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**COMMUNIST**

MAY



THE SECOND  
IMPERIALIST WAR

ROBERT MINOR

THE CONGRESS OF THE C.P.S.U.:  
ITS MEANING FOR AMERICA

*(Review of the Month)*

ALEX BITTELMAN

ARTICLES BY WM. Z. FOSTER, I. AMTER, IRENE BROWDER,  
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## REVIEW OF THE MONTH

*An Economic Crisis in Midst of an Imperialist War. Stalin's Analysis. Normal Solutions and Others. Fundamentals in the Struggle for Jobs and Security. Soviet Communist Congress Stimulates World Resistance to Fascist Aggression. Stalin Restates Foreign Policy. How Can American Labor Profit by Achievements of Soviet Workers? Defeat Pro-Fascist Reaction in 1940. Collective Security Versus Munichism and Isolationism. On Pulling Other People's Chestnuts Out of the Fire. Munichism Is Long Range Strategy of Pro-Fascist Monopolies. America's Interests in the World. Needed: an International Anti-Fascist Strategy. Warnings of Opportunist Tendencies. Fighting Imperialist Oppression and Concentrating Main Fire Against Fascism. Communist Position on War. Manuilsky's Report. Young Communists Hold National Convention.*

THAT the economic outlook continues bad and uncertain is recognized almost generally. But there is still great lack of realization (at least, in public) of the seriousness of the economic crisis and of many of its peculiar characteristics.

Comrade Stalin, in his report to the Eighteenth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, has given a most profound analysis of the present state of capitalist economy generally and of the special nature of the present economic crisis in particular. He found that the current crisis, which broke in the middle of 1937, "differs in many respects from the previous crisis and in these respects it is worse and not better."

Bourgeois thought on the question, despite all the sharpness of the political struggle around it, remains on the whole astonishingly superficial. It shrinks from probing the depths of the situation, moving uneasily on the surface of it. And so it continues to be

confronted with surprise after surprise, simulating an optimism for the "essential soundness" of the system, for which no convincing grounds can be found.

The labor movement and its progressive allies have always needed, but now more so than ever, a realistic, scientific and thorough understanding of the situation. To know, for example, that the volume of industrial production may be in the second quarter of this year three or four points higher (on the Federal Reserve Board index) than in the previous quarter is all very well as far as it goes. It is undoubtedly very helpful towards the immediate planning of wage and hour policies by the trade unions. But it may become very misleading, narrowing down the scope of demands and activities by labor and its allies, if it is not fully realized that this rise in the production index and perhaps a further slight rise in the third quarter of the year take place in an *economic crisis* which, as Stalin finds,

"will be more severe" and "more difficult to combat than the previous crisis," meaning the crisis of 1929. When this fact is clearly realized, it is also better understood why the fight of labor and its allies at the present time must be "*For jobs, security, democracy and peace*" and that this fight calls for a rounded-out program of demands whose essence is the curbing of the powers of the monopolies.

There is still too much of a feeling around, speaking of the democratic camp, that this crisis will somehow be overcome in a more or less "normal" and regular way. Characteristically enough, Big Business reaction does not believe it and seems to be proceeding on the theory that the way the crisis will eventually be overcome is through war and fascism or something very near it. And this same pro-fascist reaction demagogically exploits the feeling for "normal" recovery—to undermine the New Deal, to bring to power a pro-fascist administration which, if it becomes the government, will use methods very much *un-normal* and *irregular* to combat the crisis but it will do it at the expense of the living standards and democratic liberties of the people.

Some people take comfort for the future course of business from the fact that inventory accumulations have been decreasing during 1938. And so they were. From the balance sheets of 153 large corporations reporting thus far for 1938, it is seen that inventories on December 31 last were 13.4 per cent less than at the end of 1937. Which means something, of course. But they were only 1.5 per cent lower than at the end of 1929 and nearly 1 per cent higher than at

the end of 1936. Especially revealing of the severity of the present crisis is the comparison with 1929. This comparison shows that *eighteen months* after the outbreak of the present crisis, inventory accumulations were almost as high as after only *six months* following the outbreak of the crisis in 1929. And this despite the fact that the population has increased since 1929.

One might try to explain this fact by the temporary business improvement during 1938. It might be said that an improvement in business means building up inventories. But when *six months* of business improvement (July-December, 1938), are immediately followed by a business *decline*, it is evident that the economy is in a difficult and severe economic crisis, which displays a number of new features.

Comrade Stalin finds the following three particularly characteristic: (1) The present crisis came on top of a very slight revival and not after a period of prosperity, finding at the outset nearly ten million unemployed, an agrarian crisis and an impoverished population; (2) It broke out not in peacetime but in the period of the second imperialist war, with the Chinese market shot to pieces by Japan's invasion, with Germany and Italy already having switched their economies to a war basis, with the fascist foreign trade policies undermining and destroying the world market, with the other capitalist powers also beginning to reorganize on a war basis; and (3) The present crisis, being not a general one but involving for the time being only the economically most powerful countries

(the United States, England, France) which have not yet reorganized on a war basis, is bound to result in this: when these countries begin to emerge from the crisis, "the aggressor countries, having exhausted their reserves of gold and raw material in the course of the war fever, are bound to enter a phase of very severe crisis." (Stalin.) And this, in its turn, will have a deterrent effect upon the recovery process of the non-aggressor countries.

From which the conclusion is inescapable "that capitalism will have far less resources at its disposal for a normal way out of the present crisis than during the previous crisis." (Stalin.) This should be emphasized. First, because this helps to unmask the lying demagogy of big business reaction that, given a free hand, it will give this country "normal" and regular recovery. This profound analysis shows convincingly that Big Business reaction is moving to fascism and imperialist war as a means of overcoming the crisis (not a very "normal" means) while covering itself with "isolation" and dangling before the people promises of "old-time" prosperity.

Secondly, this helps the democratic camp to see the magnitude of the economic problem, the vital need of tackling it in a more thorough manner, in a manner of curbing the economic and political power of the monopolies as the only effective way of fighting for an economic recovery in the interests of the people. It will help them see that the struggle for overcoming the crisis requires a great people's movement, headed by the working class, *for jobs, security, democracy and peace.*

Perhaps we should be saying more to the masses on what the economic crisis has to do with peace. Because there is still a good deal of feeling, even though evaporating, that if we only concentrate on solving our domestic economic problems, we could leave the rest of the world to itself without being the worse off for it. Demagogic isolationism, as is known, tries to make a lot out of this feeling. But the truth is breaking through to the widest masses. We can help this process by making this proposition clearer:

"A new economic crisis must lead and certainly does lead to a further sharpening of the imperialist struggle. It is no longer a question of competition for the markets, of a trade war or of dumping. These methods of struggle have long been recognized as inadequate. It is a question of a new redivision of the world, of the spheres of influence and colonies, by military action."

Here is the origin of the second imperialist war now in progress: Japan's war in China, the German-Italian war against Spain, the German seizure of Austria and Czechoslovakia, the Italian war against Ethiopia, the war crisis maturing on the Mediterranean, etc. It is a war of the aggressor capitalist countries (Germany, Italy, Japan) against the interests of the non-aggressor capitalist countries (England, France, the United States), a war waged by the aggressors "for a new redivision of the world, of the spheres of influence and colonies," a war resulting from the imperialist struggles sharpened by the economic crisis.

Hence the crisis and the war cannot be torn from one another. And the pro-fascist circles of the American bourgeoisie are not making any such

mistake. They are trying to meet both as one major problem though requiring different approaches and methods for its various parts.

Big Business reaction in this country (as in other bourgeois-democratic countries) approaches *all the ramifications* of this major problem, domestic and foreign, from one general orientation—*pro-fascism*. Whether it be relief to the unemployed, farm aid, public works, collective bargaining, democratic liberties, penetration of fascism into Latin America, Japan's war in China, the wars of the Rome-Berlin axis in Europe—whatever the specific issue, Big Business reaction steers a pro-fascist course, an anti-democratic course, an imperialist course. It is pro-fascism at home, connivance with fascist aggression abroad. It is the line of *world reaction* operating with *fascism as its spearhead*.

Only by clearly realizing who the enemy is and what he stands for—Big Business pro-fascist reaction nationally and internationally—will American labor and its progressive allies be able to build up that effective democratic force which is required to prevent pro-fascist reaction from coming to power in the United States. This means *a consistent anti-fascist and democratic orientation nationally and internationally*. This means the coming together of labor, farmers and middle classes into a powerful coalition to combat the reactionary offensive on all fronts, in the field of foreign as well as domestic policy, in the struggle for the social and national security of America. This and only this is the road to an effective fight for overcoming the economic crisis. This is, therefore, the only road to a

successful fight for *jobs, security, democracy and peace*.

\* \* \*

ALREADY it can be seen that the Eighteenth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and Stalin's great report, have begun to stimulate most powerfully all those tendencies and forces in the world which refuse to capitulate to fascism, which are determined to resist and defeat its offensive. This report and congress had the instantaneous effect of putting the capitulators in a most difficult position. A powerful searchlight was thrown by Stalin upon the secret inner mechanism of the capitulation game. In this way, the peoples of all countries are now enabled to anticipate more easily the moves and maneuvers of the Chamberlains and to prepare effective action.

The strength, confidence and power of the socialist fatherland, which is now entering a most promising period of completing the construction of a classless society and of gradual transition from socialism to communism—this power and confidence of a morally united people which emanated from every word and deed of the congress are encouraging the labor and anti-fascist movements everywhere, inspiring them with certainty in their eventual victory.

Honest people desirous of knowing the truth have never had much difficulty in finding out where exactly the Soviet Union stood in world affairs. Its words and deeds were demonstrating daily that the socialist country—the only one so far—is the strongest single force for peace, democracy and human progress, the beacon light

for all exploited to their final socialist liberation. From now on, the enemies of peace will have more difficulty than heretofore in obscuring from the masses the anti-fascist light and stimulation to struggle that come from the Soviet Union. Stalin's re-statement of the Soviet Union's foreign policy is as plain, direct and aboveboard as anything ever was in this world. Point Three of this policy is a veritable clarion call to all peoples and nations to close their ranks and resist fascist aggression. This point, as well as the others, are by now known to millions all over the world, but it will bear repeating. It says:

"We stand for support to nations which have fallen prey to aggression and are fighting for the independence of their countries."

This foreign policy makes it clear once more that the Soviet Union does not want war, seeks peace, wishes to maintain peaceful relations with all countries like-minded, but is "not afraid of threats from the aggressors" and is "ready to retaliate with two blows for one against the instigators of war who attempt to infringe upon the integrity of the Soviet borders."

Comrade Stalin concluded his report with these words:

"If the successes of the working class of our country, if its fight and victory, serve to rouse the spirit of the working class in the capitalist countries, and to strengthen its faith in its own power, in its victory, then our Party may say that its work has not been in vain. And there is no doubt that this will be the case."\*

We can say together with Stalin: yes, so it will be. Reflecting upon the

\* J. Stalin, *From Socialism to Communism in the Soviet Union*, p. 62, International Publishers, New York.

state of affairs in the capitalist world and in our country, it is impossible not to agree with Stalin that the reason capitalism has not yet been overthrown, the reason it still continues to exist, is not because of its own "good qualities," not because it is acceptable and satisfactory to the masses. Not at all. It is, as Stalin said, because the proletariat has not yet got sufficient faith in the possibility of its victory. It is because the bourgeoisie and its agents in the labor movement did succeed in a measure to poison the working class with doubts and lack of faith.

But the achievements of the working class of the Soviet Union, as demonstrated at the Eighteenth Congress, have already proven that the working class in alliance with all toilers is able to rule the country, is able to run its business—without exploiters, without capitalists, without imperialists. It is able to build and develop with unparalleled rapidity an economy for the use of the people instead of for the profit and power of a clique of monopolists. With no crises, no unemployment, no exploitation of man by man or nation by nation, with no imperialist aggrandizement which produces war.

This working class of the Soviet Union—a new type of working class—is able to lead a socialist country of one hundred and seventy million people on one-sixth of the earth, making it a great power for peace, democracy and progress everywhere, standing in the front line of struggle against fascist aggression and barbarism. Thus its successes and achievements, particularly the realization of the Third Five-Year Plan, which

builds the gradual transition from socialism to communism, are having precisely this effect on the workers in all capitalist countries: raising their fighting spirit, reinforcing their faith in their own strength, inspiring them with confidence in victory over fascism, imperialism and capitalism.

American labor has made great strides in recent years on the road to political independence as a class, to collaboration with other working groups and progressive forces, to influence in the affairs of the nation. The achievements of the working class of the Soviet Union have contributed a good deal to this historic process and to the magnificent upsurge of the democratic masses in this country, an upsurge which received tremendous impulse from the anti-fascist struggles all over the world, most particularly from the struggles of the Spanish and Chinese peoples.

At the present time, American labor is faced with the most responsible task of helping to rally the majority of the American people to block the road to fascism in this country, *to prevent pro-fascist reaction from winning the power of the government in 1940*. This will be the next crucial stage. This next stage can be made to mark a far-reaching victory for democracy, for labor and all progress. And for this—labor must learn from the experiences and achievements of the Soviet working class. This means to unite its own ranks, to build intensively its alliances with the farmers and middle classes, to help bring about cohesion and consolidation into the camp of democracy and anti-fascism, to build the democratic front. The working

class of old Russia did something of the same nature when undertaking to overthrow tsarism and feudal reaction. It isolated the bourgeois and reformist capitulators to reaction and rallied around itself all the true democratic forces of the people. The fight was won. Tsarism and feudal reaction were defeated. Thus the road was opened for the next stage—for the socialist liberation. And this was won too.

Let American labor learn from these experiences and successes, which are graphically and convincingly related in the *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, now available in an American edition. Learning from these successes, labor in America will know for sure that it can be done. That it is *possible* for the working class to help bring about at this time such a unity of the democratic forces of the people as will be able *to defeat* the pro-fascist offensive of the reactionary monopolies, *to prevent* this outfit from winning the fight in 1940, *to block* the road to fascism in this country, *to advance* to socialist liberation.

\* \* \*

**I**T WOULD appear from various signs as though some people still do not see clearly the difference between Munichism and a consistent peace policy of collective security. It is astounding indeed after all the costly experiences we have had, but it seems to be a fact nevertheless.

Of course, Munichism is a somewhat complicated game. It pursues many aims which are mutually contradictory. Its ways are secret and devious. It is completely free of any

elementary dictates of human decency, honesty and morality. Suffice it to look at its embodiment: Chamberlain and Bonnet. But at this hour, every informed person should be able to smell Munichism a mile away, and to fight its coming instantly, let alone "mistaking" it for an honest policy of collective security, or vice versa.

We are moved to these reflections by a peculiar sort of argument lately current in certain circles. It is that, because the foreign policies of England and France are now dominated by Munichists, "therefore" the people and government of the United States should become a little more (not less) "isolationist." The argument runs like this:

"If the Soviet Union, which is immediately menaced by attack, is justified in being reluctant about the cooperation Chamberlain now seems to want, how much more so should the United States be, which surely would not be threatened with invasion. We have the same reasons to be suspicious, and fewer reasons to want help. Our interest in what happens in Europe is far more remote." (*New Republic*, March 29, 1939.)

To answer the question raised here, one has to be a bit more *precise*. Exactly what cooperation with Chamberlain is the Soviet Union "reluctant" to accept? Had the *New Republic* tried to clarify itself on this question, it might have found that the true situation is the exact opposite. Namely, that it is not the Soviet Union that is "reluctant" to cooperate but Chamberlain's Munichism that stands in the way of collaboration between England and U.S.S.R. against fascist aggression.

The Soviet Union has made it amply clear that it stands for a policy

of *collective* security, for a policy of *collective* resistance to aggression; that as a socialist state it has no interest in supporting the *imperialist* positions of either the aggressors or non-aggressors; that it wants peace and is willing to join with other countries like-minded in resisting aggression; that it is willing to render (and has so rendered) all possible material, moral and political support to peoples attacked by the aggressors and defending their liberties and independence; that this peace policy is in the interests, not alone of the socialist state, but of the international working class, its democratic allies and all threatened by fascist aggression.

We say this position has been made crystal clear many times by word and deed. It was made so on many occasions in formal diplomatic offers. But the Munichism prevailed in the policies of the bourgeois-democratic governments. Collective security was abandoned by them. Instead they began to pursue, especially the British and French governments, a policy of capitulating to the aggressor, conniving with him, egging him on to move against the Soviet Union. These are well-known facts.

Then something happened which had been foreseen and foretold as following inevitably from Munich and from the betrayal of Spain by the bourgeois democracies and from their Munichist tendencies in the Far East. Germany marched into Czechoslovakia and dismembered the country, establishing a "protectorate." Pressed by an aroused public opinion, and confronted with a Germany making ready to strike west (for colonies), Chamberlain began to *maneuver*. He

began to maneuver not so much and not mainly against the fascist aggressors *but against the rising demand for collective security*, in his own country and in others. And this was the meaning of Chamberlain's initial "approaches" to the Soviet Union.

Did the Soviet Union then display any kind of reluctance? Not at all. It promptly told Chamberlain that it continues to adhere to the policy of collective security and proposed the calling of a conference of all interested powers to discuss *and organize* such collective security. In doing so, it not only exposed the Chamberlain maneuver but stimulated powerfully the further rise and consolidation of the demands of the peoples for collective security and collective resistance to aggression. Can this be called "reluctance" to cooperate? No. It is active and positive struggle for collective security.

The *New Republic*, and others similarly confused, ought to try to think a bit more clearly and precisely on these vital questions. They ought to try to understand that there is an unbridgeable gulf between Munichism and collective security; that the Soviet Union's conference proposal to Chamberlain's "approaches" following the invasion of Czechoslovakia was no "reluctance" but an active demand for collective action; that Stalin's declarations on the world situation have delivered a mortal blow against Munichism and isolationism, the full consequences of which will become apparent even to the *New Republic* as we go along.

Examine, for example, the full meaning of Stalin's advice to the Soviet Union:

"To be cautious and not allow our country to be drawn into conflicts by warmongers who are accustomed to have others pull the chestnuts out of the fire for them."\*

Is it possible to find here anything even remotely approaching isolationism? The mere suggestion is ridiculous. It is the opposite. It is another thrust at Munichism and a most effective blow for *collective security*.

One must remember that Munichism is not just a passing mood of the reactionary circles of the bourgeoisie in the so-called democratic countries. It is not just a temporary expedient. It is a deliberate policy of long range. It is the class policy of the reactionary and pro-fascist monopolies in all bourgeois-democratic countries. It is a policy of saving the narrow and selfish class privileges of these cliques by conniving with fascism against their own peoples, against other peoples and against the Soviet Union. It is the policy of world reaction led by the British reactionary bourgeoisie.

In the report of Comrade Manuilsky to the Eighteenth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the reader will find a most enlightening examination of the plans of the British reactionary bourgeoisie: in southeastern Europe, on the Mediterranean, in the Far East. Everywhere it is Munichism—connivance with the fascist aggressors abroad, pro-fascist reaction at home. And a major phase of these policies is the desire of British reaction:

". . . to use the Soviet Union to break the fangs of German imperialism, to weaken Germany for many years, and to reserve for British imperialism the dominating position in Europe." (Manuilsky.)

\* *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18.



It is clear that such a strategy of world reaction can be fought against successfully only by a *counter-strategy*, national and international; by a counter-strategy of consistent anti-fascist democracy, pursued unrelentingly by the working class in alliance with all toilers and all democratic forces, and all those ready to resist fascism; by a counter-strategy which aims to curb and isolate the bourgeois and reformist capitulators, aiming to defeat the fascist aggressors, to overthrow the rule of fascism where it is in power, to block the road to fascism in the bourgeois-democratic countries.

This is why Comrade Manuilsky said:

"If the so-called 'democratic' states pursued a firm policy of resistance to the fascist aggressors, combined with economic pressure, this would suffice to force the fascist states to retreat. Such a policy would be a real peace policy. It would be supported by all peoples. With it, France, England and the United States would recover the support of the small states which the Munich policy has thrown into confusion and dismay. *It would be a policy of consolidating the democratic gains of the peoples and would be supported by the international working class.*" (*Our emphasis.*—A.B.)

Not isolationism and "neutrality" but collective resistance to fascist aggression and a consistent struggle against Munichism. This means mass pressure upon the bourgeois-democratic governments by the working class and its progressive allies. It means, in the United States, to make an end to the "neutrality" which is so helpful to the fascist aggressors. The majority of the people oppose this "neutrality," favoring in a general way the President's orientation of differentiating between aggressors and non-

aggressors. Organized mass support for this orientation is particularly necessary at the present time when the Senate is considering the revision of the "Neutrality Laws."

"Our interest in what happens in Europe," said the *New Republic*, "is far more remote" than that of the Soviet Union. We have seen that the Soviet Union does not consider its interests in Europe as being remote. The *New Republic*, as we have tried to show, has "mistaken" opposition to Munichism for an attitude of remoteness. And while the interests of the United States as a capitalist country, dominated by imperialist finance capital, are of necessity of a different qualitative content and motivation than are those of the socialist Soviet Union, the interests of this country are not at all remote from what happens in Europe. On the contrary. The betrayal of Spain into the hands of Hitler and Mussolini by the bourgeois democracies has already sharpened the fight of the fascist powers against the interests of the United States in Latin America.

The Munich-prepared invasion of Czechoslovakia has directly emboldened Japanese aggression in the Far East, the seizure of the Spratly Islands, a move that threatens the Philippines and generally endangers the interests of the United States. Finally, the drive of Germany in the southeast of Europe is already precipitating a sharper struggle with the United States for trade and spheres of influence in the Near East, as evidenced by the recent Turkish-American treaty. In other words, the aggressors are trying to help themselves in all

parts of the world at the expense not only of Britain and France but also of the United States.

To imagine therefore that the interests of the biggest capitalist country in the world—the United States—are not involved in the present most acute sharpening of the imperialist rivalries inherent in the capitalist system; to imagine that the interests of such a capitalist country as this are remote from the imperialist issues involved in an *imperialist war*, waged by the aggressors *for the redivision of the world*; to imagine all that is to engage in the worst possible kind of day-dreaming.

It is time really to understand that the question is no longer whether America should become “involved”; it is involved plenty. The question is how can a non-aggressor country like this meet the spread of the imperialist war directed against its interests? And the answer is by a firm policy of collective resistance of all non-aggressor states in honest collaboration with the Soviet Union. And since this means resisting fascism—the worst and most dangerous enemy of the working class and its allies, since this calls for a policy of consolidating the democratic gains of the masses, the international working class supports such a policy and is vitally interested in its success. This is how the working class of this country can and does support the national interests of America which the pro-fascist bourgeoisie is willing to surrender and betray. That is why in supporting such a policy, the working class has the duty of coming forward in the democratic camp, directing its main strategic efforts toward curbing the economic and political

power of the capitulators—the pro-fascist circles of monopoly capital and their agents in the labor movement.

\* \* \*

**D**EALING with the growing maturity and influence of the Communist Parties, though uneven as between different countries, Comrade Manuilsky took note of the fact that in some of the Parties, in the carrying out of the tactics of the united working class and of the anti-fascist people's front, there appeared:

“... certain tendencies of a Right opportunist nature, a tendency to abate the struggle against elements advocating capitulation, the tendency to idealize the role of the so-called ‘democratic’ states and of glossing over their imperialist character. Appearance of such tendencies, even in embryonic form, warns us of the necessity of intensifying the struggle against opportunism.”

It is a warning which Communists everywhere will welcome most heartily, increasing their vigilance and struggle against such tendencies.

For it is clear that to abate in any way the struggle against the capitulators to fascism, the pro-fascist bourgeoisie and its agents in the working class movements, is to weaken the struggle against fascism itself. Can there be anything more serious for the working class and for the people generally? Furthermore, to abate the fight against the capitulators is to distort (and eventually destroy) the main anti-fascist line of attack which must be directed toward *isolating* the capitulators from the masses, because these are the elements that stand in the way of the consolidation of working class unity and of the anti-fascist people's

front *without which the road to fascism cannot be blocked.*

Equally serious in its consequences would be the tendency to idealize the bourgeois-democratic states and of glossing over their imperialist character. The dangerous consequences of such a tendency are manifold. First, they hamper the development of a really effective mass struggle against Munichism. For we must not forget that Munichism is not just a whim of a funny individual with an umbrella; it is the class policy of the pro-fascist circles of the *imperialist* bourgeoisie of the *bourgeois-democratic* countries. It flows from the system and has its roots there. Which means that only by realizing this fact, that is, not to idealize the bourgeois-democratic states and not to gloss over their imperialist character, can the masses be mobilized against Munichism and hence against fascism.

Such a realization is also an absolute necessity for guarding the masses against falling victim to the machinations of the instigators of war "who are accustomed to have others pull the chestnuts out of the fire for them." (Stalin.)

Secondly, for the working class of an imperialist state, a non-aggressor state like ours, to gloss over its imperialist character means in practice the following: (a) a slackening of the fight against the exploitation and oppression of the peoples, say, in Latin America, by the imperialist monopolies of the United States; (b) an equal slackening of the task of rendering all possible support to the Latin American peoples against this oppression; (c) an easy-going attitude on the constant dangers confronting President

Roosevelt's good neighbor policy from the powerful pressure of the imperialist monopolies, the danger that these policies will be compromised in favor of the imperialists, and a consequent slackening of the mass struggle in this country to improve and make more consistent the good neighbor policy and to insure its continuation. The latter is especially important in the face of the coming Presidential elections in 1940; and (d) such glossing over of the imperialist nature of the bourgeois-democratic states directly endangers one of the main tasks of the American working class. It is the building of a firm alliance between itself and the Latin American peoples, a firm collaboration against fascism and reaction between American democracy and the countries of Latin America.

Said Comrade Manuilsky:

"The Communists are consistently and tenaciously opposed to any oppression and enslavement of colonial peoples by the imperialists. It is not their business to defend existing colonial empires."

That is very clear. And this is precisely the reason that, in this world situation, we concentrate our main fire against the fascist aggressors. Says Manuilsky further:

"All the greater and sharper, therefore, is their opposition to the colonial claims of the fascist states, which would impose an even heavier yoke of slavery on the colonial peoples."

In Latin America generally, we fight for such policies by the United States (and must intensify this fight) as will check and curb the U.S. imperialist monopolies in those countries, as will help their peoples to im-

prove their economic standards, as will assist the democratic forces there to combat reaction and fascism—a truly consistent democratic anti-fascist good neighbor policy. In the case of Puerto Rico, for example, the correct policy is equally clear. We demand of our government the immediate radical improvement in the living standards of the people and the granting of broad democratic rights and liberties. Does that mean that we do not support their right to self-determination, including secession? Not at all. We answer this question in accord with the general policy outlined by Manuilsky:

“While upholding the rights of the colonial peoples to self-determination, including secession, the Communists, in accordance with the doctrine of Lenin and Stalin, subordinate the realization of this right of secession to the fundamental interests of the colonial peoples themselves, in the interests of defeating fascism, the mortal enemy of the working class, and in the interests of the victory of the international working class, over its exploiters.”

When we hear that Franco, the Hitler-Mussolini guy in Spain, is planning to secure Puerto Rico’s “self-determination,” we point to the way Hitler has self-determined the Sudetens and Czechoslovakia, and say together with Manuilsky:

“Fighting consistently against all forms of national oppression in the capitalist countries, defending the rights of the oppressed nations to self-determination, including secession, calling on the oppressed nations to fight for the establishment of mutual relations on the lines indicated by the inspiring example of the Stalinist commonwealth of nations in the Soviet Union, *the Communists in the present historical situation direct their heaviest fire against the fascists’ fake ‘self-determination of nations’* which is an un-

surpassed cynical deception of the oppressed nations and an atrocious crime against the freedom and independence of the nations.”

This is clear, too, and should effectively guard against idealizing the bourgeois-democratic states and glossing over their imperialist character.

Full realization of these things will make our fight against the fascist aggressors *more effective*, not less. It will help the masses to understand better the main guiding line in the present second imperialist war which Munichism pushes into becoming a world war. It is the guiding line so plainly and powerfully stated in the *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union* which distinguishes two kinds of wars—just war and unjust wars. Just wars are not wars of conquest but wars of liberation. They are waged “to defend the people from foreign attack and from attempts to enslave them, or to liberate a people from capitalist slavery, or, lastly, to liberate colonies and dependent countries from the yoke of imperialism.” Unjust wars are “wars of conquest, waged to conquer and enslave foreign countries and foreign nations.” (*History.*)

With this guide, the working class and the people generally can define their attitude to each specific war. Defining this attitude today, we say:

“. . . the working people will support every just war waged by the people for their national independence against imperialist marauders. They will support a war which will speed the defeat of world reaction and of its spearhead—Germany, Japan and Italy. They will support a war which will hasten the victory of the world proletariat, whose interests are one with the interests of the country of victorious socialism, the fatherland of all working people.

“Communists consider it their first duty

to mobilize the working people of all countries to render support to any nation waging a just war and to promote its victory by every means." (Manuilsky.)

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**I**N COMRADE STALIN'S theoretical contributions at the Eighteenth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the reader will be struck by at least two things. First, by the merits and substance of the contribution itself. Second, by the advanced stage of the socialist development of the Soviet Union whose *practice* produces these theoretical problems.

Stalin discussed the various stages of development of the structure and functions of the Soviet state, the proletarian dictatorship, from the angle of the Marxist theory of its withering away. The question has been raised that, since the Soviet Union no longer has any exploiting or hostile classes which have to be suppressed, there would seem to be no longer any need for a state and state power. Therefore, in accordance with one of Engels' famous propositions, that in a classless society the state will die away, it would be necessary in the Soviet Union to throw overboard all the attributes of state power instead of strengthening and developing them. What is the answer?

We must refer the reader to a study of Stalin's report itself. The answer given there is so clear, so compelling in its convincingness and profound throughout that nothing less than a study of the thing itself will do. It gives an invaluable lesson in historical materialism and the dialectical method. It shows the *new* phase into

which the Soviet state is entering as the country is completing the construction of the classless socialist society and is moving along the path of gradual transition from socialism to communism, while still remaining the *only* socialist state in hostile capitalist surroundings and in the midst of the second imperialist war. It throws a brilliant light on the perspectives of developments throughout the world.

Speaking of the present phase of the Soviet state, Stalin said that its main task within the country is one of peaceful economic, organizational, cultural and educational work. As to the army, the punitive organs and intelligence service, their edge is no longer turned within but without, against the enemies abroad.

Will the state continue also under communism? Yes, said Stalin, "if the capitalist encirclement will not be abolished, if the danger of military attacks from without will not be destroyed." Of course, he added, "the forms of our state will again change in conformity with the changes in the situation at home and abroad."

His discussion of the new character of the Soviet intellectuals and the consequent new attitude toward them is of extreme theoretical and practical importance. To the old pre-revolutionary intellectuals, who served the landlords and capitalists, our theory was one of mistrust and struggle against those intellectuals. But this theory is already obsolete. It no longer fits the new Soviet intellectuals. For these a new theory is needed, one that calls for friendship, care, respect for, and collaboration with them, for the sake of the interests of the working class and peasantry.

Thus the Soviet Union negotiates the gradual transition from socialism to communism.

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**G**REETINGS to our Young Communists, whose League convenes its Ninth National Convention in New York City on May 11.

It is without doubt a significant event in the life of the American youth and consequently in the life of the country. America's youth is progressively coming to the front as a decisive factor in the struggle against reaction and fascism. New millions of youth will participate for the first time in 1940 in a Presidential election

struggle. To win these young men and women to the anti-fascist cause is a task of first rate importance. The Young Communist League and its Ninth Convention can contribute materially toward this end.

Together with the National Council of the League, we too feel confident that the convention will "mark an important milestone in the life of the progressive youth movement and the history of the League." We too feel certain that the League will "find the road to further growth and development," to greater service in the progressive cause of America's youth.

Best wishes for a fruitful convention.

A. B.

"Mastering the Marxist-Leninist theory does not at all mean learning all its formulas and conclusions by heart and clinging to their every letter. To master the Marxist-Leninist theory we must first of all learn to distinguish between its letter and substance.

"Mastering the Marxist-Leninist theory means assimilating *the substance* of this theory and learning to use it in the solution of the practical problems of the revolutionary movement under the varying conditions of the class struggle of the proletariat."—From the *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks)*, p. 355.

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# MAY DAY IN THE STRUGGLE FOR DEMOCRACY AND PEACE

BY I. AMTER

**M**AY DAY this year comes at a time when the whole world faces the burning question: Will the present wars be stopped and peace be restored, or will a world-wide war, embracing all nations, be the outcome?

A new imperialist war is in progress—a war waged by the fascist axis powers aiming at world domination. Feverish efforts are being made by the axis powers, which have taken in tow fascist Hungary and Franco Spain, to conquer the world by intrigue, blackmail and coercion, and, if need be, by force of arms.

The present international crisis is largely the child of the “heroes” of Munich, Chamberlain and Daladier. Like Hitler and Mussolini, the Chamberlains hate and fear democracy and the working class. They know that, despite many setbacks, the workers and their allies, the farmers and city middle class, are drawing their forces together for the struggle against reactionary monopoly capital. The struggle for democracy and against the effects of the crisis of world capitalism is the central struggle today for the masses of the people. National liberation and freedom from exploitation dominate the minds of hundreds of millions of people who are prepared to lay down their lives in the struggle

against fascism. It was for this reason—to strengthen the forces of reaction and fascism against the popular forces—that the Chamberlains fathered the policy of “appeasement” which blossomed out in the shameful Munich betrayal and in the surrender of Spain to the fascist invaders.

Has the Munich policy been scrapped since Hitler unceremoniously gobbled up the remnants of Czechoslovakia? True, the Tory government was thrown into feverish activity, there have been “emergency” cabinet meetings, conferences with ambassadors and foreign ministers, and hurried communications with various capitals, including Moscow. But it is clear that Chamberlain is still resisting the forces favoring the policy of collective security, of stopping aggression regardless of its direction. He is still maneuvering to divert the fascist aggressors, by “appeasement” or threat of force, into a direction that will not directly threaten the vital interests of British imperialism.

Hitler, Mussolini and the Mikado, in the interests of the decadent, monopolist capitalist class, are forcing the fight for world domination. These are the gangsters of present-day imperialism, covering their campaign of pillage against democracy, against the

democratic peoples and all small nations, with a mask of struggle against Communism.

Ethiopia, China, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Memel, Spain, Albania—were these Communist states? The camouflage is apparent—the camouflage of fascism conducting outright war against democracy.

Hitler knows better than to start an immediate war against the communism of the Soviet Union; this has been the aim of Chamberlain, to divert Hitler from countries to the west of Germany.

After the defeat and destruction of his Trotsky-Bukharin wreckers and assassins in the Soviet Union; after the placing in operation of the new Constitution of the Soviet Union, which represents the highest democracy in the world, and the unification of one hundred and seventy million people as one man behind the Soviet government; after the completion of the Second Five-Year Plan—which has advanced the Soviet Union to second place in industrial production—and after the launching of the Third Five-Year Plan, which promises to bring that country into close competition, within a decade, with the leading country in world economy, the United States—facing these facts, Hitler has good reason to think twice before plunging against the Soviet border, even though that is one of the goals laid down in his program in *Mein Kampf*.

#### THE POLICY OF THE SOVIET UNION

Comrade Stalin at the recent Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union has again emphasized the readiness of the Soviet Union to

use its vast power on the side of peace—against aggression. But the great leader of the world's toiling masses at the same time gave clear warning that—prepared though the Soviet Union is to meet any attack and to answer blow with double blow—it will not be provoked nor maneuvered into a position of catspaw for any imperialist power. The choice is clear: if not retreat before the fascist bandits, allowing them to pick successively victim after victim—then concerted action of all the peace forces, of all democratic countries, jointly with the mighty land of the Soviets against aggression at any point.

The critical international situation is aggravated by the economic crisis, which, as Comrade Stalin has pointed out, differs in many respects from past crises—“differs for the worse and not for the better.” This crisis was preceded by a depression and recovery “of a special kind,” a recovery which did not develop into a boom, which at its highest point remained considerably behind the high point of the preceding cycle. Moreover, this crisis has developed at a time when the second imperialist war is already in progress, when the Japanese war on the Chinese people has shut off the vast Chinese market.

The fascist axis powers are, apparently, not yet in the grip of this crisis; but this is only because their economy has been on a war basis for several years, which means a terrific strain on their resources and finances and a tremendous burden on the masses of these countries. They therefore face the prospect of an extremely severe crisis in the near future.

The crisis has been most pro-



nounced in the United States, and the monopolists have taken advantage of it in a drive against the New Deal and the working people. Twenty-four million people in the capitalist countries are unemployed, including twelve million in the United States. The conditions of the workers, peasants and city middle class in all countries are seriously threatened and impaired. Production remains at a low level and is stimulated chiefly by the demands of the war industries.

Millions of young people, denied apprenticeship training, are unable to obtain work. Rationalization is proceeding at a terrific pace in factories, offices and stores. Thus, for instance, a leading steel corporation in this country recently erected a new steel mill at a cost of forty-two million dollars. At the time of its erection, the steel industry in the United States was operating at less than 40 per cent of capacity. By the erection of this mill, several old mills were discarded and now three thousand workers will do the work of eleven thousand. This process is occurring in all industries.

With the income of the workers lowered through the crisis, and with millions remaining unemployed, obviously the farmers must continue to suffer. In the United States the income of the farmers since the World War has been such as to drive a large part of them from ownership of farms into tenancy. Today the majority of U.S. farmers are tenants. This is particularly true of the Negro and white farmers in the South. High monopoly prices for manufactured products that the farmers must buy, and low prices for their own merchandise, with measures by the federal government as subsidies,

payment for surplus and underplowed products—these are the factors facing the farmer in 1939.

We are living in a period of intensified decay of capitalism, of accentuated crisis of the capitalist system, in the "epoch of wars and revolutions." In this period finance capital seeks in every way to limit and, if possible, completely suppress democracy.

In the period of the decay of capitalism, the people's democratic rights become an obstacle to the capitalists. The right to organize, the right to vote, the right to petition, protest and demonstrate, the right to education and culture—the right to unite all forces against the effects of the crisis and against the very sabotage of the capitalists who want to drive down the conditions of the workers and the farmers still further—stand in the way of the handful of monopolists who control our country.

This leads to an effort on their part to destroy democracy and to institute fascism. At the same time, the monopolists mask themselves with talk of democracy and patriotism. Fascism, however, with all its brutality, with its campaign against religion, with its destruction of trade unions and working class organizations, with its bloodthirsty anti-Semitism and the pitting of one nationality against another, cannot save capitalism.

We look with horror at the fascist systems of Hitler and Mussolini.

*On May Day we declare with united might "Down with fascism," "Fight for democracy." We want no Hitlerism in the United States. For concerted action with the Soviet Union and all democratic forces to stop the aggressors. We fight for opportunities*

*and safeguards for the youth. We demand equal rights for the Negro people and urge unity of Negroes and whites in the struggle. We declare ourselves against the attacks on the foreign-born through such fascist measures as those of Congressman Dempsey and Senator Reynolds; and against efforts that are being made by Coughlin, the German Bund, Fish and other reactionaries, inside and outside the legislative halls, to arouse national chauvinism, anti-Semitism, and to place one national group against the other. We declare ourselves for equal rights for women, with the necessary safeguards for their protection. We declare ourselves for unity with the farmers, the small businessmen and the professionals—for unity of all the groups that stand for democracy, which monopoly capital is trying to wipe out.*

#### REACTION IN THE U. S. IN OFFENSIVE AGAINST THE PEOPLE

Let us have our eyes firmly fixed on the reactionaries in our own country, who are fast traveling the road to fascism and openly espouse fascist measures in the United States. These gentry seek to enact legislation that would deprive us more and more of our democratic rights and curtail the protection that the New Deal has given to the working people. These reactionary Republicans and Democrats savagely and cynically cut relief and W.P.A. appropriations, and threaten the existence of millions of unemployed. They want to revise and emasculate the National Labor Relations Act. They have given a new lease of life to the witch-hunting Dies Com-

mittee. They plan a systematic curtailment of our civil rights.

Why are these things happening at this particular period? Because these reactionaries regard even the limited capitalist democracy as no longer suitable as their mode of rule. Because they see a mighty trade union movement growing in this country; because they see a growing demand on the part of the eight and a half million organized workers for unity into one powerful united body girding itself for organizing the remaining thirty-five million unorganized workers. Because they see this powerful trade union movement taking into its ranks Negroes and whites, youth and adults, people of all persuasions and creeds, men and women of all nationalities and political affiliations. Because they see this mighty rock of democracy building itself at a time when capitalism is going into eclipse. Because they see organized labor stretching out its hand to the farmers and middle class, and building the great army of the democratic front that will preserve democracy and defeat reaction and fascism. Because they know that the elections of 1938 were no mandate to move to the Right, but represent a confusion brought about partly by Republican pledges for a greater New Deal. Because they know that despite the efforts of Wall Street and the big employers' organizations to sabotage the New Deal, the people of the United States want a more inclusive, more consistent New Deal—the opening of factories, the maintenance of N.L.R.A., more protection through W.P.A. and bigger relief—a health program, a construction program, safeguarding our social security.

*This May Day we declare ourselves for unity of the trade union movement, for organization of the unorganized, for no amendments to the N.L.R.A., for a health program, for a big construction program, for extending social security and benefits.*

*We declare ourselves for the closest unity of Negroes and white, of Americans of all national origins. We declare ourselves for the unity of workers, farmers and middle class in every field of activity, for building the democratic front, to retain and extend the New Deal. This is our clarion call on this May Day.*

There are people in our country who, in face of Munich and the rapidly developing events since Munich, still profess to believe that no matter what takes place in Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America, the United States need not be involved. They pretend that the neutrality law now in effect has protected and will continue to protect us in face of the developing world war situation. The isolationist Senator Nye tells us we should "mind our own business and thereby keep out of trouble." But trouble has come of itself. President Roosevelt apparently learned the meaning of world events. In October, 1937, and again in his address to Congress on January 4, 1939, as well as in many significant speeches, Roosevelt expressed his abhorrence of the fascist aggressors and their savage acts of international brigandage. Surely there could be no reconciliation of the Neutrality Law with the President's declarations. Roosevelt refused to recognize Hitler's seizure of Czechoslovakia. Secretary of State Hull called it a "temporary extinguishment" of that republic.

Unfortunately, the administration policy in practice too often played into the hands of reaction. The most recent manifestation of this was the recognition of Franco Spain. If Roosevelt hoped thereby to prevent Franco from joining the fascist axis combination, this hope was quickly proved illusory. Actually—although the announcement of this step was delayed for some time—Franco joined the "anti-Comintern" pact virtually at the very time when Washington granted him recognition.

Franco, Hitler and Mussolini agents and organizations are carrying on intensive activities in Cuba, Mexico, Argentina, Chile. They have ammunition and supply bases in Peru and Guatemala. Hitler agents have plotted to seize Patagonia. They are plotting an overthrow of the progressive Cardenas government in Mexico. They already represent a menace in Quebec Province, and threaten the whole of Canada. They are carrying on activities broader than ever in our own country. With the aid of reactionaries in American public life, such as Hoover, Hearst, Vandenberg, Fish, Glass, Tydings and Coughlin, and through the use of outright fascist organizations like the Christian Front, Silver Shirts, Crusaders, Frank Gannett's Committee of One Million, the Associated Farmers, Inc., etc., they are driving against American democracy and trying to keep the United States from exerting its tremendous influence and power to block the fascist aggressors.

At this moment, hearings on the Neutrality Law are in progress. Henry L. Stimson, Secretary of State under Hoover, has made a splendid statement for collective security. Various

proposals are now before Congress—from sheer isolation to the proposal of Senator Thomas, which would empower the President and Congress to recognize the aggressor and deny him war supplies, but would prevent aid to the victims of aggression. This is a half-way measure moving in the right direction; but it is inadequate.

Surely the aggressive actions of the fascist governments in Europe, Africa, Asia and the Western Hemisphere—activities against each Latin American country and against the Good Neighbor policy adopted at the Lima Conference—should open the eyes of every American. Yes, we can keep out of trouble by giving up our democracy, and capitulating to fascism; or we must fight against every surrender to fascism by uniting with all the democratic countries to halt fascism.

It is not remarkable that the reactionaries and imperialists who led us into war in 1917 are the same imperialists who oppose adequate national defense today, and see no danger of fascist aggression or invasion of the Western Hemisphere! This is a natural result of the breakdown of capitalism and the turn of the monopolists to fascism as their only means of control. These people carry on a systematic struggle against democracy and the New Deal. They openly or covertly express their approval of the "law and order" practised in the fascist countries. They sabotage the New Deal and keep twelve million unemployed out of the factories. They praise academic procedure in the fascist countries, while step by step they attempt to destroy academic freedom in the United States.

They are enemies of democracy, the

enemies of the people's rights, the enemies of the working class. Only one power can dethrone them and block the development of reaction and fascism in this country. Only one power can halt the fascist aggressors: *a mighty democratic front, fighting for social and national security.*

*This May Day we declare our support for the application of a real Good Neighbor policy that will unite the Americas against any fascist invasion. Only such a policy based upon the progressive unity of the people through democratic and people's fronts can protect the Western Hemisphere from fascism. We declare that only concerted action of the democracies, including the United States and the Soviet Union, together with the small countries threatened by fascism, can stop fascist aggression and preserve democracy in the United States and the rest of the world. We declare that any other policy will mean that the United States will later have to defend itself single-handed against a strengthened fascist bloc. We declare that the same imperialists, the pro-fascist forces led by Hoover and Hearst, demonstrate their treachery to American democracy by attempts to sabotage adequate national defense of our country. They are the Aaron Burrs and Benedict Arnolds, ready to sell our country to the fascist enemy. Unity of our people in the democratic front will defeat these enemies.*

#### ENEMY AGENTS IN THE RANKS OF THE WORKING CLASS

There are other enemies, operating within the ranks of the working class, keeping the workers divided, and doing everything they can to prevent the

building and strengthening of the democratic and the people's front. The leaders of the Socialist Second International and of the Socialist Parties of many countries have prevented even working class unity in the struggle against fascism. Many a time the Communist International and the Communists in the various countries have appealed to the Socialist leaders for unity. When Spain, Austria and Czechoslovakia were attacked, the Communists called for unity; but they were turned down. If the leaders of the British Labor Party had accepted unity, Spain, Austria, Czechoslovakia and now Albania could have been saved.

The Trotskyites and Lovestoneites play a special role as agents of fascism. Their attempts to undermine Soviet economy, to wreck, destroy and murder, in the interests of fascism, were stopped by the firm, resolute hand of the Soviet people. The actions of these people in Spain, as part of the fifth column, as traitors at the front, and in the formation together with some Right-wing Socialists and anarchists of the capitulation junta which seized Madrid by a *coup d'etat* and turned over the central provinces of Spain and tens of thousands of militant Loyalist soldiers to Franco and Mussolini, reveal these people as the vile fascist scum that they are. They agree with Hoover, Coughlin and Hearst that our country shall not have a defense able to meet the fascist aggressors. They preach isolationism, just like Fish, Vandenburg and Nye. They advocate the Ludlow amendment to befuddle the whole question of collective security. They are splitters of trade unions, fighters against the dem-

ocratic front, stoolpigeons of fascism. They are the fifth column working today in league with the fascists to sell out our country.

*This May Day we declare we will be on guard against the fifth column that is operating in our country. We have learned the bitter lessons from experiences in Spain. We have before us the example of the Bolshevik vigilance in the Soviet Union. Wherever these snakes appear, we will bring them to the light of day, expose them, and scotch them.*

This May Day we must prepare for the important elections of 1939 and the decisive elections of 1940. The reactionary forces in the Democratic and Republican Parties are already at work, stalling New Deal policies, frustrating the will of the people. They calculate upon causing confusion and misdirecting the desires of the people, in order to get control. Step by step they are trying to nullify New Deal legislation. They are stirring up anti-Semitism as never before. They hope that by goading the people to struggle among themselves they can crush our democracy. Their methods and policies are those of Hitler and Mussolini. They are determined to maintain control. Facing the rising anger of the people, they cannot rule through democracy, hence they will try to rule by means of fascism.

*This May Day we declare resolutely and firmly that there is only one way in the United States, the way of democracy. Together with our brothers and sisters, we Communists, fighting for trade union unity, and helping to organize the unorganized workers, will aid in bringing together labor, the farmers and the middle class in a*

*powerful democratic front that will sweep the reactionaries out of their posts in every nook of the land and strengthen the power of democracy.*

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This democracy cannot be static. The people demand more rights, real social and national security. In the midst of the world capitalist crisis only one country points the way to complete security. Only in one country does economy steadily go forward and the conditions of the people steadily improve. That country is the Soviet Union. The lesson of the Soviet Union and the building of socialism is a lesson for the whole world. Only through socialism can real security be guaranteed.

Does America want this? The his-

tory of democracy in the United States answers yes. The Soviet Union guarantees democracy as only socialism can do it. The American people, learning the lessons of socialism in the midst of world chaos, will see that to safeguard American democracy against all efforts to destroy it we must march forward to socialism.

*This May Day we hail the Soviet Union as the great champion of people's rights, people's prosperity, democracy and peace. We hail the peoples of the Soviet Union, their government, the Bolshevik Party and Comrade Stalin. We must build as Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin taught us, and march the path that the peoples in the capitalist and colonial countries must tread, to achieve human freedom and human rights.*

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“A distinguishing feature of the second imperialist war is that so far it is being waged and extended by the aggressor powers, while the other powers, the ‘democratic’ powers, against whom in fact the war is directed, pretend that it does not concern them, wash their hands of it, draw back, boast of their love of peace, scold the fascist aggressors, and . . . surrender their positions to the aggressors bit by bit, at the same time asserting that they are preparing to resist.”—From the *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks)*, pp. 333-4.

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# THE SECOND IMPERIALIST WAR

BY ROBERT MINOR

## I.

### BREAKING IN THE BACK DOOR OF FRANCE

IT IS common knowledge that at the end of the war of 1914-18 Germany was placed in a position in which she could not prosecute a European war without certain defeat; she could not enter into a general war without first changing her position in the military-strategic sense in relation to *France* before making the test of physical strength.

The conquest of Spain by fascist Germany and Italy has a relationship to the impending war against France similar to that which the invasion of Belgium had to the war against France in 1914. In 1914 the penetration of Belgium was the first stage of the invasion of France. In the conquest of Spain, the German and Italian fascists have committed against France an equivalent aggression, adapted to the conditions of the "creeping war" of today.

"Under the guise of supporting the Spanish fascists, they secured the opportunity of surreptitiously landing troops on Spanish territory, in the rear of France, and stationing their fleets in Spanish waters—in the zones of the Balearic Islands and Gibraltar in the South, the Atlantic Ocean in the West, and the Bay of Biscay in the North. . . . As a matter of fact, they were striking at Great Britain and France, by bestriding the sea

communications of these countries with their vast African and Asiatic colonial possessions."\*

Seven months ago Germany was in such a position that if she were to take the offensive in a general European war, she could only hope to beat herself to pieces against the huge permanent fortifications of the Maginot line on her western frontier and the all but impregnable Czechoslovak fortifications which extend westward more than half-way through the width of Germany and up to within 210 miles of the French frontier on the other side. From the military standpoint it would have been suicide for Germany to begin an armed struggle within the narrow confines she occupied up to seven months ago.

By deliberate action of the British Tories, helped by the corresponding French reactionaries, the military position of Germany has been partly changed.

From the German Nazi viewpoint the problem was one of:

1. Reducing the power of resistance of the French army by compelling it to divide itself between several fronts, that is, creating new fronts for France.
2. Breaking through the narrow confines of Germany's old position,

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\* *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks)*, p. 332, International Publishers, New York.

ridding herself of the necessity to face and to besiege the powerful Czechoslovak mountain positions which extended nearly 300 miles from the eastern tip of Germany to within 200 miles of its western border, avoiding the necessity of dividing the German army within the heart of Germany, and opening up the Balkans to undefended attack as a source of supplies, thus enabling the German armies to concentrate mainly for the reduction of France.

If these two objectives could be obtained, and with Italy's help, from Hitler's point of view, an open general military action in Europe could be faced with a hope that Germany could win.

It is axiomatic that as long as France retains its position as the strongest military power in capitalist Europe, Hitler's plan for German hegemony over Europe cannot be attained.

The reduction of France is the unconditional necessity. In 1926 Hitler said in *Mein Kampf*:

"The situation of France today is: . . . militarily the first power, without a serious rival on the Continent, practically guaranteed on its Southern borders against Spain and Italy, guaranteed against Germany by the impotence of our fatherland. . . ."

Seeking hegemony for the German fascist state, Hitler inevitably takes the position he describes in the following words:

"The German people's irreconcilable mortal enemy is and remains France. It does not matter who ruled or who will rule in France, whether Bourbons or Jacobins, Bonapartists or bourgeois democrats, clerical republicans or red Bolsheviks. . . ."

From the viewpoint of Hitler, having already brought Italy into an al-

liance against France, the next necessity for reducing the "irreconcilable mortal enemy" was to destroy the guarantee of France's "southern border against Spain."

From the viewpoint of Chamberlain, to whom Hitler gave his "sacred word," the turning over of France's Spanish border to Hitler was entirely satisfactory; the reduction of France need not take the form of open war in the West against France, but could come about by the rise of a superior military power of the German fascist state, which could then exercise pressure upon the interior situation in France to reverse the labor and democratic trend. On the East the open military action could well proceed through the Balkans and into the fertile fields of the Ukraine to the tune of clinking cocktail glasses at Cliveden. But in all events the end could only be attained by methodically breaking down the defensive capacity of France, by granting the military initiative in Europe to Hitler. This has partly been accomplished by the British Tories aided by the *deux cent familles*\* of France.

With the fall of Spain, after the conquest of Czechoslovakia, the main conditions which the Nazis thought necessary for their winning of the second general European war were realized.

France is now surrounded on all her land frontiers. Her entire standing army of 650,000 men could hardly be more than enough to defend the "Southern borders against Spain" which are no longer "guaranteed" but are manned by an army estimated at 900,000 soldiers whose arms were

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\* The two hundred families who rule France.



pledged by Franco in the axis pact of war against France on the day after the French government accepted the credentials of the new Spanish fascist ambassador.

The objective of dividing France's potential fighting force of 6,000,000 men has been accomplished; the French army must now be split between a northern, a northeastern, an eastern and a southern front. In 1914 France placed her 5,000,000 French and colonial troops, in addition to the English, on a single German-and-Belgian front of roughly 350 miles. Her Swiss, her Italian and her Spanish frontiers were safe and were a source of supplies. In the situation of today France must divide her strength to cover the *three new fronts*. Besides the same German-Belgian frontier of 350 miles, she must cover almost surely a Swiss frontier of about 150 miles, and certainly a new 200 miles of Italian frontier and 250 miles of new battle line on the Spanish frontier.

This is a part of what treachery to Spain has cost France.

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As to the second point of the two objectives, it is being said in London\* that the Nazis, through getting possession of the Sudeten fortifications, released 35 divisions (which otherwise would have been occupied with the struggle against these fortifications of the Czechoslovaks), and thereby are now able to add these 35 divisions to the tremendous weight of the army they will throw against France on the Rhine and through Switzerland and Belgium. The estimate of 35 divisions,

\* See article by Joseph Driscoll, *New York Herald Tribune*, March 11, 1939.

about 450,000 to 600,000 men, is very low; it has been calculated at twice that; but let us accept it, and it makes nevertheless an increase in the force to be thrown against France larger than the total of land troops that England is expected to send to France.\* *Because of Munich*, the hypothetical British military plan is changed to one of sending a British army to France on the outbreak of the war. But England would send *nineteen divisions*—about 250,000 men, hardly more than half the weight of manpower that was presented to Hitler by the Tory treason of September at Munich.

The German Nazi government obtained accumulations of war planes and arms plundered from the Czechoslovak government, which, it is said, would have required two and one-half years for the German factories to produce, which would mean that in the race for armaments Hitler was given by one sudden stroke the advantage of two and one-half years' headway on the democratic powers through the colossal crime of Munich. It is said that Hitler obtained 1,500 war planes and enough Czechoslovak equipment including small arms and artillery to arm 35 divisions, entirely aside from the heavy guns of the Sudeten fortifi-

\* It has been estimated that in case of general European war the German General Staff would have had to devote from half a million to a full million men, with siege equipment, for a period of several months at least, to reduce the Czechoslovak fortifications which would have been manned by a third of a million men so powerfully entrenched. This leaves out of account the Soviet aid to Czechoslovakia which would have been present and decisive. The French writers, Pertinax in *l'Ordre*, and Henri de Kerillis in *l'Epoque*, estimate that 40 German divisions would have had to besiege the Sudeten fortifications.

cations. In addition to this he obtained the great Skoda Arms Works which are among the most productive and excellent in the world, probably almost doubling the Nazi capacity for arms production.

The Nazi program prior to the looting of Czechoslovakia had reduced the gold reserve of Germany to \$29,000,000.\* By stealing the entire gold and foreign currency reserve of Czechoslovakia through the aid of his accomplice Chamberlain, the international burglar of Berchtesgaden increased the gold and foreign currency reserves of Germany to about seven times what they were before the rape of Czechoslovakia.

The Nazi General Staff obtained a tremendous strategic military advantage through the one fact alone that they obtained possession of the flying fields and marvelously perfected underground airdromes of the Czechoslovaks. One must bear in mind that Czechoslovak airdromes, entirely under cover and concealed within the fortification system, with underground repair factories, fuel tanks, etc., are within 150 miles of Berlin and 80 miles from Vienna. Both Berlin and Vienna were therefore within one-half hour's flight from these impregnable airplane bases. Both the Czechoslovak and the Soviet air forces, under their defensive agreement, were therefore within a few minutes' striking distance of the very heart of Germany and of all of Germany's manufacturing regions, except those of the west. This huge "peninsula" of armaments protruding from the east to a point reaching further westward than Ber-

lin itself, was made a gift to German fascism from British pro-fascist Toryism.

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Now let us see some of the fruits of "non-intervention" in Spain:

During the past year a number of large air bases, said to be twelve in number, have been constructed at intervals on the Spanish side of the Pyrenees, as close to the mountainous border of France as practicable; they are equipped with German and Italian planes and crews.

There is good reason to believe the published report that forty German batteries of heavy guns, with German officers and artillerymen, were landed in January, 1939, in the inlet called *los Pasages*, close to San Sabastien, Spain, and seven miles from the French frontier, and were quietly hauled away into the mountains east of Irun, where they are now planted in positions overlooking the rail and motor routes into France.

On the Gulf of Cádiz, in the South of Spain, West of Gibraltar, there are probably two, but at least one submarine base, highly developed and in use by large German submarines; while on the Spanish coast east of Gibraltar, probably at Málaga, is another big submarine base in possession of Italians, from which for many months Italian submarines have operated.

Since the fall of Catalonia, it is believed, there has been established a large Italian submarine base within a few hours' distance from Marseilles, only half as far from French soil as is Majorca, and out of which Italian submarines have been operating against British and French shipping with the

\* Approximate, in devalued dollars; or \$17,000,000 in former dollars.

knowledge of the British and French governments. Tremendous submarine and air bases have been constructed and are now operating in the Canary Islands\* off the west coast of Africa on the sea route to South America, control of which has been turned over to Germany by Franco.

A few miles down the coast of Africa in the Spanish colony of Rio de Oro, there is believed to be another complex of air and submarine bases.

Gibraltar, although not "cancelled" as many believe, is surrounded on the land side by fortified positions under Italian and German control. Across the Straits of Gibraltar, fourteen miles away, the site of the ancient fort of Ceuta has been transformed into a new German "Gibraltar" believed to be enormously stronger than the old fortress—certainly more modern and equipped with huge guns with a range far exceeding the fourteen miles' distance, set in their emplacements by German engineers and manned by German officers and men solely for two purposes: to demolish the British fortifications at Gibraltar, and to command the entrance to the Mediterranean Sea.

The Balearic Islands (except Minorca) were taken over at the beginning of the war and are now the main Italian air and submarine base for operation against the French coast and British and French shipping in the Western Mediterranean. They

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\* The Nazis have discovered that the "Phallic race" of "German blood," found "primarily in Westphalia, whence it derives its name, in Swabia and in Wurttemberg," is "also, curiously enough, on the Canary Islands." From "Official Handbook . . . of the Hitler Youth." See *Harpers Magazine*, for August, 1938.

were obtained by Italy for a price much cheaper than the twenty-four dollars that bought Manhattan Island from the Indians; the undisturbed possession and right to fortify the Balearics was bought from Chamberlain for a piece of paper on which were written twenty words: a promise not to possess and not to fortify them—Mussolini's "honor." They are the chief Italian submarine base for the sinking of French troop transports from Morocco when the war reaches that stage, and for the stopping of all British shipping in the Mediterranean that might get past Ceuta.\*

All of which goes to show that at Munich Chamberlain gave Hitler at least as much as he could have won in the first half of the first year of war, free of all risks or expenditure. Or we might put it this way: That the action of Chamberlain and Daladier in deliberately strangling the Spanish republic has presented Hitler with the equivalent of those advantages the German armies had attained after crashing through Belgium and up to the stalemate after the battle of the Ypres in November, 1914; while in the East, with the wiping out of Czechoslovakia, the German military position is given an advantage comparable to that which was won by Hindenburg in the battle of Tannenberg.

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\* Genevieve Tabouis, noted French journalist, tells of secret military clauses, supplementing the "Anti-Comintern Pact," by which Franco puts all naval and air bases of Spain at the disposal of the German and Italian governments for eighteen months, and German and Italian officers largely put in charge of reorganization and training of the Spanish army; that Germany and Italy, "in compensation," will build fortifications throughout the Pyrenees on the Spanish side of the French border and will "support the legitimate aspirations" of a fascist Spain.

Of course, such comparisons are not presented as exact, but merely to picture in striking form the magnitude of the cost of leaving the leadership of democratic nations in the hands of fascism's accomplices.

## II.

### "BLITZKRIEG" AND "SCHLEICHKRIEG"

But it must be emphasized that the democratic powers of the Old World, *even now*—after this heartless swindling—are still *overwhelmingly more powerful* than the Berlin-Rome-Tokyo-Madrid axis. There is no lie bigger or more dangerous than that which says the axis powers are strong enough to win a war against the democratic powers.

The struggle is on now to prevent the cutting down of the democratic countries of the world, their submission to further encroachments which would make the fascist powers strong enough to defeat them. Not only can this struggle still be won, but in the past weeks of betrayal the popular reaction against the fascists has made giant strides of progress, and it bears every probability of success. But the fight is not won. The "appeasement" policy of the Munichers has not been eliminated. The "creeping war" continues to claim new victims. The work that will save the world from fascism is still to be done.

But in a war fought under the conditions of today the democratic states would assuredly and decisively defeat the fascist axis. The trained military forces of the European democratic powers\* now under arms or in reserve

\* Included here as among the democratic powers are France, Great Britain (with India), and the Soviet Union. To these might

are approximately 25,000,000 men as compared with 18,000,000 of the fascist powers. The sea forces of the European democratic powers are as 14 to 9 in relation to the fascist powers. In the air the European democratic powers are stronger than the fascist powers at the ratio of 17 to 10.

One of the fascists' chief means of prosecuting their "creeping war" is that of boasting, lying and bluster. For a hundred years after the German people hang Hitler, historians will marvel at the screaming fraud that has been solemnly imposed upon the world by fascist liars (with the aid of "democratic" statesmen and press) to promote surrenders to their bullying.

But the fact remains that the proven capacity of the Italian army to fight (when led by fascist bullies) was the capacity they showed against unarmed and barefoot civilians in Ethiopia, against little Albania—one forty-fourth of Italy's size—and in the headlong defeat of Mussolini's Black-shirts at Guadalajara. The capacity of German fascists to fight has thus far been exhibited only in kicking and beating Jewish women and children in Berlin, Vienna and Prague; and their prowess in the air has been excellent only in bombing schools and breadlines. The warlike qualities of Japanese fascists had their test in a two-week "sample" war at Lake Khasan with the odds heavily on their side, after which they decided to try their mechanized equipment for the time being only against the relatively poorly-armed Chinese peasants.

well be added the 6,500,000 trained men under arms or in reserve of Poland, Rumania, Turkey, Greece and Belgium. A smaller number might be added to the fascist side from some Balkan sources.

The fascists' chief means of helping Chamberlain and Daladier to terrorize British and French civilians is the big talk of the "marvelous, speedier-than-anything-ever-seen" and "all-destroying" air force, which would destroy British and French cities in just no time at all. . . . But why did these same fascist powers with their majestic fleets of huge bombing and pursuit planes not succeed in their efforts for two and a half years to do that very thing to Madrid, Valencia and Barcelona? The writer of this article has watched more than half a hundred efforts of German and Italian air forces to exterminate civilian populations and destroy cities and villages, in Madrid, Valencia, Barcelona, a half-dozen small villages, and Belchite and Teruel, and three artillery bombardments of Madrid by German gunners. Except in Euzkadi and in a few other places under exceptional conditions, such as the entire lack of republican planes and anti-aircraft guns to oppose them, every method of frightfulness that Hitler gets Chamberlain to frighten Daladier with was tried in Spain and failed to produce any but commonplace results.

The *testing of the German and Italian mechanized units* (or the *equipment*), in Spain in campaigns in which the republican mechanical equipment of defense was infinitely weaker, proved that the Nazis would have had not the slightest possibility by means of "lightning war" to break through Czechoslovak fortifications, if these had been held and defended, before being themselves hit with the terrific force of the Soviet Union's Red Army, under the old treaty arrangements which required the Soviet

Union's action provided, and contingent upon, France's living up to her treaty obligations to Czechoslovakia.

Interesting discussions are now appearing in the press about the famous plan of *Blitzkrieg*\*, or the sudden attack without warning, without declaration of war, with overwhelming force, intended to destroy the defensive power of the attacked nation before it has time to mobilize. But the tale of *Blitzkrieg* is largely a fable supplied by von Seeckt for the use of Chamberlain and Daladier in frightening civilians. Particularly was it nonsense at the time when it was used in the Czechoslovak crisis, when Germany would have had to operate in the narrow space of two hundred miles between the fortified French frontier and the Sudeten mountain fortifications. But even now, with Czechoslovakia murdered and a potential three-quarters of a million troops released from the task of taking her mountain forts and free therefore to turn westward on France—still, *Blitzkrieg* is largely a fable. The net of the discussion is, quite accurately, that it is technically impossible to assemble the overwhelming force necessary to strike such a blow without observation: one example is that Hitler's march into the undefended Czechoslovakia had to be prepared in the guise of a celebration of the anniversary of the previous rape of Austria, and the "sudden" attack on Albania was known of full ten days in advance.

But what is lacking in this discussion? To the purely technical judgment has to be added the political understanding of the fascist pro-

\* Lightning war.

cedure. *Blitzkrieg* alone cannot accomplish its purpose.

But to *Blitzkrieg* is added what we may call *Schleichkrieg*,\* and then we have the true story of the present and recent steps toward the conquest of the world by fascism. It is by means of this creeping, sneaking warfare that Spain was slaughtered by supposedly non-combatant fascist powers; by the same general pattern of *Schleichkrieg*, Austria and Czechoslovakia were undermined and conquered, and that France and Poland, Rumania, Greece, and all of South America—and North America as well—are menaced with death by these fascist powers.

*Schleichkrieg*, if we may coin the word, is the contribution to "military science" from the underworld by the Austrian strikebreaker.

"Undeclared" war found its first model in Japanese militarist circles when China was attacked and Manchuria taken. Always there was an "incident" worked up in advance for the occasion by professional gunmen and political provocateurs, and by the undeclared war that followed, an area of China half the size of Europe has been stolen. But the prototype of the professional provocateur and political assassin was produced from the sewer of European fascism. The Austrian scab house-painter, who by his own admission once worked as an anti-labor spy and agent-provocateur in the German secret service, has out-distanced all the past. Beginning as a strikebreaker in the building trades in Vienna, Hitler was schooled in the intrigue and sabotage of the political police as an agent-provocateur during

\* War by stealth, by sneaking, or *creeping* war.

the years just after the War in which the German ruling class was busy sapping and breaking down the great post-War labor movement.

No sooner had the Nazi party—in November, 1932—reached the point of being assured of power, than it began to reach understandings and to form groups for Nazi work in other countries. All corruption and incipient treason in every land in Europe found a market there. Berlin swarmed with the human refuse of every capital, cutthroat adventurers convinced that the gendarme of Europe had come. The Nazi regime took over at the beginning of 1933 both the old tradition and the old organization of German espionage and military sabotage, but developed them to a degree never dreamed of before.\*

In his first year in possession of state power, Hitler developed his agencies of "creeping war" in Central, Western and Eastern Europe—so well that on July 25, 1934, he was able to take his first step in the conquest of Austria by sending his Storm Troop leader Otto Planetta with 144 Nazi gunmen to break into the Chancellery in Vienna and murder the Austrian Premier Dollfuss. Berlin was swarming with monarchist, White-Guard and anti-Soviet Russians, Trotsky's son Sedov among them. And within a few months after taking power Hitler had set Konrad Henlein on the way

\* It is said that Bismarck had 30,000 spies in France before the Franco-Prussian war, and that these were more than doubled and played a considerable part in making possible the clock-like precision of the German crash through Belgium in August, 1914, but military espionage and war-time sabotage have never in history played so big a role as now, when, with fascism, it has developed a vastly more effective character.

as the organizer of murder and sabotage in Czechoslovakia, established Leon Degrelle at the same time in Belgium and transformed a twelve-year-old relationship between General von Seeckt and Leon Trotsky from mere espionage and wrecking into a grandiose machine of assassination, military and industrial sabotage on a gigantic scale in the U.S.S.R., and by December 1, 1934, one successful murder had been accomplished by them, on the person of Sergei M. Kirov. An enormous network through the length and breadth of the U.S.S.R. was established by a merger of the Japanese and German espionage apparatus (operating through the German and Japanese embassies and consulates) with the Trotsky and Bukharin conspirative organizations, and through the latter a group of military commanders dating back to the old regime—the “Francos” of the U.S.S.R.—headed by the despicable Tukhachevsky—were drawn into corrupt relationship with the Japanese and German General Staffs.

There was a time, then, when Hitler's war plan did really base itself partly upon a fond belief that on the day war would break out a large percentage of the military stores of the Soviet Union would be destroyed and troop trains wrecked, its mobilization crippled, and that he would have a half-dozen “Francos” in the Red Army; and during that time Hitler *did* dream of a march into the Ukraine and Byelorussia; but that dream died with the “Russian Francos” and was buried after the testing of the Soviet Army by the Japanese “sample war” at Lake Khasan. The Hitler “creeping war” machine ex-

tended into every country that could be reached.

But the problem of conquest of France—“the irreconcilable and mortal enemy”—remained, and three large fascist organizations in France headed by de la Rocque, Taittinger, and the Trotskyite Doriot, did not suffice against the seasoned masses of the republic, strengthened by the unification of the trade unions and their growth by 400 per cent; a few tons of arms and ammunition were stored in concrete “pill-boxes” built secretly behind the flimsy walls of old warehouses bought for the purpose in Paris, but even these were discovered and taken by the French police.

Spain—the “southern frontier”—became the key to the problem of the conquest of France.

At the same time Spain was clearly the key to the problem of cutting the life-line of the British Empire.

### III.

#### ENCIRCLEMENT OF THE “IRRECONCILABLE MORTAL ENEMY”

Why this drive to the west?

Didn't the scab house-painter promise that he had no more territorial claims in Europe and that his *Ordensritter* would ride only toward the Ukraine (which in his language is not in Europe, but in Asia)?

Had not the whole bevy of Hitler's political concubines in the stock exchange and at Cliveden understood that they were granted “peace in our time”?

No European power can play with the illusion of making war east of Poland unless first it establishes hegemony over Europe. Hitler does enter-

tain the dream—mad and suicidal though it would be—of conquest of the Soviet Union. But his writings show that basic to his design of attacking the U.S.S.R. *has always been the design of first conquering and permanently reducing France.*

Many stupid comparisons are made between the ambitions of Hitler and those of Napoleon Bonaparte, but a comparison that is not so stupid is this: that it is completely impossible for the German government to think of reaching out with large-scale military operations to the far-away Soviet frontier before first becoming the master of Europe and securing Germany's rear. This is why Hitler said that France must be destroyed and England made an ally if Germany was to have any possibility of realizing her ambition to take fresh land in Europe, by which he meant land to the eastward.

Very interesting comparisons could be made to the purely strategic questions of the war of 1914. It is well-known to the present German General Staff that the "Schlieffen Plan" called for, among other things, such an overwhelming concentration of troops for the attack on France through the Belgian front, to enable the German army's right wing to "swing like a gate" through Northern France, that only a relatively thin line of German forces was to be maintained on the Russian front until after the decisive blow had been struck in France. It has frequently been said in Germany that the failure to carry out the "Schlieffen Plan" in 1914 with sufficient resoluteness was responsible for the loss of the war, and the entire Nazi General Staff operates

upon a determination that they must guard against the repetition of that mistake of 1914. Of course it would be madness to think of such a "plan" with the unprecedentedly powerful and quick-hitting Red Army on an Eastern front.

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But also the test of experience with their technical equipment in the war in Spain weighs heavy in the scales with the fascists.

At the beginning of 1937—as soon as Franco had definitely failed to take Madrid and his Italo-German advisers had to consent to settle down to a siege of the capital—the fascist states made the most systematic and intensive test of military equipment that the world has seen since 1918. A whole artillery school of Germans was set up within range of Madrid, and for two years relays of student-officers and gun-pointers were sent to practise upon the Spanish capital in testing the products of the Krupp gun factories. Two whole crops of Spanish babies grew up in Madrid streets in those two years, with never a day that they were not targets for Hitler's artillery and air bombs.

The verdict of such experience in real warfare (even against civilian populations) is of highest value to military men. And this verdict in the case of Spain disproves every important point of the present bluff of the "undreamed-of effectiveness" of German and Italian military equipment. It shows: first, that at the present stage of development of military technique, the defensive is still far stronger than the offensive, *i.e.*, in the purely technical sense, the weapons of



the present day are more effective in defending fortified positions than they are in attacking them; second, that the weapons made by the fascist states are *not* superior to those produced in several other countries and that products of the Soviet armament works do not take second place to any.

Hitler struck first, not at the U.S.S.R., but at France; first he militarized the Rhine, then took steps to enable his next offensive through Belgium and Switzerland, and then struck at France through Spain.

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"Even more characteristic is the fact that certain European and American politicians and newspaper writers, having lost patience waiting for 'the march on the Soviet Ukraine,' are themselves beginning to disclose what is really behind the policy of non-intervention. They are saying quite openly, putting it down in black on white, that the Germans have cruelly 'disappointed' them, for instead of marching farther east, against the Soviet Union, they have turned to the west, you see, and are demanding colonies. One might think that the districts of Czechoslovakia were yielded to Germany as the price of an undertaking to launch war on the Soviet Union, but that now the Germans are refusing to meet their bills and sending them to Hades."\*

There are substantial reasons why Hitler disappoints his lackeys of Downing Street: here I want to pause to tell a story that illustrates the point, trusting that the reader will forgive its sketchy style:

In the fall of 1937, at Belchite, Spain, one fine day about noon, there appeared suddenly from behind fleecy white clouds a magnificent armada of great German bombers—Heinkels, a

few Messerschmidts, escorted by a cloud of Italian and German pursuit planes—come to bomb the Fifteenth Brigade out of Belchite. The planes flew too high for counting; only a faint glimpse could be had of them, hardly more than a flicker of reflected sunlight from a dozen or so at a time; but reports later showed there were more than 45, and probably nearer 55 planes in the attack. The alarm came from the clanging of the bell in the little Belchite church-tower: all to cover, air-raid! Practically the entire brigade merely ducked to cover, just to be assured that shelter could be had, and then stuck their heads out or came out on the roads again, to watch what can never cease to be a magnificent and fascinating sight even to the intended victims. The planes were not yet directly over Belchite and the Fifteenth Brigade encampment, but were approaching and swooping downward upon it at that terrific speed that appears so slow when a plane is high.

The armada, now out from behind the screen of clouds, began coming downward for what we knew would be the release of a hellish load of bombs; but suddenly the flickering wings began that peculiar shaking that gives the impression that the whole fleet is trembling, but which is really only the zigzag motion intended to make itself a poorer target for an approaching enemy's fire. Republican planes were evidently attacking; we couldn't see them yet, but the soldiers knew and began shouting that our planes had come. A faint rattle of rapid-fire guns came from the sky, at moments louder, then dying away, inaudible. But the shimmer of the wings began to spread

\* Joseph Stalin, *From Socialism to Communism in the Soviet Union*, p. 15. International Publishers, New York.

and scatter over a larger space of sky; apparently the formation in "threes" was breaking up; there were two tiny puffs of smoke which might have been exploding shells; were the British volunteers firing to that enormous distance with their anti-aircraft guns? No, we hadn't heard any firing from the ground; and someone shouted that a plane was falling. Two were falling. There were more puffs of smoke high in the sky, but we could see nothing fall. The German and Italian planes were now climbing higher and higher, everything began to disappear from the pale Spanish sky; we had not even seen the *attacking* fleet, or at least had not been able to distinguish friend from enemy after the first moment of approach of the few little glints of sunlight on wings from our direction for the head-on fight. There is always a queer feeling of frustration in not having been able to distinguish friend from enemy; seeing planes fall, and not knowing whose.

The church-bell rang "all's over," and the men began circulating on the streets of the town, women and children to come out and ask questions. Then there was a roar of planes swooping out of the sky again; down close and fast—as every plane is fast when it is near—there was no time to move, hardly to turn the eyes; and there they were, they banked slightly, lost speed and slowly circled low over the village: nine great snub-nosed pursuit planes in wild-duck formation—three trios which together formed a triangle of nine. "*Chatos! Chatos!*" yelled the crowd; they were the well-known type of Soviet-made planes that took the place of the saints in the skies for Spanish mothers after the Holy

Father blessed the Italian and German bombers of Spanish Catholic babies.

The nine planes lost speed and circled in a majestic parade to reassure the village; then we saw another group of three of the same "*Chatos*" a thousand feet above—twelve planes in all. Later in the day we learned that the twelve, or a part of them, had fought that day against four times their number. Eleven of the German and Italian planes had been shot down in the encounter, the "*Chatos*" had lost none.\*

These are among the reasons why Hitler has made his aggressions thus far all against nations of Western Europe and Balkan countries *and none further east*, and why he was insistent upon having Chamberlain and Daladier prevent the shipment of war materials through France from nations friendly to Spain.

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Another tremendously important reason why the Berlin-Tokyo axis has not launched an open war upon the U.S.S.R. is very little understood—partly because of its historically unprecedented character, and partly because of the enormous lying that is done to cover it up.

But no one can understand the events of this historic epoch of world history if he does not know the truth of Hitler's grandiose attempt at the "blowing up" of the U.S.S.R. from within. It was the most colossal scheme in all the history of espionage and

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\* A recently published account tells of an encounter between *eight* Soviet planes manned by Soviet flyers, and a fleet of thirty-two fascist planes (fourteen bombers and eighteen pursuit planes); a fight in which eleven fascist planes—six Messerschmidts and five Heinkels—were shot down in smoke and flames.

military conspiracy, of wholesale murder and conquest. It was the raising of the pigsty of the anti-labor detective and provocateur agency to a level of world history.

It is definitely established that a war was planned in Berlin and Tokyo to begin with a Berlin-made "insurrection" in the Soviet Union, for which the time was set for "the first half of May" of 1937.

I think there hardly exists a historical factual document more important than the transcripts of the trials of the three groups of conspirators, Zinovievites, Trotskyites (Pyatakov and Radek), and of the bloc of Right-wing and Trotskyite conspirators headed by Bukharin and Rykov, and especially the confessions of the loathsome crew, revealing the intricate details of their conspiracy with the Berlin government through Trotsky and Sedov.

To understand the war that is breaking over the world today, and the peculiar methods by which the fascist war-makers secure their foothold in each country, you have to understand what Hitler and the Japanese attempted to do in the U.S.S.R. There seems no doubt that the German and Japanese general staffs, in their orientation during 1936 and until May 1937—were relying heavily upon what they believed was a means by which they would wreak havoc with the armed forces of the U.S.S.R. It is indicated that the German and Japanese general staffs thought they would be able, on the very first day of a general European war, to destroy at one stroke a large part of the effectiveness and the military supplies of the biggest army in Europe which they would have to meet. And they

dreamed of having six or eight "Russian Francos" operating on Soviet soil under their orders. What a monstrosity of conception of the great Red Army of Lenin and Stalin!

What was accomplished through Konrad Henlein in Czechoslovakia, and what had been attempted in the unsuccessful putsch of Léon Degrelle in Belgium—as well as the military conspiracy by which we now see that Spain was conquered—was attempted on an even more gigantic scale in the U.S.S.R. by the German and Japanese Military Intelligence Service through their liaison with the organizations of Trotsky and Bukharin.

That this unprecedented conspiracy failed—and we know now that it was certain to fail—affects the history of Europe, of Asia, and of the world.

Yes, Hitler talks of attacking the powerful Red Army, which Mr. Lindbergh tells us is "weakened" by the "loss" of the late General Tukhachevsky; but Hitler finds it more expedient to attack the weaker armies of western countries, in which his espionage agencies are still allowed to flourish.

#### IV.

##### THE SLAUGHTER OF SPANISH DEMOCRACY

This method of making war by which Spain has been made Hitler's colony, and Austria and Czechoslovakia as well, and which is being worked now throughout the world from Salonika to Capetown and Chicago to Patagonia, began in Spain almost immediately after Hitler's installation as Chancellor of Germany in the spring of 1933. Through the "Falangista" youth organization in

Madrid headed by Primo de Rivera's son, José, who went to Rome to receive directions, and through delegations of Spanish conspirators one of which was headed by Antonio Giococchia, General Emilio Barrera, and the Conde de Rodezno, who entered into an agreement with Mussolini and Italo Balbo in Rome on March 31, 1934, the Spanish fascist organizations were armed with some two hundred machine guns and many thousands of rifles, hand-grenades and pistols, and were more or less liberally financed by the Italian and German governments.\*

In the spring of 1935 the German government, behind the pretense of shipping new office furniture for their embassies and consulates, sent into Spain, under diplomatic seal, cases containing 38,000 rifles, 18,000 revolvers, and a large quantity of fascist literature printed in Spanish, which were distributed to the secret Nazi organization in Spain. This smuggled aid to the fascists began in 1933 and lasted through the terrific struggles of 1934, when, in spite of the Republican Constitution, the most savage and bloody repressions were made against the Asturian miners. Fascism was getting a hold in Spain, which it had been completely unable to get since the republic crushed the fascist uprising of General Sanjurjo within 24 hours in 1931.

In May, 1936, as soon as Addis Ababa fell to the Italian army in Ethiopia, and, with the aid of the British Cabinet, Mussolini succeeded

in having sanctions against Italy abandoned, he set about the military invasion of Spain. While his troopships were sailing from Lybia bringing 40,000 troops back from the Egyptian frontier where they had been threatening England, Mussolini took his first big step in bringing open war to the continent of Europe, initiating the war in Spain. On July 15 an order was issued to Italian air force officers for their participation in the "insurrection" in Spanish Morocco which began two days later, July 17. Two out of Mussolini's first six war planes flying to Spanish Morocco made a forced landing in French Morocco and the arrest of the fliers with their Italian military orders in their pockets exposed the Italian government's direct participation in the preparation of the war in Spain.

Although the fascist conspirators among the army officers succeeded in getting control of Valladolid, Saragossa, Seville and Cádiz, they failed in their efforts to capture the three great cities of Spain, Madrid, Barcelona and Valencia, and already in the *first three days* of the fighting it began to be clear that the Spanish republic would defeat the second fascist "insurrection" as it had the first.

It was already apparent by August 1 that a "Spanish insurrection" was hopeless and would have to be transformed into a big, even if secret, invasion with at least substantial material and technical men. The first step was the bulldozing of the French government into violating international law and its treaties with Spain by placing an embargo against the legal Spanish government, to stop its supply of essential war supplies, on July

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\* Spanish conspirators, not trusting one another, made a written memorandum of the agreement which was captured in a raid on their secret headquarters in Barcelona in May, 1937, during the suppression of the Trotskyite uprising of May, 1937.

25. Then, on August 8, eighteen bombing planes, type three-motored Savoia 81, left the military airfields of Sesto Calende, Sesto San Giovanni and Lonati Pozzuoli, in Italy, and flew over to Spain to join the effort to overthrow the government. About the same time or earlier a number of three motored J u n k e r bombing planes were sent into Spain by the German army; many of these at that or another time reached Spain by flying across France, keeping high, carrying loads of bombs. On August 9, one of the Junker three-motored bombers, type 52, landed on the republican Barajos airfield at Madrid and was captured with its German crew.

The "Non-Intervention" committee was formed, Italy and Germany declared that all reports of their aiding the rebels were "fantastic," and by November 7 the Moroccan troops, protected by German and Italian bombing planes, led by Italian tanks and supported by German and Italian artillery, reached the gates of Madrid. The failure to capture Madrid was the greatest shock to military experts and the greatest set-back to the fascist war plan; within three weeks it became apparent that not only material and specialists, but also large bodies of regular army troops would have to be sent if Spain was to be available as a *place d'armes* for the war against France and England. So, after conferring with Berlin, the Italian government on December 15 sent a troopship from La Spezia, Italy, with 2,800 infantrymen for Spain. Two days later the *Colombo* sailed from the same port with an additional body of Italian troops for Spain; and on December 26 the S.S. *Lombardia* sailed

from Gaeta, Italy, with 2,500 soldiers bound for Spain but told they were going to Africa.

Under insistent pressure from Berlin and Rome, England on January 10 and France on January 16 applied laws forbidding volunteers to go to help the loyalist government of Spain, and meantime—on January 13 the Italian War Ministry sent out an "urgent and confidential" circular to Italian army corps commanders ordering them to "constitute units according to the needs of the troops operating in Spain, in confirmation of verbal instructions," specifying the artillery and ammunition to be allotted to the troop formations. On February 8 a large body of Italian troops, having landed shortly before on the Spanish coast, captured Málaga through the treachery of officers within the loyalist garrison, and the next day the Italian General Mancini publicly thanked the troops and their Italian commander, General Arnaldi, *in the name of Mussolini*. Twelve days later the Italian government announced that "in accordance with the decisions arrived at by the London Committee for Non-Intervention in Spanish affairs, the fascist government has proposed the legislative measures required to prevent the recruiting, the dispatch and the transit of volunteers for Spain"; and immediately accelerated its shipment of troops so that by the beginning of March Mussolini had four regular Italian army divisions concentrated at Guadalajara, Spain, commanded by the Italian generals Nuvolini, Bergonzoli and Mancini. These four divisions—about 40,000 men—went into their offensive at Guadalajara March 6, and on March

13 Mussolini sent them the famous telegram telling them:

"... To crush the international forces will be a valuable political as well as military success. Inform the legionnaires that I am following hour by hour their fight which will be crowned with victory.—Mussolini."

The surreptitious war was becoming open war. But the four divisions were defeated and driven in wild flight by the Spanish loyalist troops, who captured 1,500 Italian prisoners and Mussolini's telegram as well as a large number of Italian guns and war material. To retrieve the loss, the Italian government shipped large reinforcements during the rest of the month. On March 23 an Italian army transport landed several thousand soldiers at Cádiz. The next day Eden was questioned in the House of Commons and declared that Italy had given him "within the last few days the most specific assurances" that not a single man had been sent. While Eden was speaking, on March 24, another Italian army transport was landing several thousand more troops at Cádiz, and the next morning a third Italian ship landed several thousand, making a total of 10,000 regular troops of the Italian army landed at the one port in three days.

\* \* \*

But those were only a small part of the strength that the German and Italian governments were pouring into Spain in the months of March and April, 1937. Much more important were the large fleets of new German bombers and faster Italian pursuit planes that were poured into Spain in the middle and last half of April, the

German bombers flying straight across France to arrive in time.

May, 1937, was being prepared to become the biggest month in history.

The biggest month in history? Yes—for fascism.

In Spain, in the first week of May, a *coup d'etat* was to overthrow the republican government. Curiously enough, the preparation was laid in the May First edition of the Trotskyite organ, *La Batalla*, which called in a cautious way for the overthrow of the Spanish republic. The appointed time was not announced publicly, but proved to be three days after May Day.

In the U.S.S.R. the armed attack of Trotsky's and Bukharin's group of traitor military commanders headed by Tukhachevsky, of which I have already told, was to take place almost simultaneously, the time being set, by understanding with the German government, for "the first half of May."

Both failed. In the U.S.S.R. the chief figures were suddenly arrested before they could act; in Catalonia, with the tolerance of Largo Caballero, the conspiracy was developed to the point of armed uprising on May 4,\* when Trotsky's agents Nin and Andrade would have succeeded, with the aid of the German and Italian agents working with them, in setting up a Catalonian "Manchukuo" if the Anarchist workers they tried to deceive had not seen in time the hand of Mussolini in the glove of Trotsky.

These two incidents of May, 1937, will be treated by future historians as incidents of world importance, for

\* See confessions of Krestinsky, Bukharin, Radek, Rakovsky, et al., in *Traitors on Trial: the Anti-Soviet "Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites."*

they represent the two earliest and most grandiose efforts of Hitler fascism to accomplish vast conquests of nations through the methods of military espionage, wrecking, sabotage and insurrection from within, in the peculiar, historically new, extreme development of the system of *agents provocateurs* that became possible only through the combination of the *old* military espionage system and apparatus with that of Leon Trotsky.

The merging of the Trotsky and Bukharinite conspirators\* with the German and Italian military intelligence services came to failure in Catalonia. The traitor gang was effectively dealt with by Soviet justice in the U.S.S.R., in the interest of the Socialist State as well as in the interest of world peace and democracy.\*\*

Only twenty-one months later was it possible for the axis powers to accomplish the strategic purpose they attempted in May, 1937—the cutting off of Catalonia, the isolation of Central Spain.

\* \* \*

Spanish fascists could not and did not defeat the Spanish republican forces. Nor could even the Italian regular army divisions in Spain, plus the German technical corps, together with the deluded Moroccans, the Foreign Legion and Spanish conscripts, with the modern war material sent into Spain by the Italian and German governments — neither did they prove able to crush the Spanish republic, pitifully armed as it was. To all of this force had to be added

\* *Ibid.*

\*\* About a dozen of the Trotskyite conspirators were convicted in Barcelona.

the cold conspiracy of the Tories of London and the Hell-smelling camarilla of anti-French Frenchmen of the *deux cent familles*. These, all together, succeeded in depriving the Spanish Army of the North of munitions, so that—undefeated in the armed combat—they were driven empty-handed into France.

Catalonia having fallen and Central Spain being encircled with an iron ring, not even all the forces of that combination were yet immediately able to take Madrid; the final blow had to come from a dagger in the back—from traitors within.

Men can do only the possible, but the world has learned new conceptions of the possible from the defenders of Spain.

Even before an unarmed and starving Madrid the Francos hesitated—not daring to enter “their own” capital, which they claim the right to rule!—without the escort of foreign troops!

A few days now, or months, belong to the scavenger beasts. Over the bleeding body of Spain the dead-meat hunters are yelping through the wilderness that lions are no more and that modes of life are set by jackals and hyenas.

Six hundred and fifty thousand of the bravest men and women of Spain are prisoners tied with ropes and chains, awaiting the search for the bravest of all, whom Hitler has decreed shall be killed—perhaps a hundred thousand, or more—all that can be found of the 2,000,000 men, women and youth on the fascist list for death; and half a million to work as slaves in chain-gangs; all for the crime of defending their native land from a foreign fascist invader.

## V.

## UNITY OF DEMOCRACY

The "end of the Spanish war," which is the seizure of the southern frontier of France by the Italian and German military forces, was immediately followed by the new extreme development of the second imperialist war toward the open stage of all-inclusive war, which the seizure of Spain was intended to make possible. The quick announcement of Hitler's Spanish "Henlein," Generalissimo Franco, that Spain and its military forces would henceforth function as the "fourth Great Power" of the Rome-Berlin-Tokio-Madrid axis, accompanied the landing of fresh Italian troops in Spain and heavy simultaneous troop movements in Germany, as well as the immediate pressure on Poland and Rumania. It is not too much to say that the first stage of an Italo-German pincer movement against France—in what Hitler calls the "geo-strategic" sense—was carried far toward the military stage by the fascist seizure of Spain.

The quick bludgeoning of the Albanian state to death and forced marches approaching the Greek port of Salonika—Salonika that played such a heavy role in the struggle for the Straits of Gallipoli in 1915—was met by a hasty announcement of Chamberlain that:

"We have no direct interest (in the Italo-Albanian situation) but we have a general interest in the peace of the world."

This almost amounts to an announcement by England of its acquiescence for a general smashing drive through the Balkans by the fas-

cist powers to capture the Straits. We are asked to believe that the seizure of the historic gateway between Europe and Asia by the fascist powers, bent on world conquest, is a purely local matter and of no importance "to the peace of the world." Though the Middle Ages were dominated by the struggle for the road to India, the world was told by the Church that only the saving of the Holy Grail from the infidel was the purpose of two centuries of war. But for three-quarters of a century Russia, England and Turkey fought for possession of this four-way gate, and in 1914 the bitterest struggle of all time originated in the fight for this great crossroads of the world.

But now we are told by a so-called British Prime Minister that the key point of the age-old road to India is only an isolated locality of no importance to the British Empire or to Europe, or to the world!

Up to the time this article is written (and we do not know whether it will be in print before open military action begins in the heart of Europe)—the Chamberlain government has made only a pretense of measures for guarding the peace and has purposely prevented the formation of a bloc for collective peace action. A reflection of the unwillingness of the Chamberlain Tories to have peace secured is in a cablegram from London to the *New York Times*:

"The whole situation, as the British saw it, could be transformed if *Russia were willing* to play a positive role by joining Britain and France in a *guarantee of the Eastern European nations*."

For the Cabinet to give out lies of this sort is to play with war.



The British Tories try to make the world believe that the Socialist State is the obstacle to the formation of a bloc for peace. But the truth is that the British government's all-decisive action today is its refusal to enter an inclusive peace bloc, and its systematic sabotage of every effort to form such a bloc against Hitler. "A guarantee of the Eastern European nations" means nothing except as a way of expressing the *exclusion* of Western Europe from mutual guarantees and an *exclusion* of the *Far East*. Mr. Chamberlain wishes to continue to play Germany's ally Japan against the U.S.S.R. in war maneuvers supporting Hitler's European game. Chamberlain has not given up cooperation with the axis. You may ask: what if Chamberlain's Cliveden Cabinet *really does* want to make a "guarantee to the Eastern European states"? But in the very moment of the war crisis when Italian troops appeared on the Albanian frontier of Greece, Chamberlain's government *refused a loan and tobacco import leniency to Greece* while seeking to persuade the fascist Generalissimo of Spain to accept such a loan and similar trade arrangements.

The Tory record is: Sabotage of Spain to give Hitler a third frontier against France! Sabotage of Czechoslovakia, to give Hitler the capacity to concentrate his army against France! Sabotage of Poland up to the last half-hour, a sabotage three times repeated. Sabotage of Rumania as though deliberately to discourage all Balkan states from resisting the Hitler invasion! And sabotage of Greece! Is this the Tory way of establishing a "guarantee of the Eastern European nations"? As Mussolini puts it:

"No matter how things go we wish to hear no more about brotherhood, sisterhood, cousins and other such bastard relationships because relationships between states are relations of force and these relations of force are the determining elements of their policy."\*

The course of Chamberlain indicates with unflinching consistency that the present clique in control at London deliberately *sabotaged* every contact that was depended upon for an alignment with Britain. We do not know anything better deserving the term "high treason."

"They supported German fascism because they want it as a European gendarme who strangles every democratic, anti-fascist movement of the masses of the people." (Dimitroff.)

We can well imagine that, in the background of deepest corruption of the British parasite class, in the midst of which the Austrian scab house-painter seems now to have become the vogue similar to that of the foul-smelling priest Rasputin, in the Russian court in 1914, the Cliveden camarilla must still be pondering the "inspired" words of *Mein Kampf*:

"For Germany, . . . the acquisition of new soil in Europe proper. Colonies cannot serve this purpose, . . . this goal could be reached only through fighting, . . . this could only have been done at Russia's expense. . . ."

"For such a policy, however, there was only one single ally in Europe: England."

For what is the program of the clique represented by Chamberlain? In what way does it differ from a following of the Hitler slogan:

"With England alone, one's back being covered, could one begin the new German invasion. . . ."

\* Mussolini's speech at Rome, March 26, 1939.

To defeat the fascist war-makers the masses of the bourgeois-democratic countries have to defeat the friends of the foreign fascists in our own countries, the worshippers of the Messiah of world murder.

• • •

A section of the most powerful capitalists in America has become indoctrinated with Hitler's contention that all that is democratic must be destroyed.

The whole democratic development of the American people since the disillusionment of the Hoover time, and especially the New Deal with its Wagner Act—establishing in law the right of workers to organize and to bargain collectively through representatives of their own choice—is described by the du Ponts, Girdlers, Fords, Hearsts and Macfaddens as Red Communism, Marxism. The great majority of the people is for the farthest-reaching measures of social security associated with the New Deal, and the exercise of the traditional bourgeois democracy of the Bill of Rights and the Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments of the United States Constitution have permitted the growth of a mighty labor movement, and collective bargaining and income taxes, unemployment relief, old-age pensions—the New Deal—in short, what the haters of the people call “Communism.” The arch-reactionaries seek a prophet who can furnish them a philosophy and a form of action to stem this tide; and from across the water they hear the voice of Hitler saying:

“Democracy of the West today is the forerunner of Marxism, which would be inconceivable without it. It is democracy alone which furnishes this universal plague with the soil in which it spreads.” (*Mein Kampf*.)

And they have turned to the destruction of democracy, which they consider necessary in order to destroy with it the labor movement which in turn must be extirpated as a menace to their propertied and privileged position. They have watched the post-war growth of the trade unions with uneasiness. To them the labor movement is terror in the workshops; and they listen as to the voice of a Messiah when Hitler says:

“The terror in the workshops, in the factory, in the assembly hall, and on occasion of mass demonstrations will always be accompanied by success as long as it is not met by an equally great force of terror.”

“Terror”? Yes, that's what they want—against this unruly “Bolshevism” of the United States Constitution. Accustomed to the use of gun-thugs to suppress trade unions, they listen to the Supreme Gun-Thug of Germany, who says:

“The importance of physical terror against the individual and the masses also became clear to me.”

The Austrian strikebreaker becomes for the Girdlers and the Fords a sort of canonized Harry Orchard, an international Chowderhead Cohen raised to the station of political saviour.

It is obvious that patriotism, Americanism, loyalty to the *national interest* of this bourgeois-democratic country, has departed from the custody of such men. The Constitution of the Repub-

lic has become a nightmare to them, and finds defense only on the other side of the picket line. Labor becomes the chief custodian of Americanism.

\* \* \*

Hearst inevitably became for a time the chief ideological organizer of Hitler's *Schleichkrieg* in America. But his crude shouting of English translations of press releases from Goebbels' *Ausländische Propagandadienst*, essentially unchanged but avoiding direct use of the term "Jew" in its venomous promotion of Hitler's "race" theory—which omission we can understand from the viewpoint of the advertising department—is now being surpassed by several others.

Roy Howard's repetition of the entire repertoire of Hitler's current diplomatic propaganda over the transatlantic cables in the guise of his own "observations" was timed almost to the hour with the fall of Madrid in anticipation of the inevitable upsurge of demand for cooperation of democratic states against the fascist war incendiaries, and it was calculated to aid the fascist powers to prevent such cooperation of democratic states. His close copying of the content of Hitler's Wilhelmshaven speech is indicative of the degree to which certain newspaper monopolists in the United States, besides the ubiquitous Hearst, are making themselves agencies of the Hitler foreign office. Howard speaks of the Wilhelmshaven war cry as "one of the most rational of Herr Hitler's recent speeches," and adds:

"That goes especially for his review of the injustices of the Versailles treaty, and his protest against Anglo-French attempts to

throttle Germany's economic growth and commercial outlets."\*

Howard proposes as the basis of the foreign policy of the United States that:

"We could make it known that we will help no nation perpetuate the mistakes of the Versailles treaty. . . ."

Or, as Mussolini puts it, the democratic powers must see the necessity of not "putting obstacles" in the way of the realization of the axis program.

Howard proposes an outright commitment of the United States to the Berlin-Rome-Tokyo axis—a formal pledge in advance to make way for the redivision of Europe and Africa and islands of the Pacific by the fascist powers. (In practical effect it would extend also to the Japanese carving of China and would amount indirectly to an agreement in advance not to "perpetuate the mistakes" of the Monroe Doctrine, as it is already being put in Japan and Germany.)

We understand that while in England Howard visited at Cliveden, and that at least some of the notes of his dispatches were made there.

The cycle was completed when he cabled as an observation of unnamed military men and statesmen a re-write of the Goebbels thesis against democratic resistance—that the Soviet Union "is an exploded hope—it is washed up as a factor in any immediate alignment against fascism"\*\*\*—for the sponsoring of which Lindbergh was decorated by Hitler.

\* \* \*

The situation in the United States

\* *New York World-Telegram*, April 3, 1939.

\*\* *Ibid.*, April 6, 1939.

\*\*\* *Ibid.*, March 29, 1939.

today is comparable to that of the 1850's, when the bourgeois forces of the Northern cities found themselves too tightly bound up with the interests of the decaying and warlike Southern slave-owners' oligarchy to be able to defend wholeheartedly the interests of a nation based upon their own bourgeois system; when the "growth of the Northwest" and the "new and reinvigorating influence it could not but bear on the destinies" of the country contributed decisively to the accumulation of "sufficient energies to rectify the aberrations which United States history, under the slave-owners' pressure, had undergone, for half a century, and to make it return to the true principles of its development."\*

Today the shameful participation of the United States in the slaughter of a sister republic—through application of an illegal and treaty-violating embargo upon her purchase of arms while under attack by fascist aggressors, and even at the same time supplying the fascist aggressors with unlimited arms—and doing this in the interest of feudal-reactionary powers (the Rome-Berlin-Tokyo axis) that are known to be engaged in preparations for war against the United States—is unquestionably contrary to the national interest of the United States and in that sense an "aberration" of her history. It is just as much a monstrosity, or aberration, as was the dominance of United States policy by the Slave Power.

The most reactionary sections of the American imperialist bourgeoisie—with the cooperation of the pro-fascist

wing of the Catholic hierarchy—exploiting the ignorance and sectarianism of petty-bourgeois groups and the natural popular hatred of war, are responsible for the slaughter of Spain.

The weak and dishonorable course toward China has been an even more glaring example (not more true, but more obvious) of the deliberate gutting of American national interest, coupled with shameful betrayal of a friendly republic, in the interest of a military opponent of the early future. That the United States will cease to hold commercial intercourse with Asia is an idiotic dream promoted in the United States in the interest of Japan's conquest of China, by such papers as the *New York Daily News*, which says "let's sell Guam to Japan"! That the United States will deal hereafter with China as a colony of Japan is an idiocy only slightly less obvious than that she will cease to sail ships on the Pacific.

The deliberate weakening of China now, by pretendedly "crackpot" bills, but really very clever bills, that amount to promotion of the military interests of Japan in the U. S. Congress, continues today.

The most glaring example of such bills is the "Referendum on War" bill proposed by Ludlow. This war-time sabotage bill is enthusiastically supported—for passage in the United States—by Mussolini's press mouthpiece Virginio Gayda, who describes it as:

"... an American declaration of war being subjected to a plebiscite, which is the typical manifestation of free democratic opinion."\*

The *New York Post* follows suit:

\* Karl Marx, *The Civil War in the United States*, pp. 7-8. International Publishers, New York.

\* *Herald Tribune*, March 10, 1939.

"Let the People Decide on Foreign War."\*

Senator Capper says:

"Adopt the War Referendum amendment and serve notice that no official or set of officials can pledge this nation into other nations' wars until the people themselves have had a chance to say what they want done."

And Hearst applauds:

"The Hearst newspapers think that is splendid Americanism."

The Ludlow Amendment is an anti-democratic provision in fact. Its purpose is to deprive the United States of all power of decision in relation to the maneuvers of the Berlin-Rome-Tokyo axis.

Many people of the middle class are momentarily confused by this seemingly "democratic" appeal.

Members of the labor movement are not so easily deceived.

What the kindly Japanese, German and Italian exporters of democracy really wish, is a certain kind of "democracy" with which trade unionists are familiar in the form of that contention that the mass should not be represented by any agents having freedom to negotiate and sign for them. When Mr. Girdler tells steel workers that it is "undemocratic" to select authorized representatives of labor, empowered to act, he is arguing that the working class should be deprived of the right to act as an organized body. When fascists tell us the United States shall not dare elect authorized agents empowered to act in the swift give-and-take of a war situation—it is only because they want the most powerful of all the democratic states to be

powerless to oppose their conquest of the world.

The "referendum on war" movement is not a movement of the democratic forces of America; it does not originate with or derive its support from the masses, not from labor, or any combination of the small middle class, the farmers and the workers. It receives its most effective support from those social groups whose main interest is to see that the German, Italian and Japanese governments are not hampered in their plans by any acts of the United States.

\* \* \*

The "neutrality" law, which has played such a heavy and damaging part in the history of this country, was passed under the pressure of forces that include the most undemocratic in American society: a certain section of high Church hierarchy distinctly under pro-fascist influence, and certain extremely reactionary financial groups. Such conscious political reactionaries worked upon the timidity of middle-class constituencies. These representatives, extremely confused by pacifist theories, try to escape the war danger through the panacea of isolation.

Regardless of their confusion, the "neutrality" law was directed against the republic of Spain for the purpose of helping the fascist forces, supported by Hitler and Mussolini, to overthrow and destroy the democratic state set up in the Constitution of 1931, and administered by the People's Front government elected in February, 1936.

In its effect, the "neutrality" law was among the most undemocratic laws ever passed in the United States.

\* March 9, 1939.

It did not have the support of the working class, except insofar as a few workers drifted with an anti-labor current. Not labor, but a fringe of sectarian groups acted as conveyors of the illusions behind which this measure, in the interest of fascism, operated.

The "neutrality" law operated in the most deadly way in the service of the fascist war-makers, by shutting off what would have been the most effective source of materials for the support of the Spanish Republic. It was also directed most sharply against the going of volunteers from America to fight for the defense of democracy in Spain. A full million deaths of the noblest and bravest defenders of the democracy basic to American life may well be attributed to the violation of international law in the shutting off of war supplies to the Spanish republic by this "neutrality" legislation.

The provision against volunteers sharply cut down the number of young Americans who went to Spain. But there was no power on earth that could make the going of volunteers to Spain an illegal act in the minds and hearts of the American people, and among the most revered heroes of American history will be listed the names of those splendid Americans who went to fight for Spain; they will be universally recorded as having fought for America as well, and "Jarama," "Quinto," and "Belchite" will be entered in the records of proud achievements of the American people.\*

\* Long ago, the tacit recognition of the heroic and justified role of the American volunteers in Spain has been nearly universal, and the American Ambassador to Spain, Claude G. Bowers, is quoted in the press as paying a tribute to the heroism of the Lincoln-Washington Battalion in Spain.

\* \* \*

It has been truly said that a fascist victory in Spain would have dangerous reverberations in Latin America. It now has. Even before the fall of Spain to the Italian-German conquest, uniformed and armed bodies as well as inconspicuous groups were as feverishly busy in the whole area from the Rio Grande to Terra del Fuego as ever they were in Spain, Austria, or Czechoslovakia.

Fascism's friends will tell us that "Patagonia, the place with a funny name, is 8,000 miles away—further than Berlin." But Patagonia is Latin America, a whole region of Argentina, one of the most advanced of Latin American countries. And Latin America touches the borders of the United States; politically speaking, Latin America as a whole is a contiguous neighbor of the United States, and its twenty republics are our closest historical relatives.

It was not an accident that the cut-throat Franco, in his first speech after the fall of Spain, proclaimed his expectations of political reverberations throughout Latin America.

Hitler's and Mussolini's newspapers directly proclaim their ambitions in South America, where already, Nazi and fascist organizations exist and operate in uniform and arms.

Within the past few months, there has been one armed uprising in Mexico, financed from a mysterious but evidently pro-fascist source. Let no one imagine that the fascist demagoguery that worked in Austria, in Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Rumania, and partly in France, Belgium and Greece, does not know how to adapt itself to the

conditions of South America, where the same parasitic interests that monopolize oil fields are ready to finance provocative actions amongst the justly irritated Latin Americans.

Already, these powerful interests centering in New York have given evidence that they would prefer Hitler in Mexico to the New Deal policy, and a "desired victory in Christian Mexico" is not a strange thought in the offices of New York corporations.

It is ominous that the head of the Republican Party and political spokesman for a very powerful section of American finance capital, Herbert Hoover, seeks to prepare the way in America for an acceptance of a penetration of South America by the German government's "creeping war" machine.

The boasted strength of the Nazis is not in their own countries but *in the ruling reactionary circles of the bourgeois-democratic powers.*

The Nazi degenerates are strong only in proportion to the paralysis they are able to instill into the masses whose life is materially almost unbearable. Morale is supremely important in circumstances in modern war which, for every soldier at the front "consuming" munitions and arms, many workers are required in the rear, endlessly producing and transporting arms, munitions and supplies. But now, "Hitler wins Austria, Czechoslovakia—all things—without war" is the Nazi thesis.

The mere knowledge of the cold fact that the democratic powers no longer surrendered to the fascist axis would bring about in Germany the same collapse of Munich that has occurred among the masses outside.

The genuine formation of a bloc of democratic powers for collective peace would be followed by a vast line up of nations extending almost instantaneously across 7,000 miles of Europe and Asia from Liverpool to Vladivostok and through the Balkans to the Adriatic Sea, and through Turkey, locking the Bosphorus against the "*Drang nach Osten*" and across the Mediterranean, through the length of Africa and New Zealand, to South America; and there is now no longer any reasonable doubt that the United States, Mexico and Canada would be included. The two most powerful states in the world are the two greatest democracies—the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Although their two social and political systems are radically different and contrary, yet the first of the world's *bourgeois* democracies and the first of its *Socialist* democracies have at this juncture of history the compelling common need and, together, the decisive power—*possibly* to save the world from a ghastly universal war, but *certainly* to save it from the extinction of its past two hundred years of social progress.

The peoples of the democratic nations have the capacity to bring this about.

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The unity of this nation requires for its establishment a decisive defeat of the Hoovers, Girdlers, du Ponts, etc. The majority of the nation—the overwhelming mass of the people—as established in the election of 1936, remains. The safety of American democracy depends upon keeping this majority. It is an anti-fascist majority in

its essence, and a progressive majority of the people consciously looking forward along the path to the future established by the historic origins and infinite capacity of this nation.

To hold this mass together is the greatest necessity. It is entirely possible that it will be divided, broken up, dissipated and defeated by the pro-fascist drive that is now under headway. The consciously pro-fascist minority and the reactionary mass that is drawn around it by the attraction of its anti-labor program has its greatest strength in the solidity of its core. That solid core is a compact group of immensely powerful capital.

The anti-fascist mass must have greater compactness, greater consistency, greater conscious unity than it has yet attained in order to hold together.

What can be the most solid core that can act as the magnetic center of this great American majority? First of all, it must be the organized mass of industrial labor, in close coordination with the great mass of farmers and small, non-monopolist sections of the American bourgeois and petty-bourgeois world. All other elements are by

their nature much less cohesive than labor can be. It is not conceivable that the great mass of the majority of the American population, as recorded in 1936, will be capable of resisting the attacks of skillful demagoguery in the service of reaction, unless within the mass is the powerful magnet of a great, united, organized labor movement of many millions.

Enemies are operating with great skill to disunite the great American democratic majority. The most sinister of such efforts are those directed toward the disunity of labor, operating through even the president of the American Federation of Labor, in the assault against the Wagner Labor Act.

Every enemy of fascism in the United States, every supporter of democracy, must know that the first and supreme task is to guard and enlarge the American trade union movement and its unity, and with the utmost skill and speed to carry forward the fight for the positive gains in social provisions of the New Deal—in clear connection with the struggle for a truly democratic American foreign policy—in other words, a struggle for social and national security.



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# THE AUTO WORKERS FORGE UNITY AT THE CLEVELAND CONVENTION

BY B. K. GEBERT

THE slogan "Organize the Unorganized," the battlecry of the constructive, progressive forces in the labor movement for many decades, is being realized in the basic industries of the country thanks to the Congress of Industrial Organizations. The organization of the automobile workers illustrates the meaning of the organization of the working class in the mass production industries. The auto industry, dominated by the three powerful corporations, General Motors, Ford and Chrysler, has been considered by the apologists of American capitalism as a symbol of "free enterprise," that is, as a model of the open-shop industry.

The auto magnates used all means at their disposal to prevent organization of the workers. They brought to the fore company unions, a stool-pigeon system, a private army, as in the case of Henry Ford; control of city and state governments; combined with the formation of such despicable, terroristic organizations as the Black Legion. Millions of dollars were spent in an effort to stop labor from being organized. The LaFollette Senate Civil Liberties Committee investigating spy activities throughout the country brought to light one letter which shows that the General Motors Cor-

poration spent \$839,000 in two and a half years for "detective" service.

As a result of all this the wages of the auto workers throughout this period, though slightly higher than the average wages paid to the workers in other open-shop industries, were far below the standard of living and union wages in the organized industries.

It was under these conditions that the union campaign was launched among the auto workers. The campaign began in a favorable political situation in the country. The sweeping victory of the New Deal in 1936, combined with the already existing nucleus of the organization of auto workers, and inspired by the progress already made by the C.I.O. in the steel, rubber and glass industries which are closely related to the auto industry, moved the workers into action, and in December, 1936, and January, 1937, a wave of sit-down strikes swept the auto shops. The auto union grew from 30,000 to almost 300,000 in a short period of time.

## A CROSS-SECTION OF THE AMERICAN WORKING CLASS

The strikes were victorious. The United Automobile Workers of America (U.A.W.A.) signed agreements

with two giants of the auto industry—General Motors and Chrysler. These outstanding victories in the open-shop industry demonstrated before the whole country the vitality, unity and solidarity of the American workers. Many of the workers in the auto shops had come from other industries—mining, railroad, steel mills and metal shops. These were skilled and semi-skilled workers, a good part of them victimized and blacklisted for union activities. Many of them had years of experience in the labor movement.

In addition to these, no less than 100,000 workers came into the auto industry from the South, principally from the farming areas.

Among these workers were a large section of Negroes and foreign-born. Women and youth also constitute a large section of the auto workers. It is truly a cross-section of the American forty million working men and women. Into the forefront of this army of auto workers came large numbers of capable, militant, determined workers who have shown abilities for leadership. Many of them are young and as yet inexperienced, yet learning fast in the class struggle.

It is probably no accident that in the ranks of the auto workers there is perhaps the largest single group of potential leaders of the American working class, larger than in any other industry in the country. The auto industry, as one of the young industries, attracted young workers from many industries with various methods of production. Its infamous belt system actually organized them, by the very method of production. These workers learned quickly the meaning of unity and solidarity. Daily they learned the

lesson that individually they play only a very small part in producing the automobile, but that they are producing it collectively, that it is the result of collective work of many tens of thousands.

These auto workers resented very much the idea of craft unionism which was offered to them by the reactionary leaders of the A. F. of L. so as to break them up into crafts. They felt that they belonged to the same family of workers, that they were working under the same conditions, and therefore any division in their ranks would weaken them and make them ineffective. Therefore, the auto workers looked toward a union that would embrace all the workers, a union not only based on the industrial form of organization, but guided by a progressive, militant program. The old bureaucrats of the A. F. of L. did not fit into the picture of the auto workers, and they quickly repudiated not only the employers' conception of a union—the company union—but that of the reactionary leaders of the A. F. of L. as well. Having freed themselves of these alien conceptions, the auto workers enthusiastically stick to the program and structure as proposed and promoted by the leaders of the Congress of Industrial Organizations.

There were many prejudices to overcome among the workers. Some of the Southern workers were prejudiced not only against the foreign-born, Negro and Catholic workers, but even against the native Americans from the East. These prejudices and differences began to disappear. New conceptions took place in the minds of the workers. They began to

see in each other a brother, a sister—the common interests rather than the differences. The lines between the workers and the employers grew sharper and the union ideology penetrated more deeply. Yes, the trade union was an elementary school for the auto workers and brought them together more than anything else in their lives.

No small role in cementing the union of the workers in the automobile industry was played by the class-conscious workers, members of the Communist and Socialist Parties, who were among some of the best organizers of the auto union. They, together with other organizers and tens of thousands of rank-and-file workers, were the shock-troops in building the union.

While the auto workers were successful in establishing their union, improving their conditions, making their jobs more secure, they were not quite so successful in selecting proper leadership and in cementing and unifying it.

#### HOMER MARTIN—THE STOOL OF THE ENEMIES

The South Bend Convention in 1936 selected as president of the union a former Baptist preacher, Homer Martin, who had spent only about three months in the factory, who was never proletarian in his whole outlook. He became easy prey for the agents of the bosses. He quickly became a captive of the band of agents of fascism, the Lovestoneites and Trotskyites, and shortly became part of the whole anti-people's conspiracy which includes Coughlin, Gerald L. K. Smith and Harry Ben-

nett, head of Ford's private army. Because of the factional situation that existed in the union at the time of the Milwaukee Convention in August, 1937, he was re-elected as president of the union. What damage has been done by this individual and his agents may be gleaned from some of the statements in the officers' reports submitted to the Cleveland Convention, which was held from March 27 to April 6, 1939. Thus, R. J. Thomas, acting president of the U.A.W.A., in his report states:

"While our ex-president, in collusion with Bennett, Ford's boss, muscleman and espionage director, tried to choke off the enthusiasm of the Ford workers for unionism, their spirit is now stronger than ever. This is because they now know that trickery and treachery is at an end and that genuine unionism is in sight. Men who have worked in union shops, where job security and humane conditions prevail, find it hard to put up with the fascist regime enforced by Bennett and Ford in Dearborn."

George F. Addes, international secretary-treasurer, in his report to the convention, further referred to the treacherous activities of Homer Martin in the following words:

"We know that the conniving of the ex-president in the State of Michigan was one of the major causes of Governor Murphy's defeat. And we know that the U.A.W.'s campaign in behalf of Murphy was secretly sabotaged and knifed by the ex-president and his lieutenants."

The struggle against Homer Martin's treachery Addes described as a fight:

". . . between the C.I.O. and democracy on the one hand and the reactionary labor-hating interests and fascism on the other. *We report to you now that the C.I.O. and democracy have won. . . . We have no place in our union for group alignments. We have*

no place in our union for racial prejudices. We have no place in our union for religious intolerance. And the auto workers have never liked the smell—no matter how much it had been perfumed—of the fake patriotism of the ex-president, of Martin Dies, of Father Coughlin, of William Randolph Hearst or of Adolph Hitler!”

The Cleveland Convention of the U.A.W.A. was its fourth convention. It met at a time of fascist aggression which threatens the democratic peoples the world over, at a time of intensified fascist activities in the United States and Canada. To this convention came over 500 delegates, representing 355,266 members, and every important shop and local union. It registered the growth of the union since the Milwaukee Convention of August, 1937, as measured by dues payments from an average of 160,000 to an average, for the period of eighteen months (August, 1937-December 1938), of 199,080, representing more than 85 per cent of the total paid-up membership of the union. The union represented at the Cleveland Convention is *the* union of the auto workers. (The dual split-off of the Martin group has 15,947 members.) The union has contracts with 253 corporations, covering 320 plants with 437,444 workers.

The delegates to the convention, democratically elected by the respective local unions, were truly representative of the great union.

FOR AN EMBARGO AGAINST  
THE AGGRESSORS

The convention unanimously adopted a resolution declaring that: “the present ‘Neutrality Act’ of the U. S. has resulted in aiding the forces of fascism by permitting the shipment

of war material to fascist nations for use against the democratic peoples of Spain and China.” Pointing out the menace of fascist aggression and wars, the convention called for legislation that would be formulated by the Federal Administration to change the present Neutrality Act and “that the U. S. government should cooperate with all democratic nations in the protection and strengthening of democracy and democratic institutions.”

In another resolution the convention demands that the government of the United States place a “complete embargo against treaty-breaking fascist aggressors, Germany, Italy and Japan.”

The convention took a stand in support of all of the progressive features of the New Deal. Therefore it endorsed President Roosevelt’s request for an additional appropriation of \$150,000,000 for W.P.A.; endorsed President Roosevelt’s health program and demanded a housing program for the people. It went on record opposing conscription of labor in time of war or peace and for unrestricted freedom of speech and radio; opposing any amendments to the National Labor Relations Act and demanding the outlawing of private arsenals for corporations. The convention endorsed the work of Labor’s Non-Partisan League and urged all local unions to be active participants in the work of this political arm of labor, to pave the way for a people’s victory in the 1940 elections.

The convention was marked by the absence of any kind of Red-baiting, though there were two resolutions introduced which proposed to prohibit membership in the union to the mem-

bers of the Communist Party and placing them in the same category with such fascist outfits as the Black Legion, the Nazi Bund, the Ku Klux Klan, etc., but not a single voice was raised on the convention floor in support of this reactionary measure. Instead, the convention wrote into its constitution that the object of the union is to "unite in one organization regardless of religion, race, creed, color, political affiliation or nationality, all employees engaged in the manufacture of all parts and assembling of those parts into completed automobiles, aircraft and farm implements."

The resolution on unity of organized labor was adopted unanimously. The convention took its position together with all the advanced, progressive forces of the country for organizational unity of the A. F. of L., C.I.O. and Railroad Brotherhoods. Into the union's constitution the convention wrote the pledge "to work as an autonomous, international union, affiliated with the C.I.O. together with other international unions for the consolidation of the entire American labor movement."

The convention reaffirmed its affiliation with the C.I.O. and declared for the setting up of a coordinating committee between the U.A.W.A. and the C.I.O. to strengthen the organizational ties between these two bodies.

These are some of the progressive actions of the auto union convention, all of which were passed unanimously, thus demonstrating the unity in the ranks of the auto workers on the important problems confronting this union and the country as a whole.

The Cleveland convention adopted

a democratic constitution, centering the authority of the union in the International Executive Board and the president. The delegates expressed their confidence in the way the convention was conducted by its chairman, R. J. Thomas. In a special resolution, adopted by a rising vote, the convention commended R. J. Thomas.

#### EMPLOYERS' STRATEGY DEFEATED

The Cleveland Convention attracted much attention. The enemies of labor had placed great hopes on the ability of Homer Martin to split the union. When the Martin split fizzled out as he succeeded in misleading only a handful of people, the reactionaries of the country placed hope in possible divisions in the ranks of the delegates at the Cleveland convention. Outspoken was the *Wall Street Journal* which, on the eve of the convention, declared:

"Whether the secession movement of Homer Martin will gain a new lease on life or continue its present trend towards diminishing strength will depend to a large extent on the results of the Cleveland Convention. . . . At the moment, it appears that the battle for the presidency of the C.I.O. division will leave scars."

In the same tone wrote practically the entire anti-labor press and, above all, the organs of the agents of fascism, the Trotskyite-Lovestoneite sheets. To their great sorrow their predictions did not materialize. The auto workers value greatly their united strength and were aided by seasoned veterans of the labor movement, Sidney Hillman, President of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers; Philip Murray, Vice-President of the United Mine Workers of America.

both vice-chairmen of the C.I.O., who played a decisive role in assisting this union to overcome all the obstacles.

In their efforts to maintain a united union they were supported by all responsible forces of the union. It was on the advice of the leaders of the C.I.O. that the Convention un-animously voted to eliminate the posts of vice-presidents. The capitalist press was badly disappointed with the way the convention voted on this matter. The *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, commenting editorially on this decision of the convention in its issue of April 3, wrote as follows:

"The most striking aspect of Saturday's action is the manner in which the five vice-presidents agreed to the arrangement by which their jobs are cut out from under them and gracefully voted for their own 'purging.' It may fairly be said that they set the cause of the organization above their personal interest."

The convention elected R. J. Thomas, a New Deal Democrat, as the new president of the union, re-elected George F. Addes as Secretary-Treasurer, and elected seventeen board members from the respective regions. The newly elected leadership is truly a representative leadership of the union. The election of the new leadership was a blow against all factional groups. Yes, it was a death blow against factionalism within the union. After all, no doubt the *Wall Street Journal* (in the article quoted above) was right when it said "some of the Martin supporters already have considered that only an open factional fight at the Cleveland convention will save their movement from collapse in the not distant future." Of course, nothing collapses by itself and even

the little splitting group supported by all the enemies of labor can do some harm if it survives for a certain period of time. But the decisions of the convention, the unanimity on all the major questions, give assurance that the Martin group will not survive in the auto industry; it will fall by the wayside in the forward march of the workers.

Disappointed in their strategy, which aimed at dividing the Cleveland convention or at least developing a factional fight, the capitalist press has now adopted a new method of attacking the auto workers' union. The *Detroit Free Press*, editorially commenting on the Cleveland convention, attempts to create the impression that it was controlled by the Communists and writes as follows: "The automobile workers who joined the union will do so with their eyes open to the fact that they are putting their necks in a noose woven for them by the directors of world Communism in Moscow."

This is, to put it simply, a brazen lie, a la Hitler. Communists did not control the convention, and the *Detroit Free Press* knows that just as well as we do. It was prompted in this lie by the Trotskyites, who in their organ claim that the Communists had the majority of the convention. All this, however, proves one point, that the big bosses do not like the proceedings and outcome of the Cleveland Convention. They don't like it because there was no split, no fight, because the convention was united. This is something Big Business has to reckon with, and it now attempts to attack the union with vicious slanders.

THE TASKS AHEAD

The economic position of the auto workers is by no means a good one. Although the average weekly wage for the auto workers for the month of December, 1938, was \$33.15 and average working hours 36 a week, one must not overlook the fact that more than two-thirds of the auto workers are always unemployed during the slack season, and even when the industry is working at full speed there are many tens of thousands of workers outside of the factory gates. The speed-up is constantly on the increase, and the yearly earnings of the workers are declining, as can be seen from the following table comparing the index of employment with the index of wages, with 1929 taken as the base.

	Employment	Wages
1929 .....	100	100
1936 .....	103	91
1937 .....	116	110

At the same time the corporations show huge profits and accumulations of reserves on hand; at the end of 1937 the big three had the following surplus:

General Motors .....	\$394,789,742
Chrysler .....	130,954,738
Ford .....	606,000,000

The present economic depression was utilized by the employers for the further advancement of speed-up. This is admitted by *Ward's Automotive Reports*:

"The 1937-38 depression which appears now to have ended has had a salutary effect on the auto industry and in fact on all industry. It has brought important new efficiencies to manufacturing which will serve to augment profit percentages of gross values in the future."

It is therefore obvious that, much as the U.A.W.A. has accomplished since 1937, it still has a difficult job ahead if it is to achieve serious improvement in the conditions of the auto workers. The outstanding task facing it is the unionization of the Ford Motor Company.

R. J. Thomas, in his report to the convention, rightly characterized this task as "our union's number one job." Thomas pointed out that "if Ford stays unorganized the union cannot long keep its strength in the auto and parts plants now under contract, as a mass production industry cannot exist half scab and half free." In the carrying out of this vital task the U.A.W.A. will not stand alone. As the readers may remember, the Pittsburgh C.I.O. convention, speaking for four million organized unionists, has already pledged its support, declaring:

"That in the event the Ford Motor Company persists in its refusal to bargain collectively with the U.A.W., the delegates assembled on behalf of their unions will treat Ford products as *unfair*, and will so advise their respective unions."

Already in the recent months the sales of Ford cars have declined because, as R. J. Thomas puts it, "Americans don't like Ford (the Hitler of Dearborn) any more and aren't buying his car as they used to."

The importance of an organizational drive to complete the unionization of the industry was emphasized in a number of resolutions from local unions. The convention itself, in the special resolution adopted on this question, instructed the incoming executive committee to set up a committee of three from among the officers and board members "answerable

to the executive board and the next convention to assemble" for the organizational drive in the Ford Motor Company. One of the resolutions introduced at the convention urges support to this campaign from the A. F. of L. and Railroad Brotherhoods. Ford is a symbol of the open shop in the auto industry, and the outstanding open-shopper in the country. Bringing him to terms will mean an important victory for labor in all industries. The U.A.W.A. must receive in this drive the support of all workers, and especially of all organized labor.

In addition to the organizational drive in the Ford Motor Co., the union will give special attention to the organization of aircraft workers, who number approximately 100,000. According to the figures of the Department of Labor, employment in the aircraft industry stood at 845.1 as compared with the average of 1923-25 as 100. Seven aircraft corporations, the United Aircraft, Curtis-Wright, Douglas, Martin, Consolidated, Lockheed and North American produced 80 per cent of the total manufacturing volume of aircraft. The profits of these corporations mount high as their sales increase and all indications are of a further increase in production in this industry.

#### WILL ORGANIZE THE AIRCRAFT INDUSTRY

According to the report of R. J. Thomas, a nucleus of the organization has already been built in the Douglas and Northrup plants and the existing union locals in the industry show promising growth. The aircraft companies in some cases practise a

system of "yellow-dog" contracts which has already been declared as unfair labor practice by the National Labor Relations Board. Summarizing the problem of the organization of the aircraft industry, Thomas correctly declared: "The opportunity to organize aircraft workers is greater than ever because of the large flow of orders from our own and foreign governments for planes."

In the light of this the convention decided to set up an aircraft division of the union to carry on the drive in the aeronautical industry. Along with the organizational drive in Ford's and aircraft, the convention discussed the question of the organization of the competitive shops, tool and die workers, garage workers, etc., and took up seriously the slogan raised by Sidney Hillman—a *union of one million members*. Since the U.A.W.A. claims jurisdiction over the farm implement industry, the potential membership of the union is one million and a half.

With a view to strengthening the work of the union, the convention decided to set up a General Motors Council, which will elect an executive committee of five, to assist the General Motors Department of the International Union. A similar council is to be formed for Chrysler and the independent auto manufacturers.

All these decisions clearly indicate that the union undertakes the task of expanding its organizational activities very seriously, aiming to bring into its fold additional hundreds of thousands of members in the next period. Upon this depends very much the whole future development of the union. The mandate for the organizational drive must be carried out,



and to do this it is necessary to involve the entire membership.

The organizational unity as demonstrated at the Cleveland convention, although there were honest differences of opinion, was a tribute to the foresight of the leadership of the C.I.O. This unity of the Cleveland convention, reflecting the unity in the ranks of the union, signifies the complete defeat of the clever strategy of the employers who attempted through their agents, the Lovestoneites-Trotskyites, and under the slogan of anti-Communism to bring division among the progressive forces in order to disintegrate this powerful organization.

IMPORTANT LESSON FOR  
ALL WORKERS

These tactics are used by the enemies of the people not only in the case of the U.A.W.A. Recently, we have seen similar developments in a number of other unions, both C.I.O. and A. F. of L., as well as among the growing democratic front forces. The spearhead in this campaign are the worthy agents of fascism, the Trotskyite-Lovestoneites. It is a credit to the intelligence and understanding on the part of the membership and the leaders of the U.A.W.A. that they fully realized the meaning of these tactics of the reactionary forces. It must be remembered that Henry Ford has been decorated by Hitler, who recognized in Ford his ally.

The unity of the U.A.W.A. in Cleveland is a blow against reaction, and has national significance. And the experiences and lessons obtained in the struggle of the auto workers against the reactionary forces should be studied and understood by the

workers in all trade unions and by the democratic and progressive forces throughout the country. The defeat of the agents of reaction within the auto union will contribute towards bringing about closer relations and ultimate unity of the C.I.O., A. F. of L. and the Railroad Brotherhoods, and will strengthen the progressive forces in general.

The victory over these reactionary forces within the union gives additional strength to the union to accomplish the tasks as outlined in the decisions of the Cleveland convention. We wish to emphasize again that Ford must be organized—to replace the open shop and insecurity of the workers by collective bargaining, reduction of speed-up, establishment of seniority rights, and abolition of the notorious Ford Service Department, to raise the banner of the U.A.W.A. over the Ford kingdom.

The decisions of the Cleveland convention must become the property of the entire union. The story of the Cleveland convention must be told to every member of the union through mass meetings, union papers and special pamphlets. Every constructive force in the union should be drawn into work for the execution of the Cleveland convention decisions. The forces of the workers must be consolidated politically in the coming election struggles in the fall of 1939 as a preliminary for the struggle of the people in 1940. Sidney Hillman placed that as one of the tasks confronting the union when he said:

“Labor is powerful and utilizes its power to bring a high standard of living in our country, not only ours but to serve everyone in our country. We want that power to safe-

guard the things that are worthwhile in life, safeguard not only our economic rights but give real support to our institutions guaranteeing freedom and liberty to the men and women in our country. . . . Yes, we long to be a factor in the political life of our country, as well, and that should be determined by our organization as an organization and not one on the outside."

The decisions of the convention are binding for each and every member of the union. The Communists who are members of the union will loyally carry out these decisions in the

spirit in which they have been made. They will give unqualified support to the newly elected leadership. The Communists at the convention collaborated with the progressive forces for the unification of the union. They did not act as a group but as part of the greater gathering of representatives, men and women, of the United Automobile Workers of America. And in this spirit they will continue to work energetically to build this great union.

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"... a second imperialist war has actually begun. It began stealthily, without any declaration of war. States and nations have, almost imperceptibly, slipped into the orbit of a second imperialist war. It was the three aggressor states, the fascist ruling circles of Germany, Italy and Japan, that began the war in various parts of the world. It is being waged over a huge expanse of territory, stretching from Gibraltar to Shanghai. It has already drawn over five hundred million people into its orbit. In the final analysis, it is being waged against the capitalist interests of Great Britain, France and the U.S.A., since its object is a redivision of the world and of the spheres of influence in favor of the aggressor countries and at the expense of the so-called democratic states."—*History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks)*, p. 333.

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# THE TECHNIQUE OF THE MASS CAMPAIGN

BY WILLIAM Z. FOSTER

*[This is the third in Comrade Foster's series of articles on mass organization and struggle. The first two articles, which appeared in the February and April issues, dealt with the urgent need for developing a modernized technique of mass organization and the necessity for humanizing the mass educational work. Others will follow.—The Editors.]*

THE rise of fascism and reaction, with their sinister and menacing forms of mass control, are making more and more decisively important the people's technique of mass agitation, organization and struggle. The traditional slipshod, "by-guess-and-by-God" methods of mass work used at present quite generally by the democratic front forces, for the most part unscientific and clumsy, have now been rendered obsolete and positively dangerous. These rule-of-thumb, primitive methods must give way to more modern and effective systems of mass work. As the first big step toward this, the whole organization question must be raised to a higher political level and be more carefully studied. Hitherto the always important but now decisive matter of the people's organization has been given but the loosest and sketchiest treatment. There is only very fragmentary American lit-

erature on the subject, a mere drop in the ocean compared to the huge volume of writings covering every detail of capitalist business organization—finances, management, salesmanship, etc. In the necessary restatement and reshaping of the people's organization methods, the Communist Party, with its superlatively great mass organizers, Lenin and Stalin, as its guides, bears an especially heavy responsibility.

The reexamination of the growing democratic front's theory and practice of mass work must cover the whole scope of agitation, organization and struggle. It should also include a careful study of the new methods employed by our reactionary enemies in all these three branches. And we should be keen to draw all necessary lessons, whether from friends or foes. In this article I am touching upon only one phase of the broad organization question—the matter of mass campaigns.

## THE ELEMENTS OF THE MASS CAMPAIGN

Before analyzing the technique proper of the mass campaign, we should fasten clearly in our minds two basic points. The first of these is to realize the political character of contemporary mass organization and struggle. Mass campaigns today are political because their objectives, even

when they bear an economic imprint, almost always have profound political consequences. They are political, furthermore, because their initiation, tempo and course are conditioned by the given political conditions. Thus it is obvious that the struggle of the unemployed under the progressive Roosevelt Administration assumes a much different character than it did under the reactionary Hoover Administration.

Mass campaigns are political also, because their forms are deeply influenced by the political convictions of those controlling them. Thus, fascists develop autocratic forms of mass work based on their reactionary dictatorial conceptions; while the different approaches of the C.I.O. and the A. F. of L. toward the task of organizing the workers of the basic industries are a direct reflection of the difference between the progressive political outlook of the C.I.O. leadership and the reactionary political conceptions of the A. F. of L. heads.

Finally, mass campaigns are political in their very knitting together. Thus, building the democratic front is not merely a question of mechanically hooking together a lot of workers, farmers, and petty-bourgeois organizations; it is a complicated political process, involving a vast amount of political mass education, the development of complex political demands, and the carrying through of many political mass actions. Underestimation of the relation of mass organization to politics is a great source of weakness in the work of trade unions and other popular mass organizations.

The second consideration to be borne in mind in analyzing the technique of the mass campaign is that a mass campaign constitutes an offensive. Let us take a trade union, for example. Normally its struggle consists pretty much of routine activities, such as recruiting, dues collections, settlement of shop grievances, operation of benefit features, and educational work. But when the union faces some special task that calls for a great effort—such as a strike, an organizing drive, or an election struggle—it goes over to the offensive; that is, it launches a mass campaign and reorganizes its forces to further this militant drive.

Right here, in the need of thoroughly concentrating the organization's resources for the offensive, we encounter the most serious of all practical weaknesses in the mass work of the various types of the people's democratic organizations. *This is the widespread inability to pass over definitely from the routine of ordinary day-to-day activities to the special, intensified effort required by the offensive, or mass campaign.* Commonly, this weakness expresses itself by a reliance upon the spontaneity of the masses instead of upon solid educational and organizational work, with the result that the mass campaign acquires only a fraction of its potential strength.

Now, after getting clearly in our minds the elementary facts that mass campaigns are political in character and also that they are militant offensives, we can proceed to a brief statement of the major principles upon which effective mass campaigns are

organized. These may be stated briefly under four heads:

A. *Utilizing the Burning Issue:* This has to do with proceeding organizationally at the strategic moment with the key demands or proposals that will set into effective struggle the broadest possible groups of toilers concerned. It is the matter of striking while the iron is hot; for often, by a few days of prompt action at the right time, results can be easily secured which would otherwise take years of hard work. This principle involves questions of correct estimates of the given economic and political situation, the elaboration of realistic demands, the accurate timing of the movement, boldness of initiative, etc.

B. *A Practical Plan of Action:* This is the question of strategy and tactics. To be effective, a mass campaign requires a well-worked-out plan of action no less than does a military campaign.

C. *A Full Mobilization of Organizing Forces:* This is the task of concentrating to the utmost the strength of the organization concerned—funds, organizers, allies, etc.—for the campaign in prospect.

D. *A Good Execution of the Campaign:* This involves the actual carrying through of the mass campaign, or offensive, the execution of the strategy and tactics, the application of the organization's strength and the realization of the demands of the masses in action.

The extent to which these four principles are correctly applied in a given mass campaign determines the measure of its success or failure. The history of the American class struggle

is rich in mass struggles; let us now see what we can learn from the great ledger of this historical experience, by referring to it in the light of our four principles, one by one.

#### A. UTILIZING THE BURNING ISSUE

Excellent examples of an effective seizure upon the burning issue, of good political timing, were shown by Roosevelt in the election campaigns of 1932 and 1936, wherein the New Deal program expressed so sharply the urgent needs of the great masses. In consequence these masses responded in overwhelming numbers, even though politically largely unorganized. In view of the present semi-fascist demagogy and militant tactics of the reactionaries, however, the New Deal forces will require a much higher degree of organization to win in 1940 than they did in 1936.

Another fine illustration of a mass campaign effectively fitting into the most urgent needs of the masses was the great 1936-38 organization drives of the C.I.O. This broad movement, with its aims of organizing the unorganized, raising wages, etc., admirably dovetailed with the moods and requirements of the masses and also with the general political situation in the country. It was a golden opportunity well seized.

The big struggles for unemployment insurance and relief, led by the Communist Party from 1930 to 1933, were similarly very timely and well-organized movements; the central issues being of the most burning importance.

So was the Trade Union Educational League amalgamation drive of

1922-24, which sounded a vital note of solidarity just at the moment when the craft-divided labor movement was being fiercely assailed in the post-war offensive of the reactionaries. This amalgamation campaign, carried on by a handful of militants, won the endorsement of over half the A. F. of L. trade unions; it declined for want of a solid organization backing.

The development of the San Francisco General Strike similarly presented a splendid case of expanding the mass struggle in accordance with the developing fighting mood of the masses, the difficulty with this historic struggle, however, being that it was knifed from within by reactionary leaders in key positions. The organizers of the national textile strike of 1914 also showed ability to seize the burning issue among the broad masses of textile workers, but they could not transform their general strike movement into solid organization and struggle, with the result that the strike collapsed. The swift spread of the Townsend movement of 1936 was another clever utilization of the burning issue of old-age pensions; but in this case the movement was in the hands of reactionary demagogues.

As against these instances of capable seizing upon the burning issue, a whole host of failures to achieve this end might be cited. In our class struggle history there have been innumerable instances when the masses, thoroughly aroused and willing to fight, received no leadership, with the result that the opportunities were lost. Let me mention, for example, the Lawrence strike of 1912.

This famous I.W.W. struggle, resulting victoriously, deeply stirred

whole armies of workers in neighboring communities; but the I.W.W., immersed in the local Lawrence situation, neglected to follow up its success there by launching a broad strike movement throughout New England, with the result that soon the far-spread workers' strike fever dissipated itself fruitlessly.

During the great 1929 upheaval among the Southern textile workers the National Textile Workers Union (Trade Union Unity League) made a similarly typical mistake. It did not understand how to take the broad and simple organizational steps required to put itself at the head of the surging movement which involved every Southern textile district, but instead short-sightedly kept its attention so completely focused upon the bitter Gastonia strike that it became isolated from the broader movement.

Or, let us take another instance: during the great national movement of the automobile workers in 1937, growing out of the big General Motors strike, it would have been a relatively simple matter to unionize the Ford workers, who were dead ripe for organization; but the union (probably because of Homer Martin's illicit connections with the Ford Company) neglected to take the A B C steps necessary and so lost this unprecedented opportunity to organize Ford's great plants. Today the problem of doing this organizing job is very much greater.

Many more similar instances could be cited of failure to utilize the burning issue, a current one being the lackadaisical response of the trade unions to the militant lead given by the Roosevelt Administration in the

urgent question of a national health program.

Sometimes the burning issue is not grasped because of organizing ineptitude; at others, it is because of Leftist attempts to raise artificial or too advanced demands; at still others, it is because of deep political reasons, as in the case of the historical failure of the A. F. of L. seriously to set about organizing the workers in the basic industries. This situation long cried out for action; but the A. F. of L. leaders did nothing to remedy it. At almost any time in the past twenty-five years (especially during the World War) they could have organized the mass production industries if they had simply tried, even with their craft forms of organization. This was proved by the fact that, through industrial federations of craft unions led by progressive elements, the meat-packing industry was organized in 1917 and the steel industry in 1919. Behind the failure of the A. F. of L. leaders to organize the basic industries, their refusal to utilize the burning issue in this central case, was a profound political reason, not simply bureaucracy and sluggishness.

These reactionaries did not want the great masses of unskilled and semi-skilled in their unions, since they dreaded the inevitable consequences of a growth of class consciousness among the workers, more progressive political action, a more advanced type of leadership. This illustrates, as Lenin so often pointed out, the organic connection between politics and organization. If the C.I.O. takes a more advanced stand towards the organization of the basic workers than do the A. F. of L. leaders, this is a

manifestation of the fact that it is of a more progressive political character.

#### B. A PRACTICAL PLAN OF ACTION

To seize upon the burning issue at the strategic moment is the first principle of a successful mass campaign. The second is to develop the campaign along a well-thought-out plan of action. Unless this second condition is met, even the most timely struggles, based upon the most urgent mass demands, will come to naught.

An excellent example of a well-planned mass campaign was the C.I.O. organizing drive in the steel industry, beginning in 1936. The main structure of the C.I.O. plan was the industrial form of unionism and a strong national recruiting campaign carried on simultaneously in every important steel center, both of which measures were well-adapted to the needs of the situation. The 1919 steel campaign was likewise thoroughly planned (despite the sabotage of the A. F. of L. leaders). The first national hunger march of the unemployed to Washington, in December, 1931, represented one of the finest examples of good planning in the history of the American labor movement. The "Save-the-Union" Left-wing United Mine Workers of America movement in the coal industry (1926-29) was a further example of a campaign elaborately planned. Likewise the California Pension Plan (Ham and Eggs movement) has carried on a well-planned campaign, deserving close study.

Such examples of good planning are, however, the exception. For the most part, labor's campaigns are de-

plorably scattered and disjointed. Responsible for this are a whole series of causes, many of them political in character; such as reliance upon mere agitation and upon the spontaneity of the masses; inertia, routinism and inexperience; craft divisions, perfectionist organization schemes and downright betrayals—all of which serve to prevent the toilers from marching forward in full strength in the given struggle. Let a few brief examples illustrate the prevalent weakness in planning mass actions.

Take the great national railroad shopmen's strike of 1922. This historic struggle grew out of a situation in which all categories of railroad workers were under heavy fire from the companies and the Coolidge government. The crying need was for a united front of all the unions, a common strategy and plan of action covering the entire body of railroad workers. The Communist Party and the Trade Union Educational League proposed such a program of action, but the conservative union leaders rejected it. Consequently, some of the unions stayed at work while the rest struck, with the result that they all suffered a heavy defeat. Similar lack of solidarity and planned action has been repeated in hundreds of strikes and organizing campaigns.

A further example is the A. F. of L. traditional political policy—which consists of more or less vague calls (often contradictory) to the workers to support certain candidates, but with no plan of action around which they can organize their forces. For haphazard dabbling and formless working at cross-purposes the conservative trade unions stand at the head of the list.

More progressive movements are often also guilty of such serious faults. Sometimes we find no adoption of a real program of action, but dependence (more or less fruitless) on merely a general agitation of an otherwise correct political line. Another traditional weakness of Left and progressive organizations is that they often go to the opposite extreme of adopting grandiose plans of action which have no real relation to the organization's forces and which, therefore, remain barren of achievement.

#### C. FULL MOBILIZATION OF THE ORGANIZING FORCES

As we have seen, the first requirement for a successful mass campaign is that it be based upon a burning issue, and the second that it be organized around a realistic and carefully formulated plan of action. But even all this will avail little or nothing unless the organization concerned, overcoming its own inertia and rising above the routine of its daily tasks, makes the best possible mobilization of its resources—raising of funds, assembling and training of organizers, etc.—to carry out the campaign, that is, the offensive, which it is about to undertake. This involves the whole question of concentration. Of course, whether a campaign is to be a long and hard one or just a demonstrative struggle is a vital matter to be taken into consideration.

The very best example in American trade union history of a powerful mobilization of organizing forces was that carried out by the C.I.O. in its big unionizing drive of 1936-38. The C.I.O. leaders, to back up their general plan of action, formed a bloc of unions



with 1,000,000 members to lead in the organizing work, put several hundred organizers in the field, and made available two or three million dollars to finance the campaign. Compare this, for example, with the \$1,400 and half dozen organizers that the A. F. of L. unions provided to start the 1919 steel campaign. Another vital element in the C.I.O. mobilization was that, discountenancing Red-baiting, the leaders drew in all progressive forces as organizers. This splendid mobilization of forces, which was incomparably superior to anything the A. F. of L. had ever done in its whole existence, was the secret of the success of the campaign. In my judgment it was the most important factor in determining the favorable outcome of the campaign.

The old-age pension movements have also displayed considerable ability in mobilizing their forces for action, notably the California Pension Plan movement; their methods deserve more attention from us than they have received. In its several fights against Roosevelt (Supreme Court Bill, government reorganization, etc.), the reactionary Coughlin movement has also shown far greater flexibility and ability to go swiftly into action on a broad scale with a maximum of its forces than have the sprawling, disjointed and cumbersome progressive peace movements.

Enemies of a full mobilization of organizing forces for a given campaign are our old acquaintances—routinism, reliance upon spontaneity, and a general planless approach to the work. Here again the craft unions are the classical offenders. Their history is one long record of dabbling with

organizing campaigns and strikes, planless and without any serious attempt to develop their real strength for the task in hand. One could write a book about their weaknesses in this respect.

A typical example of the failure to throw the full power of the organization into the campaign in hand is to be seen in the way the Martin leadership of the Automobile Workers Union dilly-dallied with the job of organizing the Ford plant. After letting slip the exceptional opportunity to organize this great works during the general wave of automobile workers' strikes, Homer Martin later on from time to time announced that campaigns would be launched to do the job. But nothing came of these "campaigns" except a lot of organizing plans, much newspaper talk, a few scattered meetings, a handbill or two, and some arrests. At no time was the great potential power of the big union mobilized for the work. If it had been, the Ford workers could have been organized readily at any time during the past two years. Deliberate sabotage by Martin explains this failure.

Another glaring example of failing seriously to mobilize the union's forces in a struggle may also be cited from the history of the Automobile Workers Union—during the 1938 gubernatorial election campaign. Although the union had endorsed the candidacy of Governor Murphy, right in the last week of the campaign and just exactly when the union leadership was needed most in Detroit to rally the union forces—the Executive Board pulled up stakes and went to Washington to hold a meeting lasting several days. More Martin sabotage.

To mobilize a movement's forces for a broad and active mass campaign is relatively simple where only one organization is concerned, but it is a highly complex problem where there are involved such loose, decentralized movements as the A. F. of L., Labor's Non-Partisan League, the League for Peace and Democracy, the American Youth Congress, the Southern Conference for Human Welfare, and many similar federated groupings. In such weakly-knitted movements, with the cross current programs and routines of their many affiliates, it takes skill, patience, and all-round good political and organizational work to achieve real concentration of forces for a determined campaign. The extreme weakness in action of these federations emphasizes the need for the systematic centralization of the people's organizations.

Many mistakes are made in seeking to bring about a mobilization of organizing forces for mass struggle. A common error, one to which Left-wing elements have long been victims, is the habit of relatively weak movements straining their resources by holding big, spectacular national conventions, sometimes with two or three thousand delegates, scared up from every nook and cranny. This disease may be called "conventionitis." Such artificially inflated conventions are but flashes in the pan; they are merely pseudo-mobilizations, agitational stunts. No mass struggle follows them, but only exhaustion of the movement. Conventions should be understood not simply as agitational devices, but primarily as means to mobilize the given organization or movement for carrying out the tasks ahead of it.

#### D. A GOOD EXECUTION OF THE CAMPAIGN

The burning issue, a practical plan of action, a thorough mobilization of the organizing forces, are, as we have seen, basic elements in a mass campaign, or offensive. But they will not avail much if the fourth element, a good execution of the campaign, is not achieved. Thus, a given movement needs not only a sound program, a correct strategy and united forces, but it must also effectively apply these three elements in the actual struggle itself.

The American class struggle provides many examples of well-executed campaigns, both on the industrial and political fields. The famous I.W.W. textile strike of 1912 was a very well executed local campaign. Effective utilization of the small resources in hand also was one of the things that made the 1919 steel struggle so strong. The New York fur workers' and the Passaic textile workers' strikes in 1926 were similarly excellent examples of mass campaigns well carried out. So were the Detroit General Motors C.I.O. automobile strikes of 1937. There is also much in this general respect to be learned from the effective campaigns of the old-time Non-Partisan League in the Dakotas, as well as from the old-age pension movements of today. The two great Roosevelt national election drives were also well conducted. Nor will an alert labor organizer scorn to study even the membership campaigns of fraternal organizations, the sales drives of business men, etc., for these activities have a great deal that is useful to teach us in the principles of organization.

Successes have been many in the general field of organization work we are discussing, and they should be studied carefully. But no less should we learn the lessons from our weaknesses, which are all too plentiful. Among the more prevalent shortcomings in the actual carrying out of mass campaigns the following may be cited:

1. *Incompetent leadership*: Failure or slowness in adapting the strategy and tactics of the campaign to the changing relation of forces and evolving political situations, which leads to serious errors in timing, such as when to advance, when to retreat, or when to bring the movement to a climax. Example, the Left-wing leadership's failure to settle opportunely the New York cloakmakers' strike of July, 1926.

2. *Feeble self-criticism*: Without an objective evaluation of its mistakes and shortcomings, as well as its achievements, no mass campaign can accomplish maximum success. The general and very bad tendency, however, is to ignore mistakes made by leaders and to cover them up by blaming defeats upon the unreadiness of the masses, the too great strength of the opposition, the unripeness of the political situation, and various other handy excuses.

3. *Lack of democracy*: In the great majority of cases, mass campaigns are carried out entirely too much from the top, everything being narrowly controlled by a handful of leaders. This is a great weakness in democratic mass movements. Good organizers, on the contrary, strive by every means to bring about the broadest mass participation in policy-making and execution compatible with centralized

action, since this enormously strengthens the whole movement. Democracy must not, however, lapse into the "rank and filism," or paralyzing decentralization, that we see in some parts of the country, notably in the West.

4. *Sectarianism*: This cramping, narrowing, splitting tendency manifests itself in a variety of harmful ways in this struggle. Example, the practice of trade unions in strikes, election campaigns, etc., ignoring or rejecting cooperation with potentially powerful allies among the farmers and city petty bourgeoisie. It is a deadly enemy. Under sectarian flags we find camping such disruptive elements as Trotskyites and Lovestoneites.

5. *Inadequate discipline*: A general weakness is a lack of discipline in the organizing forces. The center issues instructions, but the field leaders may or may not carry them out, with or without serious modifications. Result, the campaign straggles along unevenly and lamely. One of the basic reasons for the success of the 1919 steel organizing crew was its exceptionally high degree of unity and discipline. Thus, when it came to setting up the many local food commissaries to take care of the relief work for the 365,000 strikers in 80 steel centers, this was accomplished simply by a single conference of the field organizers, plus two detailed letters of instructions. These simple arrangements were enough for the disciplined crew. Not one general organizer had to be sent out from the center to supervise the work. The commissary system, well-organized, was one of the outstanding features of the struggle and attracted national attention.

6. *Abstract mass agitation*: This is the injurious tendency of ignoring or minimizing the human element in mass campaigns, of putting our case too matter-of-factly, of failing to dramatize the struggle. Old-line politicians, with their baby-kissing, hand-shaking and backslapping, realize in a crude way the importance of the human element; and the fascists, who base their activities so largely upon emotional appeals, are acutely aware of it. (See my article in *The Communist*, April, 1939, on this general subject.)

7. *Slowness to adopt new methods of work*: This is notably characteristic of the A. F. of L. craft unions, but is common also in many other mass organizations and campaigns. Use of the radio is especially neglected. The tremendous possibilities of this instrument of mass agitation and struggle are now being all too effectively illustrated by the nefarious activities of Father Coughlin. (See my article "New Methods of Political Mass Organization" in *The Communist*, February, 1939.)

8. *Neglect to build the organization during the struggle*: There has been very much experience with this harmful tendency of failing actually to organize the workers during the heat of the campaign; that is, at precisely the time when they are most responsive and organizable. This weakness is more or less prevalent in mass organizations generally and requires constant attention.

9. *Faulty check-up*: A very common organizational weakness is for the center to issue plans and instructions in a campaign without, however, establishing a thorough check-up to see that

these directives are carried out in practice. This is a grave shortcoming; for a good check-up is fundamental to the successful execution of a mass campaign.

10. *Failure to consolidate the victory*: This is the weakness of not exploiting in full the favorable situation created by a successful campaign, exemplified by failure to push the organization work into fresh fields, neglect to educate the enthusiastic new members, etc. Every good general, whether in the labor movement or in the military sphere, must know how to utilize victory to the full.

11. *Untrained organizing staffs*: In mass organizations the notion seems to prevail that organizers are born fully skilled, or somehow carry on their complicated profession by inspiration, because only in rare instances do they receive adequate training in the complexities of their work. This naturally prevents their effective action in mass campaigns. More adequate training of mass organizers is imperative. The average businessman would not tolerate for a moment in his sales force the gross inefficiency that usually prevails in, for example, trade union organizing staffs. Here is involved the whole question of good cadres.

12. *Carelessness in cleaning out spies and wreckers*: Many a promising mass campaign has come to grief through the destructive work of strategically situated agents of the enemy. American strike struggles and other mass movements are full of such experiences. This danger is emphasized afresh through the present attempt at a split in the Automobile Workers

Union by company-controlled elements. The growth of Trotskyism, Lovestoneism, and various tricky forms of fascist or new-fascist demagoguery (Coughlin, Townsend, etc.), make greater vigilance in this whole matter a prime necessity for successful mass organization and struggle.

*13. Expensive methods of work:*

Finances are a severe problem in all mass campaigns; hence, the practice of economy is a basic essential to success. Excessive salaries and expense accounts, and other extravagances, evils especially prevalent in the trade unions, definitely diminish the fighting power of the movement in question.

IN CONCLUSION

The foregoing is but an outline of the broad question of the mass campaign. In it there has been indicated the political basis of the mass campaign and its character as an offensive, as well as the four elements of the mass campaign; namely, the burning issue, the plan of action, the mobilization of forces, and the execution of the campaign. From a consideration of the many examples cited of

both good and bad practices with regard to each and all of these elements it would seem to stand out clearly that there is vast room for improvement in all sections of the current mass work of the democratic front forces, both with regard to organization in general and to mass campaigns in particular.

Many great and vital struggles stand before the American masses in the building of a great democratic front that can stem the tide of fascist reaction, in mobilizing the masses for socialism. Of these struggles the most urgent now in prospect is the crucial election campaign of 1940, which in fact has already begun. If the people's forces are to fare well in the critical struggles ahead, especially in view of the new and dangerous mass methods now being used by reaction, they must speedily and drastically improve their own technique of organization and struggle. This can be done only upon the basis of paying far closer attention to organization questions than has hitherto been the case. It is high time that organizational matters receive the scientific attention that is given to political issues.

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# PROBLEMS OF THE NATIONAL GROUPS IN THE UNITED STATES

BY IRENE BROWDER

From six continents, seven seas, and several  
archipelagos

From points of land moved to wind and  
water

Out of where they used to be to where they  
are,

The people of the earth marched and  
travelled

To gather on a great plain.

—*Carl Sandburg.*

ONLY recently the problems of the national groups have become a special topic in the curriculum of the Party schools. The national question, as a general problem and in some of its special phases, has long been an organic part of our school work. Our study of American history has given attention to the role of the various nationalities in the building of America. But only of late have we taken up the serious study and direction of work among the most important groups of various national origins—the Poles, Italians, Germans, Jews, as distinct sub-communities within the broader American community life, with their own special aspects and problems.

For the sake of clarity, to avoid confusion that has arisen in the past around these problems, I wish to define the term *national group*.

The national group represents a sub-community based upon common

origin of immigrants of one or more generations past, held together by language, cultural and social traditions. Such a group is not a separate nation, nor is it a national minority in the same political sense as the national minorities which are factors in current European conflicts—involving national boundaries and governmental systems. National groups in America take many of their characteristics from their specific origin, but they are not nations within the general American nation; they are and must be organically bound up with the American nationality which they have adopted, even while they preserve and carry over as their special contribution to American life their own traditions and cultural heritage.

Thus, we do not include the Negro people as among the national groups. A component part of the American people, the Negroes present the deeper and more fundamental problems of an oppressed nation, including the basic problem of the agrarian revolution, the securing of the land to those people who have tilled it for generations, first as slaves and later as oppressed tenants or semi-serfs.

The national groups include not only the people who came from the old countries, but also the first, sec-

ond, third, and even the fourth generations born in America. While these native-born of foreign parents are Americans, and are proud of it, yet, in varying degrees, they maintain and continue the culture and traditions of their parents.

#### SOME HISTORICAL FACTS

The national groups are peculiarly an American phenomenon. The whole population, except the remnants of the Indian tribes, originated, as regards America, as national groups, and only gradually have the earlier waves of migration merged into the body of undifferentiated "Americans" who have lost the characteristics of their land of origin.

Fully a third of the population still retains social and cultural ties identifying them as national groups. The inception of these groups stems from their migration as a means of escape from persecution or economic privation in the old countries; theirs is a significant revolutionary character: the people of the national groups were fighters for democratic rights and liberties. Coming to America they contributed tremendously, not only to the development of our natural resources and industrial power, but to forging the great American democratic traditions. As Thomas Paine showed clearly in 1776, with great effect, not England but *Europe* was the motherland of the American people. As Governor Altgeld of Illinois showed in 1890, Lincoln would not have been elected in 1860, nor the union saved, except for the vote and military service of the foreign-born.

The immigrant communities were thrown into the "melting pot" of ex-

treme capitalist exploitation, furnishing most of the low-paid physical labor which carried out the industrialization of America. But the capitalists, and their governmental agents, very carefully exerted themselves to prevent the "melting" of the varied nationalities into a homogeneous population. They artificially cultivated national separatism, prejudices, and old hatreds and feuds; they built barriers between the older immigration and the newer, as a division between "Americans" and "foreigners," although all were equally foreigners and equally Americans. Differences of religion were, and continue to be, one of the chief instruments of division and isolation of the separate national groups from one another and from the main body of the population.

It was inevitable that the rising labor and socialist movements in the last half of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century should have found a strong base among the national groups; they had retained close ties with their motherlands where labor and socialist movements grew powerful. But this gave a strong sectarian trend, especially to the socialist movement, and when the trade union movement grew into a great mass movement, it broke away from socialist thought, not so much because it was socialist as because it was sectarian. The national groups, more strongly socialist in tendency than the older American stock, were not homogeneous, however, and while furnishing many of the best pioneers of revolutionary socialism, also brought a wide variety of ideologies, opportunistic and anarchistic, as well as openly reactionary.

When the Communist Party of the U.S.A. arose out of the Left-wing majority of the old Socialist Party, in 1919-21, it found its main base in the national groups, with the Party to a great degree merely a federation of the existing national-group organizations. Such a condition could not, of course, continue for long, if the Communist movement was to become the vanguard of the whole working class and population. When the Communist Party, under the influence of the Communist International, turned its face to the broadest masses of the workers, and established a centralized and uniform Party structure, breaking with the old national-group particularism, this brought about a crisis in the national groups. Some of the old elements and leading personnel successfully made the great turn in policy together with the Party, but others fell by the wayside, and yet others went over to the enemy camp.

But while the Party has been multiplying its strength generally, it has not been making equal progress among the national groups. This fact has been especially noticeable in the last few years. Reactionary influences have been growing among them, and have found a freer field than previously, especially since the rise of the fascist powers and the implanting of fascist agencies on the American soil. From this arises the imperative need for a complete revision and re-equipment of Communist work in this field, which we began in 1937, and which was made a major point of Party activity at our Tenth Convention in 1938.

It was only as the Communist Party

became a living force in the general political life of the country that it could again turn its attention to the national groups, which had been its main base of origin. The objective was to break down all the walls of isolation of these groups, drawing them also fully into the national life, while at the same time utilizing and preserving all their healthy national characteristics, traditions and culture.

During the period of neglect of the national groups, there arose a theory to the effect that these groups were rapidly disappearing, that the first generation of native-born were completely assimilated into the general population without distinction of national origin. But examination of the facts discloses that such a theory is a great error. The group-community based upon national origin perpetuates itself over generations, even when surrounded entirely by the larger and more inclusive community, of which it is organically a part. The complete blending of the multiplicity of nationalities which have gone into the melting pot to produce the American is possible only after generations of socialism. Failure to recognize this fact only leaves the national groups as the undefended prey of reactionary forces, especially of fascism, both native and that imported from their homelands.

Work among the national groups, therefore, must always have its two aspects, closely interwoven; first, the particular interests of the national group, especially mutual aid and cultural, in all their manifestations; and second, the interests that link up the national group with the general community, especially the trade unions



and political organizations, as well as general, broad cultural activities.

#### NATIONAL GROUPS AND PROBLEMS OF CITIZENSHIP

The people of America, in their great mass, are contributors to the composite building of our country, its institutions, traditions, wealth and culture. They are all Americans, whether they are native or foreign-born, assimilated or still identified with national-group communities as Polish-American, Italian-American, etc. They have the opportunity to become full-fledged citizens even when foreign-born, on conditions quite possible of fulfillment in most cases. There is still to be found, however, remnants of an old sectarian disregard of citizenship among some foreign-born, and a consequent neglect of naturalization, that hamper the most effective work in organizing and activating these groups as part of the democratic front. It is necessary to place citizenship as one of the most important goals for all foreign-born workers and their families. It gives them courage and confidence; and a feeling that they have a stake in America, a vital interest in its future.

Anarchist, syndicalist and various other sectarian influences, which cover neglect and indifference to this duty with "revolutionary" phrases, must be particularly combatted and overcome. As long ago as 1916, Lenin faced this problem in somewhat analogous circumstances and made the question quite clear. In relation to Switzerland, where there were large numbers of immigrants, Lenin proposed the following policy, in his memorandum

"Tasks of the Left Zimmerwaldians":

"Point 18. Introduction of obligatory Swiss citizenship for aliens, free of charge. That all aliens, upon three months' residence in Switzerland, shall become Swiss citizens, unless they petition for a delay of no longer than three months, on the grounds of particularly weighty reasons. A campaign to be carried on among the masses to explain the special need of such measures for Switzerland, not only from the general democratic standpoint, but also because of the fact that Switzerland, owing to the imperialist situation, has become a State with the largest percentage of aliens throughout Europe, nine-tenths of whom speak one of the three Swiss languages. The political disfranchisement of the alien workers and their consequent political aloofness strengthen the growing political reaction and weaken international solidarity."

Basing ourselves upon our own needs and experiences, as well as on these teachings of Lenin, the Tenth Convention of the Communist Party of the United States wrote the obligation of U. S. citizenship into our Party Constitution.

#### THE STRATEGIC NATIONAL GROUPS

The largest and most important national groups are the Germans, Italians, Jews, Poles, South Slavs, Irish, and the Spanish-language groups of various national origins. In New York State, for example, these seven groups contain about 45 per cent of the total population and in New York City a proportion even higher. All the predominantly industrial states, while showing a smaller percentage than New York, present the same problem, especially in the basic and mass production industries.

There are many powerful mass organizations among these nationalities, on local, regional and national scales, embracing hundreds of thousands of

members. Over three hundred foreign-language newspapers and thousands of other periodicals serve them. The radio is extensively used, with a growing number of radio stations catering exclusively to particular nationalities and languages. Especially significant are the network of political clubs, organized by the Republican and Democratic Parties, based upon the particular national groups, and left far too much to the unhindered manipulation of mercenary and reactionary leaders. At the same time, the masses in these organizations are especially responsive on grounds of material and cultural interest, to the appeal of the progressive and democratic mass movement in the United States. A correct and systematic approach to them can and will transform them from a reserve of the reactionary and fascist forces, into a reserve for democracy.

Let us examine more intimately some recent developments among a few of these groups. Take, for instance, the Germans in the United States—when Hitler came to power, with the demagogic slogans of breaking the bonds of the Versailles Treaty, of winning a “place in the sun” for Germany, with slogans of extreme nationalism and aggression, a very large proportion of the German-Americans responded with enthusiasm and pride. Even simple democratic ideology fell to a low estate among these German-Americans for some time, and was largely silenced.

When, however, Hitler followed up the destruction of the trade unions, and the outlawing of Communists and Socialists with the liquidation of every potential center of peoples’ or-

ganization, with the Nazi control over and persecution of churches, both Protestant and Catholic; with the anti-Semitic pogroms which shocked the world with their cold-blooded bestiality; with the destruction of Austria, the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia, the joint invasion with Mussolini of the Spanish republic; the rise of the Berlin-Rome-Tokyo war alliance threatening the peace of the entire world; the emergence of fascist agents in Latin America, staging uprisings and fomenting disorders; with the establishment of Nazi spy nests within the U.S. itself, and in the Panama Canal Zone—with the exposure of these events and their significance, the spell of Hitler’s demagoguery has been broken for the mass of German-Americans, as shown in the decisions of the Steuben Society, the Turn Verein, and other organizations to ban Nazi ideology from their midst.

In spite of the terrible weakness of organized anti-fascist work among them, in spite of the poverty of adequate leading personnel and spokesmen, the great bulk of German-Americans broke the hold of the fascist agents over them; with the world alignment becoming clear, they again take their place on the side of democracy, as we have seen in that important organization, the Steuben Society, and others. How much more quickly and completely this would have taken place, and how much more effectively the German-Americans would function in the anti-fascist front, if the revolutionary and labor movements had been properly organized and functioning among the national groups, with a full understanding of their problems!

Examine the developments among the Italian-Americans. When Mussolini invaded Ethiopia, with the claim of making Italy a great world power, his demagoguery captivated for a time great masses of Italians here in America. They thought their own importance within the U.S. would grow with the expansion of Mussolini's power abroad. But with the revelation that Ethiopia's conquest brought only greater poverty and distress to the Italian people, when the prolonged invasion of Spain, with the bloody shambles created thereby, the bombing of open cities, and cynical ignoring of all principles of international order; when oppression and taxation at home mounted, together with the sense of an imminent new world-war explosion in which only disaster for Italy could be the result—with these events, the hypnotic influence of fascist slogans was broken among Italian-Americans. But how much more quickly and completely could the fascist influence have been combatted had we been better prepared politically and organizationally, with adequate spokesmen, for the work in the national groups.

Every bit of mobilization and organization in behalf of the fascist powers abroad, among their nationals in the United States, is at the same time building up the reserves of native-American fascism, which threatens the destruction of American democracy. And the democratic camp, fighting for social and national security against the menace of fascism and war, must learn to embrace within itself more effectively the great majority of these national groups.

#### TASKS CONFRONTING THE NATIONAL GROUPS

American reactionary forces, moving toward fascism, more openly operate with their slogan "For a native, white, Protestant America," rousing the spirit of fascist oppression against the national groups, against the Jews and Negroes, and against the Catholics—all part of the age-old system of dividing the people, setting group against group, as the precondition of subjugating all the people to the fascist dictatorship of monopoly capital. The more openly the reactionary intentions are brought out, the more can the people be roused and organized against them; and this is particularly true of the national groups.

More insidious is the tactic of proclaiming war "against both communism and fascism," popularized by the Dies Un-American Committee, and now even copied by Fritz Kuhn and the German-American Bund, for instance, in the recent fascist demonstration in Madison Square Garden. It is under cover of this "fair and impartial" slogan, that much of the work of supporting the fascist world-war plans is being done, here in America. The drive of the Berlin-Rome-Tokyo axis into Southeast Europe, the Mediterranean lands, Latin America and the Far East is balanced off with a mythical "communist menace," and between the "two dangers" the democratic countries are to be suspended in "neutrality" or isolation, until the turn comes for each one to submit to the demands being prepared against it. Precisely among the national groups in the American

population, which have ties with their old countries now in the storm center of these world developments, we must learn to expose and defeat this fascist propaganda, and combine their love for the old homeland with their new patriotism for American democracy, against the common enemies of both.

This can be done in every mass organization, if a serious effort is made. For this, however, we have to defeat an old tendency sneeringly to dismiss many of the mass organizations as "hopelessly reactionary" and therefore a hopeless field for work. This is a fundamentally reactionary idea, no matter what super-revolutionary phrases it hides under. In this connection it is well to read again Lenin's famous pamphlet, *Left-Wing Communism; An Infantile Disorder*—which is and will remain the classical answer to all phrasemongering which hides refusal to face a necessary and difficult task. We must learn to work in *every kind of organization where there are masses*, including the churches, cultural, mutual-aid, sport, labor, political, skilfully demonstrating the opposition between the interests and aspirations of the people and the designs of the reactionaries and fascists, in order to break their pernicious influence.

Immeasurable damage has been done in the past to the democratic and revolutionary influence among many of these groups by an improper approach to the question of religion. By crude and vulgar attacks against their religion, large numbers have been thrown back into the arms of a reactionary leadership that is uncongenial to them, but which they prefer to an intolerant and mechanical

atheism which has too often been the self-defeating accompaniment of progressive and revolutionary politics. And once the reactionaries can give a color of truth to the idea that the Communists and progressives generally are intolerant enemies of their religion, it is easy for them to convince the religious masses that we are guilty of every crime they charge against us of church-burning, priest-killing, and so on, all the atrocity stories which are the fascist stock-in-trade against the Soviet Union, against republican Spain, against Mexico, and against democracy in general. Mistakes of this nature can arise only from ignorance of the teachings of Lenin and Stalin, who always insisted upon the most considerate approach to the religious beliefs of the masses, upon the avoidance of any sign of coercion, upon the absolute and unconditional freedom of religion and worship.

It is the greatest mistake to deal with the Church, whether Catholic or Protestant, as one reactionary mass. The same political divisions run through it as through society in general, determined by much the same considerations. Class divisions are of course the basic ones, and we can always rouse the democratic instincts and sympathies of working class members of the church, and can often reach them effectively through their church, provided we do not offend their religious susceptibilities and thereby throw them back under the influence of reactionary religious leaders. Even among the clergy, even in the Catholic hierarchy itself, there are deep political divisions. Father Coughlin and Rev. Curran, for ex-

ample, represent but the extreme reactionary fringe of the Catholic community, while on the opposite side are such figures as Cardinal Mundelein, more and more consistently championing the democratic cause, and despite their anti-Communism even taking up a Christian-brotherly attitude to the Communists. To ignore such obvious differences, and their profound political significance, would be childish stupidity.

The struggle against anti-Semitism is a necessary task in relation to every national group, especially those whose land of origin is now in fascist control. It is the most short-sighted view to think of anti-Semitism as the concern only or primarily of the Jews. It is a general social and political issue, and to ignore or neglect it is merely to give a terrible weapon into the hands of the reactionaries. This social plague, cannibalistic, as Stalin defined it, always in history a weapon of black reaction to disarm and divide the people, must be combatted and defeated. So it was in the Germany of the Middle Ages, when Germans led the progressive development of the world by driving anti-Semitism out of their own country. Later the Netherlands grew to greatness while offering protection to the Jew. The other side of the picture is to be found in sixteenth century Spain and in tsarist Russia.

Today, when anti-Semitism is so closely bound up with the persecution of Catholics in Hitler Germany, there is the possibility of winning the great part of the Catholic community against the Coughlins and Currans, to bring them into the anti-fascist front regardless of their religion.

Many of the national groups have strong revolutionary traditions in America itself, as well as those brought from their homeland. These must be revived, and made the subject of mass education. Among the Poles, Pulaski and Kosciusko; among the Germans, Schurz and Von Steuben, are great heroes both as members of their national groups and as Americans. They must be made to live again to inspire the modern fight for democracy and peace.

Popularization of the historic achievements of socialist construction in the Soviet Union is one of the central features of all effective work among the national groups. The solution of the national problem under socialism touches upon one of the deepest-felt issues of most national groups, respect for nationality and freedom of development. The role of the Soviet Union as the defender of peace, and of the weak and exploited peoples, is one which the national groups are prepared to respond to and appreciate when it is made clear to them.

Trotskyism, which works for fascism under cover of super-revolutionary phrases, makes one of its special points of attention in America precisely the national groups. Among them it allies itself with narrow nationalist tendencies, with that petty-bourgeois radicalism which is intoxicated with high-sounding phrases and plays upon all separatist tendencies and prejudices. Above all, it is necessary to be vigilant to discover and combat the Trotskyite influence among the national groups. Trotskyism specializes in sowing panic and defeatism, subtly magnifying the strength and victories

of fascism, slandering the Soviet Union, sneering at the achievements of the workers and democratic peoples, announcing the "betrayal" by the Communists of any and every struggle, and in every way opening up the road for the defeat of the people and the advance of reaction and fascism.

Every national group is important and demands systematic attention from our Party. The groups are not evenly distributed over the country, tending rather to congregate in more or less solid communities in the various areas. Each state and regional organization must concentrate upon those national groups which are most numerous and politically important in its own territory. Taking the nation as a whole, the most important are the Germans with about 8,000,000; the Poles, 4,000,000; Italians, 4,000,000; and the Jews, about 4,000,000.

How important the national groups may become for the progressive and democratic forces is proved not only negatively, by the danger of fascist penetration among them, but also positively, by their active contributions in various places. Thus, in Michigan the Poles became one of the most solid groups behind the New Deal and Frank Murphy in the 1938 elections, about 80 per cent of the Polish community moving solidly for progress—more united than the labor movement itself. This was confirmed by that reactionary Polish priest who, while inaugurating a reactionary campaign in connection with a church consecration, rebuked the Poles (almost entirely Catholic, by the way) for being so overwhelm-

ingly New Deal in politics, threatening that the employers would begin to discriminate against them if they did not change their position.

Evidence of the same sort is found among the Germans. It is true that the Nazi Bund has given the most outspoken Hitler propagandists to America, but it is also true that the older and more stable German societies, outstandingly the Steuben Society, after a period of vacillation and retreat before the arrogant attacks of the Nazis, have in the last period definitely repudiated them, and excluded them from organized association with the democratic German community. Only the lack of sufficiently clear and energetic leadership stands as an obstacle to a sweeping democratic movement among German-Americans; the masses are increasingly ripe for such work. The Germans are especially rich in traditions of heroic participation in the building of American democracy, and the American labor movement, being the founders of the first Marxian societies in America, and playing a leading role in the building of the American Federation of Labor. The Krankenkasse and Turn Verein are other examples of strong democratic organizations among the Germans.

It is a great mistake to think of the Italian-Americans as preponderantly followers of Mussolini. The outstanding names among all Italian-Americans are two of the great progressive leaders of the country, LaGuardia and Marcantonio. Their influence and traditions can be made a tremendous force for progress among the Italians everywhere.

It is highly important that the broad

youth movement, and in it the Young Communist League, give more attention to the young people of the national groups, especially the largest ones. Our comrades must break down the isolation of these communities from the general life, not by ignoring their special conditions and problems, but by taking these as the starting point to bring them into organized activity and cooperation with the general movement. They need special meetings and organizations, lectures and cultural activities, broadening out their lives, showing the way to meet and solve their problems, giving them a more hopeful perspective, dissolving the pessimism that arises from a narrow and isolated life. The young people have strong ties with their national communities, which must never be ignored if we expect to engage them as a group in the larger social spheres.

One of the serious problems of the work among the national groups is that of finding the correct approach to reach the women. In many cases, the women suffer special oppression as women, besides that which comes from being members of an oppressed group. As housewives they are even more isolated than the men, have narrower social horizons and less opportunity for social development.

Yet they have equal social instincts, needs and desires, and when denied other outlets, they come under the control of reactionary social forces which make use of the church and other institutions precisely to spread their own brand of politics. The special influence of Father Coughlin among women is an important example of this.

That will always happen when women are left isolated in their kitchens without organized social life. Where serious attention was paid to the women who had fallen under Coughlin's influence, it was found not difficult to break them away; witness the experience among the Polish women in Detroit and Hamtramck.

Our task is to learn the problems and needs of the women and their families; the direct community problems, such as specific phases of housing, schools, sanitary conditions and high cost of living. By finding those concerns which most directly affect the women, we shall be able to lead them to the more general problems, step by step. Religion plays a big role among the women of the national groups, and great care must always be taken not to offend their religious preconceptions.

Farmers are generally still neglected and this is especially true among the national groups, which have many farmers among them. When they receive leadership, they are a solid force for progress, as the Finnish farmers in Minnesota; when not, they fall into the reactionary camp, as have large numbers of German farmers. Our work is far from complete until we are seriously organizing and leading the farmers.

There is one practical field of problems, touching all the national groups, to which far too little attention has been given; that is the Committee for the Protection of Foreign-born. It is engaged not only in emergency tasks, such as providing legal protection from deportation threats and so on; it also has most important services to give in solving citizenship

and naturalization problems, in fighting against jingoistic discrimination projects, and generally in dealing with those constantly emerging difficulties which affect all the various national groups. The fight for electoral rights alone is becoming a major struggle, in which this committee performs most important services. *It must receive more support, and its work must be more generally appreciated and understood.*

The most serious and important task of all, among the national groups, is that of bringing together, training, and consolidating a leading personnel which is capable of meeting and solving the thousand difficult problems that confront the movement. Our Party is taking this up in the most serious way. Leading positions in the national groups are of first-class political importance; we must have the best educated and most capable available in them; we must give the help that is needed to equip these leading groups and individuals ever more effectively.

We make the same demands upon the leadership of the national groups that we make upon members of the National Committee of the Party, who must lead the whole movement. Organized educational work must more and more be established; it must permeate the press of the national groups, find expression in pamphlets and books, be organized in special schools, and have a foundation in the custom of self-education of every ac-

tive member as well as every leader in each national group. We seek and demand an ever-deepening understanding of the problems of the group and of the movement as a whole; we seek and demand an ever-deepening understanding of the problems of the group and of the movement as a whole; we seek and demand a serious effort for the mastery of theory; we seek and demand leading people who are loved and trusted by the masses whom they lead, who are known as the ablest and most tested representatives of these masses.

The best policy in the world can never be better than the people who must see to its carrying out in life, as Comrade Stalin has often reminded us. We have a big reserve of such people who can and must be equipped for the work. We must find them, and help them, and give them the place of honor and trust to which the service of rousing and organizing the great masses of the national groups entitle them. Upon the serious and sustained performance of this task depends all progress in relation to every other question here discussed. When we have a tested, steeled and trained leading personnel, immune to all moods of panic and pessimism, able to stand on their own feet, to take initiative, and to rouse enthusiastic cooperation among their fellow workers, then and not before will we move forward decisively among these forty million Americans—the national groups.



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# SOME OBSERVATIONS ON HOW TO STUDY THE "HISTORY OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE SOVIET UNION (BOLSHEVIKS)"

BY A. LANDY

## I.

WHAT is the best way to go about studying the *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks)*? To answer this, we must keep in mind the character of the book as well as the objectives of our study.

The publication of the *History* has placed a veritable encyclopedia of Bolshevism in our hands. Previous histories of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union suffered from a number of serious shortcomings, chief of which was their failure to put the study of the history of the Party on a really scientific basis. The new short course, authorized by the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U., and prepared with the direct participation of Comrade Stalin, is free from these defects. It avoids shallow simplification and yet remains outstandingly popular in presentation. It combines within a single text the brief narrative of the Party's tremendous historical experience, the basic teachings of Marxism-Leninism on strategy and tactics, the main features of dialectical and historical materialism, the decisive

role of the Party, and the most essential aspects of political economy. It is a scientific textbook which will make it easier for us to speed up the work of mastering Bolshevism and anchoring ourselves in Marxism-Leninism.

In preparing to study the *History*, therefore, the first thing we have to take note of is its scientific character. Like every science, Marxism-Leninism can be mastered only by patient, persistent, disciplined study. The necessity of getting at the study of the *History* without loss of time is no ground for rushing through it in superficial haste; and its brevity, instead of eliminating the need of studying the book, merely facilitates it.

The second thing we must remember is that Marxism-Leninism can be studied as a science only if it is studied as a guide to action and not as a dogma.

"Mastering the Marxist-Leninist theory," the *History* states, "means assimilating the substance of this theory and learning to use it in the solution of the practical problems of the revolutionary movement under the varying conditions of the class struggle of the proletariat." (pp. 355-356.)

Finally, in preparing to study the

*History*, we must be ready to study in such a way that we not only learn the principles and methods of Bolshevism, but also assimilate its qualities. Georgi Dimitroff expressed the inseparable connection of all these aspects of Bolshevism when he wrote:

"It isn't enough to have the temperament of a revolutionary; one must also know how to handle the weapon of revolutionary theory. It isn't enough to know the theory; one must forge a solid character with a Bolshevik inflexibility. It isn't enough to know what has to be done; one must have the courage to accomplish it. One must always be ready to do, at any cost, everything which may truly serve the working class. One must be able to subordinate his entire personal life to the interests of the proletariat."

## II.

Now, when we say the *History* has to be studied like any other scientific text, what do we really mean? We mean that it is not enough to learn a number of formulas by heart and thereafter repeat them as a solution to all problems. The *History* demonstrates the correctness and profound importance of this for a party of the working class that has the task of performing the role of leader of its class, the role of organizer and leader of the proletarian revolution.

"It may seem," the *History* says, "that all that is required for mastering the Marxist-Leninist theory is diligently to learn by heart isolated conclusions and propositions from the works of Marx, Engels and Lenin, learn to quote them at opportune times and rest at that, in the hope that the conclusions and propositions thus memorized will suit each and every situation and occasion. But such an approach to the Marxist-Leninist theory is altogether wrong. The Marxist-Leninist theory must not be regarded as a collection of dogmas, as a catechism, as a symbol of faith, and the Marxists themselves as pedants and

dogmatists. The Marxist-Leninist theory is the science of the development of society, the science of the working class movement, the science of the proletarian revolution, the science of the building of the Communist society. And as a science it does not and cannot stand still, but develops and perfects itself." (p. 355.)

It is not enough to learn a number of formulas by heart because this does not give us scientific knowledge, and without this the very foundation of Marxism is eliminated. To get scientific knowledge, we must study the real world as it develops and changes. Marxism, it must be remembered, arose in the struggle against the doctrinaire dogmas of the various sects and the artificial schemes of utopian socialism. The advent of Marxism transformed socialism into a science because it took it out of the realm of absolute truth and justice and placed it on the solid basis of reality.

Its task was not to hunt for panaceas and formulas, but to discover the real conditions of the existence of the proletariat in capitalist society, to uncover the actual laws of capitalist development. That is why Engels wrote as far back as 1847 that:

". . . Communism is not a doctrine; it is a movement. It starts from facts, not principles. The Communists take as their starting point not this or that philosophy, but the whole course of history and especially its actual results at present in the civilized countries."

As a science, Marxism is hostile to all that is dogmatic and doctrinaire. The full significance of this for the practical leadership of the struggle can be seen in the fact that dogmatism is inseparable from sectarianism. Neither takes account of the actual, material conditions and the real historical movement. On the other hand,

since in real society it is the development of entire classes and the struggle between them that determine its history, once socialism has become a science it must cease to be the movement of a sect and must become the movement of a whole class.

Artificial panaceas and dogmas can be learned by heart and repeated indefinitely. They will not be upset or affected by the changes and developments of the real world, since they have no connection with them. But to deal with the real forces of social development real study and thought are necessary. The task of science is to prove and explain, not to preach and lament. It does not expect society to change according to somebody's private recipe of justice. It expects society to change according to the laws of its own economic and social development. To discover these laws is not an easy matter. The real forces of social development are complex and constantly changing, with many hidden aspects which can only be uncovered by scientific study. In the real world there is a discrepancy between appearance and reality, between surface manifestations and the real connection of things. If this were not so, there would be no need of science and no need of thought. To get at these real connections, to explain them, to understand their origin and necessity as well as the conditions of their development is impossible without patient examination, study and careful, correct reasoning. To do this is to stand on the heights of thought; anything less is to sink beneath its level.

It is evident that scientific study

means at least three things, none of which has anything in common with mere memorizing and repeating of a number of barren formulas: (1) Do not stop at appearances, but get beneath the surface to the real, underlying relations; (2) Get at the facts, substituting, as Marx said, for conflicting dogmas, the conflicting facts and real contradictions which form their hidden background; and (3) Analyze the facts concretely, establishing their specific features and relationships in every given situation, without losing sight of the similarities they have in common with other situations. It is precisely the differences, the concrete specific features which distinguish situations, events and things that constitute the starting point of scientific study and thought. These can only be studied in real life as it develops and changes.

From this it follows that the main thing in study is *thinking*, following the process of thought rather than holding fast to the letter. Lenin put this very forcibly in his speech to the Third All-Russian Congress of the Y.C.L. in 1920. It is necessary, he said:

"... to take the whole sum of human knowledge and to take it in such a way that communism will not be something learned by heart but something which you have thought out for yourselves, something which forms the inevitable conclusion from the point of view of modern education. . . . If a Communist were to boast of communism on the basis of ready-made conclusions, without doing serious, big and difficult work, without thoroughly understanding the facts towards which he must take a critical attitude, such a Communist would be a very poor one."

In this spirit, Lenin did not simply read books. He worked actively with them, came to grips with them, un-

derlined terms and ideas; made notes, reformulated different parts in his own words and wrote out his own conclusions. He never permitted revolutionary phrases to become a substitute for real thought. It was characteristic of Lenin, therefore, to get at the essence of every question, to strive to introduce clarity into it, to see the vital issues, the living forces and policies behind words and formulas.

Krupskaya, in describing how Lenin studied Marx, tells us how he used to "consult with Marx," how he used to turn to his works for guidance at the most difficult turning points of the revolution, how he would take not the letter of Marx, but the reasoning of Marx, selecting those works of Marx that dealt with a *similar situation* and carefully analyzed them, comparing them with the current moment, discovering the differences while establishing the resemblances. That is how the *History* has to be studied if Marxism-Leninism is to be studied as a science.

### III.

In preparing to study the *History* there are other important aspects of Marxism-Leninism as a science which we should note.

1. Even after Marx *applied* dialectical materialism to the study and discovery of the general laws of capitalist development, there still remained the need of studying and determining their concrete manifestations in each country.

2. Science must always observe and take into account all new developments and changes in the real world; its conclusions must be guided and tested by the facts at every step of the

historical process. Science cannot stand still.

The best illustration of the meaning of the first point is given by Marx and Engels themselves in dealing with the development of capitalism in Russia and the tactics to be pursued by the Russian Marxists. In a letter to the editor of the periodical *Notes on the Fatherland* (Russian), written at the end of 1877, Marx vigorously rejected the distortion of his views into a universal formula or "super-historicism," as he called it. After summarizing the general character of the process of capitalist production as illustrated in England, Marx says:

"Now what application to Russia can my critic make of this historical sketch? Only this: If Russia is tending to become a capitalist nation after the example of the Western European countries, and during the last years she has been taking a lot of trouble in this direction—she will not succeed without having first transformed a good part of her peasants into proletarians; and after that, once taken to the bosom of the capitalist regime, she will experience its pitiless laws like other profane peoples. That is all. But that is not enough for my critic. He feels himself obliged to metamorphose my historical sketch of the genesis of capitalism in Western Europe into an historico-philosophic theory of the *marche generale* imposed by fate upon every people, whatever the historic circumstances in which it finds itself, in order that it may ultimately arrive at the form of economy which will ensure, together with the greatest expansion of the productive powers of social labor, the most complete development of man. But I beg his pardon. (He is both honoring and shaming me too much.) Let us take an example.

"In several parts of *Capital*, I allude to the fate which overtook the plebeians of ancient Rome. They were originally free peasants, each cultivating his own piece of land on his own account. In the course of Roman history they were expropriated. The same movement

which divorced them from their means of production and subsistence involved the formation not only of big landed property but also of big money capital. And so one fine morning there were to be found on the one hand free men, stripped of everything except their labor power, and on the other, in order to exploit this labor, those who held all the acquired wealth in possession.

"What happened? The Roman proletarians became not wage laborers but a *mob* of do-nothings more abject than the former 'poor whites' in the southern country of the United States, and alongside of them there developed a mode of production which was not capitalist but dependent upon slavery. Thus events strikingly analogous but taking place in different historic surroundings led to totally different results. By studying each of these forms of evolution separately and then comparing them one can easily find the clue to this phenomenon, but one will never arrive there by the universal passport of a general historico-philosophical theory, the supreme virtue of which consists in being super-historical."\*

Engels spoke in the same modest, scientific spirit when he replied to an inquiry by Vera Zasulich, one of the founders with Plekhanov of the first group of Russian Marxists, the "Emancipators of Labor."

"First of all," Engels wrote on April 23, 1885, "I repeat to you that I am proud to know that there is a party among the youth of Russia which frankly and without ambiguity accepts the great economic and historic theories of Marx and which has decisively broken with all anarchist and slightly Slavophile traditions of its predecessors. And Marx himself would have been equally proud of this had he lived a little longer. It is an advance which will be of great importance for the revolutionary development of Russia.

"To me, the historic theory of Marx is the fundamental condition of all *reasoned* and consistent revolutionary tactics; to discover these tactics, one has only to apply the theory to the economic and political conditions of

the country in question. But to do this one must know these conditions; and so far as I am concerned, I know too little about the actual situation in Russia to presume myself competent to judge the details of the tactics demanded by this situation at a given moment."\*

It is evident from both quotations that Marx and Engels did not consider their historic theory a substitute for a scientific study of the actual conditions, of the concrete manifestations of the general laws and above all the concrete historical circumstances whose presence may lead to entirely different results even where other factors are analogous. It is this emphasis on the necessity of taking into account the concrete historical features affecting the operation of the general laws that is especially decisive for the practical leadership of the struggle, and marks the dividing line between creative, scientific Marxism and a dogmatic distortion of Marxism. True to the scientific character of Marxism, Engels set the Russian Marxists the task of applying and developing Marxism concretely in terms of the economic and political conditions of their own country. Their failure to carry this through thoroughly was the source of the major errors of the first Russian Marxists. Lenin's mastery of this decisive requirement of Marxism, his ability to apply it in a living fashion, enabled him to avoid the mistakes of the earliest Russian Marxists and to make new contributions to the development of Marxist science from the very beginning.

The history of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union is the best example of the second reason why

\* *The Correspondence of Marx and Engels*, pp. 353-355. International Publishers, New York.

\* *Ibid.*, pp. 436-437.

Marxism is not just a formula which needs only to be repeated to open the doors of knowledge and truth, but, as a science, must take account of the constant changes and developments of the real world. The concluding chapter of the *History*, in emphasizing this fundamental aspect of Marxism-Leninism, cites two specific cases in illustration: Lenin's development of the question of the form of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and the question of the victory of socialism in one country.

Before the Russian Revolution of February, 1917, Marxists all over the world assumed that the parliamentary democratic republic was the best political form for the dictatorship of the proletariat. On the basis of the experience of the two Russian revolutions, Lenin concluded that a republic of Soviets was the best form for the transition from capitalism to socialism, advancing the slogan "All Power to the Soviets" in April, 1917.

Before the development of imperialist capitalism, Marxists everywhere assumed that the socialist revolution could not be victorious in one country, taken singly. Following the rise of imperialism, Lenin concluded, in 1915, that the old formula of Marx and Engels no longer corresponded to the new historical circumstances, and that the victory of the socialist revolution was possible in a single country.

The opportunists of all countries clung to the old propositions of Marx and Engels on both these questions and accused Lenin of departing from Marxism.

"But it was Lenin, of course, who was the

real Marxist, who had mastered the theory of Marxism, and not the opportunists, for Lenin was advancing the Marxist theory by enriching it with new experience, whereas the opportunists were dragging it back and transforming one of its propositions into a dogma." (*History of the C.P.S.U. (B.)*, p. 356.)

Stalin's report to the Eighteenth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union gives us the most recent example of living, creative Marxism. Engels had taught that the socialist state would wither away with the abolition of classes and the struggle for individual existence growing out of the previous anarchy of production. This view is valid if only the internal development of the country is taken into account, leaving the international situation out of consideration, or if it is assumed that socialism has triumphed in all or most countries, eliminating the danger of attack and the necessity of strengthening the army and the state.

But what happens when socialism has been triumphant in only one country and the international situation cannot be ignored? Engels neither posed nor replied to this question. The living experience of the Soviet Union, however, is posing the question and dictating the answer. Stalin formulated it by saying: The state will remain even in the period of communism, if the capitalist encirclement is not liquidated, if the danger of military attacks from without is not eliminated. It will die out when the surrounding capitalist world is replaced by a socialist world. Only such an answer is consistent with the scientific character of Marxism, which takes the real development as its starting point and guide.

"Our teaching is not a dogma but a guide to action, Marx and Engels always used to say, rightly ridiculing the learning and repetition by rote of 'formulas' which at best are only capable of outlining *general* tasks that are necessarily liable to be modified by the *concrete* economic and political conditions of each separate *phase* of the historical process. . . . It is essential to realize the incontestible truth that a Marxist must take cognizance of real life, of the concrete *realities*, and must not continue to cling to a theory of yesterday. . . ." (Quoted in the *History of the C.P.S.U. (B.)*, p. 358.)

This is how Lenin summarized the whole matter.

It is under this banner that the Bolshevik Party developed as a party of a new type, applying and testing its creative Marxism under conditions involving all forms of struggle and all classes of modern society.

This is how the *History* must be studied if it is to be studied as a guide to action.

#### IV.

The chief conclusions of the *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (B)* are of such a character that they remain useless if memorized formally as only so many lessons out of a book. A history which teaches us how to fight for socialism, how to struggle against the enemies of Marxism-Leninism, how to overcome all difficulties on the road to victory, which sharpens our political alertness and strengthens our certainty of ultimate triumph, cannot simply be memorized. It must be absorbed and understood. Mere memorizing cannot stand the test of living practice, the test of all science and truth. For knowledge to be of practical use, it needs to be thought out and digested.

Only when the substance has been understood can new problems be met independently and creatively. Learning is most effective when it is tied up with the solution of real problems. That is why the study of the *History* cannot be simply a matter of devising a correct technical, pedagogical procedure.

But if we must guard against empty memorizing and a purely formal approach, we must likewise guard against the illusion that we can really master the *History* without disciplined study habits, overcoming mental laziness and inertia, learning essential details and acquiring precise and accurate knowledge. Without this we cannot begin to study Marxism-Leninism as a guide to action.

What, for example, is the use of knowing the general fact that the Bolsheviks boycotted the Bulygin Duma but later took part in the elections to the Second, Third and Fourth State Dumas, unless we learn and know the *exact circumstances* and reasons for the different policies in the various situations? The admirable compactness and precision with which the book is written make it possible for the reader to get right at the essential ideas and conclusions. There is no danger of getting lost in a wealth of unimportant details. In this respect the book acts as its own regulator. The essential thing is to study in such a way that the general conclusions remaining with us are definite and concrete.

To achieve this, it is necessary to follow a systematic plan of study and to go about it in truly Leninist style. Such a plan should be based upon the division of the book into separate

lessons, each one constituting a unit in point of contents and short enough to make intensive study practical. The *History* lends itself to such a procedure quite effectively. It may be divided into approximately twenty-five lessons, covering an average of fifteen pages each. This will not require more than three to four hours a week of home study and will make it possible to master the text step by step. Such a division also makes it possible to extend and deepen the study of each lesson by reading the corresponding writings of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and other Marxist classics indicated in the text itself.

To be really fruitful, the study of each lesson should center around the main situations and problems presented in it, establishing the distinguishing features of each and noting the policies that were developed to meet them. This approach is facilitated by the very organization of the *History* itself. Each chapter in the book has a brief summary, making it easy to get a quick outline of the main problems and contents.

However, it is necessary to guard against making superficial analogies and hasty comparisons with corresponding American situations and problems. The *History* is kept on a high theoretical level. It raises and develops the most important theoretical problems that have confronted the movement from the very beginning. The closest attention should be paid to these theoretical problems, for, once a theoretical generalization has been mastered, it becomes possible to understand a whole complex of similar, related or subordinate questions. In line with all this, it is

probably best to begin the study of each lesson by first reading the summary; after this, read the entire lesson through once, then go back and study paragraph by paragraph, making sure that you know what is being said at every point.

Really to re-equip ourselves ideologically with the help of the *History*, it is necessary to study the book in such a thorough and fundamental manner as the procedure indicated above implies. However, the *History* makes it possible for every serious and persistent person to do this. Such a task can be accomplished only on the basis of systematic self-study. *While every opportunity for group study should be fully utilized*, it must be remembered that there is no substitute for an individual's own self-study, his own desire to learn, to educate himself, to grow and advance intellectually. Self-study is the foundation of all real education. It is the only means an individual has of thinking his own way through problems and their solution. Without this we remain at the level of the "headline mentality," a constant victim of appearances and the passing moment.

Now that the *History* is available, the next task is to proceed to master it. Figuratively speaking, every Party member should now be walking around with a copy of the book under his arm, using every spare minute to dig into it, taking counsel with it, not leaving it out of sight. Sustained effort combined with a determination to allow nothing to prevent the fulfillment of the study plan will enable each one of us to make the most of the *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks.)*



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## CONSULTATION DEPARTMENT

FOR GUIDANCE TO READERS OF THE *HISTORY OF THE  
COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE SOVIET UNION*

**I**N A condensed form but in a simple and vibrant style the *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks)* records and interprets the enormously rich history of the struggles of the working class, as leader of the people against tsarist oppression (for democracy) and against capitalist exploitation (for socialism), as well as in the construction of a new socialist society. Every paragraph is replete with important propositions hammered out by Lenin and Stalin, on the basis of the scientific teachings of Marx and Engels, and developed further on the basis of the new experiences of the working class in the epoch of imperialism and of victorious socialist construction.

This book is of inestimable value as an introduction to the original

works of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, which must become guides in our daily struggles for democracy and socialism.

In the task of mastering the *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolshevik)* THE COMMUNIST offers its help to its readers by answering questions that may arise in the course of studying this book either in classes or through self-study. In accordance with the announcement in the April issue the editors will endeavor to respond promptly to individual and group inquiries in the pages of THE COMMUNIST for general elucidation of important problems in connection with the *History*. Send all communications to:

CONSULTATION DEPARTMENT,  
*The Communist.*

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# THE LIFE OF A GREAT AMERICAN WORKING CLASS LEADER

BY ELIZABETH GURLEY FLYNN

PAGES FROM A WORKER'S LIFE,\* by William Z. Foster, Chairman of the Communist Party of the U.S.A., is happily not the usual autobiography. The American reading public—labor and revolutionary circles especially—are privileged to read a life story so instructive and interesting. After three hundred pages you are still hungry for more. *From Bryan to Stalin*, published a few years ago, was a veritable guide book to the American labor movement of the past half century. One glimpsed between the lines the personal story of the adventures, travels and actual experiences of Bill Foster. Now they are told, with frankness, humor and dramatic intensity.

This book is refreshingly different from the made-to-sell biographies which flood the market. Salacious, scandalous confessions—even “intellectuals” succumb to the temptation of writing such stuff. No shallow vulgarities are here for the excellent reason they were never part of the life of William Z. Foster. There is no ego here; no cultivated “complex”; no soul-searching “to find himself”; no personal glory, amorous conquests nor “success” recipes. Rather there is modesty and the natural dignity which re-

bukes the strut and clamor of many other autobiographies.

This is real proletarian literature, unsuccessfully attempted by many. Some do not know the workers; others secretly despise them; some fulsomely flatter; others exaggerate weaknesses; some emphasize profanity or sexuality; others write as if workers were giants of mythology, without human attributes. But none knows them as Foster does. Foster, not Rudyard Kipling, has the right to say:

*“I have eaten your bread and salt,  
I have drunk your water and wine.  
The deaths you died I have watched beside,  
And the lives that you lived are mine!”*

\* \* \*

Foster is an American, born in Massachusetts, son of “immigrants and revolutionists,” as President Roosevelt accurately described our national origins. His parents were political refugees from Ireland. His childhood in Philadelphia was peopled by Molly Maguires from the anthracite region, fleeing arrest and ardent advocates of freedom for Erin. His first burning hate was for British imperialism. The plight of the early Irish in this country, how hard they worked and drank; their pugnacity, the fratricidal struggles between

\* International Publishers, New York, 320 pp. \$2.

Protestant and Catholic, their political rise due to their speaking English as their native tongue, were known to him.

The family was large. His father was a laborer. They lived "in the poverty-bred slum atmosphere of Kater Street where indolence, ignorance, thuggery, crime, disease, drunkenness and general social degeneracy flourished." Teamsters, longshoremen and their wives, from the green hills of Ireland, struggled to raise their children in these dreary environs. *The inherent decency and instinctive militancy of the workers, even under the most adverse conditions*, are clear to Foster. Boys organized baseball teams and bands. "Scabs were never recruited in our neighborhood." The people came out in full force to stop the street cars in the '95 strike.

His "first real job," at the age of ten, was that of apprentice to an old sculptor, master of artistic crafts. But, he says, "I felt no call to the life of art." Nor did he enjoy peddling the wares. "The idea of selling anything went 100 per cent against my grain, as it has done all my life." Art and commerce were abandoned. Even then, as a small, frail lad, he began to chart his own course with deliberation. He worked because he was poor. He is self-educated. But this story differs completely from the tales of "self-made" men, the glowing ideals of American Babbitry! Unlike these, he did not resolve to become a captain of industry, a "useful" politician, or a "fashionable" preacher. He had no ambition to live without labor, to climb on the backs of his fellow-workers.

He made a decision, born of *instinc-*

*tive class consciousness*, which affected his whole life. He chose to be an industrial worker. "I was drawn as by a magnet to the shops. . . . Nor did I afterwards ever feel the slightest remorse. I made no mistake in becoming an industrial worker." This is the key to Foster. He "lives and moves and has his being" as a worker; conscious of his class and its struggles, its needs and what its final aims must be. He has no personal life nor ambition outside of theirs. He learned through his working experiences and in the struggles of workers. Capitalism offers no attractions, no distractions, no interests to him.

He has an abiding love for "the wide, wide sea" and the mountains, beauty remote from greed. But like the old "Wobbly" in the West, he "can't enjoy the landscape under the capitalist system!" In "Sailing Ship Days" he is an able seaman on the square-rigged sailing ships. Unlike Conrad, romantic sea writer, he tells "undecorated" tales of the lives of deep sea sailors. You hear the roar of the great sea; the howl of the storms; the "chanteyns" or work songs, the pitiful frightened wail of shanghaied landlubbers.

Fishing for shark, snaring the albatross; St. Elmo's fire; sighting a ship after weeks of wandering on deserted seas; an earthquake experienced aboard ship—these are entrancing adventure tales. The pathos of poor Jorgensen's "will o' the wisp wife and home in Iowa"—he saved diligently but sacrificed them in every port to the "shore sharks"! The "End of the Road" for aged Jim, after a half century of labor and hardship, when worn out, friendless and homeless,

unfit for work, he was thrown ashore—is the fitting class finale to these magnificent tales of the briny deep.

\* \* \*

Foster never has any doubts as to just who our enemies are. In the words of Marx, he is “a mortal enemy of capitalism,” as its representatives well know. His baptism in struggle was at fourteen, during the Philadelphia street car strike. He listened entranced to tales of strikes in the anthracite, of the Homestead lock-out and the Pullman strike. He was “all seas over with interest.” The police charged the crowd in a parade and gave the boy “a belt in the jaw” that left him dizzy. Thus began a long career of arrests, deportation, trials, imprisonment, violent attacks and abuse. “Armchair organizing methods” were never his style.

The whole book manifests his deep class consciousness. He knew whom to despise just as naturally as one knows a skunk. When the hardboiled boss and the scab head-cook fought with fists and clubs, it was “merely a fight between our enemies.” The “deep and blazing animosity” to strike-breakers, the “concentrated contempt” in the word “scab” is in “A Scab’s Payoff.” He remarks “we sailors even hated the chickens which used to lay eggs for the officers while we lived on starvation food!”

His sympathy was entirely with the mules when the boss started to “tail bone” (beat) them as they struggled desperately in loose earth. One “lifted a hind leg and dealt him a crashing blow full in the face.” He saves his pity for “how little a worker’s life is valued.” He tells of the “glory hole,”

an untimbered mine, so named because many went to “glory” there; of two workmen blown to bits on a grading job in Washington. “All we found was a shoe with a torn off foot inside. The hard-boiled boss lifted this in his hand a moment and, remarking, ‘Well, I guess we can’t have a funeral over that,’ threw the grisly object into the swirling Columbia River.”

He has seen many soldiers of industry killed—Mile Korecs, truck hand at Swift’s car shop, crushed flat and dying without a sound under a loaded car; a young switchman decapitated under the wheels; two young sailors swept overboard in a gale off Cape Hon; a hobo crushed to shapeless jelly in a lumber car in Idaho when the load shifted; a Negro, arm and leg gone, left to bleed to death in Florida by whites.

Flashes of humor relieve the stark tragedy and misery. But it is organically for the workers, never against them. “A Proletarian Introduction” warms your heart after suffering the flowery flattery of over-zealous chairmen. How “class feeling can be evoked by a piece of pie”; how he joined a tent show as a canvas man in order to write a pamphlet and nearly became a Thespian—are some anecdotes. His “Soap Boxers” is particularly enjoyable to one who cut her wisdom teeth as one! The exaggerations, witty retorts, “bulls,” are characteristic. We were our own loudspeakers. The victory was to the leatherlungs. The contribution of these hardy agitators, however, is worth remembering in these happier days of amplifiers.

Foster lashes those like Gompers who cringed before capitalist rulers

and tyrannized over workers. William Z. Foster never drew a large salary, owned property, hobnobbed with the rich, nor became a lieutenant of capital. He has redeemed the name "labor leader" for the workers, to whom it was so long a term of contempt. Once it connoted corruption, incompetence, bureaucracy. William Z. Foster is the outstanding labor leader—organizer, strike strategist and teacher—of the past quarter century. "Strikes" and "Agents of the Enemy" give highlights (subdued by his characteristic modesty) of his invaluable services to the American labor movement.

America produced this leader, out of the soil—out of the struggles, the sufferings, the courage, the militancy, the solidarity of the great American working class. His boundless confidence in them is evident. Their trust and admiration of him are wide and deep. His keen mind, accumulated knowledge and experience are theirs. Workers understand his simple and clear language. What he says of Lenin describes himself: "He was such a deep thinker and plain speaker that every time he wrote or spoke he bared the very heart of the question in hand." Workers know he knows America—North, South, East and West, and not as a Pullman observer.

This book is tremendously serious, even its humor. It is tragic, as workers' lives are. It shows this rich, beautiful country, devastated, polluted by capitalism. The author has no illusions as to what is wrong with our country. He exposes poverty, dirt, squalor, hunger, bad food, cheap clothes, slum dwellings—the lot of workers. Stockades for prostitution in

Western cities, lousy jails, sex pervers-

sions within prison walls, evil bred of poverty, are portrayed. His clean words cut like the scalpel of a skilled surgeon, opening up festering wounds. His sympathy for victims of capitalism never fails. Potter's Field on Hart's Island, where the paupers of seventy years are buried, where dead babies of poor mothers were thrown into long trenches and devoured by rats, haunts you for days. If these conditions still exist, New York remains a whited sepulcher.

Comrade Foster conceals nothing and spares no one. He "hews to the line, let the chips fall where they may." This is an embarrassing moment for Grover Whalen, Chairman of the World's Fair, to have his record as a brutal police official turn up—but here it is!

This is no muckraking book on how the other half lives. This is *capitalist America through the eyes of an American Communist*. He does not despair of this country, nor of its people. Capitalism made the conditions in America which made Foster a Communist. Foster would make America Communist and wipe out these conditions. The hope of a Communist to make America a land of happiness is the mother lode of pure gold shining through this book. It isn't a textbook on Communism; it doesn't elaborate on the theory of Communism. But this book develops it as simple common sense for America.

I am certain many who are not today members of the Communist Party will say as they regretfully close this book, what a coal miner said to me in famous Logan, West Virginia: "I've been a Communist all my life and just didn't know it!"

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## PAMPHLETS

FROM SOCIALISM TO COMMUNISM IN THE SOVIET UNION, by *Joseph Stalin*, International Publishers, N. Y. 5c.

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UNIONE DEL POPOLO ITALIANO PER IL PANE, LA PACE E LA LIBERTA. Edizioni Di Cultura Sociale, Paris, Fr. 5.00.

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