
March 1943

Fourth International

The Class Meaning of the Soviet Victories

By Felix Morrow

Ten Years of the New Deal

By William F. Warde

The French Bourgeoisie *by Marc Loris*

"Friends" of India *by Ajit Roy*

A Note on Plekhanov *by Leon Trotsky*

The German Revolution in Lenin's Time

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International Notes:

A Letter from Ireland
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The Month in Review

The Murder of Erlich and Alter
Labor Unity vs. Congress

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Our friends have sent us many letters during the month giving moral support and financial aid in our struggle to keep our mailing rights. So far the Post Office authorities burned our December issue and released the January and February issues. We would like to quote from some of the letters.

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FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

Volume IV March 1943 No. 3 (Whole No. 31)

Published monthly by the
Fourth International Publishing Association

116 University Place, New York, N. Y. Telephone: ALgonquin 4-8547. Subscription rates: \$2.00 per year; bundles, 14c for 5 copies and up. Canada and Foreign: \$2.50 per year; bundles 16c for 5 copies and up.

Entered as second-class matter May 30, 1940, at the post office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879.

Editor FELIX MORROW

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* * *

Our friends in other countries have also sent us some very encouraging letters from which we would like to quote: "I beg to inform you that soon I will subscribe for one year to your newspaper and especially the magazine which is, unquestionably, the most authoritative political one published in the English language. I also wish to get the bound volume of that stupendous magazine, for I am interested in keeping it."

"I have just received my first copy of the *Militant* and am looking forward to receiving them regularly as also the *Fourth Internationals*. It would be extremely helpful to receive more than one copy of these publications as there is a big demand for them. I took my one copy out the first evening it arrived and found difficulty in getting it back into my hands to finish reading it."

* * *

We are very happy to announce that the article, "West Coast Longshoremen and the 'Bridges Plan'," which appeared in the December, 1942, issue of **FOURTH INTERNATIONAL** and about which we received so many fine comments, has now been printed in pamphlet form, with an introduction that includes "a number of positive proposals indicating a way out of the blind alley into which the American workers are being led by the bankrupt policies of the Stalinists and other labor fakers." This pamphlet, 24 pages, sells for 5 cents and can be ordered from Pioneer Publishers, 116 University Place, New York City.

FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

VOL. IV

MARCH 1943

NO. 3

The Month in Review:

The Murder of Heinrich Erlich and Victor Alter Is a Blow Against the Soviet Union— American Labor Unites Against the Anti-Labor Congress—Gandhi's Fast Ends But the All-India Crisis Is Just Beginning

AMID OUR REJOICING AT THE SOVIET VICTORIES comes the news that Stalin has delivered a terrible weapon into the hands of the foes of the Soviet Union. A score of Nazi divisions could not have done as much damage as Stalin has done by his murder of Heinrich Erlich, leader of the Jewish Socialist *Bund* of Poland and a member of the executive committee of the Labor and Socialist International, and Victor Alter, President of the Polish National Council of Trade Unions. The news of this foul crime will unfortunately serve to alienate from the Soviet Union the sympathies of wide sections of the working class in many countries.

On February 25 the American Jewish Labor Committee announced that it had just received word from "official sources in Washington" that Erlich and Alter had been executed in December 1941—14 months ago. Washington in all probability knew this long ago but releases it now when the "democracies" are beginning to exert strong diplomatic pressure on the Kremlin. What that anti-Soviet pressure means is dealt with in detail in this issue in the article by Felix Morrow on "The Class Meaning of the Soviet Victories." As yet the American capitalist press has treated the news about Ehrlich and Alter quite perfunctorily. If the Washington-London negotiations with the Kremlin do not go well, however, the press will probably wax indignant about these murders. The cynicism of the "democracies" is indicated by the fact that they remained silent as long as relations with the Kremlin were satisfactory. But their connivance in a conspiracy of silence until now should in no way obscure Stalin's responsibility for the crime and for having given this weapon to the bourgeoisie.

Stalin's capacity for invention is extremely limited, and the infamous Moscow Trials are again the model for his justification of these murders as of so many others. Once the Jewish Labor Committee made the story public, the Stalinist version was published in the February 27 *Daily Worker*, which cites "the Soviet Consulate in New York City" as its authority. We can list only a few of the obvious falsehoods:

1. "Ehrlich and Alter were first arrested in the Soviet Union for working with the Polish *espionage* service." (Our italics.) Actually, they were arrested in Poland in September 1939. They had refused to flee with the Beck government and had remained behind to continue the struggle against the Nazis. They were either turned over by the Nazis to the GPU, or were arrested by the GPU as soon as the Red Army occupied the territory which fell to the USSR in the joint Hitler-Stalin partition. Their "espionage" work, therefore, could only have been done *before* the Polish territory became Soviet—not to dwell on the absurdity of charging such public figures with doing espionage work. Nobody ever heard of a trial, but they were sentenced to death, later commuted to ten years imprisonment. After the Nazi attack on the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941, they were released after protests had been made to

Moscow by many labor organizations throughout the world.

2. "Alter and Erlich *resumed* their anti-Soviet work after their release. . . . The hostile anti-Soviet activities of Erlich and Alter went so far that they called upon the Soviet soldiers to *cease the shedding of blood and to conclude a peace with Germany.*" (Our italics.) Had they previously carried on anti-Soviet activities, why did not Moscow do the obvious thing—expel them from the country upon their release? Actually, they were not permitted to leave the Soviet Union. They were doomed men, released—an old trick of Stalin: thus he released Rakovsky and sent him as a Soviet delegate to the Red Cross conference in Tokio—in order to make more plausible their later murder. The official work assigned to them was to aid in organizing the former Polish prisoners-of-war into an army with its own commanders under the direction of the Red Army. The project never materialized. Difficulties between the Poles and the Kremlin soon developed, and many of the Polish soldiers were evacuated to the Middle East, but Erlich and Alter were imprisoned again in December 1941. The immediate purpose was probably as a warning to the Poles—a warning more palatable to the Sikorski government since the victims were not Polish capitalists but leaders of the Polish labor movement; the long-range purpose was to frighten into submission to Stalin the socialist and trade union elements of Eastern Poland. Nobody in the labor movement outside the Stalinists will believe for a moment that Erlich and Alter called upon the Soviet soldiers to make peace with Germany; Stalin is merely repeating here the "Nazi agent" formula of the Moscow Trials, on the principle perfected by Hitler that if you repeat a lie often enough people will believe it. Not the least of Stalin's reasons for murdering these men is that under their leadership the *Bund* declared its belief in the revolutionary integrity of Leon Trotsky and branded the Moscow Trials as frameups.

3. "Erlich and Alter were once again arrested for these activities. On December 23, 1941, they were tried by the highest Soviet court and were both sentenced to the highest punishment. The sentence was executed." Why is this the first Stalinist word about that "trial" 14 months ago? Why was it not announced at the time, and why were Erlich and Alter's comrades abroad—the British Labour Party, the Socialist Party and Social Democratic Federation in the United States, the Australian Labour Party, etc.—not given an opportunity to provide counsel to defend them, the minimum requirement for assuring that it would not be a kangaroo court? The truth is of course that the charges are so absurd that Stalin dared not let the men have counsel to defend them—just as in the Moscow Trials he dared not agree to the August 21, 1937 request of the Labor and Socialist International and the International Federation of Trade Unions for "defending counsel who are absolutely independent of the government." Nor did Stalin dare permit any time to elapse between sentence and execution—if, indeed, a

trial was ever held at all. Had time elapsed, the entire labor movement of the world except the Stalinists would have energetically voiced its demand for the freedom of Erlich and Alter. Even without knowing anything except that they were probably in prison, many demands for their freedom—Citrine for the British trade unions, Green for the AFL, Murray for the CIO, etc.—have been sent to Moscow during the last year.

Stalin has dealt the Soviet Union another terrible blow. It starkly illumines again our fundamental thesis that the real defense of the Soviet Union must be waged in spite of and against the Cain in the Kremlin.

THE MOST IMPORTANT EVENT OF THE MONTH IN THE trade unions was the announcement by CIO President Murray that the AFL, CIO, the Railroad Brotherhoods and the National Farmers Union have joined forces to fight on a local state and national scale against anti-labor legislation.

The statement of the CIO Executive Board explaining the need of this united front for intensified legislative activity declared:

"Our national economic problems are problems which go far beyond any question of mere negotiations with employers and the statement of grievances with employers.

"Today the War Labor Board in Washington must pass upon all wage matters. The Office of Price Administration and the Department of Agriculture and other Washington agencies make policies which will decide whether we will have a really effective price control or whether prices will skyrocket upward so that wage adjustments will become meaningless.

"These same agencies in Washington decide whether we will have a fair distribution of food and other necessities of life through overall rationing or whether those with the most money will get the largest share of our limited supply. Congress passes on all of these matters and also decides whether through tax cuts there will be taken out of pay checks of our members taxes to such an extent as to cut down their food budgets and their health.

"All of this has placed on the shoulders of the CIO and its members an increased responsibility which goes far beyond wage negotiations and grievance adjustments. Our members paying a victory tax out of their pay envelopes each week have realized that *the real questions relating to their everyday working life are being decided in legislative and political fields.*"

This statement of the CIO confirms in its own limited way the analysis of the problems confronting the American workers in this Second World War set forth in the political resolution adopted by the Tenth National Convention of the Socialist Workers Party last October.* That analysis stated:

"The most elementary economic problems facing the workers today are *political* problems. The questions of food, rent, the price of clothing and other necessities, the owning and operating of automobiles are controlled directly by political authorities and agents. Wages and hours of labor and working conditions are routed through War Production and Labor Boards, etc. . . . All these issues, affecting millions of workers, requires the united struggle by all the toilers, including the unorganized and white-collar workers, against the government of Big Business." (P. 44.)

This prospective coalition of the trade unions against anti-labor legislation constitutes a belated admission of the vital fact that the trade unions cannot restrict their struggles to safeguard the interests and gains of the labor movement to the economic field but must throw their full force into the political arena. It is an as yet partial indication of the desire and the demand of the most intelligent and class-conscious workers for

a break with the Democratic and Republican Parties and for independent labor political action—a demand manifested in the November 1942 elections, when millions of organized workers stayed away from the polls because they had no candidates of their own.

This growing discontent of the advanced workers with the capitalist parties and their policies and their striving for an independent role in American politics is not overly welcomed by the official leadership of the trade unions. They hesitate to break with the capitalist parties and, above all, with the Roosevelt administration whose domestic and foreign policies they support. Nevertheless, they cannot completely ignore the realities of trade unionism under wartime conditions nor the demands of their rank and file for struggle against Big Business and its political servants in the government.

They have therefore been forced to take this half-step toward independent political activity. They will undoubtedly seek to discourage direct political intervention by the organized workers themselves, offering them instead lobbying in the legislative halls within the framework of capitivty to the old two-party set-up.

The conservative aim of the leaders of the CIO, AFL and the Railroad Brotherhoods does not, however, detract from the objective significance of this step toward united political action which they have been compelled to take by force of necessity. What they view as a substitute for an independent political organization of American labor can be transformed by the intervention of the workers themselves into the real thing.

The trade union leaders have placed themselves in an extremely contradictory position by this action. Murray, Green and their colleagues confess that, *after* the capitalist candidates have been elected, it is then necessary to wage a united struggle against them and their union-busting schemes. Why, then, shouldn't labor unite; form its own national political party; and fight before, during and after elections for its own policies, its own candidates, its own aims? Why do the leaders of labor try to bolt the door after they let the thieves into the House of Congress?

These are questions every worker must be pondering. They can find the answer in the resolution of the Socialist Workers Party:

"Organized labor lacks the elementary instrument to carry on such a political struggle. While Congress is the sounding-board for the anti-labor drive, American labor has not a single representative of its own in Congress. What a mockery of democracy it is in which over twelve million organized workers and their families are without one elected voice in the government! It is time the workers ended company unionism on the political field and proceeded to organize an Independent Labor Party based upon the trade unions." (P. 44.)

It is significant that the National Farmers Union joined with the trade unions in forming this legislative united front. It demonstrates anew the responsibility that the labor movement has to the other toiling sections of the population which look to it for leadership and action today as never before. The Labor Party will be a powerful attractive political force not only for the workers but also for exploited and discontented middle class elements in the cities and in the farm regions. It will be a barrier to the growth of a native fascist movement.

The forward step taken by the AFL, CIO, Railroad Brotherhoods and National Farmers Union can and must be followed up and carried through by the formation of a stable political organization of labor. It is the unpostponable task of all militants to disseminate this idea and thereby speed the launching of such a nation-wide INDEPENDENT LABOR PARTY.

**The Workers And The Second World War*. Pioneer Publishers, 116 University Place, New York City. Price, 10 cents.

THE END OF GANDHI'S FAST WILL SCARCELY END THE deepening crisis in India. The immediate causes of the explosion last August were political—the masses in the cities, and those organized peasants in contact with the cities, understood that Britain's difficulties were their own opportunity, and impelled the Congress to press for independence. Now the developing causes of a new explosion are economic. Food shortages and inflationary price increases have brought a new stage of hunger to the hundreds of millions who have always known hunger. The clue to Gandhi's fast is to be found in one of the passages of his letters to the Viceroy which were not published in the capitalist press. In it Gandhi refers to "the privation of the poor millions, due to the India-wide scarcity which I cannot help thinking might have been largely mitigated, if not altogether prevented, had there been a bona-fide government responsible to a popularly elected Assembly." Gandhi's fast was thus identified in the minds of India's masses as a protest against their steadily worsening conditions of life.

There is no question that Gandhi is right in blaming the British rulers for this situation. A national government responsible to a popularly elected Assembly would be under pressure to take certain elementary steps: rationing, fixed prices for consumers' goods, prosecution of at least some price violators and hoarders and black market operators, etc. Such steps would be dictated to any government seeking popular support. The British regime, however, neither has popular support nor can it seriously hope to seek it. Its sole support within the population comes from precisely those elements—landlords, importers, food concerns, money-lenders, speculators, etc.—who are profiteering from food scarcity and selling supplies to the growing British and American armed forces in India. The loss of the one and a half billion tons of rice normally imported annually from Burma and French Indo-China is of course a factor, but subsidiary to the unbridled profiteering. Herbert L. Matthews reports in the January 7 *New York Times* that "Government authorities generally agree that rationing of the whole country is impossible because of the millions of small producers," but that would be

no obstacle to a popular government which would authorize mass consumers' committees to police rationing and prices. But the British dictatorship would not dare permit the intervention of the masses, neither in this field nor in any other.

The result is that the rich and the armed forces in the country are getting the lion's share, while the masses do without. Even a member of the Viceroy's Council admits that

"Queues for daily necessities have become a common feature in our towns . . . and prices of foodstuffs have gone up so high that large masses among the middle classes and laborers are experiencing acute hardships." (*New York Times*, January 8, 1943.)

Coal, charcoal and wood are becoming almost unobtainable, which deprives the poor not only of heating but of their only means of cooking. The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce, warning of "serious danger of food riots"—some are already reported in Bombay Province—blames the government for the situation, a fact obvious to all.

If the next explosion in India comes on this basis, it will have far more of a class character than that of August. It will be directed not only against the British rulers but also against the native profiteers. Gandhi understands this very well and his protest was undoubtedly designed to assure the masses that those sections of the bourgeoisie associated with the Congress are not to be blamed for the high prices and scarcity. Nevertheless, when the masses begin to move against the native profiteer who is conniving with the British, they will tend to make little distinction between the food profiteer and the munitions profiteer. Moreover there must be a growing awareness of the inadequacy of the "non-violence" methods advocated as a creed by Gandhi and eagerly accepted as a political method by the Congress bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie fear with good reason that mass revolutionary methods of struggle will lead not only to the ousting of the British but to deepgoing inroads into the political and economic power of the possessing classes. But the masses are learning that neither their political nor their economic needs are served by any other method than the road of revolution.

The Class Meaning of the Soviet Victories

By FELIX MORROW

Great masses throughout the world are rejoicing at the victories of the Red Army. Without a rounded theory but nevertheless with a basically *class* loyalty, they understand that the Soviet victories are *their* victories too. They are definitely aware of a distinction between the Workers' State and its capitalist "allies." It is deeply symbolic that at Cardiff, Wales, in honor of the 25th anniversary of the founding of the Red Army, the miners from the surrounding valleys paraded with lighted lamps, the girl munition workers in overalls, while over the City Hall flew the red flag. Of course, the parade was officially sanctioned, Deputy Prime Minister Attlee was the chief speaker, and we can be sure that the Stalinists sought to identify the affair as a symbol of unity between the Soviet Union and British capitalism. But in the essence of the matter the red flag and the lighted lamps and overalls, so different from the symbols of the usual British celebration, signify that the *workers* were primarily celebrating for the Workers' State. Certainly no one can seriously pretend that the rejoicing in India over the Soviet victories is on behalf of Britain! No, at bottom it is a

class phenomenon, the feeling of the oppressed toward the victories of the army established by the October revolution.

Equally a class phenomenon are the first frank reactions of the "democratic" capitalists toward the Red Army successes. These—the very first victorious battles!—have already brought out into the press the anti-Soviet sentiments—and activities—of the "democrats." The Nazi armies are still deep in Russia, are still intact—yet already authoritative voices in the "democracies" indicate their dismay at the thought of a decisive Soviet victory over the fascist foe.

A leading editorial in the *New York Times*, undoubtedly the most responsible and sober spokesman of American capitalism, undertakes "a frank discussion of the problem." The editorial states:

"Swiftly, inexorably, the Russian armies continue to drive toward the west. One supposedly impregnable Nazi stronghold after another falls before their assault. . . .

"But as the Red Armies plunge forward, they are also raising many questions in many minds as to what other order they

have written on their banners, and the greater the Russian victories grow the more insistent these questions become. They are raised in private conversations, in the press, over the radio and in Congress. And these questions carry the danger that they will provide a fertile ground for the latest Nazi propaganda with which Hitler hopes to escape the consequences of defeat—the propaganda which raises the bogey of a Bolshevik domination of Europe in an effort to scare the world, divide the United Nations and therewith pave the way for a compromise peace.

"Under these circumstances it would do more harm than good to ignore these questions . . .

"The fears and suspicions about Russia are based primarily on two considerations. The first is that Russia will use Communist groups in other countries as instruments of ideological conquest. And the second fear is that the power which has the greatest share in victory will also dictate the peace, and that Russia, having the power, will also use it for conquest, or at least for gaining 'strategic frontiers.' In this connection we cannot fail to note the Washington dispatches yesterday, reporting that the Soviet Embassy is circulating an English translation of an editorial from Pravda, asserting an emphatic claim to Bessarabia, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, on the ground that they are legally a part of Russia. *This is a claim that our Government has not recognized.*

". . . Russia has accepted the principles of the Atlantic Charter. . . .

". . . Binding Russian engagements to observe these principles were laid down in both the Anglo-Russian Mutual Assistance Agreement of May 26, 1942 and in the War Aid Pact between Russia and the United States of June 11, 1942, and it was on the basis of such acceptances that both America and Great Britain agreed to extend material and other aid to Russia—aid which she solicited. . . .

"In these circumstances it seems clear that further and more explicit agreements are necessary in order to give concrete meaning to the Atlantic Charter . . ." (*New York Times*, February 14, 1943.) (Our italics.)

These words are clear enough. The reference to the "first fear" about Stalinist groups abroad is obviously perfunctory. It is the "second fear" that is really at issue: American capitalism has not recognized (and, the tone of the *Times* indicates) does not intend to recognize the Soviet Union's claims for strategic frontiers; it was on the basis of this non-recognition as embodied in the "principles" of the Atlantic Charter that England and America have been "aiding" the Soviet Union—and presumably only on this basis; it is time now to demand from the Soviet Union still more binding and material ("explicit," "concrete") guarantees that post-war Europe will be made up according to specifications from Washington. And if these guarantees are not forthcoming. . . . During the days immediately following this editorial, as the *Times* happily noted in another editorial on February 17, "a number of bills and resolutions looking forward to the post-war world have been introduced in Congress." Senator Gillette proposed immediate negotiations for "a post-war charter in order to give substance" to the Atlantic Charter. "As matters stand now," he said, "there is no guarantee that the declarations arrived at in that agreement will be crystallized into action after the war." Representative Kee proposed that Roosevelt "without undue delay enter into agreements with the several United Nations and other members of the community of sovereign nations to secure and maintain law, order and peace." (Which "other members"—Finland? the Baltic states?) In short, the American bourgeoisie demands "without undue delay" new, still more satisfactory, guarantees that the Soviet Union will submit to the Peace of Washington.

Finland now looms as the first case in which these guar-

antees will be rigidly insisted upon. Indeed, this was long foreseen: Washington never declared war on the Finnish invaders of Soviet Karelia. For that matter, however, the British declaration of war on Finland did not prevent Churchill from meeting with the Finnish Minister to Ankara, Baron Yrjoe Koskinen, during the Englishman's visit to Turkey, as a United Press dispatch of February 12 from Stockholm reported. Permit us to recall that Britain is still at war with Finland. Yet this unprecedented interview between ostensibly warring ministers is reported casually in the American press, which does not conceal its class solidarity with Finnish capitalism against the Workers' State.

The Issue of "Strategic Frontiers"

Finland, indeed, is well on the way to becoming the "poor little Finland" of the Soviet-Finnish War of 1939-40. If we do not yet read of the cocktail parties and theater benefits and airplanes and guns for Finland, we already read declarations unmistakable in their import. President Risto Ryti made a speech which the February 3 *New York Times* accurately headlined as "Finnish President Appeals to Allies," and which it was quick to hearken to in an editorial declaring:

"If the United Nations win there is a good chance that the Finnish rights to self-government and economic outlets will be respected. *They will be if America has any say in the matter. . . .*" (*New York Times*, February 5, 1943.) (Our italics.)

What are "economic outlets"? For the Finnish bourgeoisie it means a Greater Finland embracing large portions of Soviet territory; what is it for the American bourgeoisie? In the February 5 editorial, Finland's war against the Soviet Union was still defined by the *Times* as "aggressive." Twelve days later, however, Finland's war suffered a quick sea change. The term aggressive disappears; instead an editorial tells us:

"Despite her present alignment, Finland deserves our sympathy, for she is one of the small nations victimized by the power politics of her mighty neighbors . . . The Germans exacted from Finland 'transit facilities' that enabled them to place German troops in that country. These troops, again, were Russia's reason for air attacks on Finland, which in turn caused Finland to enter into the 'defensive war.'" (*New York Times*, February 17, 1943.)

The *Times* lies, and knows that it lies. Why did the Finnish bourgeoisie more than willingly agree to what Nazi Germany "exacted," in contrast to fighting a war rather than agree in 1939 to the Soviet offer of an exchange of territory to provide Leningrad with more defensible frontiers against Germany? Why did the Finnish bourgeoisie prefer to fight on the side of the German bourgeoisie rather than on the side of the Red Army? Obviously a class criterion was involved and bourgeois Finland chose accordingly. The *Times* is silent about all this, and silent likewise about the "Greater Finland" expansionist aims for which Mannerheim led the invasion of Soviet Karelia and for which he provided the Nazis with bases to sink American ships bound for Murmansk. Instead the *Times* blames it all on the "power politics" not only of Germany but of the Soviet Union. Reading these editorials, one could hardly discover that the United States is presumably the ally of the Soviet Union. And indeed that alliance is as nothing for the American bourgeoisie in comparison to a cry for help from their class brothers, the Finnish capitalist allies of the Axis.

The atmosphere in London and Washington has already encouraged the Polish government-in-exile to drop its previous pretense of harmony with the Soviet Union. In a press interview on February 21 in London the prime minister, General

Wladislaw Sikorski, announcing a formal protest to Moscow, stated:

"For the moment I cannot deny that there are very great difficulties with Russia. However, they can and must be overcome. At the Polish-Russian frontier not only the Polish problem is being decided but also the question of peace in Central and Eastern Europe, as well as the whole attitude of the Soviet toward democracy.

"The secret Russian radio in Poland—the Kosciuszko station—is always appealing to Poles for a general uprising and demanding that I issue orders to that effect. I cannot give an order for a revolt, because I would risk drowning my nation in a sea of blood. Now is not the time. . . .

"The Russians have dropped some parachutists in Central and Eastern Poland. They are not so much guerilla leaders as leaders of internal political warfare. They have been organizing Communist cells, but so far, however, without any results.

"Despite contrary reports, it is not true that our government has given instructions for fighting them actively. If there are any local incidents they are spontaneous. Underhand propaganda is using falsely this argument, but the Polish Government has only had recourse to an official protest [to Moscow] against foreign elements' intervening in the internal affairs of the Polish state." (*New York Times*, February 22, 1943.)

This statement is particularly important since hitherto Sikorski has been the official leader of the Soviet-"collaborationist" wing of the Polish bourgeoisie and has been sharply criticised by the anti-collaborationists, who control most of the Polish-language bourgeois press in America and elsewhere. His statement makes clear that no real differences separate the two wings; only that, hitherto, under British pressure, Sikorski has remained silent publicly—and now that pressure is released as the Red Army advances.

In the press interview Sikorski demanded "restoration of the pre-war Polish frontiers." This means that what was formerly Eastern Poland, predominantly inhabited by Byelorussians and Ukrainians suffering national oppression under Poland, and which in 1939 were incorporated into the Byelorussian and Ukrainian republics of the Soviet Union, would have to be surrendered to the Polish bourgeoisie. But their incorporation into the Soviet Union was immensely popular both with the people involved and with the masses of the Soviet Union; what was disliked was that it was done by joining with Germany in dividing Poland; it is doubtful whether Stalin would dare risk rescinding the incorporation with which his prestige is so closely bound up. Morally, of course, the Polish bourgeoisie has not the slightest claim upon these national minorities which they oppressed so brutally.

Sikorski's real demands, however, go far beyond return of the pre-war frontiers. Their real scope is indicated by Frederick Kuh, the well-informed head of the London Bureau of the *Chicago Sun*:

"It is known that General Sikorski, during his recent visit to Washington, handed President Roosevelt a memorandum dealing with the future frontiers of Poland. . . .

"What does Sikorski want? His government in London is thinking of creating a Greater Poland.

"Would that include East Prussia, the whole of Silesia and, in the west, a Polish frontier bounded by the River Oder? Would Czechoslovak Teschen be included in this blueprint of the future Poland? Vilna? Would there be an 'independent' Lithuania under Polish influence? And would Poland's eastern boundary revert to the 1921 Riga Treaty line embodying millions of Ukrainians and White [Byelo] Russians?

"These are definite proposals we hear from influential Poles in London nowadays." (*Chicago Sun*, February 5, 1943.)

Let us sum up the issue of "strategic frontiers." Washington and London refuse to recognize as Soviet territory Lithuania, Esthonia, Latvia, Bessarabia, western Byelorussia and western Ukraine and the Finnish territory which became part of Soviet Karelia. On the other hand Stalin, in his Order of the Day of February 23, explicitly names as permanent Soviet lands "Byelorussia, Lithuania, Latvia, Esthonia and Moldavia [which includes former Bessarabia] . . . and Karelia [which includes the former Finnish territory]."

The Real Issue

So far we have discussed the dispute on the superficial plane on which it publicly appears. Now let us proceed to deal with the fundamental basis of the dispute.

The "democratic" bourgeoisie pretends that the sole issue is one of safeguarding the national "independence" of Finland, Poland, Rumania and the Baltic states. This threadbare hypocrisy would be easy to see through—were it not for the fact that Stalin plays into their hands. Thanks to Stalin's bureaucratic and nationalistic conception of the defense of the Soviet Union, the Soviet side of the dispute is also presented to the world working class as one over frontiers and territorial acquisitions. Moreover, Stalin's false policy prevents him from explaining to the international proletariat the purpose of the territorial acquisitions. Here one sees the fundamental continuity between Stalin's policy during the period of the Hitler-Stalin pact and at present.

For the revolutionist the first task is to arouse the world masses in defense of the Soviet Union as a part of the world revolution. But Stalin is not a revolutionist and that is not his method. Stalin did not explain to the international proletariat that the territorial demands upon Finland in 1939 were to secure the defenses of Leningrad against an attack from Nazi Germany; instead he was publicly assuring Ribbentrop that Nazi-Soviet unity was "cemented by blood" shed in the joint division of Poland. Under these conditions the Soviet invasion of Finland and the partition of Poland alienated world working class sympathy from the Soviet Union—a loss which, Trotsky pointed out, far outweighed the territorial and strategical gains achieved by Stalin's reactionary methods. Today the world masses are for the Soviet Union. But tomorrow, if Stalin again appears to be invading and dividing small nations, again without explanation, his bureaucratic methods are likely to re-awaken the suspicions of 1939-40 and once more alienate from the Soviet Union the sympathy of the working class of the world. Here lies a terrible danger for the immediate future.

Regardless of what Stalin does, however, it remains the class duty of the workers to defend the Soviet Union. We must explain to them, as Stalin does not and cannot, what is really at issue in this ostensible dispute over frontiers.

Against whom would the desired frontiers guard? Not primarily against the small countries directly involved—Finland, Poland, Rumania, the Baltic states. Neither individually nor in coalition could these countries by themselves hope successfully to assault the Soviet Union. Nor for many years could they hope for aid from a defeated and disarmed Germany (not to speak of the fact that, far more likely, after defeat revolution will bring Germany to the side of the Soviet Union). That is why Walter Lippmann, dealing with the post-war "problem of carrying out the obligations of the Atlantic Charter on the western borderland of the Soviet Republic," is not telling the truth when he writes:

"For Finland and for Poland the paramount reality will be that they are the weak neighbors of a very powerful Russia. Both countries fear Russia and both of them are

seeking the support of Britain and America in opposing what they believe are Russia's territorial and political designs. They are disposed to argue that if we do not align ourselves with them against Russia they will end by throwing themselves into the arms of Germany." (*New York Herald-Tribune*, February 6, 1943.)

Throwing themselves into the arms of a defeated Germany is an empty threat; we doubt that the Finnish and Polish bourgeoisie utter it. They are not, indeed, in any position to threaten or to bargain with America and Britain; they are merely appealing to the class solidarity of Washington and London against the Workers' State. And this fundamental appeal is being answered and, indeed, instigated. What appears superficially as disputes over frontiers between the Soviet Union and its small neighbors are in reality the steps being taken by the Anglo-American bloc to prepare new super-Wrangels against the Soviet Union.

We dismiss with the contempt it deserves the argument that the Soviet Union has no need to worry about its precise post-war frontiers because, forsooth, peace will reign under the aegis of a permanent international police force of the United Nations. It is, alas, true—not the least of his crimes—that Stalin has signed his name to such buncombe, for example the following clause in the December 4, 1941 pact between the USSR and the Polish government:

"3. After the victorious war and appropriate punishment of the Hitlerite criminals, it will be the task of the Allied States to ensure a durable and just peace. This can be achieved only through a new organization of international relations on the basis of unification of the democratic countries in a durable alliance. Respect for international law, backed by the *collective armed force* of all the Allied States, must form the decisive factor in the creation of such an organization. Only under this condition can a Europe destroyed by the German barbarians be restored and can a guarantee be created that the disaster caused by the Hitlerites will never be repeated." (Our italics.)

Similar clauses appear in the Anglo-Russian Twenty Year Treaty. Since he signed these, querulous voices of the "democracies" are demanding to know, why is Stalin worried about his frontiers? Thus Stalin's signature—and the Stalinist propaganda in the "democracies" along the same line—is being used to create suspicion against the Soviet Union among the masses.

Stalin of course has no faith in those clauses and neither has Churchill or Roosevelt, although, if they can arrive at a temporary settlement among themselves, they will join in using those clauses against defeated Germany and others. But at most that could only be a very temporary and unstable arrangement. As for a longer-range perspective, Roosevelt has so little faith in an international police force that he is already openly preparing to safeguard the American frontier . . . in Africa! At his press conference in Washington immediately after Casablanca

"Notice was served by the President on our allies as well as our enemies that this country and Brazil were determined to eliminate in the post-war arrangements any threat from the West African coast to the 'bulge' of Brazil, only 1,650 miles distant at the nearest point. He said it was well to have it understood now by the people of this hemisphere and those who hold territory on the West African coast that all military, naval and air threats from West Africa must be eliminated.

"Asked if this meant post-war demilitarization of West Africa, the President said it was difficult to state the method of achieving his goal, since the method had not yet been decided upon. It might be demilitarization or any other of a half dozen solutions, he added." (*New York Times*, February 3, 1943.)

The international police force is pap for the multitude and a talking point against the Soviet Union's seeking strategic fron-

tiers. Roosevelt refuses to recognize a danger to the Soviet Union in a bourgeois Finland frontier twenty miles from Leningrad. But he is terribly concerned about the danger to America and Brazil from the frontiers of the British and French possessions in West Africa "only 1,650 miles distant at the nearest point." No satirist could invent a crueller joke. It certainly illumines Roosevelt's faith in the international police force and all other methods for post-war "peace."

Are there politically literate people who really believe that Roosevelt and Churchill are interested in preserving the national independence of small nations? Try to tell that to the Ceylonese and Burmese nations, the Porto Ricans, the Negro people in the southern states and the West Indies as well as Africa, and the four hundred millions of India. Washington and London wish to preserve Finland, not as an independent nation but as what it has been since 1917—an outpost of imperialism on the borders of the Workers' State, a dagger point at Leningrad. To the same role they wish to return the Baltic states. As for Bessarabia, never ethnically Rumanian and forcibly seized from the young Soviet republic in 1918 while it was besieged by the imperialist armies of intervention—what argument can be made for returning it to Rumania except to strengthen that kingdom as an imperialist outpost on the Soviet border? If the issue were really national unification, what claim can be advanced for Polish sovereignty over the Byelorussian and Ukrainian population of "Eastern Poland"?

Those in the "democracies" who deny these territories to the Soviet Union do so only to seek them as springboards against the Workers' State. They would like as soon as possible to repeat more successfully what Churchill, leader of world imperialist intervention, did in 1918-1920. They know that private property and the nationalized property of the Soviet Union are two fundamentally antagonistic systems and cannot indefinitely continue to live side by side. One or the other—capitalism or the foundations of socialism—must conquer.

The present disputes over frontiers may be resolved. The temporary relation of forces between the "democracies" and the USSR in case of further Soviet victories, or Stalin's agreement to help try to crush a proletarian revolution in Germany, may dictate to Churchill and Roosevelt a settlement recognizing as Soviet some or perhaps even all the territories now in dispute. But they will do so in the sense that Hitler agreed to the Soviet occupation of Eastern Poland and the Baltic states—in exchange for Stalin's services (including those of the Comintern)* and to await a more propitious moment for assaulting the USSR. If the "democrats" thus have to surrender outposts in Eastern Poland, Finland and Rumania, then they will find new ones in Central Poland, Bulgaria, the Scandinavian peninsula, etc. This incontestable fact also demonstrates the basic fallacy of Stalin's

*Stalin's thanks for the Polish territory took the form of joining the Nazi "peace offensive." The "Declaration of the Soviet and German Governments" of September 28, 1939 stated:

"After the conclusion today by the German and Soviet Governments of an agreement regulating the questions arising from the disintegration of Poland, thus creating a firm basis for protracted peace in eastern Europe, they express the opinion in mutual agreement that the liquidation of the present war between Germany on one side and England and France on the other side would coincide with the interest of all the peoples. . . . If, however, these efforts of both Governments are unsuccessful, then it will have been established that England and France carry the responsibility for the continuance of the war. In case of the prolongation of the war, the Governments of Germany and the Soviet Union will consult with each other on necessary measures." (*Izvestia*, Sept. 23, 1939.) In accordance with this declaration the Comintern during the ensuing months branded France and England as the "warmongers" guilty of continuation of the war.

bureaucratic and nationalistic method of defending the USSR. Vain is his search for "strategic" frontiers in the epoch of the bomber, parachutist and tank. The Soviet Union will remain in mortal danger so long as capitalism remains the stronger power on a world scale. Only successful proletarian revolutions in Europe and the establishment of the Socialist United States of Europe can assure the existence of the Soviet Union.

The Dispute on the Military Plane

Let us now go on to analyze the immediate *military* implications of the class antagonism between the Soviet Union and the Anglo-American bloc. This is not at all a question to be settled at the "peace" table after a definitive victory over Nazi Germany. *It will be settled in the course of the war.* Precisely for this reason the "democracies" are perturbed by the very first Red Army victories over the Nazis.

They remember what happened when the Red Army was advancing in Eastern Poland in 1939. As the Mensheviks and the bourgeois press admitted at the time, the workers and poor peasants arose in a revolutionary wave as the Red Army neared, identifying their class interests with those of the Soviet Union. The same thing happened in Bessarabia. In a somewhat different form—Red Army garrisons had first arrived by agreement with the bourgeois governments and incorporation into the Soviet Union came later—Sovietization of the Baltic states was also immensely popular with the masses involved.* Moreover in order to expropriate the bourgeoisie in those territories the Kremlin was compelled to call upon the masses, no matter how cautiously, to take matters into their own hands: workers' committees seized the factories, peasants' committees the land, they formed provisional administrations which arrested the capitalists, landlords and police, etc. Soon enough the Stalinist bureaucracy proceeded to stifle the workers' initiative and to gather all power into the hands of the bureaucracy and the GPU, and we must warn the workers that the same process of repression will be attempted in any territory taken by the Red Army so long as the Kremlin bureaucracy remains dominant. The bureaucratism is, however, small comfort to imperialism which understands the mortal danger to world capitalism from revolutionary expropriation anywhere. In 1939-40 the revolutionary wave which arose as the Red Army advanced was necessarily limited by the domination of Europe by the Nazi army, as well as the still-intact bourgeois armies of Finland, Rumania, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Greece, etc. But now if the Red Army continues to advance, the revolutionary example set by the workers and peasants of Eastern Poland and Bessarabia is likely to be followed by great masses in the Balkans and Central Europe. This thought is a nightmare in Washington and London and inevitably they must seek ways and means of preventing its realization.

That is why the peace feelers from Finland are clearly formulated to rule out the use of Finland as a base of operations against the Nazis. While insisting they were not taking part in the "larger war," the Finnish bourgeoisie nevertheless supplied the Nazis with bases which are still being used against American and British convoys. But, even in defeat, Helsinki has no intention of agreeing to a Finnish-Soviet settlement which would permit the Red Army and Navy to use Finnish bases against the Nazis. The difference between Helsinki's attitude toward the Nazis and toward the Soviet Union is a *class* difference. Even

if Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill were to guarantee the post-war inviolability of Finland, Helsinki fears that their word would not prevent the Finnish workers and poor peasants from arising against the Finnish bourgeoisie if the Red Army and Navy enter Finland. Nor is Helsinki sure—and in this it is profoundly correct in its appreciation of the extent of the healthy revolutionary forces in the Red Army—that Stalin has the power to appease the Anglo-American bloc by ordering the Red Army to aid the Finnish bourgeoisie in an attempt to crush the workers and peasants. Hence it is certain that, if Finland does make peace with the Soviet Union, it will preclude the entry of the Red Army into Finland. Washington and London are sure to back Helsinki in this demand, despite its obvious disservice to the grand strategy of defeating Hitler. Their class solidarity with the Finnish bourgeoisie will take precedence.

Now we can also understand the full meaning of Sikorski's protest, quoted above, against Soviet "internal political warfare" in "Central and Eastern Poland." We do not know yet whether he is accurate in reporting Soviet parachutists in those areas engaged in organizing an uprising against the Nazis. That such activities are at least envisioned is indicated by a February 22 United Press dispatch from Moscow reporting a letter sent to Stalin by Dimitrov for the Executive Committee of the Communist International—this is the first mention of that body since June 22, 1941!—in which they "promise to exert even greater effort so that at the moment of the decisive battles we may successfully aid in the creation of a universal anti-Hitler war in the rear of the German fascists." This resurrection of the Comintern is probably part of Stalin's "war of nerves" with his allies for better terms. Quite apart from Stalin's plans, however, the workers and peasants of Eastern Poland are certain to repeat again their revolutionary actions of 1939 as soon as the Red Army approaches. This is what Sikorski fears.

From the point of view of effective struggle against the Nazis, Sikorski's protest is of course preposterous. His demand that the Red Army refrain from organizing uprisings in Central and Eastern Poland—i.e., in Hitler's rear—is on a par with the position of the Beck government during the Franco-Soviet pact and the subsequent Anglo-Soviet negotiations, when Beck was ready to agree to a Polish-Soviet pact against Germany—but only on the condition that the Red Army must not enter Polish territory to confront the Nazi invader. Absurd as that condition was, it was backed by London and was one of the causes for the collapse of the Anglo-Soviet negotiations. Sikorski apparently has reason to believe that his present demand will be backed by Washington and London—his government-in-exile has in itself little bargaining power. But whatever concessions Stalin might be tempted to make, it is plain that the advancing Red Army would never agree now to Sikorski's demand to abandon "internal political warfare" behind Hitler's lines.

To forestall a Red Army advance into Poland and the Balkans, Sikorski is urging Washington and London to open a second front *in the Balkans*. As Frederick Kuh reports from London:

"Sikorski is known to favor strongly the earliest possible Allied expedition into the Balkans so that American, British and Polish troops could reach Eastern or Central Europe at least as soon as the Red Army. These tendencies are certainly heightening Russian suspicions." (Chicago Sun, February 5, 1943.)

Soviet suspicions that such a move is in prospect are also cited that same week in an editorial in the British Liberal weekly, the *New Statesman*:

*John Scott's *Duel for Europe*, 1940, gives a good description of all the Soviet occupations.

"The Russians fear that when the continent is invaded by Allied armies the blow may be so delivered as to be indirectly aimed at the Soviet Union as well as against Nazi Germany. To many such suspicions may sound exaggerated, but let us not forget what no Russian ever forgets—that the last war ended with Allied intervention not in Berlin but at Archangel."

That Soviet objections to such a plan have gone through diplomatic channels was indicated as early as last November by Edwin L. James, managing editor of the *New York Times*:

"There are reasons, well known in diplomatic circles, to believe that the second front Stalin desires is a second front in Western Europe. . . . In fact, the question arises as to whether if from Africa a second front could be established in the Balkan States it would meet in full the desires of the Russian chief." (*New York Times*, November 8, 1942.)

Publicly the Soviet opposition to the North African-Balkan plan was indicated only in indirect forms: extensive reports in the Soviet press about "second-front" demonstrations in Trafalgar and Union Square, the insistence of the Stalinist press that Roosevelt and Churchill in January 1942 had promised a second front in Europe during 1942, Stalin's letter of October 4, 1942, to AP correspondent Henry C. Cassidy, insisting "that the Allies fulfill their obligations fully and on time." None of this, however, made clear to the world working class the danger to the Soviet Union which would arise from a second front in the Balkans. The most the Stalinist press ever did on this question was to argue that a second front would be more possible and more effective against the Nazis in Western Europe than in the Balkans. Thus when Willkie on October 26, 1942, made his "report to the people," and in advocating a second front in Europe suggested it might be best to have it in Southern Europe—Italy or the Balkans—"A Veteran Commander" wrote in the Stalinist press:

"There is a flaw—a military flaw—in this speech [of Willkie]. . . .

"The danger lurks in the words 'free North Africa from Axis domination and begin an assault on the soft spots of Southern Europe.' . . .

"It means that the second front in Europe is only to follow the completion of the North African campaign—note the word 'and'—and that that Second Front will be directed against the weakest link of the Axis and not against the strongest, as it should—note the words 'soft spots of Southern Europe!' . . .

"The African campaign is NOT a Second Front, and cannot be one, even if successful. . . .

"Access of troops and supplies to Africa is difficult and entails great loss of time and a lot of shipping, especially so for the Allies. It's almost 15,000 miles from the USA to Egypt around the Cape of Good Hope. . . ." (*Worker*, November 1, 1942.)

This cowardly argument collapsed when the North African expedition *did* succeed. Moreover Stalin and his flunkies are committed to justifying to the Soviet and world workers his sacrifice of their interests to the Anglo-American bloc in return for "aid" to the Soviet Union. Hence the Stalinist press hailed the North African expedition; so did Stalin, in a second letter to Cassidy, which said it "radically changes the political and war situation in Europe in favor of the Anglo-American Soviet coalition." Thus Stalin ceased even his indirect warnings on the meaning of an Anglo-American front in the Balkans precisely at the time when its preliminary, the North African expedition, became a reality. Here again we see that Stalin's methods are the polar opposite from those of Lenin and Trotsky, to whom the first consideration in defense of the Soviet Union was to arouse the world working class by explaining to it the real situation.

Stalin is all the more to be condemned by the workers for

deluding them because *privately* he showed thorough awareness of the situation. In June 1942, Roosevelt and Churchill made the decision for the North African expedition without consulting Stalin, and in mid-August Churchill went to Moscow to break the news to his "ally." Something of what happened then we now know from two very informative articles by Forrest Davis in the February 20-27 issues of the *Saturday Evening Post*. Stalin vehemently protested to Churchill against the June decision for a North African expedition and insisted on a second front in western Europe, but of course Churchill remained adamant. Stalin showed his chagrin the next month in an astonishing incident at a private dinner he gave to Willkie on September 20, 1942:

"The Kremlin dinner was nearing its end when an American guest proposed a toast to the Russian and Allied pilots. Stalin proposed an amendment. With some feeling, he saluted the Soviet pilots who, he charged, had gone to their deaths while fighting in the 'cast-off' planes furnished by the Atlantic allies. While his guests listened in a stunned silence, the premier of Russia accused the British prime minister of 'stealing' 150 planes—Lockheed P-38 Lightnings—out of a Russian-bound convoy."

It is notable that Willkie thereupon answered Stalin, praising Churchill and asking Stalin "what Russia's situation would have been had Britain been conquered or gone over to the enemy at a time when Russia, for her own good reasons, was standing aloof from the battle." Willkie's quarrel with Churchill is an intra-class argument; he stands on the side of British imperialism in the more basic dispute with the Workers' State.

The class meaning of the proposed Balkan front is further illumined by the situation in Rumania, ally of the Nazis. Why the touching solicitude of the "democracies" for the claims of the Rumanian camarilla to Bessarabia? It is not even being said that the "democracies" would support this claim only on behalf of a democratized Rumania. There is an obvious reason for this. As in Italy, the "democracies" are seeking a Darlan deal in Rumania. That they have no perspective of a full-scale military assault to knock Rumania out of the war is indicated by the fact that neither by bombing or sabotage have they touched the British and American-owned oil wells in Rumania, now working full-speed for the Nazis. This significant fact is underlined by the able correspondent, C. L. Sulzberger, formerly in Rumania, in a dispatch from London:

"Many Rumanians are inclined to blame the Allies for this [the lack of Allied sabotage in Rumania] because of an alleged lack of desire to blow up wells owned by United Nations interests. . . .—and the writer never received a satisfactory answer to this question from the British group of oil men who used to frequent Bucharest's Athene Palace. . . .

"When Russians get within easier bombing range it is logical to expect that they will concentrate their efforts on devastation of refineries." (*New York Times*, February 17, 1943.)

To put it more plainly than Mr. Sulzberger's broad hint: the Balkan-front-and-Darlan-deals is being pressed ever more hastily in order to forestall Soviet bombing of the Rumanian ally of the Axis as the Red Army advances nearer to bombing distance. The same Anglo-American considerations hold equally for Hitler's Bulgarian friends—and even more so for Yugoslavia where they must back the royalist Mikhailovich against the successes of the pro-Soviet Partisans.*

Further developments may, it is possible, do away with the specific dispute between the "democracies" and the Soviet Union over a Balkan front. As in the case of the disputes over the

*The situation in Yugoslavia will be dealt with in an article by John G. Wright in the April issue of *Fourth International*.—Ed.

"strategic frontiers," Roosevelt and Churchill may find it advisable to "appease" the Russians and open a second front in Western Europe first instead of in the Balkans. This shift may be dictated if Rommel's army remains in being on the southern Mediterranean coast, making extremely risky an Anglo-American crossing to the Balkans. The Balkans would be closed off, too, if Hitler seizes Spain and Gibraltar, closing off the Mediterranean from the Atlantic. But whatever happens cannot blur the class meaning of the preoccupation of the "democracies" with the idea of a Balkan front which would cut the Red Army off from Europe. Basically, too, this class meaning will dominate any other front opened by the Anglo-American armies. Just as vain as Stalin's search for "strategic frontiers" is his search for a "good" Anglo-American second front. At best Stalin's false policy can succeed in leaving the "democracies" holding relatively poorer outposts on the Soviet borders. We repeat: the Soviet Union will remain in mortal danger so long as capitalism remains the stronger power on a world scale, i.e., so long as there does not exist the Socialist United States of Europe. The fundamental antagonism between the system of private property and the system of nationalized property will not be obviated by the shifting of Churchill and Roosevelt from plans for a Balkan front to plans for a Western European front.

If we were minded to forget this, we have just been forcibly recalled to it by the decision of Washington to expand its armed forces to eleven millions. This decision unquestionably means curtailing civilian manpower to the point where considerably less supplies will be available for the Soviet Union. This fact is pointed out by the Social-Democratic organ here, which writes:

"There is the suspicion that our Army men are, for reasons of their own, underestimating the importance of Lend-Lease. An over-sized Army of our own would limit our supplies to Britain, Russia and China. Russia and China have millions of men eager to fight who need equipment. There may be good reasons for building up our forces at the expense of our Allies, but if there are such reasons, they should be openly stated. Do we fear that some of these friends will be too powerful at the end of the war?" (*New Leader*, editorial, February 20, 1943.)

We suspect that the *New Leader* editor pretends to be a little more naive than he actually is in real life. Undoubtedly he remembers the sage advice given by Auer to Edward Bernstein, when the latter too early and too openly revealed the anti-revolutionary content of his revisionist doctrine: "My dear Eddie, one does it but one shouldn't say so." Naturally, General Marshall cannot at this stage say publicly for what purpose he wants an "over-sized" Army. Incidentally, the sole difference between the General and the *New Leader* is concerning the means of putting the Soviet Union in its place. In the same issue an article on the Soviet territorial claims suggests that Russia, with its "terrible wounds to heal," "will face a tremendous task of reconstruction, and she will need help. An effort should be made to persuade her. . . . Obviously the point of departure should be the situation existing before the period of aggressions and annexations." In short, what the General would do by an "over-sized" Army, the Social Democrats proposed to do by economic coercion. But, since the Social Democrats are not pacifists, we can be sure they will eventually be converted by the General, since they already agree with him on the objective. The counter-revolutionary role of Social Democracy against the Soviet Union is certain to be repeated here and everywhere.

What the *New Leader* pretended not quite to understand was very well understood in plain-speaking bourgeois circles. Ar-

thur Krock, the Washington correspondent of the *New York Times*, wrote on General Marshall's secret testimony to a Congressional committee:

"The answers of the War Department are uttered in private and they may be good ones. It is possible to speculate that one of them is: to assure the kind of peace that will prevent a new war the United States must have overwhelming military strength behind its delegates to the peace conference. A victorious Russia, master of Europe, may need more than the sermons of Henry Wallace to refrain from seeking too high a price for its contribution. . . .

"That would be an answer calling for serious consideration. . . ." (*New York Times*, February 12, 1943.)

Likewise the Luce press reports:

"George Marshall's testimony was deeply secret. Perhaps his program . . . was insurance against the possibility that a victorious Russia might dominate the entire continent of Europe. Perhaps the expansion, unquestionably approved by Franklin Roosevelt, might have been planned to make U. S. weight felt at the peace table." (*Time* magazine, February 22, 1943.)

And the military expert, Hanson Baldwin, writes:

"America's voice at the [peace] conference table must be an important voice if the whole job of the war is not to be repeated in another 25 to 50 years; yet the American point of view will be only as authoritative as the military strength behind it. This is not power politics but realism." (*New York Times*, February 22, 1943.)

These days do not permit one to savor the Homeric laughter worthy of these solemn statements that while the Red Army is bearing the whole brunt of the war the American Army is being readied to fight the peace. In truth the references to the use of American military power at the peace table are not at all accurate and are designed to blunt the sharp fact that this power is being expanded to face the Red Army on the continent of Europe long before a peace conference.

Meanwhile the first victories of the Red Army have been followed by a furious outburst of diplomatic moves in neutral capitals where both Axis and "United Nations" diplomats are gathered. Especially active are diplomatic circles at the Vatican, where Roosevelt was the first American president to maintain an envoy. Is it merely a coincidence that the American Archbishop Spellman (he saw Roosevelt before he left, according to the March 1 *Time*) arrives in Rome the same week that Mussolini's son-in-law is accredited as Ambassador to the Vatican? The Vatican's own diplomacy is quite frankly anti-Soviet and it has "some" support here, as the Luce press, reporting Spellman's trip, writes:

"The Church regards the spread of Communist doctrine and Russian influence as its first problem. . . .

"One means of opposing a Russian sphere of influence would be a Catholic Federation, pivoted on a Catholic Austria-Hungary, supported by Danubian agrarian parties and possibly involving exiled Otto Habsburg, who apparently has potent friends in high places. Poland would be a northern anchor, Italy the southern anchor of such a federation. But, should restoration of the Habsburgs meet with too great resistance from socialist Freemason Czechs and pro-Russian Yugoslavs, an Eastern European Catholic Federation might be contrived, binding Catholic groups together in a Balkan *cordon sanitaire* from Poland to the Mediterranean.

"Invasion of Hitler's Europe may be aimed through the Balkans. If so, one result could be a misunderstanding with the Russians, whose armies would be in the north while Allied armies were moving in from the south. The best hope of avoiding such a misunderstanding is a complete *rapprochement* with Moscow. Lacking that, the plans credited to the Vatican appeared to be among the few under real consideration. High sources in Washington reported that at least some U. S. sup-

port had been given to these plans." (*Time*, February 22, 1943.)

We can be sure that at some stage of this diplomatic drama one of the chief actors will appear—the Junker aristocracy who constitute Hitler's general staff. Unlike most of the generals of the western world, the Junkers are extremely able politicians in their own right, with a long tradition as rulers. In 1918 they threw the Kaiser overboard in order to weather the revolutionary storm and military defeat. As revolution and defeat loom again they will be quite ready to drop Hitler and don the cap of "liberty." They will certainly prefer to save capitalism by calling in the Anglo-American armies than permit the Red Army to cross the German border. And let us recall that the defeated enemy in 1918 was instructed in the Allied armistice terms to retain General von der Goltz's troops in the Baltic states, where they crushed the Lettish soviets.

In war as in peace Stalin's theory of "socialism in one coun-

try" demonstrates its bankruptcy, and this fact is being underlined for us every day by the responses of the bourgeoisie to the first victories of the Red Army. The almost untouched armies of the United States and Britain have stood by while the Red Army has been bled white. On the military plane the Soviet Union cannot hope to prevail against world capitalism. Only the shock troops of proletarian revolution can redress the balance. In spite of Stalin and against Stalin, we are confident, the strangled October revolution, which has so often demonstrated its persistent vitality, will find the road to unity with the European revolution.

(A second article on the class meaning of the Soviet victories, dealing with the developments in the Red Army and the Soviet Union, will appear in the April issue of *Fourth International*.)

The Political Misadventures of the French Bourgeoisie

By MARC LORIS

The military defeat in France was followed by a political development notably different from that of the other European countries invaded by German imperialism. While the Dutch and Norwegian governments simply transported their household gods from The Hague and Oslo to London, the French government collapsed; its attempt to move to North Africa in order to continue the struggle failed, and it was succeeded by a new regime.

The Vichy Government

In the other German-occupied countries the places left by the governments emigrated to London were either occupied by Hitlerian satraps or by native political adventurers—Quislings or Musserts. Around the latter gathered all those who hoped to profit from the German victory. However, the Quislings could never pretend to represent more than a minority of the possessing classes and soon became simply *Gauleiters*.

In France in July 1940, the deputies and senators, sacred guardians of the Third Republic, delivered the power to the hands of Petain-Weygand-Laval in Vichy. The new gang was the political instrument not of the minority but of the great majority of the possessing classes of France. Having lost all hope of an English victory and thinking no more than to save what it could through "collaboration," the bourgeoisie abandoned the struggle against German imperialism. The instrument of this policy was the Vichy government. Fascist adventurers such as Doriot and others did not receive the power, as Quisling did, but were reduced to a secondary role: in the hands of the German chiefs they became an auxiliary means of pressure on Vichy.

The cause of this special development in France must be sought above all in the country's political history during the years immediately preceding the war. February 1934 had disclosed the break in France's political stability, marked the polarization of the country into two opposing camps and heralded the end of the democratic regime. The revolutionary offensive of 1936 was unable to attain a victorious conclusion

because of the failure of the working-class leadership (Blum Jouhaux, Thorez). After the defeat of the drive to the left, the political center of gravity started to move gradually to the right. Daladier, the day before still a hero of the Popular Front, was governing more and more by decree-laws. The revolutionary crisis had been averted, but none of the fundamental problems had been resolved. Each class in society remained discontented with the others.

Explained in great part by these political developments, the military debacle shook the French bourgeoisie, which was still trembling from its fear of the revolutionary crisis, and was solely preoccupied with consolidating once more its rule over the country. It now clearly appears that from the point of view of French imperialism the correct decision would have been to continue the struggle against Germany in July 1940 from Algiers or from London, with all the resources of its colonies and its intact navy. However, the error committed by the Vichy people was not merely a technical error of appraisal of the various contending military forces, but was determined by a much more profound political necessity.

For it to continue the struggle the French bourgeoisie would have needed a self-confidence, a faith in the future and a political cohesion which was actually far beyond its command. Scarcely out of the revolutionary crisis, politically divided, without perspectives for tomorrow, it saw an understanding with Hitler as the safest decision for the present. As for the future, it would see later. Thus was born the Vichy regime, which is not to be accounted for either by an error of calculation or by "treason," as many would like us to believe.

Vichy itself understood this determinism better than all the garrulous Left, Stalinists included, who cried treason. A governmental appeal in July 1940 explained the political evolution of the Daladier government from parliamentary democracy to semi-Bonapartism:

"Everything cried out the impotence of the regime which could maintain itself only by disavowing itself through the use of decree-laws. Thus it was making its way, at each step.

towards a political revolution which *war and defeat only hastened.*" (Our italics.)

After the defeat of the revolutionary offensive the impotence of the democrats led inevitably to Bonapartism. The military defeat speeded up this process and gave, of course, some special features to the new regime.

Gaullism

When all seemed lost on the battlefield, a young general, Charles de Gaulle, until then unknown outside of military circles, broadcast an appeal from London for the continuation of the war. The appeal met no response within the ruling circles, either Right or Left, and at the beginning, it seems, made little impression on the broad strata of the population. Around De Gaulle rallied a few professional military men, generally belonging to the middle cadres, and colonial administrators, generally from the poorest colonies, farthest from the metropolis. The poor reception which De Gaulle received in the beginning alone would suffice to refute the thesis that Vichy was the result of a plot of a few "traitors" and not the product of profound political currents.

The Gaullist movement at first pretended indifference to politics, its sole aim being to carry on the war on England's side. De Gaulle had royalist sympathies, it is said, but this fact played no role in the development of the movement, all the less so since the French royalist leaders rallied to the policy of collaboration with Germany. The Gaullist chiefs were above all military men, with the scorn for "politics" customary to their caste. That was their only political coloration at the origin of the Gaullist movement.

But a change soon came. Vichy was not only a government of collaboration with Germany, but also one of political reaction. Democratic liberties were suppressed. As often happens in a struggle, the position taken by the adversary often determines that which the other must take. Vichy combined pro-German collaboration with a dictatorial policy. The Gaullist movement, champion of the patriotic anti-German struggle, soon had to oppose itself to Vichy on the grounds of internal politics as well.

This evolution was greatly accelerated by the movement of resistance inside France proper, to which the weight of the Nazi oppression gave birth after the first months of discouragement and apathy. This movement, in view of the difficult circumstances, and also the deliberate policy of the Stalinists, remained at rather a low political level, for the fact that the oppression had its source in a foreign power made it easy for the Stalinists and petty-bourgeois groups to direct the movement into the channel of nationalism. Nevertheless, the part of the population which supported the resistance movement was, in general, the working masses of the nation, and much more those of the cities than of the countryside. One can say that the bulk of the forces which support the resistance is the same which supported the Popular Front, with the addition of certain circles of the bourgeois youth and the middle military cadres. Strictly speaking, the Gaullist organization is rather circumscribed, but the popularity of the movement extends well beyond this limit. Here for example, is the story of the demonstration at Lorient on October 24, 1942 at the time of the forced departure of the workers to Germany:

"Came train time. The workers formed a procession and came to the station escorted by an immense crowd. A big detail of French and German police forces were guarding the approaches at the station. Outside the station the angry, turbulent crowd swarmed so thickly that the police themselves

estimated the number present to be about 15,000. Fist-fights broke out on the station platform where Doriotists and local collaborationists had gathered. The workers were singing the 'Marseillaise' and the 'International,' with the crowd outside joining in chorus. They were shouting 'Long Live De Gaulle!', 'Down with Petain!', 'Hang Laval!'"

There is no doubt that this crowd, with a few additions, is the same as that of the 1934-36 demonstrations. This combination of the national and social aspects of the resistance movement, which has both negative and positive sides for future revolutionary development, is strengthened by the economic collaboration of the big bourgeoisie with Germany. One can measure the extent of this collaboration by a figure that the German press published at the end of 1942: the orders placed by Germany with the French industrialists reached at that date more than 10 billion marks or 200 billion francs.

Last but very important, we must not forget the traditional division of French political life into Right and Left. The origin of this division dates back to the great French revolution which, although a bourgeois revolution, was in reality led to victory by the poorest layers of artisans in spite of the hesitations of the rich, timorous bourgeoisie. Naturally, the appearance of an industrial proletariat and of workers' parties reduced the importance of this division. Nevertheless, it continues as a tradition in French political life and plays its role, within certain limits. By opposing Vichy, De Gaulle became, in a certain sense independently of his will, a figure of the "Left." In the territories which he controls, he maintains the laws of the Republic and he accords Syria and Lybia a formal independence which Blum himself was unable to achieve.

Washington's Deal With Darlan

When the American troops debarked in North Africa, Washington placed in power one of the most compromised representatives of Vichy, Petain's heir, Admiral Darlan. We have already had occasion to discuss the reasons for this action in this magazine.* It revealed the emptiness of all the democratic phrases with which Anglo-American imperialism tries to cover itself, and it gave a heavy blow to all those whose function is to disguise the present war as a struggle for liberty.

On the day after the American debarkment in North Africa, Secretary Hull hastened to answer the numerous criticisms of the American policy of conciliation toward Vichy. He explained that this policy had not been motivated by "any fondness for the Vichy leaders," but solely as a means to obtain information and thus to prepare the occupation of North Africa. To answer his critics Hull made the American policy look more Machiavellian than it was in reality. Indeed, the American diplomatic service did not abstain, no more than any other diplomatic service, from recording all possible military information. Nevertheless, if Roosevelt sent Admiral Leahy to Vichy, it was not only for spying, but because of more profound political reasons: he knew that Petain represented the French bourgeoisie much more than did De Gaulle.

The deal with Darlan followed the same line. Darlan assured the continuity of political power of the bourgeoisie better than the "rebel" De Gaulle who had broken the discipline of the army. The collaboration of the Gaullists in France with the Stalinists could only add to Washington's apprehensions.

All information coming from Europe since November indicates that the repercussions of the deal with Darlan were pro-

*North Africa: A Lesson in Democracy, December 1942, and Darlan and the Liberals, January 1943.

found throughout the continent and that the illusions about the "United Nations," especially the United States, were badly shattered. One of the most recent indications is a statement made in London on February 1 by Rene Massigli, a former functionary of the Third Republic, who had just escaped from France to join De Gaulle:

"The French people at first regarded the Admiral's rise to power as a farce, but later showed anxiety as his influence grew and now viewed his 'disappearance' with immense relief."

His "disappearance" was his assassination, which Roosevelt was quick to condemn as "first degree murder." We can easily imagine that the French people had a different opinion about the end of one of their hangmen.

The circumstances of the assassination are now sufficiently clear, through the little information which the censor has allowed to pass and, equally, through the points that he has suppressed. In the turmoil of the first hours after the assassination, Washington—as could be expected—launched the theory that it was a Nazi deed, but this proved so untenable that Washington had to abandon it without more ado. With the present available information we can now reconstruct the drama. The Americans were aided in the preparation and the execution of the debarkment by some Frenchmen in North Africa. They belonged in general to the patriotic and democratic petty-bourgeois circles: lower ranking officers, students, etc. There was a group among them, it appears, that seized Admiral Darlan in Algiers on November 8 and turned him over to the Americans who had just landed. The Americans lost no time in restoring Darlan to all his former powers, investing him with the sacred mission of "freeing" France. We can imagine the anger of the men who had risked their lives believing they were overthrowing Darlan. The angry petty bourgeois readily grabs a revolver. Darlan was killed by such a young Frenchman who, without revolutionary perspectives, saw no other solution to the Darlan deal than an individual attempt to get out of the impasse.

Perspectives

Darlan's place was taken by Giraud, a general until then outside of politics but known for his Rightist sentiments. Darlan's advice was followed even after his death. Thus Peyrouton, former Vichy Minister of the Interior who introduced the Nazi police system in France, has just been named the new governor of Algeria. As we learn from the January 31 *New York Times*, "early in December Darlan proposed that Peyrouton be sent for," and, at Casablanca, Roosevelt approved the choice of the defunct admiral.

The consequences of such a policy are easy to imagine. The North African dispatches have informed us of the political apathy reigning among the population. A cable dated January 27 declared:

"As far as the mass of Frenchmen is concerned, the honeymoon is over in dealing with the Americans. Those who retain a lingering faith in America as a champion of the oppressed pray that the United States will retrieve the political situation 'before it is too late.' Distrust springs mainly from the 'new collaboration' of French officials who were lately pro-Vichy and pro-German with American officers."

Washington's principal argument to justify its policy was that in Algeria the population was 90 per cent for Petain. This is no doubt true for the milieu in which Mr. Murphy and General Eisenhower circulate. The answer to this impudent claim is very simple: "We dare you to call for an immediate general election. If you are right you have nothing to lose." Of course,

such an answer would demand a political firmness far beyond the power of the Gaullist movement. Its fundamental solidarity with Washington and London on the question of the war absolutely prohibits it from having enough courage and initiative to undertake such a campaign.

It is interesting to examine De Gaulle's arguments in his controversy with Washington. They will enable us to better understand the character of the movement. In a December 6 radio appeal, De Gaulle declared in speaking of Darlan and his confederates:

"The nation will not permit that these men, having failed in foreign war and feeling themselves condemned, should save themselves by *creating conditions from which would spring civil war.*" (Our italics.)

Thus, according to the general, the deal with Darlan is dangerous because it revives class antagonisms. Since then, several spokesmen of the Gaullist movement have underlined the fact that Washington's policy in North Africa increases the danger of communism in France, against which the Gaullist movement is a much better guarantee than Darlan or Giraud.

These declarations show us that De Gaulle, yesterday still ignorant of politics, has quickly appropriated all the old arguments of the democratic conciliators who always present themselves as a better protection against the revolution than the reactionaries. We must recognize that in the present case there is a great deal of truth in the declarations of De Gaulle and his friends. If De Gaulle had joined Darlan or even Giraud, the resistance movement in France proper would have undergone a great shift to the left. By his refusal of reconciliation De Gaulle retains a popularity which can be worth much more for the bourgeois order in the future.

Concrete political estimates are so much the more difficult now that France is muzzled. The French in North Africa constitute only a weak minority amid a large Arab population. The Gaullists are a few thousand emigres. In such circumstances the role of individuals may be especially important. Thus the division of the two movements unquestionably reflects, to a certain degree, the rivalry between the two generals; De Gaulle made a difficult decision when the military situation was more grave than now and he firmly intends not to leave the fruits of it to the eleventh hour penitents. However, it would be light-minded to see in this merely a personal feud.

De Gaulle does not want to cut himself off from the resistance movement in France proper, and in a way he leans on this movement. One of his aims in doing so is, of course, to prevent the movement from going further to the left. Giraud, and behind him Washington, dread this illegal movement and prefer to have no contact with it. They intend to resolve the military problem without worrying about anything else. Thus it is interesting to note that Giraud has not yet addressed a single appeal to the French people. Probably he does not yet know whether he should address himself to the Vichy gang or to those whom it persecutes!

The American invasion of North Africa marks the end of the regime which was born at Vichy in July 1940. This regime could maintain a precarious existence in face of Germany only because it controlled colonies beyond the reach of Hitler. Naturally, the limits of maneuver were very narrow. But with the American debarkment they have been reduced to nothing. Laval is now little more than a clerk for the German administration.

The military developments lead, at a more or less rapid tempo, to the defeat of Germany. Once more the bourgeoisie in France itself is going to turn toward America. Giraud represents, much more than De Gaulle, the axis around which the

political regrouping of the French bourgeoisie will take place. Notwithstanding Roosevelt's declaration that the French people will themselves decide their future, Washington could not have failed to give guarantees for the future to Giraud and to the proconsuls who surround him. A troubled epoch approaches and it is wise to make arrangements in advance!

If De Gaulle is now left to one side, this does not mean that

he has ended his political role. After the collapse of the Hitlerian empire, Anglo-American imperialism will find the masses in France embittered by poverty and oppression and not at all disposed to knuckle down to the old rulers. If a Giraud does not work, then imperialism must try a De Gaulle. But it is a question whether any cover, even the most left, can save this rotten order.

Ten Years of the New Deal

By WILLIAM F. WARDE

The close of a decade of Democratic Party rule under Roosevelt provides an appropriate occasion to survey the evolution and results of the New Deal.

Roosevelt's New Deal was a political product of the world crisis of 1929. By 1932 this crisis had shaken the superstructure of the mightiest capitalist state in the world. The pre-1929 appearance of impregnability of American capitalism, which had captivated the imagination of the bourgeois world, was seen to be a myth. The old social equilibrium, based upon the confirmed allegiance to monopoly capitalism of the middle classes and the support of the better-paid layers of the proletariat, was shattered. The class struggle, hitherto held back by the labor aristocracy's share in the spoils arising from the privileged world position of American imperialism, was now unleashed.

Germination of the New Deal

In removing Hoover and electing Roosevelt to office by a tremendous majority, the American people indicated their desire for a radical change. But Roosevelt was the candidate of the Democratic Party which, despite its more liberal language, was directed by men who were devoted to the interests of the capitalist class. Roosevelt himself frankly stated many times that he "cherished our system of private property and free enterprise and was determined to preserve it as the foundation of our traditional American system." But Roosevelt also understood—what the ultra-reactionaries did not—the necessity for making certain reforms, or the appearance of reforms, in order to revive American capitalism and restore the masses' confidence in it. "The most serious threat to our institutions," he pointed out in 1936, "comes from those who refuse to face the need for change. *Liberalism becomes the protection for the far-sighted conservative.*"

In 1932 two courses opened out before the American bourgeoisie. One was the program of naked repression which had already manifested itself in Hoover's handling of the Bonus March in Washington and Henry Ford's shooting of the demonstrating Ford workers in Dearborn. This was the road which could culminate only in fascist reaction, the organic political tendency of monopoly capitalism.

This course—the course of Italy in the post-war depression—was pursued in Germany, Austria and in Spain. In these countries, after prolonged and exhausting civil conflicts, the capitalist rulers emerged from their national crises by overthrowing bourgeois democracy, setting up dictatorial regimes, and refashioning society along totalitarian lines. Hitler came to power in Germany at the same time as Roosevelt in the United States, and as a result of the same world crisis of capitalism.

But the "Democratic" representatives of the plutocracy here

followed a policy different from that of the most ruthless representatives of monopoly capitalism in Germany. Roosevelt took the road of reform rather than the road of fascist reaction. Despite the opposition of a significant section of Big Business to Roosevelt, the bourgeoisie of the United States was able to reconcile itself to his policy of concessions. Why?

The reason lies, not in the greater kindness and devotion to democracy of the American plutocracy, but in their favored material circumstances. The American plutocracy was the richest, most powerful and privileged section of the world bourgeoisie. Just as many American workers were able to buy automobiles, so the rulers of America could still afford to buy their way out of the crisis by throwing certain sops to the labor and farmer aristocracy.

In addition, on the political side, the policy of concessions was cheaper than a fascist dictatorship, since the drive to institute totalitarianism involves the sharpening of the class struggle and runs the risk of provoking civil war.

Consequently the Democratic Party leaders at the beginning of the decline of monopoly capitalism in the United States were enabled to push through the policy advocated by Machiavelli during the rise of capitalism centuries ago. If the possibility exists, advised Machiavelli, it is better to temporize with, rather than violently attack, an evil that has sprung up within a state, and "becomes so great as to fill everyone with apprehension." Roosevelt's theatrical thunder against the "economic royalists" did not much alarm the most calculating monopolists. They recognized its political necessity. They also felt they had enough pressure at their disposal to bring the heads of any capitalist party into line, whenever they tended toward too great an independence.

The Morgans, Rockefellers and their associates had already gone through similar experiences with the reform administrations and policies of Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson. Both of these presidents, after their first fanfare of liberalism, had been forced to knuckle down to Big Business. Roosevelt was of the same caliber.

Moreover, in 1932 fascist reaction lacked the mass base necessary to the rule of all types of government. The road of reform, on the other hand, corresponded to the desires, interests and social position of light industry, the petty bourgeoisie and those sections of the proletariat under their ideological sway.

Thus Roosevelt, as an opportunist leader of imperialist democracy, simply acted in accord with Machiavelli's dictum that "a republic or a prince must feign to do of their own liberality that to which necessity compels them." Assuredly Roosevelt had not before this time been distinguished by exceptional liberality in public affairs. His party platform and campaign speeches in 1932 were remarkably conservative, considering the profundity of the crisis. Nevertheless, he found it necessary to

lavish talk about a New Deal, without specifying precisely what the content and objectives of this New Deal were to be. The masses took Roosevelt's promises at face value in their frantic desire to snatch at any straw of salvation.

If the reformist side of Roosevelt's policies disturbed some monopolists, his solicitude for the military establishment was reassuring to them. The world crisis indicated that war would stand first on the agenda in the not distant future. American capitalism required a two-sided program to emerge from its crisis: a domestic policy of reform combined with a foreign policy of maneuvering into position for the developing world war. Roosevelt fulfilled both of these needs with his New Deal program and his Big Navy outlook. Just as Harding and Coolidge expressed in their personalities and programs the era of class equilibrium and boundless profits, just as Hoover had exemplified the headlessness and helplessness of the big bourgeoisie in the depths of the crisis, so Roosevelt, former Assistant Secretary of the Navy, fulfilled the new demands of American capitalism by combining pseudo-liberalism with the Big Navy tradition of the American imperialist theoretician, Alfred Thayer Mahan. Outstanding historical figures invariably reflect the needs of the class, or a layer of the class, which thrusts them forward and maintains them in power.

The New Deal Blooms

When Roosevelt came to power in March 1933, certain professional reactionaries denounced him as a "Communist." The Stalinists assailed him as a "fascist." Roosevelt's own partisans championed him as the savior of the "forgotten man." Father Coughlin, clerical-fascist demagogue, who advocated New Deal panaceas over the radio, insisted it was "Roosevelt or Ruin."

The Trotskyists, on the other hand, defined his regime as essentially a political instrument of monopoly capitalism, designed to rescue American imperialism from the worst crisis in its history, to tie the working class to the state, and prepare a new war for world domination. Let us quote from the thesis of the Third National Convention of the (Trotskyist) Communist League of America on "Position and Perspectives of American Imperialism," published in October 1933:

"In the absence of a proletarian revolution, a breathing space for American capitalism is possible. It still has very powerful resources at its disposal. It is now attempting to consolidate its position by a process of sweeping reorganizations.

"This reorganization finds its popular expression in the NRA section of the New Deal program, which is presented as a vehicle of recovery. On the one hand it aims ostensibly at the restoration and stabilization of the purchasing power of the broad masses, though distinctly on the lowest possible level, together with an upturn in commodity prices to re-establish the profit inducement for capital investments. On the other hand—and this is far more fundamental—it aims at greater concentration of industry and centralization of capital, the strengthening of monopoly capital under governmental regulation and support, to prepare the basis for new imperialist expansions. This will facilitate the quick transformation of industry to a war footing when deemed necessary. In a word, the reorganization of American economy aims at the restoration of capitalist profits and has nothing in common with planned economy.

'Flowing from the fundamental aim of strengthening of monopoly capitalism the NRA is designed as a means of regulating social relations, that is, class relations. Its whole pattern is interwoven with attempts to elevate the system of class collaboration to the status of a permanent institution."

Ten years of Roosevelt's rule have shown that this characterization came closest to reality. In the early days of his regime Roosevelt hastily propped up all the sagging pillars of American capitalism. At the expense of the middle classes and working masses he aided the plutocracy with huge loans and whipped recalcitrants into line through the intervention of the state apparatus. He mollified important sections of the middle classes and light industry by increasing the purchasing power of the masses, providing credit, farm subsidies, etc. He gave just enough alms to the unemployed and enough concessions to organized labor to allay their rebellion.

The most important concession to labor was Section 7-A of the National Industrial Recovery Act, which, in addition to putting Big Business on its feet, gave legal recognition to the workers' right to organize into unions of their own choice and engage in collective bargaining. Section 7-A granted the workers only what they had already won through their own struggles. It was conceded in the face of the obvious fact that a great new upsurge of trade unionism was beginning on a scale far beyond the capacity of either the industrialists or their government to stem.

Thus Roosevelt's various reform measures and administrative agencies soldered around a new governmental center the social forces which had been sundered during the previous four years. Through the NRA codes even the most short-sighted and ignorant monopolists were forced to help the bourgeoisie as a whole escape from possible catastrophe. At the same time the Roosevelt administration began to draw the trade unions into the embrace of the state.

Although Roosevelt succeeded in securing a new political equilibrium, economic stability eluded him. Unemployment continued on an unprecedented scale. Relief was a bare pittance; wages were far below the accustomed standards; the agricultural crisis was only slightly mitigated; the memory of 1929 profits irritated Big Business.

Roosevelt could not prevent the struggle between monopoly capital and the industrial proletariat from unfolding. No sooner had capitalist economy started to revolve at a faster rate after 1933, than its principal driving force, the proletariat, began to move on its own account. The invigoration of the AFL and the formation of new industrial unions in the CIO were the chief organizational expressions of the growing power of the American labor movement.

The most accurate index of the struggle between capital and labor under the New Deal is the table of strike statistics. This struggle reached its peak during 1937, when there were 4,740 strikes embracing 1,860,621 individuals, almost 20 per cent of the organized workers. This was the greatest strike wave in American history. 1937 also witnessed the big sit-down strikes, in which the revolutionary spirit and potentialities of the American workers flashed forth.

This feverish activity in the ranks of the working class was accompanied by constant ferment amongst the petty bourgeoisie. During the first part of the New Deal this ferment expressed itself in a series of reform crusades. Technocracy, the Utopian movement, the Epic plan of Upton Sinclair, the Townsend Old Age Pension Plan, and a half dozen others like them, enjoyed a brief hour in the sun and then passed into oblivion. To the extreme right, more reactionary and outright fascist currents began to take shape. Huey Long, Coughlin, Pelley and his Silver Shirts bid for leadership of the exasperated petty bourgeois in competition with the Ku Klux Klan, the Black Legion, and Mayor Hague. As in Italy and Germany

these groups found financial support in the Big Business interests who most openly resented the New Deal.

This unceasing political effervescence of the petty bourgeoisie during the most favorable phase of the New Deal, as well as the militant actions of the proletariat, was evidence that Roosevelt's reforms had succeeded in solving none of the basic problems of American society.

Nevertheless, owing to the upswing of the economic cycle and the absence of any serious political alternative, Roosevelt was returned to office in 1936 by a huge popular vote.

The 1937 Depression

In 1937 the industrial index which had been slowly crawling upward since 1933 took an abrupt plunge downward. The unexpected character of this reversal and the sharp rate of decline indicated that American capitalism, the giant of world capitalism, was mortally ill.

This new stage in the chronic crisis of American capitalism wrought significant changes in the policy and outlook of the most advanced sections of the various classes. To the monopolists it indicated that the breathing spell granted by the New Deal reforms was coming to a close. The White House became increasingly aware of the bankruptcy of its reform measures. At the same time it became more and more evident that Hitler, the Mikado, and Mussolini were preparing to throw down the gauntlet to American, French and British imperialism. This conjuncture of domestic and foreign developments dictated a reorientation in the activities and outlook of the Roosevelt administration.

What had hitherto been kept in the background of the New Deal now came forward rapidly. Emphasis upon domestic reform was supplanted by concentration on foreign policy. The major domestic developments, the tendency of labor to assume an independent political role, sketched in the formation of Labor's Non-Partisan League and the American Labor Party, the spread of despair and fascist sentiments among middle-class elements, the slackening of heavy industry, called for a foreign diversion. These internal needs coincided with the external need to meet the challenge of German and Japanese imperialism on the world arena. The turning point came with Roosevelt's famous speech in Chicago, October 5, 1937, calling for "quarantine of the aggressors."

The 1937 depression was halted and reversed, not by any normal upswing of the economic cycle, but by the speeding up of war preparations not only in this country but throughout the world. Step by step, the superstructure of administrative agencies created from 1933 to 1937 was adapted to suit the needs of the war program. The concessions to the masses (CCC, WPA, FSA, NYA) were curtailed or abolished, while the departments ministering to Big Business (RFC, Export-Import Bank, etc.), were enormously expanded. Thus the main agencies of capitalist recovery in the first phase of Rooseveltism were revamped into means of mobilizing the national resources for the impending war. The New Deal's huge public works at Tennessee Valley, Boulder Dam, and Grand Coulee, which were originally depicted as providing cheap electricity to the masses and water for municipal and farm use, ended up as indispensable adjuncts of war industry.

The administration likewise endeavored to convert the workers' organizations into instruments for mobilizing labor for the war and to yoke it to the state apparatus. Thus the reform measures of the regime in its initial phase began to reveal their reactionary imperialist content.

The immediate effect of war preparations was to intensify the struggle between capital and labor. The expansion of war industry lessened unemployment and increased the confidence of the workers and the bargaining power of the trade unions. The spurt in corporation profits convinced the masses of greater possibilities of securing increased wages. Hence from 1937 to the outbreak of the Second World War the trade unions were able to strengthen their economic positions.

This situation was sharply reversed the minute war broke out. The administration forced the union leadership to abandon the right to strike, imposed longer hours and lower hourly wages, and launched an assault on overtime pay. Whereas under fascism the monopolists wiped out social reforms and democratic rights, and annihilated the labor organizations, the imperialist democrats, obliged to accommodate themselves for a time to the existence of the trade unions, set out to transform them into obedient appendages of the capitalist state apparatus. This program of taming the trade unions is in war and peace the typical feature of the policy of imperialist democracy toward organized labor.

Fruits of the New Deal

The Roosevelt regime started out with the slogans of reform at home and the Good Neighbor policy abroad. But Roosevelt's road ultimately coincided with that of Woodrow Wilson—and Adolph Hitler. As Trotsky wrote in 1939: "The New Deal policy with its fictitious achievements and its very real increase in the national debt is unavoidably bound to culminate in ferocious capitalist reaction and a devastating explosion of imperialism. In other words, it is directed into the same channels as the policy of fascism." Not his earlier reforms but the imminence of war gave Roosevelt a third term.

The war marked a breaking point in American history and in the course of the Roosevelt regime. It has modified all, and reversed many, of the pre-war political trends. It immediately smothered the smoldering class struggle under the official blanket of "national unity." The outright fascist movements crept into their crevices almost overnight; their chief financial sources dried up as the monopolists dipped into profits exceeding those of the First World War. With the industrial index shooting to unprecedented heights, the urgent political need for fascist brutality died down. The trade unions were shackled, their leaders more openly converted into agents of Administration policies, the rank and file threatened from all sides. The draft cut wide swathes among the most vigorous and militant trade unionists. Millions of youths and women unacquainted with trade unionism were swept into the expanding war industries. While the trade unions grew in size and number, their direct bargaining power and political influence were cut down. Strikes dwindled toward zero.

On the other hand, the strengthening of the state apparatus and its executive head was enormously accelerated by the war. Roosevelt's personal power rose with the industrial index and the expansion of the battlefields. He was now no longer simply Mr. President but Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces. Decree law—the method of Bonapartistic rule—has been extended to all spheres.

This enhancement of the power of the state apparatus at the expense of the people, and—to an incomparably lesser degree—of the plutocracy itself, has characterized all phases of Roosevelt's administration. It is an index of the collectivist tendencies of modern industrialized economy and of the permanent crisis of American capitalism.

The war has given fresh impetus to all the basic tendencies

of monopoly capitalist economy. The concentration of industry and centralization of capital in Big Business hands proceeds apace while the middle classes, shaken by more than a decade of insecurity, are being ruined wholesale.

Here is the testimony of Senator James E. Murray, chairman of the Senate Committee on Small Business in the *New York Times* for January 26:

"Whereas there were 170,000 small plants in the United States in 1939, producing 70 per cent of all the manufactured goods that went into the trade of the country, while 100 big corporations produced the remaining 30 per cent, the 100 big corporations are now handling over 70 per cent, while a meager 10 per cent is accounted for by those of the 170,000 smaller plants which survived the economic hurricane of the past two years."

The Senator adds:

"If this spectacle of concentration continues, if eight of the 100 big firms are allowed to hog 31 per cent of the war contracts, tens of thousands of the smaller concerns will vanish. Bankruptcy will surely invade once prosperous small communities, ghost towns will rise all over America, and whole areas will become as effectively devastated as if by Hitler's barbarian legions."

The small merchants, the petty proprietors in the cities and on the farms, the civil servants, the professionals, feel the pinch of impoverishment through rising prices, soaring taxes, stringent rationing, etc. Marx's prediction that the middle classes must decay and disintegrate as capitalism develops, ridiculed by the bourgeois economists, has become a terrible reality in the mightiest stronghold of world capitalism.

Pearl Harbor became the signal for the monopoly capitalists to cast aside all restraint in the scramble for profits, to brush aside everything in their drive to extend the stranglehold of monopoly. With government aid they are gathering the bulk of the national resources under their control. The government has already built more than twelve billion dollars worth of new plants for the big corporations, guaranteed their profits for the duration of the war.

At the same time the problems of monopoly capitalism and its government are heaping up and becoming intensified. The accumulated wealth of the past decades together with the resources of generations to come have already been thrown into the struggle for world domination. In such a conflict there can be no real victors. Revolutionary developments, impending in all parts of the globe, present a mortal menace to American imperialism.

At home there loom economic, financial and political crises of hitherto unknown proportions. "Winning the peace" confronts monopoly capitalism with as many problems as engagement in the war. Where will jobs be found for the millions in the armed forces and the tens of millions from the war-expanded industries in a devastated world?

In the face of these real perspectives and present problems, the preoccupation of the powers-that-be with their profits, their day-dreams of world conquest, their vision of a world police system bear the features of delirium.

Regardless of the outcome of this war and the date of its conclusion, the Roosevelt regime is laying the basis for a revival of the class struggle in the United States on an incomparably broader scale and in a far more developed form. Although Roosevelt succeeded in postponing the final showdown between the contending classes for a time, he settled none of the burning issues of the class struggle. These are returning for reconsideration. A ruthless, greedy, domineering plutocracy, a ruined, pauperized, discontented middle class, a well-organized

and politically awakening proletariat are, each in their own way, preparing for new battles.

All the political and economic processes in the country are converging toward the new arena. Hordes of rural youth are being thrown into the melting pot of the armed forces with millions of city trade unionists. The Negroes, most oppressed section of the population, are gaining new self-confidence and determination to fight for their rights. Fifteen million women have already been torn out of their households and placed at the point of production where they can see with their own eyes the value and necessity of labor organization. Millions of youth have been sucked into the vortex of the war.

Finally, the working class is becoming politically educated at a rapid rate. The concentration of all authority in Washington is teaching the workers the limits of pure-and-simple trade unionism and the necessity for combined independent political organization and action. The class struggles under Roosevelt from 1934 to 1941, interrupted by the war, were no more than a rehearsal for greater battles to come.

The Real Results of Roosevelt's Rule

Roosevelt's regime will go down in history as the regime of most grandiloquent pretensions and most abysmal failures. During his first campaign in 1932 Roosevelt promised to balance the budget if elected president. On June 30, 1932, the Federal debt amounted to a little more than \$19 billions. By January 1943 Congress was preparing to raise the legal debt limit to \$220 billions—and this astronomic sum represented merely the beginning of war expenditures.

Roosevelt promised to cut down the number of government employees. Today the state apparatus numbers over three millions without counting the ten millions or more in the armed forces.

Roosevelt promised peace. The United States is now involved in the greatest of wars.

Roosevelt promised prosperity. After a decade of fluctuating insecurity for the masses, today with production going full blast, the American living standards are being reduced to "bed-rock."

In 1932 Roosevelt declared that his administration would "drive the money changers out of the temple." In 1942-43 Big Business and banking play the leading role in war production and finance in Washington as well as in the economy. Roosevelt was going to curb the monopolies. Instead, the anti-trust laws are being set aside and government suits against the big corporations over cartel agreements with foreign trusts have been suspended. Never has the power of monopoly in American life been greater than today. Never has that power been exercised more nakedly, brazenly and ruthlessly.

Roosevelt promised to save the middle classes. They are being destroyed.

Roosevelt was elected as a friend of the Negro people. They suffer discrimination in the country and in the armed forces as before. His administration did not even pass anti-lynch legislation or abolish the poll tax.

Roosevelt posed as the friend of labor. Today the unions have been deprived of their strike weapon, wages have been fixed, while prices and taxes soar.

Roosevelt promised to make liberalism prevail; today the reactionaries in his own party are dictating official policies.

Roosevelt promised to ameliorate class bitterness and curb the class struggle. His administration is preparing the ground for an explosive outbreak of class struggle.

Such are the real results of the past decade of Democratic Party rule. Roosevelt's New Deal has turned out to be the same grim fiction as Wilson's "New Freedom." The war has disclosed the true character of Roosevelt's regime as a political instrument of monopoly capitalism.

The historical significance of the New Deal consists in the fact that it has demonstrated the inability of even the strongest

section of world capitalism to solve the problems of present-day society. The experiment of reforming American capitalism has been tried on a gigantic scale and found wanting. Out of the New Deal's debacle, new roads open out before the American people, requiring new methods, new leadership, new forms of political organization. These are being shaped in the crucible of the war which has crowned ten years of Roosevelt's rule.

The German Revolution in the Leninist Period

By MARC LORIS

EDITOR'S NOTE: In our December 1942 and January 1943 issues we published two articles by Walter Held, "Why the German Revolution Failed." The following article is an answer to Held. Other comrades have also indicated their intention to contribute articles to this discussion of a profoundly important question which has been the subject of controversy for two decades.

It is not without some embarrassment that I undertake a criticism of our comrade Walter Held's article "Why the German Revolution Failed." The terrible conditions of the reactionary period which we are going through prevent Held himself from participating in the discussion. In spite of Held's enforced silence, however, I feel forced to criticize his article, because it contains a number of errors on questions of prime importance for the revolutionary education of proletarian militants. For the very reason that his article contains excellent truths, very useful to recall, it is so much the more necessary to criticize it: nothing, indeed, is more dangerous than an error which takes refuge behind a great truth.

Held strongly emphasizes, and rightly so, that without a tested party with a firm leadership it is impossible to lead a proletarian revolution to a successful conclusion. This great truth was certainly demonstrated positively in October 1917, in Russia and negatively in Germany in 1918-19. Held, however, gives to this truth an abstract character.

Appropos of the various events of 1919-23 in Germany or Italy, Held incessantly uses the same expressions: "The conception [of the party] was not adequate from the very beginning," "the attempt to [build a party] was too late," "such an attempt [to build a party] was doomed to failure because there was a vacuum," etc. Held thus turns in a vicious circle: the party cannot be formed because it does not yet exist. But there was a time when the one real party that he recognizes, the party of the October revolution, also did not exist. How did Lenin and his co-workers pass from the non-existence to the existence of a fully-formed and tested party? Held is under the illusion that he has analyzed this important question and that he applies what he has thus learned to the events of 1917-23. In reality, however, he simply reiterates, over and over again, that such a party was not created in Germany. As he must get out of this vicious circle one way or another he ends up by breaking through it haphazardly and arbitrarily. As the non-existence of the party is his sole explanation for everything, so he fetishises one incident in the party's history into the sole explanation for its non-existence. He stumbles, in the history of the German movement, upon the Levi case, and is obliged to exaggerate and distort it in order to construct out of it a

cause for the defeat of the revolutionary wave of 1917-23 and thereby for the degeneration of the Communist International and the Soviet state. Held has thus been led to a veritable revision of the history of the Comintern and the origins of our movement.

To clarify all the points raised by Held would mean to write a history of the Communist International. I will limit myself here to trying to correct his evaluation of a number of important facts. I will try to show how he was led to such inexact evaluations through a false method. It is to be hoped that this discussion will inspire many young members of our party to become much more familiar with the rich history of the first years of the Communist International.

The Second World War once more brings forward to our generation, under broadly analogous conditions, the tasks which were not resolved at the end of the First World War. The history of the Leninist period of the Communist International is of more burning significance today than ever before.

Paul Levi

In order to explain his criticism of the leadership of the German and Russian Communist parties, Held bestows the greatest eulogies on the pamphlet that Paul Levi wrote after the March Action of 1921 in Germany. He writes:

"Immediately after the close of the event, he [Levi] published a brilliantly written pamphlet, 'Our Road: Against Putschism.' Outside of Rosa Luxemburg's Spartacus Program, this is one of the most noteworthy contributions to be found in the whole history of the German Communist Party."

Held does not dwell long on the circumstances of the publication of this pamphlet. Only indirectly does it appear in his article that Levi's criticism of the leadership of which he was a member was made outside the party.

After the defeat of the March Action in Central Germany, the Communist Party underwent the most severe blows. In addition to the military and police repression there was the activity of armed reactionary bands such as the *Orgesch*. The courts unhesitatingly handed out long sentences to the Communist workers. Leaders were hunted down and arrested. One of them, Sylt, was killed "while attempting to escape." The bourgeois and Social-Democratic press was waging a violent campaign against the Communists, accusing them of sabotage, arson and murder. The entire bourgeois rabble and its social-democratic lackeys were crying incessantly about "the putsch." It was under these conditions that Paul Levi, on April 3, 1921, sent his pamphlet to press without the knowledge, much less the

consent, of the party. Naturally, Levi understood the term "putsch" differently from the anti-Communist hounds, who so described any revolutionary action. Later we shall discuss whether Levi was justified in calling the March Action a "putsch" in the Marxist sense of the word. But if we admit for the moment that he was entirely right on the political plane, the irresponsible manner in which he presented his critique could not and did not fail to furnish a weapon against the party.

The pamphlet was distinguished above all by its complete lack of solidarity with the party. It threw the grossest insults publicly at the party leaders. It used unsparingly the cheapest demagoguery. The following is one example among many others:

"You orphans and widows of the fallen proletarians! Do not hate capitalism; do not hate the Social-Democratic lackeys and hangmen, do not hate the Independent Socialist rascals who have stabbed the fighters in the back. Do hate the leaders of the Communist Party! And you workers who, maltreated in the jails, still raise high your bloody heads, convinced that you have fallen into the hands of the enemy in a gallant fight for the interests of the proletariat—you are mistaken. You have no right to be proud of your wounds; you are victims of new Ludendorffs who cynically and frivolously sent you to your death!"*

The leaders of the party are thus compared publicly, by a member of the leadership, to Ludendorff. Any honest member of the party could do no more than remain impervious to Levi's arguments. By his irresponsible conduct Levi discredited his political critique of the leadership's errors and thus helped the leadership to avoid its political responsibility. As Lenin noted:

"Levi acted like an 'intellectual anarchist' (if I am not mistaken, this is called *Edelanarchist* in German), instead of acting like an organized member of the proletarian Communist International. Levi transgressed discipline. By his series of extraordinarily stupid errors Levi rendered more difficult the concentration of attention on the gist of the matter." (*Works*, 2nd Russian edition, XXVI, p. 489.)

Held passes very lightly over this whole problem of Levi's conduct. Dealing with the criticisms of Levi that Lenin made in his conversations with Clara Zetkin, Held writes that, according to Lenin, "Levi's critique lacked the feeling of solidarity with the party and had embittered the comrades by its tone, rather than by its content." And Held comments:

"This argument sounds surprising, coming from a politician who had always used the sharpest tone in his polemics and had ridiculed every criticism of sharp tone as evidence of political weakness."

Thus Held reduces the whole question to "tone," without quoting Lenin's further declaration to Zetkin:

"[Levi] tore the party to pieces. He did not criticize, but was one-sided, exaggerated, even malicious; he gave nothing to which the Party could usefully turn. He lacks the spirit of solidarity with the party." (Clara Zetkin, *Reminiscences of Lenin*, International Publishers, 1934, p. 27.)

Indeed, Lenin knew how to employ "the sharpest tone in his polemics." But one must note that either this "tone" was directed against the enemies of the party and not against his own party or, in polemicalizing against another party member, even where he used a sharp tone, Lenin always made clear that they both stood together within the borders of the same party. Levi did not understand how to discern these borders. He publicly "tore" his own party "to pieces."

*As quoted in *Die Kommunistische Internationale*, 1921, No. 17, p. 71, from the first edition of Levi's pamphlet. In the second edition of Levi's pamphlet, which is now the easiest to come by, this sentence has been somewhat altered.

Having reduced the affair to a question of tone, Held evidently cannot comprehend the attitude of Lenin and Trotsky. He writes:

"It remains difficult to understand how Lenin and Trotsky could follow the Third World Congress in placing the form above the content" [of Levi's criticism].

But the question was by no means one of "tone" or "form"; the principles of democratic centralism, the very conception of a party, were at stake. By passing so lightly over this whole aspect of the problem, Held betrays a real blindness to organizational problems.

Under the given conditions the first duty of the German party was to cut immediately all ties with Levi, independently of any further political discussion. To act otherwise would have been to erase all party boundaries; indeed, for the party it would have been suicide.

On April 29, 1921, the Executive Committee of the Communist International adopted a resolution approving Levi's expulsion:

"Having taken cognizance of Paul Levi's pamphlet 'Our Way—Against Putschism,' the ECCI approves Paul Levi's expulsion from the United German Communist Party and thus from the Communist International. Even if Paul Levi, in his appraisal of the March Action, were nine-tenths right, he should be expelled because of his unheard of breach of discipline and because of the stab in the back to the party that Levi's action represents in the present situation."

Today, with the entire experience of the last 22 years that separates us from this declaration, I do not see a single word which could be changed.

Certainly Levi's conduct hardly tallies with the flattering picture which Held paints of him. Let us try to construct a more balanced portrait. Levi was a lawyer, the son of a rich banker. He came into contact with the Social-Democratic movement before 1914 in the course of defending party members in court. However, he did not become really integrated in the labor movement. During the war he became an internationalist in his views, but did not join in the underground work of the Spartacists. The war over, it was above all his abilities as writer and orator, in view of the lack of cadres, that carried him to the first rank. Those who worked at his side from 1919 to 1921 report that in the difficult periods he sometimes spoke of retiring into private life, that he was not made for the struggle, etc. Zetkin, while defending Levi to Lenin, nevertheless said: "After the murder of Rosa [Luxemburg], Karl [Liebknecht] and Leo [Jogisches] he had to take over the leadership; he has regretted it often enough."

He never gave up, it is said, collecting antiques. The dilettante and the esthete were always present in him. Lenin told Zetkin that already during the war he "was aware of a certain coldness in his [Levi's] attitude to the workers. Something of a 'please keep your distance.'" Extremely interesting for the light it throws on Levi's personality is the letter which he addressed to Lenin on March 29, 1921.* In this letter he was already condemning the March Action, just ended, as a "fatal putsch" and explained what his conduct was going to be:

"I will also now go no further than to write something like a pamphlet in which I will set down my conceptions; I will neither bring the case before the authorities who are now considering meeting in Germany, nor before the International Executive Committee. The comrades who bear the responsibility should not feel hindered by me."

These lines might have been written by anyone but a revo-

*Reproduced in *Die Kommunistische Internationale*, 1921, No. 17, p. 70.

lutionist. Intellectual smugness, lack of solidarity with his organization, condescension and even a certain contempt, and some fatalism—all these can be seen in his words. But even more is involved. This letter was written four days before he sent his pamphlet to press! Either he was guilty of duplicity in reassuring Lenin or, more likely, he reveals here his personal and political instability.

The March Action

We must now ask ourselves: was Levi's estimate of the March Action entirely right politically? In his pamphlet he denounced the party's adventurism and qualified the March Action as a "putsch"; it was even for him "the biggest Bakuninist putsch in all history." Held, without saying so specifically, seems to adopt Levi's version completely. He speaks of "putschist riots" and of "putschists." He gives a highly colored description of the March Action with the help of tragi-comic episodes borrowed from Levi's pamphlet. He neglects, however, to place it exactly in the trajectory of the German revolution.

This tacit adoption of Levi's appraisal and this absence of precise political analysis are all the more astonishing since Lenin and Trotsky were far from agreeing with Levi even on the political plane. Held, who could not fail to know the documents, did not undertake to discuss this point. He did not even note it.

Lenin wrote:

"Of course, Levi was not right in asserting that this action was a 'putsch'; this assertion of Paul Levi is nonsense." (I.c. XXVI, p. 488.)

The most complete and precise political analysis of the March Action is found in one of Trotsky's speeches before a membership meeting of the Moscow section of the Russian Communist Party at the end of July 1921, immediately after the Third Congress of the Comintern:*

"What was the gist of the March events? The proletarians of Central Germany, the workers of the mining and industrial regions comprised, until recently, even during the war, one of the most backward sections of the German working class. The majority of them followed not the Social Democrats, but bourgeois patriotic and clerical cliques; they remained loyal to the Kaiser, etc. Their living and working conditions were exceptionally hard. In relation to the workers of Berlin, they occupied a position approximately comparable in our country to that of the backward Ural regions with respect to the Petrograd workers.

"During a revolutionary epoch it frequently happens that the most oppressed and backward layer of the working class, when awakened for the first time by the thunder of events, enters into struggle with the greatest energy and demonstrates a readiness to fight under any and all conditions. And in so doing it far from always takes into account the general situation and the chances for victory, i.e., the requirements of revolutionary strategy. For instance, at a time when, after the experience of 1919-1920 the workers of Berlin or Saxony became much more cautious—and this has its negative as well as its

positive features—the workers of Central Germany continued to follow the line of stormy manifestations, strikes and demonstrations, carting out their foremen on wheelbarrows, holding meetings during working hours, and so forth. This was, naturally, not compatible with the sacred tasks of Ebert's republic. It is hardly astonishing that the conservative police republic decided, in the person of its police agent, the Social Democrat Hoersing, to carry out a sort of 'purge,' i.e., drive out the most revolutionary elements, arrest this or that Communist, etc.

"At just about this time—in the middle of March—the Central Committee of the German Communist Party broached point blank the idea of the need to carry out a more active revolutionary policy. The German party, you will recall, had been formed a short time before through the merger of the old Spartacus group with the majority of the Independent Socialists and this confronted the party in practice with the questions of mass actions. The idea of the need to effect a transition to a more active policy was absolutely correct. But what form did this actually assume? At a moment when the Social-Democratic policeman Hoersing issued an order demanding of the German workers what Kerensky's government used to demand in vain more than once in our country, namely, that no meetings be called during working hours, that factory equipment be looked upon as sacred property, etc.—at this very moment the Central Committee of the German Communist Party issued a summons for a general strike to aid the workers of Central Germany.

"A general strike is not something to which the working class rises easily at the first summons of the party—especially if it has previously suffered a number of defeats, and all the less so in a country where alongside the Communist Party there exist two other mass parties led by Social Democrats and where the trade union apparatus is hostile to us. Yet if we study for all that period the issues of the central organ of the Communist Party, *Die Rote Fahne*, we shall see that the call for the general strike came wholly unprepared. During the revolution in Germany there had been not a few blood-lettings and the police offensive against Central Germany could not have sufficed in and of itself to rouse the entire German working class to action. A serious mass action should obviously have been prepared for by a broad and energetic campaign of agitation with clear-cut slogans, hitting at a single point, and this agitation might have led to a more decisive summons to action only after one had probed out that the masses had been touched to the quick and were ready to move ahead on the road of revolutionary action. This is the ABC of revolutionary strategy, but precisely this ABC was completely violated during the March events.

"The police detachments had not yet reached the factories and mines of Central Germany when a general strike actually did break out there. I have already said that in Central Germany there was a readiness for immediate action and the call of the Central Committee met with immediate response. But elsewhere in the country something entirely different happened. Such an abrupt transition to action was necessitated neither by the foreign nor by the domestic position of Germany. The masses simply did not understand the summons.

"In the meantime, certain influential theoreticians of the German Communist Party, instead of recognizing that the call had been a mistake, proceeded to justify it by advancing a theory that during a revolutionary epoch we are obliged to carry out exclusively a policy of offensive, i.e., the policy of revolutionary offense. The March Action was thus proffered to the masses as an offensive. In the light of this, the entire situation can now be appraised. The offensive had been actually launched by Hoersing, the Social-Democratic policeman. This should have been utilized to rally all the workers for self-protection, for defense, for resistance, even on a modest scale at the beginning.

*This speech is reproduced in the collection of articles and speeches of Leon Trotsky published in Russian as *Five Years of the Comintern*. For those who do not read Russian, this speech is available in one of Trotsky's pamphlets published in 1921 by the Communist International, entitled *Die Neue Etappe* in German, *La Nouvelle Etape* in French, *Nueva Etapa* in Spanish. An English translation of the speech may have been published in the *International Press Correspondence*, but it is difficult to obtain this magazine for that period.

We must note that Trotsky's pamphlet treats in detail a large number of the questions raised by Held in his article. Held could not help but know the German version of this pamphlet. Strangely enough, he does not mention it, although he utilizes many less known documents.

"Should the ground prove favorable, should the agitation meet with a favorable response, then one could go on to the general strike. If the events proceed to unfold further, if the masses rise, if the internal ties among the workers grow stronger while the moods of indecision or splits arise in the opposing camp—then you issue the slogan to go over to the offensive. Should the ground prove unfavorable, however, should the condition and moods of the masses fail to correspond with the more resolute slogans—then it is necessary to sound a retreat and, if possible, to retreat in an organized way to the previous positions, gaining thereby the conquest of having probed the working class masses, having strengthened the internal ties and, what is most important, having raised the authority of the party as a leader wise under all conditions. But what does the leading center of the German party do?

"It seizes, so to say, the very first pretext, and before the pretext itself has become known to the workers and assimilated by them the Central Committee flings out the slogan for a general strike. And before the party has succeeded in rousing the workers of Berlin, Dresden, Munich to aid the workers of Central Germany—and this could perhaps have been achieved in the course of a few days if, without leaping over the events, the masses had been led forward planfully and firmly—before the party has fulfilled this work it is proclaimed that our action constitutes an offensive. . . . This alone meant ruining the whole undertaking and paralyzing the movement in advance. The self-evident thing is that during this particular stage the offensive came entirely from the enemies side. The need was to utilize the moral element of *defense*, the need was to call upon the proletariat of the whole country to rush to the aid of the workers of Central Germany. The form of support could have been varied in the initial period prior to the party's issuing the generalized slogan of action. The task of agitation was to rouse the masses, fix their attention on the events in Central Germany, smash politically the resistance of the labor bureaucracy and thus assure the genuinely *general* character of the strike as a possible basis for the further development of the revolutionary struggle.

"But what happened instead? The revolutionary and active minority of the proletariat found itself counterposed in action to the majority before this majority had the opportunity to grasp the meaning of the events. When the party came into a head-on collision with the passive and watchfully waiting working class, impatient elements here and there tried not by means of agitation but through mechanical measures, to drive the majority of the workers out into the streets. Assuredly, whenever the majority of workers favor a strike they can always compel a minority by forcefully shutting down the factories and realizing the general strike in action. This has happened more than once and will always happen and only simpletons would protest against it. But when the overwhelming majority of the working class does not take clear stock of a movement or does not sympathize with it, or does not believe in its successful outcome, when a minority plunges ahead and seeks to drive the workers into a general strike by mechanical measures, then this impatient minority, in the person of the party, can come into a hostile clash with the working class and it can break its own head."

As we see, Trotsky does not speak, and could not speak of "putsch." Classic examples of the putsch are: the attempted insurrection of Blanqui in Paris on August 14, 1870, the insurrection of December 1, 1924 organized by the Estonian Communist Party in Reval or, on a reactionary plane, Hitler's attempt at Munich on November 8, 1923. The March Action is far from this type. It embraced hundreds of thousands of workers. The slogan of political power never went beyond a propagandist character and played only an episodic role. The question of the arming of the workers was connected with the struggle against the fascist bands and not

to a direct struggle for power. Thus, the call for a general strike at Mansfeld declared:

"The workers should secure arms where they can, and smash the *Orgesch* [armed reactionaries] wherever possible."

The character of the movement in Central Germany in its early stages is typified by a resolution adopted by the several thousand workers of the Leunawerke factory on March 21:

"An action committee was elected which was put in charge of drawing up the following demands and taking the necessary measures to realize them.

"The following demands were formulated:

"1. Immediate withdrawal of the armed police and of the military occupation forces from Central Germany.

"2. Disarming of the *Orgesch* and its accomplices.

"3. Arming of the workers for defense against counter-revolutionary *coups*.

"4. If the factories are occupied [by the armed forces] all work is to be stopped immediately."

On March 24, the Central Committee of the party threw itself into the adventure of the general strike, which was a complete failure. The March Action is an example of a partial struggle where a minority is ready to go much further than the class as a whole. Such a situation always raises very difficult tactical problems for the revolutionary party. It is very possible that even with the most prudent policy an experienced party might not have been able to come out of that situation without having received serious blows. The Bolshevik Party was not able to avoid them in July 1917 and, as Trotsky notes, the March Action is related much more to a situation of this type than to a putsch.

The Third World Congress

On the political plane, Levi was of course much closer to the truth than the majority of the German party leadership. Nevertheless, our examination of the question of the "putsch" enables us to evaluate Held's criticism of the Third Congress of the Communist International. To Held, who adopted Levi's theory of the "putsch," any mention of the fact that the German Communist Party in spite of everything had participated in a great proletarian struggle is a "concession to the general rhetoric of the Congress." As neither Lenin nor Trotsky refrained from often mentioning this important fact, Held saw in this a part of the "compromise" that Lenin refers to with the majority of the German delegation. The remainder of the compromise, according to him, is the attitude of the Congress toward Levi.

Held writes that the main theses on tactics adopted by the Congress "anathematized the critics of the ultra-leftists." On this point, however, the theses stated:

"For the purpose of carefully weighing the possibilities of the struggle, the United German Communist Party must attentively listen to the voices which point out the difficulties of the actions and carefully examine their reasons for urging caution. But as soon as an action is decided upon by the party authorities, all comrades must submit to the decisions of the party and carry out the action. Criticism of the action must commence only after its completion and be practised only within the party organizations, giving due consideration to the situation wherein the party had found itself in the face of the enemy.

"Since Levi did disregard these obvious demands of party discipline and the conditions of party criticism, the Congress approves his expulsion from the party and declares it inadmissible for any members of the Communist International to cooperate politically with him." (*Theses and Resolutions of the*

Third World Congress of the Communist International, New York, 1921, p. 57.)

This is the "anathema" of which Held speaks. In reality, the resolution simply recalls the most elementary principles of revolutionary discipline. But we have already seen that Held has a real blindness toward the demands of democratic centralism. For him, the decision of the Third Congress is bureaucratism. Even worse, it is bureaucratism that caused the bankruptcy of the International and the degeneration of the Soviet state. Held writes:

"The delegates must have gained the impression that it would always be better to make mistakes following orders of the Comintern than to act correctly while violating discipline. In this way the foundation stone was laid for the development which was to change the Communist International in the course of a few years into a society of Mamelukes, in slavish dependency upon the ruling faction in Moscow and finally into the mere instrument of Stalin's opportunist nationalistic foreign policy."

And at the end of the article he mentions, among the causes of the failure of Lenin and Trotsky:

"the treatment of it [the German March Action] by the Third World Congress, where form was placed above content, and a bureaucratic conception of discipline was sanctioned."

Held's somewhat vulgar contrast between "to make mistakes following the order of the Comintern" and "to act correctly while violating discipline" is not correct, for there were not, as we shall see, any "orders of the Comintern" in the March Action.

With this criticism, which is certainly the weakest point of his article, Held comes dangerously close to the petty-bourgeois critics of Bolshevism, who also discovered that the "foundation stone" of Stalinism was laid by the Bolsheviks themselves. For them this stone is the discipline of the party, the prohibition of factions in the Bolshevik Party, or the repression of Kronstadt. For Held it is the "bureaucratic conception of discipline" of the International. We will return later to this method of interpretation. Let us now cite still more facts to elucidate the problem of Paul Levi.

Did Lenin and Trotsky give Levi's head to the leadership of the German party as their part of the "compromise" which Lenin mentioned at the Congress? Not at all. Lenin's attitude toward Levi is well known through his conversations with Clara Zetkin, as well as through his speeches at the Congress: Levi committed a serious breach of discipline, he attacked the party in an irresponsible and disloyal manner, and the Congress could not retract his expulsion; however, Levi has great abilities and if he disciplines himself and wishes to collaborate, Lenin would intervene in a few months for his reinstatement. Trotsky's position was essentially the same:

"What was decided at the Congress in Moscow concerning Levi is clear enough by itself, and intricate comments are unnecessary. Levi was put out of the Communist International by the decision of the Congress. This decision was by no means taken against the Russian delegation, but, on the contrary, with its rather noticeable cooperation, for it was precisely the Russian delegation that formulated the resolution on tactics. The Russian delegation acted, as always, under the leadership of the Central Committee of the Party. As a member of the Central Committee, and as a member of the delegation, I voted for the resolution upholding Levi's expulsion from the International. Together with our Central Committee I did not see any other way. Due to his egocentrism, Levi's struggle against the grave theoretical and practical errors connected with the March events had such a disorganizing character that the cavilling elements among the Independent Socialists could only agree with him and

support him. Levi did not only oppose the errors, but also the party and the workers that committed these errors. [. . .]

"I do not want to say thereby that at the time of the Congress I regarded Levi as lost forever to the Communist International. I did not know him well enough to be able to make a categorical statement in either direction. But I wanted to hope, however, that the severe lesson would leave its mark and that, sooner or later, Levi would find his way back into the party. [. . .]

"But when I learned, and this happened two or three weeks after the Congress, that instead of patiently trying to climb up the hill Levi was loudly announcing that the rails of the party and of the entire International had to be laid across the spot where he, Paul Levi, had fallen; when furthermore Levi began constructing a 'party' on his egocentric philosophy of history, I was compelled to say to myself that the Communist movement, however regrettable this might be, had to put a cross over Levi definitively." (*Five Years of the Comintern*, p. 340.) Zetkin herself, Levi's close political companion, had to state to the Congress:

"My personal opinion is that Paul Levi himself will say the last word about this, when he, as I hope, in spite of everything, will work and fight with us again in the future as a Communist on a principled basis and on the lone of the Communist Party."*

Indeed Levi said the last word. He soon attacked the October revolution and took refuge in the Social-Democracy, so that Lenin was able to write a few months later:

"Levi and Serrati are not important in themselves, but as the present representatives of the extreme left wing of the petty-bourgeois democracy, of 'their' camp, the camp of the international capitalists, against our camp." (*l.c.*, XXVII, p. 205.)

Then exactly what was the "compromise" of which Lenin spoke at the Congress? The compromise had very precise limits: Lenin and Trotsky so formulated the resolution on tactics, written largely by Lenin, that the German delegates could join in a common vote on it. Had they desired, Lenin and Trotsky could have worded it in a way that would have made it impossible for the Germans to vote for it, thus necessitating a separate vote on the tactic of the March Action. One can recognize that there was a question whether to have a common resolution with the Germans and that it could be answered by yes or no without unleashing by that the degeneration of the International and the USSR. The possibility of a separate vote was mentioned by Trotsky,† who added that the Russian delegation would probably be in the minority, for the Germans had the support of the Austrian and Italian delegations, the majority of the Hungarian delegation, etc. Naturally, it was not the fear of being in the minority which held back Lenin and Trotsky from demanding a separate vote, although this fact was not without importance.

The main reason for their attitude was the immaturity of the German leadership. The German party, and moreover the whole International except the Russian party, was still in the process of formation. It must be added that the struggle against centrism in the International was far from being ended. It well seems that for all these reasons Lenin and Trotsky were right, after their sharp political attack on the March Action, in seeking a common vote. However, in a certain sense the question on this particular point remains open. But this by no means signifies that one could, like Held, derive such disproportionate consequences from such a narrowly-limited "compromise."

*Thirteenth Session. See *Protokoll des Dritten Kongress der Kommunistischen International*, 1921, p. 598.

†Fourteenth Session. See *Protokoll des . . .* p. 644.

To appraise Held's criticism of the Third Congress, we must examine one further point: the responsibility of the International in the March events. Held attributes the direct responsibility for the March Action to the Secretariat of the Executive Committee of the Communist International. He writes:

"Lenin and Trotsky shook their heads at all this folly. They were unaware that the March Action was contrived by the Secretariat of the ECCI."

And further:

"Since Lenin and Trotsky based the necessity for the introduction of the New Economic Policy on the failure of the international revolution to materialize, Zinoviev and his associates in the Secretariat thought they could provide a speedy remedy. This was precisely their chief motive for unleashing the infantile March Action."

For an accusation of such gravity, we must demand serious proof from Held. Held explains lengthily that, in view of their opposition to the New Economic Policy, Zinoviev and Bukharin could not but have desired the March Action. That is possible, but even if it were certain, it would be no proof that they "contrived" and "unleashed" the March Action, i.e., an accusation of direct responsibility. Held was only repeating one of Levi's accusations, which he too had advanced without proof. In reality, it seems demonstrable, at least indirectly, that such responsibility did not exist. Indeed, the Third Congress was the scene of the most violent discussions; letters and telegrams until then unknown were pulled out of pockets; the leaders of the German party were under fire from Lenin and Trotsky and even from Zinoviev, who was then under pressure from Lenin. If there actually had been some telegram or order, written or verbal, from Moscow about the unleashing of the March Action, it is extremely unlikely that such a bomb would not have burst at the Congress, or even before it. Shortly after the Congress Trotsky had occasion to write on this subject:

"The German bourgeois and Social-Democratic papers, and after them the press of the whole world, have cried that the March insurrection had been provoked under orders from Moscow; that the Soviet power, going through difficult days at that time (peasant uprisings, Kronstadt, etc.), had given, you see, the order to make insurrections independently of the situation in each country in order to save itself. It is impossible to invent anything more stupid." (*Five Years of the Comintern*, p. 283.)

Further along, Held explains, on the basis of Radek's later revelations that, in the period immediately preceding the March Action, "Zinoviev and Bukharin had continued their machinations against Levi's policies and, as a result, the March Action had taken place." Here Held abandons his main thesis, that of direct responsibility, devoid of proof, as we have seen, for a new thesis of indirect responsibility, difficult to define with precision: Zinoviev and Bukharin had favored the leadership which had set out on the adventure of March 1921. In this diluted sense responsibility can be extended indefinitely.

Lenin and Trotsky may in this sense be held responsible for not having more closely controlled the work of the Secretariat. And historically there is some truth in this: Lenin and Trotsky were occupied with the building of the Soviet state, they were not always able to prevent Zinoviev and Bukharin from making errors. This general responsibility Trotsky willingly recognized when he wrote:

"If we are guilty of the March errors—as far as we can speak of guilt here—it is only in the sense that the International as a whole, including our party, until now has accomplished insufficient educational work in the field of revolutionary tactics and thus has not eliminated the possibility of such erroneous actions and mistakes. To dream of com-

plete elimination of mistakes would be childish." (*l.c.*, p. 283.)

In this realm it is necessary above all not to lose a sense of proportion. In the concrete case of the German leadership, if one wishes to go to the point of explaining why Levi did not have enough authority to prevent the March Action, one must look—as much as to Zinoviev's machinations—to the personal traits of Levi himself.

Held's Method

Summarizing his criticism of the Third Congress, Held writes:

"the Third World Congress already contained the diseased germs which were a few years later to precipitate the degeneration of the Communist International and, along with it, the Soviet state."

We have already seen how unjustifiable are the historical points of Held's criticism. We must now dwell upon his method.

With his "germ" theory, Held follows a method long practiced by the critics of Bolshevism. Trotsky had occasion to reveal the emptiness of this explanation in his pamphlet "Stalinism and Bolshevism,"* in which he showed, specifically, how Souvarine "seeks the inner flaws of Bolshevism to explain all the subsequent historical mishaps."

Why was Held carried along this beaten track of the causal continuity of Bolshevism and Stalinism? He recognized, with good reason, the absolute necessity of the party for the success of the revolution. But this in no ways means that the subjective factor—the party—is all-powerful. It operates in a given milieu. If in a historical analysis this factor is artificially separated from the milieu, its development and its transformations are then assumed to be found within itself, that is to say, it must contain its whole future within itself. This leads to explanation by "germs." Held's way of explaining thus unfolds from an abstract and super-historic interpretation of the role of the party. In a word, Held errs in an excess of subjectivism.

We are forced to the same conclusion when we examine Held's attitude toward two very important problems, the founding of the Third International, and that of the Fourth International.

For Held, one of the reasons for the defeat of the world revolution after the First World War is "the all-too-late unmasking of Kautskyism [and] the consequently delayed founding of the Communist International." That Lenin held, until 1914, illusions about the character of the German Social Democracy is a well known fact. We should not, however, exaggerate the depth of these illusions. Through them, Held tries to detect a delay in the founding of the Third International, and so he places himself on the ground, unstable enough, of historical hypothesis. Let us try to follow him.

We must first ask ourselves the question: If Lenin had not had these illusions about Kautsky, should he have proceeded with the founding of the Third International in 1903, in 1910 or in 1914? (For this question to make sense, we must suppose that the revolutionary consciousness of the masses would not have been very different from what it was in reality. For if we were to assume that not only Lenin but also large layers of the proletariat had lost confidence in the German Social Democracy, the founding of the Third International would have been possible and necessary well before 1914. But psychologically this is a pious wish, and logically a tautology: if the movement had been in an advanced stage, it would have formed an advanced organization.) Let us suppose that Lenin alone, or one of the small groups around him, had been fully conscious before 1914

**Stalinism and Bolshevism*, by Leon Trotsky. Pioneer Publishers, 116 University Place, New York, 1937.

of the role of Kautsky. Should Lenin then have made a split on an international scale? This question raises a large number of hypotheses, but even in this extremely abstract and artificial form, I am ready to answer no. Held writes:

"With so much bitterness did Lenin turn against Kautsky, when he realized his mistake in 1914, that his opinion of Kautsky had been mistaken. From this point on, Lenin propagandized unhesitatingly for the foundation of a Third International."

Thus Held connects the recognition of the necessity of a new International with Lenin's loss of illusions about Kautsky. But—separating the subjective factor from its milieu—Held does not mention the fundamental fact behind this: the war, i.e., the entry into a new historical epoch, which brought changes in the consciousness of the masses.

However, these questions on the founding of the Third International become a little more concrete if we consider the creation of the Fourth International. Until 1933, that is after the Communist International had committed even more dreadful crimes against the international proletariat than had the Social Democracy before 1914, the Left Opposition considered itself a faction of the Comintern. And this after the whole historical experience of the betrayals and splits of the war and its aftermath. The Left Opposition waited to proclaim the necessity of a new International until the Comintern had its own "August 4th"—until the shameful capitulation of the German Communist Party before Hitler in March 1933. Was this because Trotsky had illusions about Stalin as Lenin had about Kautsky? Obviously not. And it is here that we see the emptiness of Held's appraisal of the founding of the Third International.

But perhaps Held, after all, does not agree with the politics of the Left Opposition? Indeed, this soon becomes apparent. Like many others he opens fire against the policy of the Left Opposition in the USSR. "If Trotsky had publicly stepped forward in the spring of 1923," everything would have been better. This question has been discussed so many times that I do not feel much can be added here. The only new note which Held has introduced is a letter from Engels to Bebel on the end of the First International. Alas, Held does not say a word about the differences between the two epochs. The comparison thus holds a purely literary, and I must say, superficial, character. But it is important to note that this conception of Held's again reveals in him a certain intellectual subjectivism.

Held poses the following question: "Why had not Lenin and Trotsky succeeded in building a serious Marxist International during the period from 1917 to 1923?" One can only reply that as yet the old society proved too resistant, this resistance having several aspects, such as reformism, the slowness and the difficulty of the formation of revolutionary cadres, etc. Held wants to go further, to find a cause for the defeat of the International in the International itself.

These problems of historical causality can easily turn into casuistry, if one does not state precisely what one is speaking about. In clear terms the question is this: Was there, in the Leninist period of the Communist International, a specific error perpetrated without which there would have been a good probability that the degeneration would not have been produced? Held cites the Levi affair. Until now, it was the method of the petty-bourgeois critics of all shades—the ultra-lefts like Gorter, the anarchists, Souvarine, etc., etc.—to place the cause of the defeat of Bolshevism in Bolshevism itself. We willingly relinquish to them this barren method.

A New Marxist Classic

IN DEFENSE OF MARXISM—Against the Petty-Bourgeois Opposition. By Leon Trotsky. Pioneer Publishers, 116 University Place, New York, N. Y., 1943. Pp. 211+XXI. Copy \$2.00. Paper cover \$1.50.

Since Lenin died nineteen years ago there have been many attempts to install one form of revisionism or another in place of Marxism, the doctrine of the proletarian revolution. In the sphere of thought these eddies reproduced the maelstrom of imperialist reaction in the interval between the two world wars.

Revisionist ideas have their deepest roots in the petty bourgeoisie. The reasons for it were long ago laid bare by Marx. "The petty bourgeois," he explained in 1865, "is always composed of 'On-the-One-Hand' and 'On-the-Other-Hand.' Two contradictory tendencies dominate his economic interest and *therefore* his politics, his scientific, religious and esthetic views. It is so in his morals, in everything. He is a living contradiction." In his perpetual condition of indecision, vacillation and instability, the petty bourgeois, when confronted with the titanic tasks and events of our epoch, falls at the first blow from the summits of revolutionary exaltation to abysmal moods of cynicism, despair and panic. Revisionist attempts, in essence, represent a series of petty bourgeois capitulations, each more degrading than the one before, to the imperialist bourgeoisie.

Leon Trotsky's last book contains the articles and letters written by him in the heat of the struggle—from August 1939 to April 1940—against the revisionist minority in the Socialist Workers Party. In addition, there are articles and letters following the split. The final letter in this book was written on August 17, 1940, three days before the GPU assassin struck him down. This was no passing struggle. The issues involved were neither local, episodic nor tertiary. As Trotsky correctly characterized it in his Open Letter to Burnham:

"It is a question of nothing more or less than an attempt to reject, disqualify and overthrow the theoretical foundations, the political principles and organizational methods of our movement."

Precisely because the struggle was so deep-going and all-inclusive in its character, these writings, and letters of Leon Trotsky are of historical and international significance. Concentrated in them are the experiences, lessons and traditions of all the previous great struggles against revisionism—struggles in which successive generations of proletarian revolutionists received their basic training.

Trotsky participated personally in all of them save the first, namely the one waged—a year before Trotsky was born—by Engels in 1877-78 (*Anti-Duehring*). Already as a youth at the beginning of this century, Trotsky took part in the international struggle against the Western European revisionists (Bernstein & Co.), and later in Lenin's epic battles against the Russian varieties of revisionism: the "Legal Marxism" of Professors Struve-Bulgakov & Co., Economism, Menshevism, the Neo-Machism of Bogdanov & Co., etc. In the theoretical fight against the Russian Mensheviks Trotsky played a leading role next only to that of Lenin. Then came the crucial battles against the social-chauvinists during the first World War. The fight against the opportunists (revisionists) of the Second International continued during and after the Russian revolution of 1917 when Trotsky fought side by side with Lenin. After Lenin's death, Trotsky, at the head of the Russian Left Opposition (1923-29), battered down the whole structure of Stalinist revisionism and falsification within the Third International.

It was this unequalled experience combined with his sure

mastery of the theoretical weapons forged by Marx, Engels and Lenin that Trotsky turned full-blast in the last year of his life, against the latter-day revisionists who had arisen within his own movement.

In richness and diversity of content only one other Marxist classic matches this volume, Friedrich Engels' "Herr Eugen Duehring's Revolution in Science (*Anti-Duehring*)."

For the scope and extent of Trotsky's last struggle against revisionism involved not only the burning political issues of the day (the defense of the Soviet Union, the Soviet-Finnish war, the character of the second World War, etc.) but the whole domain of Marxist thought and practice, from the plane of organization principles of Bolshevism to the peaks of theory, from a dissection of clique politics to the brilliant summation of dialectical materialism.

This is a manual above all for the revolutionary youth of the whole world. By steeping themselves in it and using it as a guide they will assure themselves from the outset of a schooling in the traditions of Marxism, the greatest of which is: the unyielding and implacable defense of ideas, of the principles conquered in life-and-death struggles. These principles are the sole foundation upon which it is possible to build the principal instrument of the revolution—the proletarian party. That is why genuine Marxists have always met head-on and fully settled accounts with all attempts at revisionism. In a way worthy of the tradition of our masters, Trotsky carries out the task in this book.

The very publication of "In Defense of Marxism" is, again, in the great Marxist tradition of fully documenting our fights, thus explaining to the end what we are, what we stand for, what decisions we arrive at, what are the issues in the fight and what the political reasons are for all our unifications and splits. Our movement has absorbed this tradition into its blood and marrow. It is our richest heritage. It is what the Bolshevik Left Wing did when they split from the Second International during the last war. The polemical writings of Lenin and Trotsky against the social-chauvinist majority, before the split, became the programmatic documents of the new movement which arose from the split. The same course was followed by the Trotskyist Left Opposition in the struggle against the Stalinized Communist International. Trotsky's polemics against Stalinism from 1923 on—"The New Course," "Lessons of October," "Criticism of the Draft Program of the Comintern," his articles against the Anglo-Russian Committee, his articles on China and the rest of that precious material—educated the cadres of the new world movement. From the day of its proclamation in 1933, the Fourth International has never swerved from the path of fully documenting all its struggles. This is one of the primary considerations for publishing this volume and for the publication of companion volumes scheduled for the immediate future.

In each of the struggles against revisionism it was the revisionist majority that tried to suppress the basic documents in the fights, and it remained for the seceding sections to make them available and known to the world. In the present instance it was the revisionists who were in the minority and seceded. But unlike the *revolutionary* fighters, they make no effort whatever to publish their documents. Nothing is so self-indicting and annihilating to the "Workers Party" as this fact. They have yet to explain their separate existence! The task has to be performed for them by others.

The principal document of the opposition, "Science and Style"—mimeographed and circulated by them during the fight and since then pocketed—is published for the first time as an appendix to this volume. There is a reason for this self-suppression. It is manifestly not convenient for them to reveal on what shabby ideological grounds they based their struggle and their subsequent split. As Trotsky pointed out, throughout the fight they refused to give battle on principled grounds. Because of this they now hide their own documents and find themselves in a position—certainly an anomaly for a seceding group—of leaving the causes for the split without any serious theoretical and political explanation. Instead from time to time, in passing, they offer as reasons for the split only fables and nursery bogies: "Cannon kicked us out!" "We are such civilized, cultured and moral individuals as could never survive in a bureaucratic jungle like the Socialist Workers Party!" And so forth and so on.

Therefore it is not surprising that these people who sometimes refer to themselves as "Trotskyists" are unable to find time on their hands or space in their publications to review this manual of Trotskyism by one who up till now has been considered the first authority on the subject. If they attempted to review Trotsky's book they would be obliged to give an appraisal of their chief programmatic document in the struggle, Professor Burnham's, "Science and Style," upon which they have so long maintained a dignified silence, and which, as has already been said, is reprinted in the appendix to Trotsky's book.

"In Defense of Marxism" has been hailed enthusiastically by the revolutionary youth and is being studied assiduously by all serious students of the movement. Within the few weeks since its publication this indispensable manual of Marxism has already achieved an international circulation. We feel certain that our co-thinkers all over the world will not only disseminate it as widely as possible but will exert their energies to translate it into the native languages of their respective countries.

Pioneer Publishers is to be congratulated on the historic service performed by its publication in English.

Reviewed by JOHN G. WRIGHT

INTERNATIONAL NOTES

A Letter from Ireland

The following is from a letter from Dublin, dated January 1943:

There is an interesting article about the cost of living, based on the latest issues of the official Statistical Abstract, in the *Irish Times* of December 29th. I would send you a copy but one is not allowed to send news-

papers through the post now. So I shall simply quote the chief parts of the article, to which I am sure there will be no objection.

By the official index figure, the goods which could have been bought for £100 in 1914, cost £176 in '38, £237 in '41, and £273 in '42 (November of each year).

To complete the picture of the depreciation of purchasing power, it is important to

know that while many of the principal items which constitute the official cost of living figures have been the subjects of controlled prices (kept down by means of subsidies which are met by taxes paid by the consumers), a wide variety of commodities not taken into account in computing the cost of living figures have risen to double or treble their pre-war prices. While many of such

items may fairly be regarded as luxuries, others—such as certain types of household equipment and food—come within the category of domestic necessities. When all such allowances have been made it can be assumed that today's average purchasing power of the 1938 pound note is somewhere between ten and twelve shillings in the twenty-six counties.*

"Confirmation of that estimate of depreciated money values is given by the fact that issues of legal tender notes by the Currency Commission have more than doubled since 1939, while external trade has diminished, and there has been no increase in the volume of trade in the twenty-six counties. A further index to the increased cost of commodities is that the average price of imported goods had more than doubled between December '38 and December '41—since when the upward trend of prices has continued to operate. During the three years during which the import prices rose by more than 100%, the prices of twenty-six county exports only increased by slightly over 80%."

A Perspective of Poverty

I have not seen a similar analysis of the price rises in England and don't know if they are comparable, but I do know that wages have risen in England, while here they are stabilised at a low level. It is even illegal for an employer to give a raise when he wishes to do so without permission from the government. And such permission is often refused. Many of our workers are living on pre-war wages. If we take the wage levels into account alongside of the price levels, we should find that the picture in Ireland is far worse than that in actually belligerent countries.

No one is optimistic enough to suggest that under post-war conditions this state of things will alter appreciably for the better. In fact the official government policy is a warning that we must expect things to be just as bad after the war. In my opinion when the post-war world situation develops, so that the workers at present in England have to return, while Irish agriculture is faced with normal importations from America, and with the competition of mechanised English agriculture (itself in competition with America), then the whole situation will be aggravated.

Another point which throws light on the economic relations between Eire and the outer world is the reaction here to the Beveridge Plan. It is assumed that something of the sort will be adopted in England and the North. In the General Election atmosphere all parties would like to promise similar reforms to the country to gain support and this holds good whether the election is really about to come off as required by the Constitution, or whether some way will

*There are twenty shillings in a pound note. The 26 counties are Free Ireland. The rest is Northern Ireland, under British rule.—Ed.

be found of forming a government without resorting to it. Election promises are being made. But no parliamentary party dares to suggest that anything resembling the Beveridge Plan will be operated here.

Eire and Imperialism

To show the reason why, I refer again to the *Irish Times*. On December 31, quoting from the *Economist*, it says

"The scale of benefits and family allowances may be much higher north of the border than in the south. The possibility of attractions of this sort will lead to emigration on an even greater scale unless restrictive measures are taken, either in Eire or in the United Kingdom. . . . The solution of the acute problem of partition will not be rendered any easier by the emergence of different standards of social and welfare services north and south of the border."

The *Irish Times* goes on to say that the Beveridge Plan assumes a steadily increasing national income in England, while in this country in the years before the war the national income "obstinately failed to expand" and there is no reason to think that it will expand much during the post-war period. I should think that is an understatement. However, the main point is clear, and is an interesting illustration of our relation to economic imperialism.

Obviously there is no solution under capitalism and the position of a reformist labour movement is therefore obviously hopeless.

The Labour election promise is £3 a week to every farm hand, as in England. The reaction among the farm hands is that it's only right, a man can't live decently on less, and this business of keeping the farm hands alive on the charity of the farmers by supplying free vegetables, etc., should be done away with . . . but of course, they add, it can't be done. They know it can't be done, because they know that the small farmers, who themselves make less than £3 a week, could not employ any labour at that rate, while the large farmers would not do so, would let the farms go to rack and ruin instead, except as grazing land, unless they could get prices twice or nearly twice what they are now. And such prices could not be paid. However, the Labour Party is afraid to suggest a radical reorganization of the country.

The Labour Party Program

Its program includes the following points: nationalisation of the whole transport system under workers' control, nationalisation of basic industries and control of secondary ones, collective farming, etc. Certainly we have in this an approach to a solution of the problems of the country, especially as the program states specifically that it is only intended as a first draft and that it must be clarified. It can be clarified in a socialist sense. But this program is never referred to by the Labour leadership and is not used as the basis for the election cam-

paign. The majority of party members even know nothing about the program.

It seems to me and others that the basis for a socialist education of the party is to be found by pushing forward that program, explaining its full implications, demanding that the party program should be the basis of the election campaign, that leaders and perspective candidates should publicly pledge themselves at least to their own program, and to attack the leadership for abandoning its program. This is a perfectly legitimate attitude within the party constitution and will have the effect of rallying the whole left wing on the basis of a discussion of political principles.

Danger of a Split

At the present moment the party is facing a serious situation owing to the rivalry between the Irish Transport and General Workers Union, headed by Bill O'Brien, and the Workers Union of Ireland, headed by Jim Larkin. The ITGWU is by far the most powerful union in the country and the most reactionary. Its recent record has been that it withdrew from the Trades Council of Dublin, in which all Dublin unions are combined, in order to sabotage the fight against the Trade Union Bill. It gave no assistance during the Municipal Election campaign which, in spite of this defection, resulted in a great gain for labour. The candidates returned as councillors included Larkin himself, while one of his union organisers headed the poll in his area.

When it came to the selection of Dail (Parliament) candidates for Dublin, the ITGWU, in control of the conference, filled the panel with personal followers of Bill O'Brien, and rejected outright all Larkinite candidates and all left wing candidates who would be acceptable to the Labour Party branches, with one exception.

Larkin has so far said nothing. But it is certain, or almost certain, that he at least, and probably one or two of his men, could get a seat in the Dail without assistance from the party.

The general feeling is therefore that we face the danger of an immediate split, and the daily press hostile to labour is making the most of this. The worst of the situation is that we are facing a split upon an unprincipled issue, and the more or less progressive Dublin section of the party has been maneuvered into taking the side of Larkin, for whom it has no particular brief.

Meanwhile the point which is being obscured and which one must try to make plain is that the real issue lies not between O'Brien and Larkin, but between party democracy and the leadership.

Australia

The following is an excerpt from a letter from our Australian friends, dated mid-December:

Australia is, of course, moving much closer to Washington these days. To understand

the situation here, you must remember that there are three parliamentary parties of major dimensions. The Australian Labor Party has 175,000 members in the State of New South Wales alone. Prime Minister Curtin heads an Australian Labor Party government. The other two big parties are the United Australian Party and the United Country Party, and correspond to the American Republicans and Democrats. The great political issue in Australia now concerns conscription for overseas service, to which Labor is traditionally opposed, having defeated conscription in two famous referenda in 1916 and 1917. The leaders of the anti-conscriptionists are Labor Minister Ward and politicians named Calwell, Blackburn and Lang. Prime Minister Curtin is now sponsoring a move to revise the traditional Labor attitude.

Chile

A confused but significant split in the Socialist Party, the second largest party in Chile, occurred at its recent Ninth Congress at Rancagna.

The social composition of the Socialist Party is divided about equally between genuine workers and low-paid government functionaries, etc. on the one hand, and on the other hand bureaucrats, well-paid functionaries, and middle-class elements, with strong Freemason support. Until the 1942 Congress, the latter groupings supported the thoroughly rightist, Oscar Schnake Vergara; the former, for lack of one better, supported Marmaduke Grove Vallejo, who is leftish only by comparison with Schnake.

But since last year's Congress, a strong leftward surge has been sweeping through the ranks, in mounting revolt against the leadership's policies, especially its participation in bourgeois cabinets which, the opposition correctly pointed out, made the party responsible for the Rios government's measures against labor and civil

liberties; furthermore, the opposition warned, the party's total failure to fulfill its leftist election promises was bringing it into deepening disrepute among the popular masses who had hoped to find in it a solution for their increasingly unbearable conditions of life.

The prudent Schnake, his prestige diminished almost to zero by his sell-out action of retiring his presidential candidacy in favor of Juan Antonio Rios, left for the United States; and "left-winger" Marmaduke Grove, with a genuine left-wing revolt rising, found himself now the right-winger.

So uncheckable was the wave of revolt that a sector of the "grand dukes" (as the socialist rank and file call their top bureaucracy), led by Salvador Allende Goosens, tried to choke its militancy by the classic maneuver of putting itself at the head of it, issuing demagogic demands that the party quit the cabinet.

"Don Marma" Grove had hoped to save himself by postponing the 1943 Congress till after Chile's rupture of diplomatic relations with the Axis, believing that—with the help of the example of the Stalinists who were demanding a "cabinet of national union" with participation of all anti-fascist parties—he could browbeat the ranks into becoming resigned to continuation of the Socialist Party in the government. But the Congress elected a praesidium with an anti-Grovist majority, and refused to accept either Grove's own organizational report or Senator Eleodoro Dominguez's political report. This was a far cry from the Tacla Congress of 1936, which had voted: "Marmaduke Grove is appointed, for his lifetime, leader of the Socialist Party, and he will be the chairman ex officio of all Party meetings he attends; he will resolve, without subsequent appeal, every conflict arising in the internal life of the Party." Angry at the present rebuff, Grove stalked out of the Rancagna Congress, taking with him 42 delegates out of a total of 126.

There followed a frantic running to-and-fro of negotiators, mediators, and conciliators, trying allegedly to "save the Party's unity," in actuality to save their own ministerial portfolios and cushy posts. The bureaucrats who had put themselves at the head of the revolt offered Don Marma a majority on the new Central Executive Committee, but negotiations finally failed. Grove, controlling the Socialist Militia, ordered them to raid the Congress headquarters, which they did, seizing all documents, the public-address system, office equipment, etc. The bureaucrats who seized the leadership of the opposition called on the government's military police, the notorious *carabineros*, to resist the Grove pillage of the headquarters.

The Congress, however, confirmed its rejection of the Grovist reports, reaffirmed its demand that the Socialist ministers leave the cabinet, and elected a new executive committee headed by Allende, Jose Rodriguez Corcos (former Socialist Militia chief), and Rolando Merino and Pedro Poblete Vera (both ex-Ministers of Land and Colonization.)

But, as might have been expected, the new bureaucracy promptly withdrew the main opposition slogans, and tried to reduce what was a crisis of political tendencies to a mere struggle for personal power between the Grovist and Allendist cliques. In place of the oppositions slogan "Withdraw from the government," Allende coolly proposes now "full collaboration with the government, but without administrative demands."

This bureaucratic cynicism precipitated a much clearer subdivision within the reconstituted party between the flatly "anti-collaborationist" proletarian base and the functionary layers fighting for collaboration with the Rios government. Wriggle though they may, the new camarilla of "grand dukes" is going to find it hard to continue bamboozling the proletarian ranks which are moving massively and steadily leftward.

From the Arsenal of Marxism

G. V. Plekhanov, the founder of Russian Marxism, was born in 1856. He died in 1918. In publishing Trotsky's article on Plekhanov, the new English periodical *Free Expression* for November 1942 states:

"Plekhanov's works are still little known in this country; only two or three slender volumes have been published. Owing to the Stalinist regime's departure from internationalism, revolutionary socialists have not been able to benefit by Ryazanov's colossal labor in preparing for publication twenty-two volumes of Plekhanov's writings as part of a library of scientific socialism.

"Of Plekhanov's works Lenin has writ-

ten: '... It is impossible to become a real communist without studying—really studying—all that Plekhanov has written on philosophy, as this is the best of the whole international literature of Marxism.'

"We hope that the following article by Leon Trotsky, published for the first time (we believe) in the English language, will arouse interest in a study of the available works of Plekhanov."

These remarks apply with equal force here in America.

The First World War and the Russian revolution flung Plekhanov into the camp of his former opponents, the opportunists

against whom he had conducted for so many years a merciless and brilliant struggle.

A. Voronsky, the outstanding Soviet critic and editor (purged by Stalin for his adherence to the Trotskyist Left Opposition) wrote:

"Plekhanov's point of view on the February revolution and the Provisional Government is well known. But not many know that during the October days Plekhanov flatly came out against the attempts of Kerensky to seize Petrograd with the aid of Krasnov's cossacks. When Kerensky, approaching Petrograd, seized Krasnoye Selo, a well-known revolutionist was sent to G.

V. Plekhanov as an emissary, or it might be that he came on his own initiative. He was a friend of Plekhanov's and proposed that the latter take upon himself the task of getting together a ministry just as soon as the cossacks had entered Petrograd. Ple-

khanov's answer was: 'I have given forty years of my life to the proletariat and I do not intend to shoot them down even when they are following the false path.'

Trotsky's article on Plekhanov constitutes a part of the introduction to the first

and second volumes of Trotsky's collected works. This introduction was written on April 24, 1922, and published for the first time in the Russian periodical *Under the Banner of Marxism*, Nos. 5-6, 1922. (Translated from the Russian by Margaret Dewar.)

A Note on Plekhanov

By LEON TROTSKY

The war has drawn the balance sheet of an entire epoch in the socialist movement; it has weighed and appraised the leaders of this epoch. Among those whom it has mercilessly liquidated is also to be found G. V. Plekhanov. This was a great man. One becomes sad at the thought that the entire young generation of the proletariat today who joined the movement since 1914 is acquainted with Plekhanov only as a protector of all the Alexinskys, a collaborator of all the Avksentiev and almost a co-thinker of the notorious Breshkovskaya*—that is to say, they know Plekhanov only as the Plekhanov of the epoch of "patriotic" decline. This was a truly great man. And into the history of Russian social thought he has entered as a great figure.

Plekhanov did not create the theory of historical materialism, he did not enrich it with new scientific achievements. But he introduced it into Russian life. And this is a merit of enormous significance. It was necessary to overcome the home-grown revolutionary prejudices of the Russian intelligentsia, in which an arrogance of backwardness found its expression. Plekhanov "nationalized" the Marxist theory and thereby denationalized Russian revolutionary thought. Through Plekhanov it began to speak for the first time in the language of real science; established its ideological bond with the world working-class movement; opened real possibilities and perspectives for the Russian revolution in finding a basis for it in the objective laws of economic development.

Plekhanov did not create the materialist dialectic but he was its convinced, passionate and brilliant crusader in Russia from the beginning of the eighties. And this required the greatest penetration, a broad historical outlook, and a noble courage of thought. These qualities Plekhanov combined also with a brilliancy of exposition and an endowment of wit. The first Russian crusader for Marxism wielded the sword famously. And how many wounds he inflicted! Some of them, like those he inflicted on the talented epigone of Narodnikism, Mikhailovsky, were of a fatal nature. In order to appreciate the force of Plekhanov's thought one has to have an understanding of the tenseness of that atmosphere of Narodnikist, subjectivistic, idealistic prejudices which prevailed in the radical circles of Russia and the Russian emigration. And these circles represented the most revolutionary force that emerged from Russia in the second part of the nineteenth century.

The spiritual development of the present advanced working youth proceeds (happily!) along entirely different ways. The greatest social upheaval in history is between us and the period

*Alexinsky was a Russian social democrat who later became a monarchist and a White Guard. Aksentiev was a right Social-Revolutionary, one of the Ministers of Kerensky's government and later also a White Guard. Breshkovskaya was a participant of the Russian revolutionary movement of the '70s. She opposed the October revolution.—Ed.

when the Beltov-Mikhailovsky duel took place. (Under the pseudonym Beltov, Plekhanov in 1895 succeeded in getting past the Czarist censor his most triumphant and brilliant pamphlet "On the Question of the Development of the Monistic Outlook of History.") That is why the form of the best, i.e., precisely the most brilliantly polemical works of Plekhanov has become dated, just as the form of Engels' "Anti-Duhring" has become dated. For a young, thinking worker, Plekhanov's viewpoint is incomparably more understandable and more akin than those viewpoints which he shattered. Consequently, a young reader has to give more attention and use more imagination to reconstructing in his mind the viewpoint of the Narodniki and the subjectivists, than he does to appreciating the force and accuracy of Plekhanov's blows. That is why his books cannot today attain a wide circulation. But the young Marxist who has the opportunity to work regularly upon the widening and deepening of his world outlook will invariably turn to the original source of Marxist thought in Russia—to Plekhanov. For this it will each time be necessary retrospectively to work oneself into the ideological atmosphere of the Russian radical movement from the '60s to the '90s. No easy task. But in return, the reward will be a widening of the theoretical and political horizons, and the esthetic pleasure that a successful effort toward clear thinking gives in the fight against prejudice, stagnation and stupidity.

In spite of the strong influence of the French masters of letter on Plekhanov, he remained entirely a representative of the old Russian school of publicists (Belinsky, Herzen, Chernyshevsky). He loved to write at length, never hesitating to make digressions and in passing to entertain the reader with a witticism, a quotation, another little joke. . . . For our Soviet age, which cuts too long words into parts and then compresses the parts of several words into one word, Plekhanov's style seems out of date. But it reflects a whole epoch and, in its way, remains superb. The French school beneficially made its impression on his style in regard to his accuracy of formulation and lucidity of exposition.

As an orator Plekhanov was distinguished by those same qualities he possessed as a writer, both to his advantage and disadvantage. When you read books by Jaures, even his historical works, you get the impression of a written-down speech of an orator. With Plekhanov it was just the reverse. In his speeches you hear a writer speaking. Oratorical writing as well as literary oratory may reach very high standards. But nevertheless writing and oratory are two different fields and two different arts. For this reason Jaures' books tire one with their oratoric intensity. And for the same reason the orator Plekhanov often created the double—hence the dampening—effect of a skillful reader of his own article.

He reached the heights in the theoretical controversies in which whole generations of the Russian revolutionary intelligentsia never tired of immersing themselves. Here the material

of the controversy itself brought closer together the art of writing and that of oratory. He was weakest in speeches of a purely political character, i.e., those which pursue the task of binding the audience in a unity of concrete conclusions, molding their wills into one. Plekhanov spoke like an observer, like a critic, a publicist, but not like a leader. He was never destined to have the opportunity to directly address the masses, summon them to action, lead them. His weak sides come from the same source as does his chief merit: he was a forerunner, the first crusader of Marxism on Russian soil.

We have said that Plekhanov left hardly any such works as could become part of the wide, every-day use of the working class. The sole exception is, perhaps, the *History of Russian Social Thought*; but this work is far from irreproachable in point of theory: the conciliatory and patriotic tendencies of Plekhanov's politics of the last period succeeded—at least partly—in undermining even his theoretical foundations. Entangling himself in the cul-de-sac contradictions of social patriotism, Plekhanov began to look for directives outside the theory of the class struggle—now in national interests, now in abstract ethical principles. In his last writings he makes monstrous concessions to normative morality, seeking to make of it a criterion of politics (“defensive war is a just war”). In the introduction to his *History of Russian Social Thought* he limits the sphere of action of the class struggle to the field of domestic relationships; in international relationships he replaces the class struggle by national solidarity. (“The course of development of every given society, divided into classes is determined by the course of development of those classes and their mutual relationships, i.e., first, by their *mutual struggle* where the internal social order is concerned, and, secondly, by their more or less friendly *collaboration* where the question of the defense of the country from external attack arises.” G. V. Plekhanov, *History of Russian Social Thought*, Moscow, 1919, page 11, Russian edition.) This, however, is no longer according to Marx, but rather according to Sombart (a well-known social-democratic economist—Trans.). Only those who know what a relentless, brilliant and successful struggle Plekhanov waged in the course of decades against idealism in general, normative philosophy in particular, against the school of Brentano and its pseudo-Marxist falsifier Sombart—only they can appreciate the depth of Plekhanov's theoretical downfall under the pressure of national patriotic ideology.

But this downfall was prepared: Plekhanov's misfortune came from the same source as came his immortal merit—he was a forerunner. He was not a leader of an acting proletariat but only its theoretical precursor. He polemically defended the methods of Marxism but had no possibility of applying them in action. Having lived for several decades in Switzerland, he remained a Russian emigre. The opportunist, municipal and cantonal Swiss socialism, with an extremely low theoretical level, scarcely interested him. There was no Russian party. For Plekhanov its place was taken by the “Emancipation of Labor Group,” i.e., by the close circle of co-thinkers (composed of Plekhanov, Axelrod, Zaslitch, and Deutsch doing hard labor in Siberia). Since he lacked political roots, Plekhanov strove all the more to strengthen the theoretical and philosophical roots of his position. In his capacity as observer of the European workers' movement he very often left out of consideration most important political manifestations of pettiness, pusillanimity, and conciliationism on the part of the socialist parties; but he was always on the alert in regard to theoretical heresy in socialist literature.

This disturbance of the balance between theory and practice,

which arose from the whole circumstances of Plekhanov's life, proved fatal for him. In spite of his wide theoretical groundwork, he showed himself unprepared for great political events: already the revolution of 1905 took him by surprise. This profound and brilliant Marxist theoretician oriented himself in the events of the revolution by means of empiric, essentially rule-of-thumb appraisals; he felt unsure of himself, whenever possible preserved silence, evaded definite answers, begged the question with algebraic formulas or witty anecdotes, for which he had such a great fondness.

I first saw Plekhanov at the end of 1902, i.e., in that period when he was finishing his superb theoretical campaign against Narodnikism and against revisionism, and found himself face to face with the political questions of the impending revolution. In other words, the period of decline had begun for Plekhanov. I only once had the opportunity to see and hear Plekhanov as it were at the height of his strength and fame: that was in the program commission of the Second Party Congress (July 1903, in London). The representatives of the *Rabochoye Delo* Group, Martynov and Akimov, the representatives of the *Bund*, Lieber and others, and a few of the provincial delegates were attempting to bring forward amendments to the draft of the party program, mainly the work of Plekhanov, amendments largely incorrect theoretically and ill-considered. In the commission discussions Plekhanov was inimitable and—merciless. On every question or even minor point that arose he brought to bear his outstanding erudition without any effort and forced his listeners, even his opponents, to become convinced that the problem only began precisely where the authors of the amendment thought it to end. With a clear scientifically finished conception of the program in his mind, sure of himself, of his knowledge, his strength; with a merry, ironical twinkle in his eyes; with bristling and also merry moustache; with slightly theatrical but lively and expressive gestures, Plekhanov, who occupied the chair, lit up the numerous gathering like a human firework of erudition and wit. This was reflected in the admiration that lit up all faces, even those of his opponents, where delight struggled with embarrassment.

Discussing tactical and organizational questions at that same Congress, Plekhanov was infinitely weaker, sometimes seemed to be quite helpless, evoked perplexity of the very same delegates who admired him on the program commission.

At the Paris International Congress of 1889 Plekhanov had already declared that the revolutionary movement in Russia would conquer as a workers' movement or not at all. That meant that in Russia there was not and could not be a revolutionary bourgeois democracy capable of triumphing. But from this there followed the conclusion that the victorious revolution, achieved by the proletariat, could not end other than with the transfer of power into the hands of the proletariat. From this conclusion, however, Plekhanov recoiled in horror. Thus he politically denied his old theoretical premises. New ones he did not create. Hence his political helplessness and vacillations, crowned by his grave patriotic sinfall.

In time of war, as in time of revolution, nothing remained for the true disciples of Plekhanov but to wage an irreconcilable struggle against him.

Plekhanov's admirers and adherents, in the epoch of his decline, often unexpected and always worthless, have since his death gathered together in one separate edition all his worst writings. By this they only helped to separate the false Plekhanov from the real one. The great Plekhanov, the true one, belongs entirely and wholly to us. It is our duty to restore to the young generation his spiritual figure in all its stature.

Some British "Friends" of India

By AJIT ROY

The truth is that the so-called well-wishers of India in Britain have probably done more to prevent in this country a true appreciation of the Indian problem than even the propaganda of Churchill, Amery and the true-blue Tories. Each Indian crisis has produced its inevitable crop of sympathizers and well-wishers of the Indian people—pacifists and parsons, journalists and writers, professors and philosophers, ex-civil servants, Liberal and Labour M.P.'s, leaders of the Independent Labour Party; a motley collection of individuals have grouped themselves together under the somewhat derisive title "Friends of India." The current crisis has been no exception. At the present moment, these "Friends" are to be found gathered around the "Aid to India Committee" sponsored by the ILP and the pacifists, and the "India League" supported and dominated by the Stalinists.

The basic characteristic of all these "Committees" and "Leagues" is the extremely modest requirements for conditions of membership. They do not demand that one should be opposed to imperialism as such; but if one is so opposed then it is not held against him as a crime! You can be Tory, Liberal, Labour, Stalinist or a member of the ILP; you can be pro-war or anti-war; these differences are of little consequence so long as you are prepared to "express" your sense of horror at what is taking place in India.

Here, sitting next to Brockway of the ILP, Mr. Edward Thompson, the Liberal journalist, gives sober advice to the Tories on the desirability of reopening negotiations with the Congress leaders in order to save British rule from the twin danger of foreign invasion and a Red Revolution. In a paper, *Free India*, published and issued by the "Indian Freedom Campaign Committee of the British Centre Against Imperialism," Thompson refers to the war as "our war," talks about "our propaganda on India" and declares that "everything now depends on the new Viceroy and his instructions." But neither his unconcealed imperialist outlook nor his malicious jibes at the socialist organizations in India prevent in any way the professed anti-imperialists represented by Reginald Reynolds, Brockway and other ILP leaders from solidarizing with him in the same organization. Lack of principle apparently is the basic feature of these types of organizations.

The necessity and importance of the widest dissemination of anti-imperialist propaganda cannot be too strongly emphasized. In the revolutionary workers' press anti-imperialist news has always occupied, and will continue to occupy, an important place. And that is why the reformist and Stalinist press of today is so noticeably silent on Indian and colonial matters. But such propaganda can aid the Indian struggle for freedom only to the extent that it becomes an argument for independent working-class action leading to the overthrow of imperialism. To the extent that the propaganda fails to raise, or blurs over, the fundamental class issues, and degenerates into a demand that Churchill should change his policy, it becomes an instrument of reaction. For it leads to the illusion that it is possible to aid the Indian struggle while congratulating Churchill on his victories, or that it is possible to fight for the national freedom of India within the framework of "national unity" in Britain.

The revolutionary workers within the ranks of the ILP must needs ask themselves: "Where does the leadership really stand

on the issue of unity with the India peoples?" If solidarity with the Indian struggle is to be anything more than a gesture and a doubtful one at that, then the leadership must break with the pro-war "Friends of India." The ILP condemns the Stalinist leadership for its betrayal of the Indian people; but in what does this betrayal consist? Surely not the reluctance to express sympathy with the Indian people or to condemn the reign of terror? The essence of the Stalinist betrayal consists in its political support for Churchill and the capitalist class. But in what way does the alliance of the ILP leadership with the open imperialism represented by Thompson or the more camouflaged type represented by Ballard, secretary of the so-called "British Centre Against Imperialism," differ in essence from the Pollitt-Churchill tie-up?

To Lenin and Trotsky, the unity between the socialist movement of the Western proletariat and the national movement of the colonial countries was of a two-fold character.

In the first place, the struggle of the oppressed masses in the colonies for freedom constitutes powerful blows directed against the entire world structure of monopoly-capitalism and gives immense aid to the working classes in the imperialist countries fighting for socialism. In the second place, they regarded the independent political role of the colonial proletariat and its leadership of the national revolution as the pre-condition for its victory. That is why Lenin and Trotsky considered the development of the Communist International in India and the colonial countries as one of the urgent tasks of the Russian and the international proletariat.

The idea that the British workers must not interfere with the internal composition of the Indian national movement or its domestic disputes is completely alien to the spirit and traditions of international revolutionary socialism. Socialists in Britain have the duty and responsibility to intervene in the activities of the Indian proletariat; to advise, and be advised by the Indian socialists.

This is the essence of internationalism. Trotskyism has continued this tradition of Bolshevism, and the result is to be seen not only in the development by the Fourth International of fresh and virile organizations of the colonial proletariat in Ceylon, China and India, but also in a great strengthening in the ideological basis of the socialist vanguard in this country. When Reginald Reynolds, therefore, brazenly declares that it would be impudent for British socialists to argue over the domestic disputes in the Indian movement for national independence what he really means is that the proletariat in Britain must remain indifferent to the problems of their Indian brothers. This is a complete repudiation of international socialism and is characteristic of that petty-bourgeois literary socialism which Reynolds represents.

It is not an accident that the "sectarian" Fourth International alone of all organizations has succeeded in bringing significant sections of the colonial workers within the framework of one international organization. It is not the Trotskyists but the compromisers who are the real sectarians. For, under the pretext of achieving "the broadest possible form of unity" on the Indian question they have managed to tie themselves up with imperialism, however unwittingly, and built a wall between themselves and the Indian masses.

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