adulterer to a sinner's grave just as well as can the moral law of the Almighty God and the almost equally Almighty Joseph Breen, Code Administrator for the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America.

The historic past has given us a high level of literary culture. This level is expressed in a series of great tragedies which come down from the Greeks to modern times. In tragedy there is an unhappy ending. Serious American writers such as Theodore Dreiser have written in this tradition, and the spirit which motivates work such as Dreiser's is one that is drawn from a high level of literary culture. Contrastéd to such work, there is the cheap escape fiction, the best seller and the plot short story. By and large, the plot short story and the saccharine best seller cannot be maintained in the modern American world. The falsity of writings of this order is so patent that in

a hard, atomized, cynical urban world this type of writing seems merely funny—unintentionally funny. Slowly and surely, the old type of saccharine best seller is being driven from the market. There can be very few new Gene Stratton Porters.

A best seller today must have something different from the best seller of thirty or forty years ago. If it is given a religious tone it can be a market sensation, as we find in the case of Lloyd Douglas. But naive virgins, happy and good housewives performing their role, love without hormones—these ingredients of the old best seller are rapidly declining in sales value. It is writers such as Cain who stand in between the work of a serious and tragic character which has been fathered by such men as Dreiser in America and the work that has connection with the more or less forgotten writings of Robert W. Chambers, Gene Stratton Porter or Harold Bell Wright. And in this in-between, neither-fish-nor-fowl-literary medium, James Cain has become the master. He is a literary thrill-producer and he profits by the reaction against the sentimentality of other years. At the same time, he gains from the prestige of more serious and exploratory writing. As a consequence, James M. Cain is not an insignificant or unimportant American literary phenomenon. He has helped to perfect a form which combines Hollywood and serious realism.

The Mencken Background

And herein hangs an irony which should be pointed out. James M. Cain is an old newspaper man, a former contributor to *The American Mercury*, a writer whose background is intimately associated with the 1920's. The sophisticated attitude of *The American Mercury* of the Twenties remains in his writing. For instance, in *Mildred Pierce*, Veda is a caricature of a flapper of the Twenties and she describes bourgeois people as peasants. If one reads Cain's book, *Our Government*, one is transported back to the days when we all read that green-covered magazine. Cain has not grown by jumping off from the positive sides of Mencken and of *The American Mercury*. Mencken was a major voice in America agitating for serious realistic fiction: at the same time that he played such a role in advancing Dreiser, that he welcomed Sherwood Anderson and others, he attacked, parodied, flayed the books of Chambers, Winston Churchill and others, and cast on their kind of work the

brand of ridicule at which he had become so expert. In doing this he helped to open channels for the more serious writer and contributed toward the creation of a better taste for literature among more serious and literate people, especially younger people. Cain comes out of this period. The taste for reality exists in him. To it he has added lessons learned from Hollywood. Therein lies the irony. The James M. Cain who wrote about a government which was elected by yokels and middle class "peasants" is now the thrill-producing movietone realist who shocks these yokels and the sons and daughters of these yokels with novels of adultery, murder, cynicism and violence. To drive home the irony, one might say that in the Twenties, the attitude on government which Cain implied was, more or less, that people deserved the government they got. The American middle class yokel deserved a Calvin Coolidge. These same yokels deserve, as it were, the realist they now have and that realist deserves his audience.

Pseudo-Realism and Public Taste

Mildred Pierce has been made into a movie by Warner Brothers, produced by Mr. Jerry Wahl, who is likely to become one of the Hollywood producers of movietone realism in which there is adultery, murder and unhappy endings. The saccharine story of the happy ending, the virgin, the pure but masculine and smartaleck hero has become the typical story of Hollywood. Boy meets girl. The boy is immature; the girl is immature. The story of the boy and the girl is juvenile and revolves around how the boy comes to meet the girl and how they end up in a kiss, sufficiently short not to constitute a sin, and properly directed so that the kiss is more like that of a brother and sister than that of two lovers. The endless retelling of this story, the stupefying succession of movies with this kind of happy ending has now confused public taste. If a movie has an unhappy ending, it is realism—not romance on the level of a popular song. Because of such facts, the filming of novels of James M. Cain has a certain significance and will be falsely interpreted by many who are now so groggy with stories of purity that they accept as realism any story with murder, an unhappy ending and love which violates the Sixth Commandment. Such stories then are falsely accepted as signs that Hollywood is growing up and becoming sophisticated. It is apparently assumed that if Hollywood can "crack"

a Cain book, and produce it within the boundaries set by the Production Code, then we see signs of change, of a new era in pictures. Intellectuals, producers, writers and others have, in fact, begun to look forward to such achievements with hope and confidence. Mr. Jerry Wahl has begun to produce more serious pictures. Now, Hollywood will advance into the stage of real film art.

With this in mind, it is well to take a quick look at the film, *Mildred Pierce*. The novel begins with a description of a middle class home that is breaking up because of the depression. The sense of the novel relates to this beginning. Mildred Pierce is a middle class woman whose capacities have been restricted by the performance of her role as mother and wife. When her husband is driven out of business she has to assume the role of the man and she has to enter, unprepared, the savage and competitive world of the breadwinner, of the male. The life of the middle class is atomized. Socially it is crushed between the two antagonistic classes of modern society, the big bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Its social relationships are dictated by business considerations. Its women are half-ornament and half-slave. They often preserve their beauty, their figure, the loveliness of their flesh, but their characters go into a stagnant sleep, and their inner life dries up. They are trained for nothing but to be a mate, a mother, a housekeeper and housewife. The performance of this role makes them the queen of their class. Mildred is such a woman.

But the film opens with a murder. There is no murder in the novel. Mildred seems to be a murderess and she even wants to commit suicide in one of the first scenes of the film, but a policeman prevents her and this permits some quasi-humorous dialogue in which the policeman tells her to go home and remarks that if she tries to go swimming rather than home, he will have to take a swim too and he might even get pneumonia. The edge is thus taken off of the murder and of the torn image of Joan Crawford standing over a bridge getting ready to dive into turbulent waters. Also the movie story is told backwards and becomes a quasi-mystery story.

Movie Changes Plot

In the novel, home, things and an inadequately motivated mother-daughter relationship are the basis of what subsequently happens. In the motion picture, false suspense as to who killed Monty is the starting point, and the

out instructions from above—she avows, in fact, that she doesn't know what will come of it all; ignorant of socialism, completely unpolitical, she is, however, religious and looks forward to a church marriage by a Partisan priest; the second martyr is the Communist, Manfredi, who functions as a member of the Committee of National Liberation, carrying out secret instructions of sabotage, but has no contact with the people; the third and last martyr is the priest Pietro,—with his death the picture comes to an end. His execution is witnessed by the children of his school, self-organized militants led by a crippled boy, Romoletto. This little terrorist wished to throw a bomb into a crowd of his own people in order to destroy the SS men who question them. The last shot is of these same children, representatives of the Italian future, returning to the city; the horizon is dominated by the high dome of St. Peter's. They will go back to their church school where they have played soccer under the guidance of the good priest Pietro.

This collaboration with the Church constitutes, in my opinion, a basic theme of the film. It is carried through in many details and even assumes the pattern of a familiar Christian legend. In the conclusion, always vital for the effect of a film or play, the two martyrs, Pietro and Manfredi, recall the martyrdoms of Peter and Paul in Rome. Like Paul, Manfredi is the energetic, uncompromising apostle, who engaged in world propaganda for the new religion; like Paul, he began as a persecutor of the church, and like Paul, he dies under another name, a more Christian name than his original one. The priest, Pietro, has made out for him a fake passport as Giovanni Episcopo (Bishop), and it is under this suggestive name (borne also by a character of D'Annunzio) that the Gestapo registers his martyr's death. I may be permitted in this context to carry the mythical pattern further and observe that just as Saint Peter was crucified upside down, so the priest Pietro is shot from behind.

Church Presented Favorably

The Catholic Church is presented here from the viewpoint of a friendly spectator who does not know too well the dogmas, hierarchy, ritual, temporal interests and miseries of this powerful institution; he sees only the modest priest who derives from his love of Christ good will toward the poor, hatred of injustice and readiness to help those who need him. The sacraments appear as flexible instruments at the disposal of

human wants, rather than as magical rites administered under fixed conditions. The priest hears Pina's confession while she accompanies him on the street when he is on a mission of the Resistance, as one human being with another. The rite of extreme unction is acted out as a ruse to deceive the Gestapo and to save Romoletto whose bomb might be discovered by the enemy searching the house. The relations of the individual priest to the people conceal the broader relations of the church to the whole community. The audience is given the feeling that the church is tolerant, human, warm, adaptable, superior to dogma and rite. Nothing in the film indicates that Pietro is an exceptional priest, like Silone's Don Benedetto; he is nowhere contrasted with priests who compromise or who side with the oppressors. Thus the people are prepared for support of collaboration with a clerical party.

There is in this film a series of crude moral contrasts which should also be noted as part of its collaborationist thought. The religious woman, Pina, the real heroine, is not only a believer, but conforms to the church teachings about manners and dress. If she has been living in sin, that is because of the unsettled war conditions; she is about to be married in the church. Opposed to her is the mistress of the Communist Manfredi and ultimately his betrayer, through a German spy, Ingrid. The latter, a sinister figure, resembles in her features and action the cruel females of Beardsley and the literature of the 1890's, the vampire or Salome of that period. She is a Lesbian and a hater of men. Her political role issues from a psychological deformity. The reward for her service is not money or love, but morphine. Similarly, her Gestapo chief is a homosexual animated by a cold vanity and sadism. The struggle between this German agent and Manfredi is pictured as one of racial psychologies; the Gestapo man says: If Manfredi will hold out under torture, then there is no difference between the blood of a master-race and of a slave-race,—which is impossible. Manfredi's death is therefore a sign of Italian superiority. It is also a victory of the normal human being over the sexually perverted and loathsome. The characterizations of the antagonists are not of representatives of classes as in the older Communist films, but of national types as moral opposites. Even the two figures from the German camp who are not Nazis are inferior to the Italians:

the Austrian deserter, unable to face the expected torture, which Manfredi endures, hangs himself; and the German captain, who alone dares to criticize the Nazi aspirations and brutality as a hopeless failure, turns up at the end to finish the priest when the Italian firing squad balks in its duty. The polarity: German-Italian, is stronger, more decisive, than the differences among Italians.

Farrell's Interpretation Rejected

A last point—the character of Manfredi as a leader. Unlike the priest, he enters into no intimate relations with the people; nowhere in the film does he make decisions for them or do they learn from him or respond to him politically. An Italian friend observes that in the period with which the film deals, under the Badoglio régime, there were no important Stalinist leaders in Rome, only agents and minor party functionaries. Togliatti was still in Moscow. To picture Communism as a principle of personal leadership in this situation would have been impossible.

Leadership of a kind there is in the film. Certain individuals stand out by their greater courage and initiative, as they do in reality; and there is also the obvious dramatic device of isolating and focussing on individuals as representatives of various groups. But we will scarcely conclude from this that the aim or effect of the film is to establish "the leadership principle." The fact that in answer to Pina's discouragement after a domestic brawl, her lover points to Manfredi as the man with the key to the future, indicates the prestige of the Communists and the low level of political awareness among the Italian people at that moment; it hardly warrants Farrell's interpretation.

Manfredi is more clearly, however, an example of the readiness of the CP to cooperate with reactionary groups in a common front. He quickly approves Pina's desire for a church wedding by a Partisan priest; and his own death is the result of his loyalty to Badoglio's generals, whose names he will not divulge to the Germans. The whole tragic story, the fate of Pina and Pietro, grows out of Manfredi's role of liaison with the Military Junta. The party line of collaboration with the church and ultimately with the Christian Democrats, we have seen, is well expressed in the triple martyrdom. This line entails the acceptance of the Catholic schools and the masking and reshaping of the familiar face of the Catholic ally. The church becomes for

story unfolds in such a way as to suggest that Mildred is the murderess. This change of plot and emphasis, obviously helps the studio sneak the film past the Code.* All that is promising in the opening of the book is sacrificed. Even less than in the novel is the mother-daughter relationship motivated. Veda is turned into an outright and humanly impossible movie villainess. The consequences of the Hollywood alterations of this already Hollywoodized realism are such that the film becomes stupid and senseless.

The same comment could be made of a previous film based on a Cain novel—*Double Indemnity*. The demands and restrictions of the Production Code are such that this is one of the most likely types of realism, of sophistication which can be introduced into films. Such realism, such sophistication is usually further enhanced and made vivid by the familiar and glamorous background of sin in our time. There is a suggestion of the "sins" of the glamor boys and girls of the newspaper columns in such films. The "sinfulness" of the characters is made thrilling in scenes of night clubs or road houses, and it is also laid against a

background of furnishings and decorations such as one might see in the advertisements of *The New Yorker*. The magic of the movies, the capitalization on glamor, the skillfulness of producers, directors and scenarists are thus all put into the creation of a pseudo-realism. At the same time the demands of the stern Mosaic Code of the Hays Office (really the Johnston Office) are met: the sinners die. Murder and adultery are punished. The thrills of adultery in the most modernistic setting are then compensated for. The Vedas of this realism die in the end.

If this new movietone realism continues it will most likely have the effect of further debauching popular taste in America. One of the major virtues of serious realism is that it describes the pitiless force of circumstance and the equally pitiless drive of human emotions which often play so central a role in causing the tragic destruction of human beings. But in this pseudo-realistic type of novel and movie the pitiless force of circumstance and of human impulse is turned into the fortuitousness of automobile accidents and the like and into a melodramatically simplified conception

of good girls and bad girls. Furthermore, the tendency in such films can be that of sneaking just a few added thrills of adultery into the plot. If this happens, then the censors will howl anew. The Hollywood movietone realists will, under such circumstances, crawl back into the usual motion picture defense of virtue. They will, then, be in a position to claim that they tried realism, tried to produce serious art and were thwarted by powerful forces which are beyond their control. This will undoubtedly make it likely that serious realism will be open to fresh attacks. With these fresh attacks it will have to carry along the burden of defending and of being held responsible for this movietone realism. Herein, it seems to me, is one of the significant aspects of this new movietone realism, one which must be watched and analyzed. Far from being any serious step in the right direction, it is merely one of the new and rapidly developing "art" forms of our contemporary and commercialized culture.

JAMES T. FARRELL.

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*The rigorous prescriptions of the Production Code are such that motion picture scenarists are again and again faced with the problem of "licking" a picture. This means to contrive some means of saving something of a story and, at the same time, recontrive it in such a way as to make the film permissible under the terms prescribed in the Code. To my knowledge, no one has attempted to observe and study the consequences, moral and artistic, of this practice. The need to get by the Code conditions or can condition the picture-maker to think in terms of ambiguities. It imposes false problems on the writer. In time, it will undoubtedly contrib-

ute greatly toward helping create cynical and dishonest attitudes toward material. This cynicism will threaten to infect the audience as well as the picture-makers. For the audience will perceive the sexual meanings behind many contrived ambiguities of invention and will draw proper conclusions. I would hazard the guess that the problem of "licking" the Code which is so constantly imposed on writers is one of the significant causative factors in inducing the artistic decay of so many writers who work in Hollywood for a long period of time. In order to suggest the dangers involved here we might refer to Freud. In *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, Freud revealed and exposed

the psychological structure of forgetting. He discovered that in an instance of significant forgetting, a process of thought had been begun and then left incomplete just prior to the act of forgetting. This incomplete process of thought is intimately involved in the act of forgetting and is bound up with the repression which underlies the same act of forgetting. Consider the significance of this discovery in terms of the scenarist who is constantly required to sneak something by the Code, and to recontrive something else so as to make it acceptable to the Code administrators. There must be involved here an endless series of little repressions, repressions of the kind which sap the artist.

A Note on "The Open City"

Some Comments on Farrell's Review

In his article on *The Open City* in the August number of *THE NEW INTERNATIONAL*, James Farrell has tried to show that the essential content of this film is the new conception of the Leader in the Stalinist party; "it establishes the leadership principle" and by various subtle devices inspires the audience to "trust and follow the leader." More than once Farrell insists that the film neither contains nor implies a political program; the political void is filled by the image of the Leader, the Stalinist functionary or agent.

This conclusion, which is built on a

detailed analysis of the story, does not seem to me to represent correctly the political content of the film, or to correspond to Italian conditions, at least as we know them through the press. It is true that the classical action of a Marxist party,—leadership in class struggles, the awakening of revolutionary consciousness in the workers—is not evoked here. We should be surprised indeed if this were the theme of an Italian film in 1945. But it is no less evident that *The Open City* does convey a political line, a line which is fateful for the European future and should be recognized for

what it is, wherever it appears. It was the Stalinist Resistance line for Italy during the crucial period of the "Liberation" and has its parallels in other countries. *The Open City*, to describe it briefly, is an exemplary account of the collaboration of the Communist Party, the Italian people and the Catholic Church against the national enemy: Nazi Germany. Italian fascism is almost wholly ignored. There are three martyrs to the common cause, each representing one of these active elements: the working class woman, Pina, who initiates the bread riot spontaneously, with-

the moment the friend of the poor and helper of all "who fight for justice and liberty," to quote the words of the priest, who gives his blessing to the martyred Communist. The Vatican Concordat Mussolini, its support of Fascism and Franco, are shamefully forgotten.

I have assumed up to this point that *The Open City* is a Stalinist work; but I am not sure that this is correct. In Italy and France, during the war, the Resistance movements included many non-Stalinists who respected the CP as a powerful militant apparatus and the Catholic Church as a noble ally; the lower clergy more than once saved the lives of underground fighters. The ideas of the Popular Front came to life again spontaneously, in a patriotic form, among the middle class, even where the Stalinists were weak. It is conceivable that *The Open City* is the product of such anti-Fascist artists in the Resistance; they were politically naive carriers of Stalinist notions and tendencies who sometimes came to these less through direct instruction than through their social role and their relationship to the events

in their reaction against Fascism. In their experience the Communists were neither proletarian revolutionists nor agents of Stalin, but courageous fighters against the common Nazi enemy. There were many who sincerely believed that the unity of the Resistance would be maintained after the war, even if under CP leadership. In the film the preponderance of Pina and the priest, humanly, dramatically and artistically, is such that I supposed at first that the whole was the work of men nearer to the people and the priest, somewhat in Silone's sense, than to Stalinism, although certain touches suggested a Stalinist hand. And this, indeed, is the impression one gets from reading the reviews in Italian and American magazines. They stress the tragic quality of the film and the veracity of the image of Rome and its people among whom Pina and the priest stand out above all. They make it difficult to accept Farrell's idea that the deliberate aim (and effect) of the film is to insinuate emotionally the principle of totalitarian leadership. It is incredible that an organization directly under Communist

control, aiming to convey this principle, could have produced such a film, which is not only incomparably better than the recent Russian films and the Italian Fascist ones, but is free from the stylizations and absurd automatisms inevitable in party propaganda. It would be interesting to know just who is behind this effort. It is no isolated work; other groups, perhaps including Communists, have been formed in Italy to create similar realistic films of the Resistance and the "Liberation," using unprofessional actors, as in the great Soviet films of twenty years ago. In any case, whether *The Open City* was produced by Stalinists as party propaganda or by an independent artistic group, with various political tendencies, united in a common front, its essential message of the solidarity of the Communists and the church, both idealized through heroic individuals, is politically more significant than one would discover from Farrell's article, which makes the new cult of the leader the central meaning of the film.

MEYER SCHAPIRO.

The Nature of the Russian Economy

A Contribution on the Discussion on Russia

(In Analysis of Russian Economy,¹ which was made after an exhaustive study of all available data on the dynamics of the Five Year Plans, it was shown that the law of value dominated the Russian economy. This law expressed itself in two ways: (1) The production of means of production outdistances the production of means of consumption. (2) The misery of the workers increases, along with the increase in capital accumulation. No one has challenged this study based on official Russian documents, which, however, did not draw the inescapable conclusions. It is necessary, therefore, to draw fully and explicitly the conclusions implicit in the statistical analysis, which this author has always considered as Part I of her study of the Nature of the Russian Economy.—F. F.

Introductory—"A Single Capitalist Society"

The profound simplicity of Marx's method of the Russian economy revealed that, given the domination of the law of value, which is a law of the world market, a given society would remain capitalist even if one or all of several conditions prevailed: (1) the exchange between the sub-

divisions of the department producing means of production were effected *directly*,² that is, without going through the market; (2) the relationships between the department producing means of production and the one producing means of consumption were planned so that no ordinary commercial crises arose; and, finally, (3) even if the law of centralization of capital would reach its extreme limit and all capital were concentrated in the hands of "a single capitalist or... a single capitalist society."³

Precisely because Marx analyzed a pure capitalist society which has never historically existed, his analysis holds true for every capitalist society, but only for capitalist society. What Marx was primarily concerned with was not the abstraction, "a single capitalist society." His concern was with the fact that this extreme development would in no way change the law of motion

² Cf. Karl Marx: *Theories of Surplus Value*, (Vol. II, Part II, p. 170, Russian ed.). The debates on this question within the Marxist movement are dealt with by this author in her *Luxemburg's Theory of Accumulation* in the N. I., April and May 1946.

³ "In a given society, this limit [extreme centralisation] would be reached if all social capital were concentrated into the same hands whether those of an individual capitalist or those of a single capitalist society." —Karl Marx: *Capital*, Vol. I, p. 692, Eden and Cedar Paul translation; in the Kerr edition this appears on p. 688.

of that society. He made this abstraction a point of analysis because by it the limitations of any individual capitalist society could be seen more clearly. The only basic distinction from the traditional capitalist society would be in the method of appropriation, not in the method or laws of production.

RUSSIAN STATE CAPITALISM: A GIVEN SINGLE CAPITALIST SOCIETY

I. The Mode of Appropriation

Since under the specific Russian state capitalism legal title to the means of production as well as the competitive market for such means have been abolished, how is appropriation achieved?

Inasmuch as private property in the means of production has been abolished in Russia, it is a deviation from the juridical concept to permit accumulation within any enterprise since the state aims to increase only "national capital." Nevertheless, with the establishment of "ruble control," enterprises were permitted to accumulate internally. In fact, incentives towards that interest in capital accumulation were created through the establishment of the Director's Fund. In 1940 internal accumulation comprised 32.5 per cent of capital investment!⁴

⁴ Cf. Part I, N. I., Jan. 1943.

¹ Published in *The New International*, Dec. 1942, Jan. and Feb. 1943. This series will hereafter be referred to as Part I.

Because these agents of state capital do not have title to this accumulated capital, however, is production thereby governed by a different motive force?

1. Planning vs. the Average Rate of Profit

The Stalinists, in denying that Russia is a capitalist society, insist that the best proof of that is that Russia is not subject to "the law of capitalism: the average rate of profit."⁵

"The law of capitalism" is not the average rate of profit, but the decline in the rate of profit. The average rate of profit is only the manner in which the surplus value extracted from the workers is divided among the capitalists.⁶ It is impossible to jump from that fact to the conclusion that "therefore" Russia is not a capitalist country. It is for this reason that the Stalinist apologists, with great deliberation, perverted "the law of capitalism" from the decline in the rate of profit to the achievement of an average rate of profit. With this revision of Marxism as their theoretic foundation, they proceeded to cite "proof" of Russia's being a non-capitalist land: Capital does not migrate where it is most profitable, but where the state directs it. Thus, they conclude Russia was able to build up heavy industry, though the greatest profits were obtained from light industry. In other words, what the United States has achieved through the migration of capital to the most profitable enterprises Russia has achieved through planning.

Profit, moreover, does not at all have the same meaning in Russia as it does in classical capitalism. The light industries show greater profit not because of the greater productivity of labor, but because of the state-imposed turn-over tax which gives an entirely fictitious "profit" to that industry. In reality, it is merely the medium through which the state, not the industry, siphons off anything "extra" it gave the worker by means of wages. It could not do the same things through the channel of heavy industry because the workers do not eat its products. That is why this "profit" attracts neither capital nor the individual agents of capital. That is the nub of the question.

Precisely because the words, profit and loss, have assumed a different meaning, the individual agents of capital do not go to the most "profitable" enterprises, even as capital itself does not. For the very same reason that the opposite was characteristic of classic capitalism: The individual agent's share of surplus value is greater in heavy industry. The salary of the director of a

5 Cf. "Teaching of Economics in the Soviet Union" *American Economic Review*, Sept. 1944, p. 526).

6 "A single capitalist, as is well known, receives in the form of profit, not that part of the surplus value which is directly created by the workers of his own experience, but a share of the combined surplus value created through the country proportionate to the amount of his own capital. Under an integral 'state capitalism', this law of the equal rate of profit would be realized, not by devious routes—that is, competition among different capitals—but immediately and directly through state bookkeeping."—L. Trotsky: *Revolution Betrayed*.

billion dollar trust depends, not on whether the trust shows a profit or not, but basically upon the magnitude of the capital that he manages.

State capitalism brings about a change in the mode of appropriation, as has occurred so often in the life span of capitalism, through its competitive, monopoly and state-monopoly stages. The individual agent of capital has at no time realized directly the surplus value extracted in his particular factory. He has participated in the distribution of national surplus value, to the extent that his individual capital was able to exert pressure on this aggregate capital. This pressure in Russia is exerted, not through competition, but state planning. But this struggle or agreement among capitalists, or agents of the state, if you will, is of no concern to the proletariat whose sweat and blood has been congealed into this national surplus value.⁷ What is of concern to him is his relationship to the one who performs the "function" of boss.

2. Private Property and the Agents of Capital

It is neither titles to property nor motives of individuals that distinguishes different exploitive economic orders, but their method of production, or manner of extracting surplus labor. If it was the legal title to property that were basic, the Stalinists would be right in assuming, "Since there is no private property in Russia, there is no exploitation of man by man."

Behind the imposing façade of the "socialist economy," however, stands the "classless intelligentsia."⁸ The specific weight of the upper crust of this ruling class, as we saw in Part I, comprises a mere 2.05 per cent of the total population!

The individuals who act as agents of the state and its industry are, of course, theoretically free to refuse to participate in the process of accumulation, just as a capitalist in the United States is free to sign away to the workers in his factory his legal title to the means of production. In the United States he would retire to Catalina Island, or, at worst, be sent to an insane asylum. In Russia he would be "liquidated." But he does not refuse. He acts exactly as the agent of capital that he is, as agent of the dead labor alienated from the worker and oppressing him. The class difference between the two, which the Russians euphemistically call "functional", is expressed outwardly, too, in no different manner than under traditional capitalism, where the one lives in luxury and the other in misery. It is true that in Russia the agent of capital does not "own" the factory. But personal property is recognized in the unlimited right

7 "It is immaterial to the laborer, whether the capitalist pockets the whole profit, or whether he has to pay over a part of it to some other person, who has a legal claim to it. The reason for dividing the profit among two kinds of capitalists thus turns surreptitiously into reasons for the existence of surplus value to be divided, which the capital as such draws out of the process of reproduction, quite apart from any subsequent division."—Marx: *Capital*, Vol. III, p. 448.

8 Cf. Part 1, *New International*, Feb. 1943.

to purchase interest-bearing bonds, sumptuous homes, *datchas*, and personal effects. State bonds, no matter how large the amount, are not subject to inheritance or gift tax. All forms of personal property can be left to direct descendants. Institutions of higher learning, the tuition fees of which make them inaccessible to the proletariat, welcome the children of these property-less factory directors, and this assures their offspring of good positions as befits the sons and daughters of the ruling class. This, however, is entirely incidental to the relationship in the factory.

It is not the caprice of bureaucracy nor the "will" of the individual capitalist in competitive capitalism that sets the wages of the workers. It is the law of value which dominates both.

The law of value, i.e., the law of motion, of the Russian economy has led to the polarization of wealth, to the high organic composition of capital, to the accumulation of misery at one pole and the accumulation of capital at the other. This is a given single capitalist society, an economy governed by the laws of world capitalism, originating in the separation of the laborer from control over the means of production.

But how could that arise when not only private property was abolished, but the capitalists were expropriated?

II. THE COUNTER-REVOLUTION (Emphasis 1935-1937)

Given, on the one hand, the environment of the world market, and, on the other hand, the failure of the advanced proletariat of Europe to make its revolution and thus come to the aid of the Russian proletariat, it was inevitable that the transitional stage between capitalism and socialism perish, and the law of value reassert its dominance. It is necessary, Lenin warned the last party congress at which he appeared, to examine squarely "the Russian and international market, to which we are subordinated, with which we are connected and from which we cannot escape."

The counter-revolution did not make a "formal" appearance, with arms in hand, and therefore it was hard to recognize it. Along with the bureaucratization of the apparatus and loss of political control over the state by the proletariat, the relations of production were undergoing a transformation. It was, in fact, the changing relations of production which laid the basis for the eventual consolidation of the bureaucracy as a class.

The initial changes in the relations of production appeared imperceptibly. The labor inspector failed to defend the workers' interests because, with the adoption of the First Five Year Plan, all enterprises became state enterprises and automatically were labeled "socialist." The leaders of the trade unions who displaced, first the Left Oppositionists, and then the Tomsy leadership, were all too ready to speak out against any "right wing unionistic tendencies" of those who put their welfare above those of the "socialist" economy. When, in 1931, the state told the worker he could not change his job without permission of the

director of the plant in which he worked, the trade unions had to acquiesce. When the worker's ration card and his right to living space were placed in 1932 in the hands of the factory director, the trade unions hailed the step as a necessity for establishing "labor discipline." The Workers Production Conferences, established by the early workers state so that every worker "to a man" might participate in the management of the economy, seldom convened. In 1934 the trade unions were made part of the administrative machinery of the state.

But the final divorce of labor from control over the means of production could not be achieved merely by legal enactment, any more than the constitutional dictum that the means of production belonged to the "whole nation" could give the workers automatic control over them. Stalin saw early that the dual nature of the economy violently shook his rule, now to one extreme, now to the other. In his address to the directors of industry, he issued the slogan: "Let there be an end to depersonalization." This, translated in industrial terms, read, "Better pay for better work." "Better pay for better work" needed a foundation, a piecework system that could gain momentum only with such a momentum as Stakhanovism, which arose in 1935.⁹

1. Stakhanovism and the Stalinist Constitution

The high organic composition of capital in advanced capitalist countries, which makes necessary a comparable technical composition in any single society, demands sacrifice in the sphere of the production of articles of mass consumption. That the resulting distribution of the scarce means of consumption is at the expense of the proletariat as a whole is only the "natural" result of value production. This, in turn, engenders a certain relationship which gives the impulse to the capitalistic movement of the economy. The "underconsumption" of the workers in a capitalist society is not merely a moral question. It is of the essence of Marxism, that once the workers are in that situation, the relationship of constant to variable capital moves in a certain direction. This is the hardest point for the petty bourgeois to understand.

The piecework system was declared by Marx to be best suited to the capitalist mode of production. The Stakhanovite piecework system was best suited to the mode of production prevalent in Russia. These record-breakers-for-a-day soon entered the factory—not through the back door, but through the front office—because they themselves occupied that front office. The politician bureaucrat found an "heir apparent" in this "production intelligentsia." Both groups soon fused to comprise the new "classless intelligentsia."

Stakhanovism made possible the development of a labor aristocracy. But not merely that. A labor aristocracy meant a better prop for the ruling clique. But not merely

⁹ Cf. Part I (section on "Ending Depersonalization and Creating Stakhanovism"), N. I., Feb. 1943, pp. 53-54.

that either. No, as master over the production process, with Stakhanovism as a base and nourishing soil for "heirs" to bureaucrats, the bureaucracy began to feel the stability of a class. Feeling the stability of a class and having a source of reinforcement from the managers of industry, the bureaucracy moved headlong toward the juridical liquidation of the dictatorship of the proletariat. To legitimize the counter-revolution against October, the new class needed a new constitution.

The Stalinist Constitution of 1936 recognized the intelligentsia as a special "group," distinct from workers and peasants. With this juridical acknowledgment of the existence of a new ruling class went the guarantee of the protection of state property form "thieves and misappropriators."

Moreover, the Constitution raised into a principle the Russian manner of payment of labor. The new slogan read: "From each according to his abilities, to each according to his labor." This seemingly senseless slogan is in reality only a method of expressing the valid capitalist law of payment of labor according to value. To guarantee the free functioning of this truly economic law, it became necessary to exterminate the remnants of the rule of October, even if it were only in the memory of some men.

2. The Moscow Trials

The Moscow Trials of 1937 were the culminating point to the counter-revolution that we saw developing early in the changed relations of production. A hangman's noose, rather than arms in hand, sufficed because only one of the parts to this conflict was armed. The October Revolution was exterminated and the proletarian state overthrown not only by the execution of the Old Bolsheviks who led it, but by clearing a place in the process of production for the new class. That place could have been cleared for that "classless intelligentsia" only when there existed such a class only where the method of production called it forth.

The Russian worker knows that the job of factory director is not, as the Russians put it euphemistically enough, merely "functional." The factory director behaves like a boss because he is a boss. The state bears no more resemblance to a workers' state than the president of the U. S. Steel Corp. does to a steel worker just because they are both "employees" of the same plant. The Counter-Revolution has triumphed.

Yet it was not the laws that caused the triumph of the counter-revolution. The accumulation of these laws only bears witness to the accumulation of changes in the role of labor in the Soviet state and in the process of production.

The Counter-Revolution is not the child, not even an illegitimate one, of "Bolshevism." The Counter-Revolution is the legitimate offspring of the "new" mode of production, out of Stalinism and fired by the imperialist world economy. It is this method of production, and not the legal enactments, that needs, above all, to be investigated. In this investigation we will find that, as in any capitalist economy, the two major contending forces are capital and labor.

III. LABOR

"The economic laws of such a régime (state capitalism) would present no mysteries."—Leon Trotsky.¹⁰

The inner essence of the Marxian theory of value, and hence of surplus value, is that labor power is a commodity bought at value.

Up until 1943, the Soviet theorists had denied that the law of value, the dominant law of capitalist production, functioned in Russia where socialism had been "irrevocably established." In 1943, however, a startling reversal of this position was published in the leading theoretical journal of that country, *Pod Znamenem Marxizma*.¹¹ The authors of this article state that the teaching of political economy is being resumed after a lapse of several years, and offer the teachers rules to follow in their "teaching" of political economy. Even a superficial glance at the article reveals, however, that it is not the teaching that is being reversed, but the political economy taught.

The Stalinist ideologists affirm that the denial of the operation of a law of value in Russia has "created insurmountable difficulties in explaining the existence of such categories [as money, wages, etc.] under socialism." Now the admission that the law of value operates must bring with it the further admission that the law of surplus value operates. Like all apologists for ruling classes, this admission they refuse to make. This then, is their dilemma, which does not concern us here.¹² What does concern us here is the admission that the law of value does in fact function in Russia, and that money is therefore the "price expression of value."

1. Value and Price

As in all capitalist lands, so in Russia, money is the means through which prices and wages are equated in the supply and demand for consumption goods, that is to say, the value of the worker is equal to the socially-necessary labor time that is incorporated in the means of subsistence necessary for his existence and the reproduction of his kind. So long as the production of means of consumption is only sufficient to sustain the masses, prices will irresistibly break through legal restrictions until the sum of all prices of consumption goods and the sum of wage payments are equal. Price-fixing in Russia established neither stabilization in prices of goods nor of wages. The abolition of rationing in 1935 brought about so great an increase in prices that the worker who had eked out an existence under the very low rationed prices, could not exist at all under the "single uniform prices." The state was therefore compelled to grant general

¹⁰ *Revolution Betrayed*, p. 245.

¹¹ *Under the Banner of Marxism*, No. 7-8, 1943. Russian. For English translation see "Teaching of Economics in the Soviet Union" in *The American Economic Review*, Sept. 1944.

¹² For an analysis of how they attempt to solve their dilemma, see commentary of Raya Dunayevskaya to the above article, published in same issue of *A. E. R.*, under title, "A New Revision of Marxian Economics." The attacks upon this from the Stalinist apologists in this country were published by that journal in the following three issues, and Dunayevskaya's rejoinder, "Revision or Reaffirmation of Marxism," appeared in the Sept. 1945 issue.

increases in wages, so that by the end of the Second Five-Year Plan wages were 96 per cent above that planned.

The erroneous concept that because prices are fixed by the state, they are fixed "not according to the law of value, but according to government decision on 'planned production'"¹³ fails to take into consideration the economic law that dominates prices. Even a casual examination of any schedule of prices in Russia will show that, giving consideration to deviations resulting from the enormous tax burdens on consumers goods, *prices are not fixed capriciously and certainly not according to use-values*, but exhibit the same differentials that prevail in "recognizably" capitalist countries, i.e., *prices are determined by the law of value.*¹⁴

2. Labor: "Free" and Forced

Time is of the essence of things in a society whose unit of measurement is socially-necessary labor time, whose mode of existence is enveloped in technological revolution, and whose appetite for congealed surplus labor is from its very nature insatiable. The machine age has therefore passed this wisdom on to its trustees, the bourgeoisie: Use "free labor" if you wish the wheels of your production to turn speedily.

As if to prove that they are not "really" capitalists, the Russian rulers ignored this elementary wisdom and attempted to turn wage slaves into outright slaves through legislative enactment. At the lowest point of production in 1932 when the whole régime was tottering and labor was turbulently restless, a law was enacted which transferred the workers ration card into the hands of the factory director who had the right both to fire the worker and evict him from his home for even a single day's absence. This statute failed to fulfill the desired end. Labor would not come to industry and when it did come, it left soon, after producing as little as possible. Since industry needed labor the factory director "forgot" to fire the worker for absence and slowdowns in production. By 1933 the crisis in agriculture and consequent unemployment and actual famine caused such an inflow of labor to the city as to permit the managers of industry to discipline labor through "natural" bourgeois methods. What the reserve army of labor accomplished in 1933, the speed-up and piecework system of Stakhanovism accomplished in 1935.

These "natural" methods brought about natural results: the class struggle. The simmering revolt among the workers, which was ruthlessly crushed during the staging of the Moscow Trials, only produced further chaos in production and a mass exodus of the workers from the city. In 1938 the state grew desperate. The 1932 law was revived and "improved upon." This still proved

¹³ Cf. Kent in the *New International*, Oct. 1941.

¹⁴ This has finally been admitted by the Stalinists. In the above cited thesis, they write: "Cost accounting, which is based on the conscious use of the law of value, is an indispensable method for the human management of the economy under socialism. Value of the commodities in a socialist (sic!) society is determined not by the units of labor expended in its production, but upon the quantity of labor socially necessary for its production and reproduction."

fruitless. In 1940 came the creation of the State Labor Reserves, and with it came the institution of "corrective labor": workers disobeying the laws were made to work six months with 25 per cent reduction in pay.

Because the state is in their power, the rulers think that it is within their power to coerce labor by non-economic means to obey the needs of value production. Statification of production has resulted in restricting the free movement of workers. It has not achieved the increase in labor productivity required by constantly expanding production.

There is this constant pull and tug between the needs of production for highly productive labor which means "free" labor, and the resort to legislative enactment to bring this about in hot-house fashion. On the one hand, several million workers end up in prison camps as forced laborers. On the other hand, many are released back to join the "free" labor army. The phenomenon of "corrective labor" is the result of a compromise between the resort to prison labor, and the need to get some sort of continuous production right within the factory.

Labor, too, has shown ingenuity. Where it cannot openly revolt, it either "disappears," or so slows up production that in 1938 production was lower than in 1935! There have been periods when the rate of increase has been at a practical standstill, and all the while labor turnover continues to be very high.¹⁵ So widespread were the labor offenses during the war that the state has found that it must disregard its own laws if it wishes to have sufficient labor to begin to put the Fourth Five-Year Plan in effect. It has therefore declared a general amnesty for all labor offenders.

Thus while the state has found that it cannot by legal enactment transform wage slaves into outright slaves, the worker has found that he has the same *type*¹⁶ of "freedom" he has on the capitalist competitive market: that is, he *must* sell his labor power if he wishes to get his means of subsistence.

3. Unemployment and the Growing Misery of the Workers

Just as labor power being paid at value is the supreme essence of the law of value, so the reserve army of labor is the supreme essence of the law of the preponderance of constant over variable capital. The greater expansion of production, it is true, has meant the *absolute* increase in the laboring army, but that in no wise changes the fact that the law governing the attraction and repulsion of labor to capital is that of the *decrease* of living labor as compared to constant capital. It is for this reason that Marx called the unemployed army "the general absolute law of capitalist production."

In Russia unemployment has officially been abolished since 1930. In 1933, however, it was revealed, as the Russians so delicately put it, that "there are *more workers* in the shops than is necessary according to plans." The influx from the famished coun-

¹⁵ See Part I (section on "The Workers and the Law"), *New International*, Feb. 1943, pp. 52-3.

¹⁶ The same *type* of "freedom", Franz Neumann shows, existed for the German worker in Nazi Germany. Cf. his *Behemoth*.

tryside was, in fact, so great that labor passports had to be introduced and anyone without a passport was not permitted to live in the large cities. Stakhanovism in 1935 and the gory Moscow frame-up trials in 1937 changed the picture in the opposite direction. There was a mass exodus from the city to the country. The 1939 census revealed that 67.2 per cent of the total population was rural, and that of the 114.6 million rural dwellers 78.6 millions were peasants. To find so overwhelming a percentage of the population in agriculture in the United States we would have to go back to a period before the American Civil War!

Russia is backward, but is it that backward? The productivity of labor there is very low, but is it that low? Or is it rather that the unemployed army hides out in the countryside? That the latter is the true situation was revealed by the "Great Leader" himself when, in announcing the creation of State Labor Reserves, he appealed to the kolkhozy for their surplus labor. "The kolkhozy have the full possibility," said Stalin, "to satisfy our request inasmuch as abundance of mechanization in the kolkhozy frees part of the workers in the country...."

It has been impossible for Russia, as it has for traditional capitalism, to avoid unemployment over a historic period, because this single capitalist society is straining every nerve to bring its plants to the level of the more advanced productive systems and the only way to do this is to use as little living labor as possible to produce as much value as possible. It is for this reason that Russian state capitalism has had to base its entire calculation, not on the amount of labor time, as in a transitional society, but basically on wages, that is to say, upon the value of the worker. This has been further aggravated by the backwardness of the Russian economy so that we meet there the extreme condition to which Marx pointed in Volume III of *Capital*.¹⁷ In order to obtain sufficient surplus value to increase production, part of the agricultural population receives payment as a family unit.¹⁸

The conditions of the workers have constantly deteriorated. Since the initiation of the Five-Year Plan, the real wages of the workers, as I have shown in part, have declined by half! That is not at all accidental. It is the inevitable consequence of the law of motion of that economy which had resulted in so high an organic composition of capital. Accumulation of misery for the class that produces its products in the form of capital necessarily flows from the accumulation of capital.

IV. CAPITAL

Capital, said Marx, is not a thing, but a social relation of production established through the instrumentality of things. The instrumentality which establishes this exploitive relationship is, as is well known, the means of production alienated from the direct producers, i.e., the proletariat, and oppressing them. The capitalist's mastery over the worker is only the "mastery of dead over living labor." The material mani-

¹⁷ p. 273.

¹⁸ Earning statistics are "per peasant household." Population statistics "per family unit" held hide child labor. Cf. Part I, *New International*, Feb. 1943.

festation of this greater preponderance of constant over variable capital is the preponderance in the production of means of production over means of consumption. In capitalist society it cannot be otherwise for the use values produced are not for consumption by workers or capitalists, but by capital, i.e., for productive consumption or expanded production. The greater part of the surplus value extracted from the workers goes back into this expanded production.

The Russian exploiters are so well aware of the fact that surplus value, in the aggregate, is uniquely determined by the difference between the value of the product and the value of labor power, that the Plan for 1941 stipulated openly that the workers are to get a mere 6.5 per cent rise in wages for every 12 per cent rise in labor productivity.

"This proportion between labor productivity and average wage," brazenly proclaimed Voznessensky, "furnishes a basis for lowering production cost and increasing socialist (!) accumulation and constitutes the most important condition for the realization of a high rate of extended production." 19

1. The Production of Means of Production at the Expense of the Production of Means of Consumption.

The huge differential between labor productivity and labor pay goes into expanded production at a stupendous rate. According to Voznessensky, the Chairman of the State Planning Commission, 152.6 billion rubles were invested in plant and capital equipment from 1929 to 1940. Of the entire national income in 1937, 26.4 per cent was expanded in capital goods. The plan for 1942 had called for an estimated 28.8 per cent of the national income to be invested in means of production. Some idea of the rate at which production goes into capital goods in Russia may be gained from the fact that in the United States, during the prosperous decade of 1922-1932, only 9 per cent of the nation's income was utilized for expansion of means of production.

At the time the Plans were initiated, the production of means of production comprised 44.3 per cent of total production, and production of means of consumption 55.7 per cent. By the end of the First Plan, this was reversed, thus: means of production, 52.3 per cent; means of consumption, 46.7 per cent. By the end of the Second Five-Year Plan, the proportions were 57.5 per cent to 42.5 per cent. By 1940 it was 61 per cent means of production to 39 per cent means of consumption. This is true of contemporary world capitalism.

The slogan "to catch up and outdistance capitalist lands" was the reflection of the compelling motive of present world economy: who will rule over the world market? Therein lies the secret of the growth of the means of production at the expense of means of consumption. Therein lies the cause for the living standards of the masses growing worse despite the "state's desire" for what it called "the still better improvement of the conditions of the working class."

19 Cf. "The Growing Prosperity of the Soviet Union," by N. Voznessensky.

The fundamental error of those who assume that a single capitalist society is not governed by the same laws as a society composed of individual capitalists lies in a failure to realize that what happens in the market is merely the consequences of the inherent contradictions in the process of production. A single capitalist society does not have an illimitable market. The market for consumption goods, as we showed, is strictly limited to the luxuries of the rulers and the necessities of the workers when paid at value. The innermost cause of crisis is that labor, in the process of production and not in the market, produces a greater value than it itself is.

But wouldn't it be possible to raise the standard of living of the workers (not of some Stakhanovites, but of the working class as a whole) if all capital is concentrated in the hands of the state?

What a grand illusion! The moment that is done, the cost of production of a commodity rises above the cost of the surrounding world market. Then one of two things happens: Production ceases because the commodity cannot compete with the cheaper commodity from a value-producing economy, or, even though the society insulates itself temporarily, it will ultimately be defeated by the more efficient capitalist nations in the present form of capitalist competition which is total imperialist war.

Our specific single capitalist society has achieved some highly modern factories, and a showy subway, but it has not stopped to raise the living standards of the masses of workers. It cannot. Capital will not allow it. Because of this the economy is in constant crisis.

2. Crises, Russian Brand

The value of capital in the surrounding world is constantly depreciating which means that the value of capital inside the capitalist society is constantly depreciating. It may not depreciate fully on the bureaucrats' books. However, since the real value of the product can be no greater than the value of the corresponding plant on the world market, the moment the Ford tractor was put alongside the Stalingrad tractor, the state had to reduce the price of its own brand. This was the case in 1931 when Russia, while importing 90 per cent of the world's production of tractors, sold its own below cost.

However, of greater importance—and therein lies the essence of Marx's analysis of all economic categories as social categories—is the fact that, no matter what values may appear on the books, the means of production in the process of production reveal their true value in their relationship to the worker. That is to say, if an obsolescent machine was not destroyed but continued to be used in production, the worker suffers the more since the overlord of production still expects him to produce articles at the socially-necessary labor time set by the world market.

As long as planning is governed by the necessity to pay the laborer the minimum necessary for his existence and to extract from him the maximum surplus value in order to maintain the productive system as far as possible within the lawless laws of the world market, governed by the law of

value, that is how long capitalist relations of production exist, no matter what you name the social order. It has thus been absolutely impossible for Stalin, Inc. to guide the productive system without sudden stagnation and crises due to the constant necessity of adjusting the individual components of total capital to one another and to the world market. He has avoided the ordinary type of commercial crises. But, on the other hand, when the crises came, they were more violent and destructive. Such was the case in 1932. Such was the case in 1937. And one is brewing now.

The Fourth Five-Year Plan is being initiated in the midst of a new purge wave, at a time when the country has suffered a loss of 25 per cent of capital equipment on the one hand, and of 25 million homes on the other. And, towering above all these now that "peace" has arrived, is the need to keep up with the latest and greatest discovery of atomic energy. All this keeps the Russian economy in a constant state of turmoil. Behind this turmoil is the law of value, and hence of surplus value, which cause world capitalism in decay to writhe. If this law, in its essence and in its essential manifestations, is dominant also in Russia, what kind of society can it be but capitalist?

F. FOREST.

(Part two will appear next month)

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INTERNATIONAL WORKING CLASS

In our November issue of *THE NEW INTERNATIONAL* we promised our readers reports on two significant conventions held by sections of the Fourth International—the Internationalist Communist Party of France (PCI), and the Revolutionary Communist Party of Great Britain (RCP). Below we give the most important details of these conventions, both of which mark definite progress away from the repetition of sterile, orthodox dogma and progress toward ideologic and revolutionary clarity:

French Trotskyist Convention

The Third Convention of the Parti Communiste Internationaliste, French Section of the 4th International, was held from September 7th to 11th. Considerable progress was manifested since the previous convention in February. A large majority of the 102 delegates, however, felt that the progress would have been much greater if the leadership elected in February had been more capable—organizationally and politically.

The progress of the PCI since February, 1946, was considerable in several fields. The party increased its membership by between "50 and 75 per cent." The increase was by no means localized at the center. On the contrary, the increase was notable at the opposite ends of France. Where groups existed, they grew, e.g., the Bordeaux region doubled. Entirely new regions came into being where before there were one or two comrades or none at all. From Alsace-Lorraine to Corsica, from the Italian to the Belgian frontier regions there are now groups of the PCI.

Another big gain was the legalization of *La Verite* in which the pressure of left wing groups all over the world, including sections of the SP in France and the SWP and WP in the U. S., played a part. This was followed by the enlargement of the paper from a tabloid size two-pager into a full size four-pager attuned more closely to the life and struggles of the masses.

Of great importance was the role of the PCI in the development of the revolutionary left wing in the unions and in the recent strike actions. The left wing workers grouped around the paper *Front Ouvrier* played an important part in the recent teachers' and CGT (labor federation) conventions as well as in the printers and postal-telegraph-telephone strikes. Not only did *Front Ouvrier*, in which our comrades collaborate, increase its strength, but the PCI itself made a good name for itself. Particularly in the PTT strike, where a special issue of *La Verite* was put out and well received. There was a valuable discussion of this strike by the delegates.

The second and third days of the convention were given over to the political report and its discussion, in which 80 delegates took part. The following two major tendencies manifested themselves:

1) *The Frank tendency*—heart of the old

majority—centered around the old Molinier group which fused with the party during the war. This group, supported by the International Secretariat, had one-third of the delegates. Its political line reflects the influence of the SWP (Cannon faction). Its position is based on its belief that we are in a revolutionary crisis (second wave), and therefore calls for what amounts to organs of dual power, and the creation of an extra-parliamentary CP-SP-CGT government. "The revolutionary crisis engendered by World War II is of a depth and extension far superior to that of the years 1917-1923," i.e., to that which produced the Russian October, a Soviet Hungary and Saxony and various Soviet revolts in Germany, Finland, Bulgaria, etc., if one believes the Frank resolution. Not believing that the offensive of the bourgeoisie against the Socialist-Communist bloc for the May Constitution, with its virtual abolition of the reactionary Senate, posed any serious danger of a defeat for the working class, the Frank group clings to its opposition to the "Yes" stand taken by the PCI. However, part of the group (Frank) was for a "No" answer and most of it for a blank ballot.

2) *The Geoffroy-Demaziere-Craipeau group*, the former minority, had a slight majority at this convention, 52 delegates. For them the situation is characterized by a reconsolidation of bourgeois rule and a getting into motion of capitalist economy, accompanied by a series of defeats of the working class and a lowered level of class consciousness due to the war, the occupation and those defeats (speedy liquidation of militia, factory committees and all other workers organs since August 1944, transfer of the struggle to purely parliamentary forms due to the CP and SP leaders, parliamentary defeats and retreats—Constitution) and a corresponding rebirth of parliamentary and democratic illusions. The economic lift opens up new perspectives of labor struggle although necessarily at a lower level to start with, due to those defeats and illusions. The party can play a decisive role by applying its economic and democratic slogans so as to help set the masses in action and to generalize and raise the level of such action.

This group has shifted the CP-SP-CGT slogan to "Break the Coalition." It offers two reasons. Firstly, because, as a concretization of the idea of "oust the bourgeois (MRP) ministers" it no longer has sense since the SP and CP no longer have a majority in parliament. Secondly, because considering it as a concretization in immediate agitation of the slogan "Workers and peasants government" means posing the problem of extraparliamentary power organs, obviously not sensible today. They therefore replace it in agitation with "Break the coalition with the bourgeois ministers" and relegate "Workers and peasants government" to general propaganda.

In addition to these two major (Majority

and Minority) tendencies, there are other small ideological groupings within the party which oppose the "CP-SP-CGT government" slogan and have varying estimates of the general situation in France today, as well as different positions on the basic question of Russia, as indicated below.

Differ on Russian Question

The Russian resolution of the old Frank majority takes the traditional line of defense, while declaring that the occupied countries remain capitalist but at the same time says that in the unlikely case "of the Soviet occupation continuing for years and bringing about a structural assimilation (which they say elsewhere is the tendency), it would result in a development of the productive forces far surpassing all that those countries have known during 30 years of capitalist evolution." They further say that they oppose the Stalinist methods of struggle against the local capitalists "not because they are inhuman, but because they are ineffective." They also attack "Shachtman and now L., etc.," who, in "isolating" Trotsky's prophesy (that the war, won or lost, would finish Stalin), show that they "didn't understand its meaning." The only error was of "rhythm and limit and not of analysis," they say, and to say otherwise one must "prove that the direction of Russia's evolution has changed."

The M. group bases its defensism primarily on its fear of a capitalist victory opening up new areas to exploitation, but continues to call Russia a workers' state.

The newly formed M.-C. group is defeatist and considers Russia a bureaucratic collectivist state, but opposes the use of the term "imperialist" because they say it leads to confusion with capitalist imperialism.

The Guerin group is defeatist and its resolution holds that Russia is imperialist but not capitalist "in the same sense as the others." The resolution takes no stand on the problem of State capitalism or Bureaucratic collectivism.

The multitude of positions convinced everyone that further discussion is necessary in the party and it was decided to open that discussion after the convention with a special conference on the Russian question to be held in six months.

The convention of the Revolutionary Communist Party of Great Britain did not, unfortunately, reveal the same organizational growth and progress as did that of the French section of the Fourth International. Recognizing the extreme power and attractiveness of the Labor Party to the masses of English workers, the convention resolution dealing with the political situation in England admitted an overestimation in its previous prognosis of a sharp swing to the left, based upon a disillusionment with the Labor Government, which would benefit the RCP. This did not materialize, but unfortunately the Convention drew only a fatalistic conclusion from it, rejecting

overwhelmingly the proposal of the International Executive Committee that the RCP join *en masse* the British Labor Party. The RCP, in sharp contrast with the French PCI, seems stagnating and incapable of grappling with the realities of English national political life.

After a long period of ignoring or barely considering the so-called Russian question, the RCP finds itself involved in an intense discussion on this issue. Three different tendencies were revealed at the Convention during a discussion that will undoubtedly continue in the post-convention life of the party. The Majority (Haston-Grant) tendency—the party leadership—has developed the novel interpretation of Trotsky's analysis of the Soviet Union to the effect that, although Russia today has a "capitalistic economy" (exhibiting all the features of capitalism, including operation of the law of value, commodity production for the market, wage-labor, etc., etc.), it nevertheless remains a "Workers' State." The party Minority clings to the traditional (that is, sterile) characterization of Russia and

brands the Majority as revisionist, preparing the way for acceptance of the "State Capitalist" theory regarding Russia or of the "bureaucratic collectivist" theory. A small minority, headed by comrades from the Irish section, advanced substantially the "bureaucratic collectivist" point of view held by the Workers Party in America. These three tendencies will now be discussed within the ranks of the party.

It is important to note that these two conventions of the leading European sections of the Fourth International mark definite progress toward reconsideration of the entire Russian question—a most welcome event, long considered necessary by us. The Russian defensist position, still clung to with desperation by the SWP in America, is becoming increasingly untenable throughout the International. A thoroughgoing reevaluation of this issue is on the order of the day. Bureaucratic smugness can answer everything but the pressure of history.

H. J.

Book Reviews . . .

OUR THREATENED VALUES, by Victor Gollancz. Published by Gollancz, 1946.

Mr. Gollancz's book, which has received a wide sale in England, is a welcome and eloquent tribute to the value of personality and a warm-hearted appeal for its preservation. But while the book is strong on moral purpose, it is weak in analysis.

Western culture, he asserts, is distinguished by its respect for personality, which contains all the other primary values. It emphasizes the uniqueness of the individual and his right to live, develop and create. Personality is a wider concept than nation, race, color, class or religion. It asserts that men are to be treated as men, in terms of their common humanity, and not in terms of such accidental and divisive circumstances as birth, status, color or fortune. The country or the class or the religion or the color into which men are born should be irrelevant to their treatment. The treatment the Germans accorded the Jews and the treatment we are according the Germans is painful evidence of the disintegration of Western values. Men should not be treated *as* Germans or *as* Jews but simply as men.

What technique does Gollancz offer to implement Western values? Merely the consciousness of our failings and the injunction to correct them. And that consciousness can be applied only by example. Russia offers the most serious threat to Western values—well, let us answer the Russians by showing them how much we value personality!

Gollancz does not consider how Western values arose and why they are now disintegrating. Certainly the few men of good will share his affirmations, but that is not enough. People will not reduce their rations

to help others, business men will not sacrifice profits and politicians will not refuse power.

These Western values were always imperfectly realized and in far happier times received no more than peripheral emphasis. But how did these values, tentative and half-tried though they always were, arise? They arose in specific historical circumstances, in an age of burgeoning capitalism and the growth of diverse religious beliefs. Are contemporary conditions approximate or analogous to the historical circumstances that were congenial to these values? Is the growth of population and cities, the development of the factory system and the machine process and the rise of the labor movement compatible with these values? What is the relevance and applicability of these values in different historical circumstances? Gollancz makes no attempt to answer these questions.

Gollancz is a socialist and subscribes to the socialist ethic, but he is not a Marxist. The real case for socialism, he states, is moral, and respect for personality demands the supersession of capitalism. If capitalism and the value of personality are incompatible, how can Gollancz account for the rise of the value of personality under capitalism? Such a contradiction cannot be explained by Gollancz's abstract and unhistorical approach. Indeed, it is the unhistorical character of his thought that creates such contradictions.

Gollancz is the latest in a long line of non-Marxist socialist moralists. The criticism voiced by Sidney Hook some years ago is still valid despite the authors subsequent break with a Marxist point of view. "Marxists have criticized non-Marxist socialism not because of its interest in ideals but because of the abstract character of its morality. The history of non-Marxist socialism

reveals a succession of *unhistorical* moral ideals — Kantian categorical imperatives, extensions of the social principles of Christianity, or apotheosis of the good, true and beautiful *überhaupt*."

Actually, capitalism can make a respectable moral case for itself. The theory of capitalism asserts that by obeying certain laws of the market, society can rise to higher economic levels and engage in ever-widening distribution of its commodities. Economic inequality is one of the levers through which these aims can be realized. There is nothing morally revolting in an economic inequality which can give Mr. Morgan a yacht and an extra car in his country home, provided that all men are guaranteed rising living standards of decency and comfort. But the criticism of capitalism is an economic criticism.

Marxists assert that socialism can work, not because it is a superior moral system, but because it is a rational, consistent system capable of guaranteeing the maintenance of production and the distribution of goods.

Gollancz states that he is sensitive to the means-ends fallacy, but nevertheless falls victim to it. I agree, he says to the Russians, with your end (socialism), but I disagree with your means (contempt of personality). The indissoluble character of the means-ends relationship should make him question whether, contemptuous as they are of personality, the Russians are interested in realizing socialism.

And yet, this is a significant book because it calls our attention to the easily forgotten fact that we are moral beings with moral purposes. In the routine of class struggle, thinking as one does in terms of organization, strategy, tactics, party, program and propaganda, one may forget the value of personality.

Nevertheless, considering its aim, this is an ineffectual book, the English counterpart of many of the contributions that appear in *Politics*. Our desires, ideals and values must, if they are to be effective, bear an intimate relationship to possibility. It is well enough to voice an aspiration, remote from reality, provided of course that we recognize it is dream or fiction. But to voice an unattainable aspiration is to incur the danger of creating an illusion more harmful than a mirage to a thirsty traveler. Not only does such an illusion enlist energies into sterile channels, not only is its fruit ultimate frustration, but it diverts attention from what may be achieved and hastens the triumph of the evils it is designed to avoid. It is not enough to say we want freedom or that we want a socialism in which the unfettered personality can function. We must first determine what can be achieved, and then we must decide, within the framework of the possible, within the structure of alternatives, what we ought to achieve. Our first task, involving as it does a statement of what the contemporary world is, would be historical and descriptive: to determine the alternatives discarded, adopted and exhausted in achieving our culture, and to state what the structure of our culture is. Will that structure survive, and if it will not, what can replace it? If more than one structure can replace it, which one should we struggle for? RICHARD STOKER.

Correspondence . . .

Dear Editor:

Howe and Weiss should appreciate that my article on Koestler was not a review in the strict sense of the word. It was an attempt to evaluate the political evolution and worth of Koestler. Consequently, their formalistic objection, that the criticism went beyond the scope of the books I discussed, has one merit: for the volumes were considered mere media through which we could reach a final evaluation.

Of real significance, however, is Weiss' fury at my contention that Koestler "palmed off" Rubashov as a real revolutionary. This is significant because it indicates that Weiss missed the whole point of the book! In all fairness to me Weiss must acknowledge that careful reading of my article will show that I did not at any point question Koestler's sincerity or integrity. Koestler really believes Rubashov to be a revolutionary. In believing this, Koestler treats him as such. Most readers accept this treatment. The confusion between a "party hack" and a Marxist is implicit in the book; and the essence of my criticism was to expose this confusion. Weiss vociferously maintains that this amalgam does not exist. Unfortunately he lists no supporting arguments for his position. My reasons for contending that this amalgam does exist are few—but clear.

1. Koestler, personally, does not distinguish between Stalinism and Marxism. While it is easy for Weiss, Howe, and myself to agree that Rubashov was a party hack but not a real revolutionary, Koestler would not agree to such a formulation. Stalinism is, for Koestler, not distinguishable from Marxism! If Weiss can point to any of Koestler's writings in which Koestler accepts Stalinism as a tradition distinct from, and of less merit than, Marxism, it would support his argument. I, however, find that Koestler invariably treats Stalinism and all

Marx-and-or-Trotskyisms as tarred with the same brush. It follows that since Koestler himself does not distinguish a party hack from a revolutionary, his treatment of Rubashov would not carry such a distinction.

2. In his treatment of Rubashov, Koestler uses purported "Marxian" arguments to bring about the capitulation. If Weiss could point out that Rubashov capitulated from "fear," "torture," "hope of reward," etc., it would support his argument. My recollection is that Rubashov capitulated *primarily* from the conviction that it was the best service he could render his party and tradition. It follows that if "Marxian" arguments led to his capitulation, it was "Marxism" and not Rubashov who capitulated to Stalin.

3. The reaction of readers is certainly not a conclusive test of the "documentary intent," but it is an interesting sidelight. I checked my reactions with those of people holding diverse views. Non-political people saw merely "an interesting story of the Moscow Trials." The liberal elements saw exactly that which was in Koestler's mind, because they are the closest to him: "to be a revolutionary you must be a Stalinist." They carried this thought to its conclusion: "since I cannot stomach Stalinism, I won't be a revolutionary." Two backsliders from our movement (one who is a violent anti-Trotskyist and one who is still generally sympathetic) had similar reactions. They literally waved the books under my nose and shouted: "If you only had four or five standard bearers with ideas like Koestler's, you might really have a movement." What they meant was: "if you were a non-Marxist party, perhaps we would still be interested in you"! I repeat, reader reaction is certainly not conclusive; but the fact that political non-Marxist and anti-Marxist elements find solace for their position in this volume should give us at least a hint on its documentary intent.

Koestler is a political writer and as such should be held responsible for his politics. With Howe I say: "the glitter of his metaphors hides the shoddiness of his thoughts." But I go further and add that it sometimes hides the true import of his work. Weiss feels he can give an eclectic appraisal of Koestler. This is highly different from being eclectic in your appreciation of Koestler. I would be the last to maintain that there were no valuable thoughts in Koestler if taken by themselves. But Weiss' eclectic appraisal runs into danger! In treating the "Yogi and the Commissar" Weiss says: "the central idea must not be considered, on the basis of its efficacy as a substitute for Marxism, in which case it is to be rejected out of hand." That is the crux of Koestler: his ideas *HAVE* to be considered as a substitute for Marxism. That is what they are! That is what he intends them to be! And in Weiss' own words: they should be rejected out of hand!

Anti-Marxism is—for Koestler—an integral part of his "pro-democratic-socialism." He renounces the materialist and the class basis for thought and action and then builds his concepts on these renunciations. That is the essence of my article. Howe, I believe, sees all this clearly in the "Yogi and the Commissar"; but he is unable to pierce the glitter of the metaphors in "Darkness at Noon." He should realize that the "Yogi and the Commissar" is the flower of the seeds labeled, "Darkness at Noon," "Scum of the Earth" and "Arrival and Departure." While the seed does not smell as obviously as the blossoms, it has the germ of the blossom in it. It is further true that the blossom does not have the taste of the fruit that follows. Let Howe and Weiss wait for Koestler's next work to see if the comments in my article were "heel-clickings" and "tub-thumpings" or whether they were measured, necessary comments in an evaluation.

PETER LOUMOS.

(Peter Loumos is the author of the omnibus review of Koestler's novels which appeared in our August, 1945, issue and gave rise to the discussion of Koestler in these pages.—Editor.)

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