

# Fourth International

## MARXISM AND DEMOCRACY

By ERNEST GERMAIN

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### “THE TALENTED TENTH”

Negro Leadership and Civil Rights

By J. MEYER

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*Starvation Ahead? . . . . . By A. Gilbert*

*An Answer to the Prophets of Famine*

•

*EDITORIALS: North Atlantic Pact, Filibuster, etc.*

For First Time in U.S.

**THE MEANING OF HEGEL**

By George Plekhanov

April 1949

25c

## Manager's Column

The March issue proved popular with friends and supporters of Fourth International.

Bob Kingsley of Cleveland wrote: "I just finished reading Bert Cochran's article on 'The Union Bureaucracy.' This article is a masterpiece of concentrated thinking; and, with Art Preis's article on Roman Catholicism in the trade unions and James P. Cannon's speech on 'New Problems of Socialism,' fill a long-felt need. Our theoretical magazine is bringing us up to date on the Marxist interpretation of the present epoch in this country." The Cleveland comrades ordered another six copies of the March issue.

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Seattle asked for five more copies. "Congratulations on the new trend," they write. "Like it very much."

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Los Angeles needed 25 extra copies and Pittsburgh sent in for 10 more.

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Worcester, Mass., asked us to send five extras and P. told us: "I think the magazine is better. I can remember when I couldn't wait for the next issue to come out. I read the last one with some of the old drive."

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Howard Mason asked us to increase Detroit's regular bundle by six more copies and ordered an additional 25 copies of the March issue. "A youth comrade is attempting to establish the magazine in a few places around Wayne University. In addition there seems to be an increased interest among regular readers."

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New York's literature director, Harry Gold, reports that a promising beginning has been made selling copies of Fourth International on the campus of various schools. I.G. was credited with six sales; K.B. with

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five; Doris, two. Edith Bartell, Kitty Green and Sarah Ross sold ten copies. In addition, Bob Williams, and Gladys Barker of Harlem sold five at a meeting in defense of the Republic of Indonesia. Sales on newsstands, according to Harry Gold, increased last month.

Literature agents in other parts of the country please note New York's experience selling single copies on the campus. Have you tried it in your area?

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From Toledo, Milton Alvin congratulates the staff on "the fine improvements. The March issue is excellent—good articles, timely, and, of course, well-written. Our friends here have expressed themselves very much in

favor of keeping up with timely material that answers many of their questions." Commenting on the editorial about Stalin's latest moves, Comrade Alvin suggests that we "should not attempt to foretell the precise development but outline the general course, taking into account the various possibilities. The Kremlin line zig-zags so rapidly these days that by the time a publication is off the press, Stalin has reversed his policy . . . The statements of the CP leaders in France, Italy, etc., crude and not taking into account the feelings of the workers, prove that Stalin looks upon the European and American Communist parties as so much garbage to throw in his enemies' faces."

J.S. of Saskatchewan, Canada, ordered five more copies of the February issue. "I think the article by Li Fujen is a most excellent source of very useful information for all workers. I will do all I can to have it read. And the article on the old War Dog Churchill is very interesting. It describes the old rascal to a nicety and expresses my own opinion much better than I could do. In fact, Fourth International is a splendid little—or I should say, big magazine for people who wish to learn the facts about world events."

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Grace Carlson, Vice-Presidential candidate of the Socialist Workers Party in the 1948 elections, writes from Minneapolis: "The March issue is first class! Comrades come into the headquarters these days and volunteer the information that they really liked the articles in the FI and that they read it through in one or two sittings. This represents a genuine shift of attitude toward the magazine on the part of our worker comrades. We have ordered 25 extra copies of the March issue and expect to dispose of them all very comfortably. As a matter of fact, we may have to increase this order. A Duluth comrade wrote in today for ten copies to sell to contacts there."

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And Vincent R. Dunne, 1948 candidate of the Socialist Workers Party for United States Senator from Minnesota, took time out to send us his opinion: "The new FI is fine. It is my opinion that you are getting somewhere and there can be no real argument about the favorable reception which the magazine gets from the comrades. It is genuine, it is readable, it teaches. I like John G. Wright's treatment of Bertram Wolfe's book. His last sentence is worth a basketful of doubloons. The editorials are so useful—I thank you very much for that."

# FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

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## EDITORIAL REVIEW

### THE FILIBUSTER: A DECISIVE TEST

The ignominious defeat of the Truman administration at the hands of the filibuster reveals once again that the issue of civil rights is the crux of the political and social struggle in the United States today. Whoever grasps this nettle feels the sting of all the crucial problems of our day: class rule, the fate of the two-party system, the future of the labor movement.

Since the Civil War, the South as the citadel of reaction has been one of the main bulwarks of social stability under capitalism. The rise of the labor movement as a first-rate power in the class war, weakening the popular base of capitalist rule in the North, has thereby enhanced the importance of the political monopoly held by the Southern Bourbons. Enfranchisement of the Negroes in the South, through the enactment of civil rights legislation, would bring a new force into the political arena on the side of the organized workers, tipping the social scale in its favor, altering all class relationships.

It is not accidental therefore that the issue was "fought out" in the Senate, the legislative body created by the class-conscious authors of the Constitution, in their elaborate system of checks and balances, as the safeguard against such sweeping social changes. Camouflaged in parliamentary doubletalk, the remark of Senator Vandenberg that "the rules of the Senate are as important to equity and order in the Senate as is the Constitution to the life of the Republic" contains the gist of the matter. It is conceivable that the House of Representatives, elected on the basis of population, can be made to reflect the will of the popular majority. Difficult under any conditions, this is impossible in the Senate, chosen with parity representation for all states, so long as the South remains a bastion of reaction. The danger inherent in civil rights legislation lies in the breakup of the political monopoly of the Southern Bourbons which would undermine the special function performed by the Senate.

Only political infants or liberals could have expected that the Democratic Party could lead the battle for such a profound change. The whole issue was distasteful to Truman and his lieutenants. The consequences of an all-out struggle terrified them. True, they had written a radical civil rights plank in their election platform but this was only *in extremis* to garner the Negro vote and save themselves from what seemed an inevitable defeat.

The organization of Congressional committees showed they had no intention of deepening the split with the Dixie-

crats, thus shifting the balance of power within the Democratic Party in favor of the trade union bureaucrats. What they wanted was a compromise which, without changing anything fundamentally, would have the appearance of fulfilling their election promises to the Negro people.

Hence the timid and cowardly character of the "fight" to break the filibuster. No sooner had it begun than Truman packed his bags for a tropical fishing trip entrusting the leadership to Lucas who had no heart for the whole business. It was a setup for the Southerners who could filibuster at their leisure without night sessions or any other inconvenience. A "phoney" fight—sneered Senator Wherry, GOP promoter of the Dixiecrats. And he was right. At the first hint of a "compromise," Lucas and Co. threw in the sponge. Of course there was no compromise. The Dixiecrat-Republican coalition had won hands down. Instead they forced the Democrats to drink the last bitter dregs of defeat by passing a rule that made cloture more difficult than ever. Thus ended the "great battle" for civil rights. The "unpleasantness" over, Truman returned to his desk to get down to the "important" business before Congress. As was to be expected, the debacle of the Truman Democrats in the cloture quarrel gave rise to a rash of outraged statements by Negro leaders, labor leaders, liberals and social democrats. The Republicans had "betrayed." Truman had run out on the fight, etc., etc. In reality, the Republicans and Truman remained true to the class they represent, a higher loyalty than all the election promises in the world. Nobody had betrayed but these leaders themselves. One and all, from Walter White to Walter Reuther, placed sole reliance on Truman whose concern with civil rights during and especially after the election was the most transparent hypocrisy.

The Negro leaders, as J. Meyer so graphically depicts elsewhere in this issue, went into raptures over the token recognition shown to a few of the "Talented Tenth" during the inauguration festivities. Despite numberless "betrayals" in the past, they did little to warn the Negro people, let alone to mobilize them in mass struggle to force the capitalist politicians to make good on their election promises. There was plenty of lobbying, to be sure. But the real lobby, the only one respected by Congress besides the lobby of Big Money and Big Business, the millioned might of the people in the factories, the unions and the Northern Negro ghettos, was never summoned to action.

Far more treacherous however was the attitude of the labor bureaucracy. Behind their passivity toward the filibuster issue, even more flagrant than their passivity

in the struggle to repeal the Taft-Hartley Law, is an explicit or tacit deal with Truman. The civil rights bills could wait until the rest of the "Fair Deal" legislation was acted upon. These super-slick strategists didn't want to antagonize the Southerners before the votes were taken on the "important" bills. If a token fight on civil rights had to be made, its only purpose would be to demonstrate to the Negro people how long and difficult and complicated such a struggle would be. This strategy always worked under Roosevelt. Why not now again under Truman? But times have changed. The Negro people are more conscious of their own interests; the Southern Bourbons less dependent on federal subsidies.

The emasculation of the rent control bill in the House by the continuing Republican-Dixiecrat alliance showed that far more than civil rights was involved in the filibuster. Northern Big Business and Southern Bourbons have openly joined forces for mutual advantage under the political leadership of the GOP. Unquestionably, Big Business would like to rid itself of the international embarrassment it suffers from the oppression of the Negroes in this country. But the addition of a new social force in the struggle against a powerful labor movement at home is more persuasive for them than all moral considerations. For the Southern Bourbons, the alliance signifies the only means for the preservation of its political monopoly and privileges. And these are more decisive than all the sentimental traditions of its long association with the Democratic Party.

Nevertheless, it is significant that the Southern Democrats have not broken with the Democratic Party nor have they been expelled by it. Capitalist commentators are quick to point out that alliances have always been fluid and changing within the two-party system. Operating on this basis, the main strategy of the Democratic high command is to mend the fences within the party. They have no desire to explore the untracked wilderness of a liberal capitalist party where the labor movement is not counter-balanced by the Southern Democrats. On the other hand, they see nothing fatal in Southern Democrats crossing party lines at will, so long as the bureaucracy keeps the trade unions loyally chained to the Democratic Party regardless of doublecrosses, disappointments and defeats.

Its defeat on the rules controversy demonstrates that Truman's popular front, like all popular fronts, weakens and not strengthens the fight against reaction. The Republican Party has temporarily surmounted its crisis through its alliance with the Dixiecrats. With the help of Truman, the Dixiecrats, defeated in the November election, hold the balance of power in the new Congress. The labor movement is left to pick up the remnants of the "Fair Deal" program.

The task of the workers and the Negro people, the creation of a party of their own, postponed and thwarted by their leaders in order to elect Truman, now returns with greater insistence than ever. The impotence and bankruptcy of popular frontism has been adequately demonstrated.

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## NORTH ATLANTIC ALLIANCE

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As we go to press the signatures of twelve European nations are being affixed to the North Atlantic Pact. The immense significance of this event transcends by far its effect on the "cold war" for which it is immediately designed. Four years after the collapse of Hitler's "New Order" a new balance of power is being forged on the old continent. At the head of the coalition, for the first time in modern history, stands a non-European power—American imperialism, chief victor in the recent war, inheritor of the mantle of the British Empire, unrivalled pretender for the role of master of the world.

Columnists and editorial writers in the kept press euphemistically characterize this open transformation of U.S. foreign policy as "the end of isolationism." The description is a mixture of ignorance and deceit. Despite the survival of isolationist *opinion* among capitalist politicians, isolationism received its death blow as the *policy* of the capitalist class after World War I. Transformed by that war from a debtor to a creditor nation, American imperialism deployed its great technological superiority between the wars to supplant England as the manufacturing and financial center of the world and, as Trotsky said, "to put Europe on rations."

If this new role as dominant world power was not clearly visible nor consciously translated at the time in terms of state policy, it was primarily because of the continued although declining strength of the British Empire and the remaining vitality of European capitalism. The Second World War marked the definitive end of that epoch. Far from being a rival, Britain had to be saved from collapse by an American loan. And the annihilation of Germany smashed to bits the last attempt to redivide the world for the benefit of a continental capitalist power.

In speaking of the dangers inherent in the upholding of the anti-civil rights filibuster by Congress, the *New York Times* warns editorially that isolationists might attempt to obstruct the North Atlantic Pact by similar methods. It is a debater's point, devoid of all reality. There will be no genuine clash on this question. Bi-partisan foreign policy is a firmly established institution because the capitalist class has been solidly united in its new world role. It has, indeed, no other choice. Although it is conceivable that the capitalist rulers, in deference to the 160-year tradition of "non-interference," would prefer to hire out the task of maintaining "order" and policing the world, the candidates for this position no longer possess the required qualifications.

Great Britain, France and the Netherlands and the others are rapidly becoming colonial powers in name only. Their efforts to "pacify" the insurgent peoples of the East is proving one of the most costly and colossal failures in history. How could it be otherwise when it has become well-nigh impossible for them to achieve "stability" at home with their own resources alone. They are admittedly impotent without outside help, either individually or collectively, to cope with the power of the Soviet Union.

Life itself has obliged American imperialism to become the caretaker of world capitalism. But it can only fulfill this role effectively on a global scale, i.e., provided private property rights are restored in the Soviet Union and in Eastern Europe. For this reason we have predicted time and again that the road to world domination must be the road to world war. It is well to recall here that the liberal toadies and the labor lackeys of the State Department hailed the Marshall Plan as a great humanitarian effort to feed starving people. (Even a section of the trembling Shachtmanites joined in the chorus.) What have they to say now that it has become plain as the nose on your face that the price of Marshall Plan aid was subordination to the military plans of the North American imperator? Not a word of protest. Not a gesture of opposition. Like good salesmen, they have quickly adapted themselves to the change in the company line.

What has happened to the rights and integrity of the "small nations"? Not a murmur about this from the swarm of ex-radical apologists of the Pentagon-Wall Street gang. Yet the diplomats of the State Department have been only slightly more delicate in lining up these countries than was the Ribbentrop crew. We still do not know the full story behind the type of "persuasion" used to convince Norway and Denmark to join the pact, although they would inevitably be the first victims of a U.S.-Russian war. A Swedish writer for the *New Republic* raises the curtain just a little when he describes the pressure of "American representatives in Stockholm" comparing with "the pressure business . . . German agents had been heavily engaged in . . . a few years earlier."

The North Atlantic Pact is not just another military alliance. The coordination of weapons and the unification of the military staffs of the participating powers under a centralized command cannot be achieved without the regimentation of all economic and political life in harmony with this martial plan. In effect, the political form of this coalition can be nothing else than a world-wide military dictatorship taking its orders from the Brass Hats in Washington.

While the pact will hasten the demise of the United Nations, it is important to note, as the architects of the alliance continually assure us, that the pact is legally sanctioned by the UN charter itself. Once again the class character and class aims of a bourgeois institution has dynamited the illusions and demagoguery of liberals, social democrats and Stalinists. Just as Hitler was able to use the statutes of the Weimar Constitution, "the most democratic in the world" to create his Nazi dictatorship, so American imperialism is establishing its juggernaut of war in the very bosom of "the organization of world peace." The UN, like its predecessor, the League of Nations, as we predicted long ago, has been the breeding ground for war.

The general staffs have carefully calculated all contingencies and eventualities—all but one. That one is the alliance of the peoples of the world who above all want peace. Not the maneuverings of the Kremlin, but the class

struggle in Shanghai and Indonesia, in Milan, the Ruhr and Detroit will prove the Achilles heel of this unholy compact of death, reaction and dictatorship.

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### STALIN SHUFFLES THE COMMAND

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What is happening in the Soviet Union? The events of the past few weeks, which have seen the removal of Molotov, Mikoyan and Voznesensky, three members of the Politburo, from commanding positions in the Soviet regime, indicates a profound internal crisis in the USSR. This shakeup in leadership, rapidly extending to all important posts in the government and economic apparatus, is reminiscent of the political transformations which accompanied the Moscow Trial purges. Its significance may not be less far-reaching.

It is idle to speculate at this time on the precise causes or possible effects internally of this drastic reorganization. They will soon be spelled out more clearly by events themselves. Suffice it to say that the Stalinist regime is infinitely weaker and more unstable in reality than it is in the minds of the renegades and near-renegades from Marxism. For all its territorial conquests in Eastern Europe, Stalinism has continued to be shaken by unending crises produced both by the isolation of the Soviet Union and by the parasitic bureaucracy which Trotsky long ago pointed out had become an absolute break on all progress. Despite temporary gains in the form of plunder and reparations, the attachment of Eastern Europe to the Soviet orbit has only piled new contradictions on old ones.

What is fundamentally involved is the bankruptcy of the theory of "Socialism In One Country," the ideological justification for the perpetuation of a reactionary, totalitarian bureaucracy and for the counter-revolutionary actions of Stalinism on a world scale. So long as it was possible for the bureaucracy to maneuver between conflicting imperialist powers, there seemed to be empirical proof for this pernicious revisionist doctrine. But the postwar situation and above all the consolidation of the power of American imperialism on the European continent has altered all that. Against the North Atlantic Pact, which is pointing all guns eastward from Scandinavia to the Italian peninsula, "Socialism In One Country" has become the very symbol of impending catastrophe.

The minimum aim of the pact, says a *New York Times* editorial, is "to persuade Russia to come to terms and to establish at least the same kind of a modus vivendi between itself and the rest of the world that enabled both sides to live in peace after the revolutionary wave had exhausted itself following the first world war." In other words the price Stalin must pay for a breathing spell is "at least" withdrawal from Germany if not from all Eastern Europe. And this obviously is not the last but the first demand of American imperialism.

What next? This dilemma is one of the main roots of the present crisis of Stalinism precisely because the bureaucracy can no longer find a feasible answer to it. On

the one side Washington intransigently refuses to come to any agreement except on the most humiliating and disastrous terms. On the other side, Stalinism is rapidly losing its influence over the European working-class movement because of the betrayals and hostility of the bureaucracy toward the socialist revolution.

What next? For the first time in a quarter of a century, the bureaucracy cannot extricate itself from its difficulties by a violent shift to the right or to the left. On the right looms the yawning chasm of capitalist restoration and the destruction of the bureaucracy as now constituted. On the left, the workers' revolution, no less perilous to the bureaucratic caste. Each new turn tends therefore to be shorter in duration, deepening rather than resolving the basic crisis.

Regardless of temporary expedients, the crisis now even more than in the past will be driven internally, into the ranks of the Soviet bureaucracy itself. In the past, Bonaparte-Stalin could ruthlessly suppress the struggle within the ruling caste so long as he appeared to safeguard the interests of the bureaucracy as a whole. The present crisis is one of the indications of the limits of this Bonapartist role. As the "savior" loses the possibility of solving the critical problems, the bureaucracy itself must seek by sharp alignments and violent internal conflicts to find a way that will assure its survival.

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### ANOTHER IMPOTENT MANEUVER

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Within the space of a few weeks, the policy of world Stalinism has undergone a violent shift. Cachin's peace offering, promising permanent cohabitation between the capitalist and Communist world extending even to critical support of the Marshall plan, has been replaced by the bellicose threat of Thorez to support the Soviet Army in the event of a war. In rapid succession, a dozen Communist parties, from Israel to Columbia, fell into line with declarations of loyalty to the Kremlin.

Both the "peace feelers" and the "war threats" are variations on the same theme—an attempt to halt the ominous advance of American imperialism. Stalin's diplomatic gyrations, based on a foredoomed attempt to cheat the class struggle, has landed the Soviet Union in a blind alley. It is now face to face with the North Atlantic Pact, the most serious threat from world imperialism outside of military intervention in 1919-21 and the Nazi attack in 1941.

Stalin's efforts to halt the mobilization of armed might being arrayed against the Soviet Union have proved to be feeble and desperate gestures. We pointed out in our editorial last month that the price of the counterrevolutionary services of the Stalinist parties had drastically declined on the world diplomatic market. Precisely because the Stalinist parties in the major European countries no longer constituted an imminent revolutionary threat they could be dispensed with as a prop to maintain capitalist "stability." American imperialism therefore found it possible to brusquely reject the "peace feelers" and to reveal

the mailed fist of the Atlantic Pact beneath the silken glove of the Marshall Plan.

Equally impotent now are the "threats" of Thorez and Togliatti, not to speak of Pollit, Foster, Grotewohl and the other lesser Stalinist hacks in Cuba, Switzerland and Argentina. At the very moment their shouts that the workers of their country will never fight the Soviet Union reach a crescendo, the State Department has battered down opposition in Norway and is dragging Denmark into an anti-Soviet military lineup. Who but the most desperate eclectic could have expected differently?

The prior announcement of Stalinist opposition to a war by American imperialism against the Soviet Union was no revelation to the strategists in the State Department. They have been proceeding on this assumption at least since the promulgation of the Truman Doctrine. One of the main aims of the Marshall Plan was to drive the Stalinists out of the governments in France and Italy as the price of economic aid. Since then, no stone has been left unturned to organize the forces of reaction in each country to smash the Communist parties. Not the least of the objects of the Atlantic Pact is to place the military equipment at the disposal of the native capitalist rulers which will guarantee the success of internal repressive measures.

The Stalinist leaders themselves have prepared the political basis of this repression. Beginning with the turn to people's frontism in 1935, these bureaucrats became the arch-patriots in every country allied with the USSR. This chauvinism reached its most disgusting depths during the war years when Thorez and Duclos in chorus with de Gaulle were shouting for the blood of "the Boche."

The workers, however, particularly in Europe did not follow the Stalinists because they were the best jingoists but rather because of the mistaken opinion that Stalinism represented communism and the Russian Revolution. Their understandable indifference toward the question of whether the Stalinists were better defenders of "national sovereignty" than the French or Italian capitalists facilitated the victory of the Marshall Plan.

This apathy—and even demoralization—can only be deepened by the "pro-Soviet" declarations of the Stalinist leaders. The workers are now discovering that the "maneuver" of patriotism does not culminate in a revolutionary policy but with a frank confession of the "border guard" role which the Soviet bureaucracy has assigned to the Communist parties. If this role does not find an enthusiastic response, it is not because the communist masses are against the defense of the Soviet Union but rather because they cannot visualize such defense separate and apart from the struggle against their own bourgeoisie.

On the other hand, the new "turn" of the Stalinists must alienate thousands of its middle class followers. Attracted in the early postwar period by sympathy with socialism to the Communist parties, their nationalist illusions were strengthened by the chauvinism of the Stalinist leaders. In their eyes, the recent declarations of loyalty to the Soviet Army can only be viewed as "treachery" to the "fatherland." Not all the tortured logic of Duclos ("the French people now have two fatherlands—their own and

the USSR") will stem their movement to the de Gaullists whom they consider the authentic patriots.

The one virtue of the present "turn" is that it reveals the basic perspective of Stalinism in the capitalist countries: collaboration with their native capitalist class or the role of underground agents for the Soviet bureaucracy in the event of a war. It should be unmistakably clear that the first policy has not prevented war but brought it dangerously close. It is doubtful that the second policy will meet with greater success.

The Soviet Union, above all, was the offspring of workers' internationalism. It was saved from capitalist intervention in its early days not by "border guards" but by a revolutionary tide which engulfed European capitalism. By betraying this principle of internationalism, Stalinism has proved to be not only the foe of the world struggle for socialism; it reveals in the final stages of its degeneration that it is also a mortal danger to the continued existence of the Soviet Union.

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### A "SUPPRESSED" DOCUMENT

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The third edition of *Socialism on Trial*, just brought out by Pioneer Publishers, is an important event in the current political scene. Although still permitted to circulate through the mails, the verbatim testimony of James P. Cannon in the Minneapolis Trial of 1941—which comprises the contents of the pamphlet—has assumed the nature of a suppressed document. The prosecution and the defense in the current trial of the 11 Communist Party leaders in New York under the Smith Sedition Law have entered into a tacit agreement to black out any genuine discussion of the first trial and conviction under that act. Only the most casual references to the trial and conviction of the 18 Trotskyists have appeared in either the capitalist or the Stalinist press.

This unspoken conspiracy of silence discloses more about the motives and aims of the antagonists in the present trial than all their conflicts in the courtroom. The clear intent of the government, following the main lines of post-war capitalist propaganda, is to identify Marxism with Stalinism. In this way, they hope that the popular revulsion against Stalinism will limit the protest movement against this fundamental assault on civil rights. Once the conviction is obtained, they undoubtedly plan to use the same "liberal" camouflage in outlawing Marxism and all revolutionary opponents of capitalism, stigmatizing them with the label of Stalinism. The effectiveness of this plan is already to be seen in the discussion now appearing in the pages of *The Nation*. Liberals like Morris Ernst and James Fly, ostensibly frightened by Stalinism, are championing the repressive principle of "full disclosure," i.e., the registration with the government of vital facts on finances and membership by all political organizations.

For opposite reasons, the Stalinists are happy to unite with the government in this game of identifying Stalinism with Marxism. They are not unaware that this line will seriously restrict the scope of the anti-prosecution forces.

But the factional and bureaucratic interests of Stalinism are for them a higher consideration than the democratic rights of the workers—than even the liberty of the leaders of the Communist Party.

For the Stalinists to give recognition to the Minneapolis Trial would constitute a body blow to their treacherous policy in the labor movement. To admit that a capitalist government could persecute Trotskyists as Marxists and revolutionists—not as "fascists" and "agents of Hitler"—would undermine the lexicon of abuse, calumny and amalgams which are an essential part of the ideology of Stalinism. It would call into question the Moscow Frameup Trials and the bloody purges which assured the final victory of the Bonapartist bureaucracy over its revolutionary opposition. It would expose their stab-in-the-back action against the Trotskyists in the Minneapolis trial.

For parallel if not identical reasons neither the prosecution nor the defense desire genuine Marxism, as it was examined and presented in the Minneapolis case, to feature prominently in the present trial. Class reasons, as usual, prove a thousand times stronger than juridical needs and precedents. Yet the truth will not be so easily suppressed. Despite the conspiracy of silence, the similarity of the indictment in both cases based on the same police state law will arouse new interest in the Minneapolis trial and conviction and thus help reveal the repressive aims of the government and the criminal anti-working class policies of the Stalinists. *Socialism on Trial* has already become a basic document of the workers' movement, a primer of Marxism. It has gone through two editions in this country; it has been republished in Great Britain and translated into Spanish by the Mexican Trotskyists.

We predict with confidence that one of the by-products of the present trial will be a revival of new interest in genuine Marxism. In reading *Socialism On Trial*, thousands of workers will compare the capable and uncompromising defense of the doctrine of scientific socialism by James P. Cannon with the behavior of the Stalinists in the Federal Court in New York.

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### COMING IN THE MAY ISSUE!

We beg the indulgence of the readers for not publishing a number of articles we had promised for the current issue. Reason: we just ran out of space. They will appear in the May Fourth International as follows:

**Latin America in the Postwar World** by Louis T. Gordon.

**Soviet Economy and Soviet Theory** by F. Forrest.

**Wobbly Apostate** by Vincent R. Dunne: a review of the biography of the renegade IWW, Ralph Chaplin.

In addition, we have the following articles in the editorial hopper:

**Eastern Europe After Two Years** by Ernest Germain, a survey of economic trends in Stalin's satellite nations.

**The Evolution of a Centrist Tendency in France** by Pierre Frank.

**Dos Passos' Grand Design** reviewed by Paul Shapiro and Blackett's controversial book on the atom bomb reviewed by Joseph Hansen. The concluding installment of **Plekhanov on Hegel**.

# Marxism and Democracy

By ERNEST GERMAIN

The triumph of Byzantinism in language has always been a sure sign of decadence. It is difficult to conceive of a more Byzantine language than the political language of our time, thanks to which the straw men of the Yankee Sixty Families become the "champions of the human personality" and the GPU squadron leaders the "guardians of the most democratic constitution in the world." The most abused term of our time is undoubtedly the term "democracy." Passionate controversies have raged about its definition, international conflicts are identified with the various interpretations of its meaning. This meaning however fits into a well defined framework if it is removed from all polemical surroundings and considered in the light of its historic evolution and its social content.

"Democracy" literally means "government (power) by the people." Usually the word is employed to designate the parliamentary regimes which developed in Europe at the beginning of the nineteenth century on the British model. These regimes not only were not governments by the *entire people*—electoral qualifications generally excluded nine-tenths of the inhabitants from all exercise of political rights—but not even direct governments of the owning classes. They were representative and *indirect* parliamentary governments. Their mode of operation was perfectly characterized by Marx when he said that once every four years, they permitted the mass of electors to designate the members of the ruling class who were to govern the country.

However, the historic origin of the parliamentary "democracy" of the nineteenth century is in fact to be found in a *direct democracy*: the petty-bourgeois democracy of the medieval communes. We know that this democracy disintegrated following the rise of capitalist trade and monarchical absolutism. Under specific conditions (certain Swiss cantons and Scandinavian agricultural communities; pioneer regions in the Middle West of the U. S. in the nineteenth century, etc.), this advanced form of democracy was able to subsist and to temporarily reproduce itself up to the middle of the nineteenth century.

These narrow limits were determined by the existence of a *genuine social and economic equality*, itself the function of specific historic conditions. These communities of small agricultural proprietors were rapidly swallowed up by the world rise of capitalism and their social equality was not long in disappearing into an extreme polarization of social conditions. This is what condemns in advance all the petty-bourgeois utopias of "social democracy" just as the famous plan of Saint-Just for the redistribution of the land remained unrealizable.

The opposition between the principle of direct democracy and representative "democracy" is in no sense an artificial mental construction. During all the bourgeois revolutions, this is what crystallized the nascent ideological conflict between the triumphant bourgeoisie and the plebeian formations, the principal actors of the revolutionary drama. In his scholarly work, *The Class Struggle*

*Under the First Republic*, Daniel Guerin points out that "the men in shirt-sleeves of Paris" spontaneously raised the question of the direct exercise of power by the people in opposition to all the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois groupings, including the Jacobins, the most radical and fanatical supporters of the principles of representative government.

This opposition not only expressed the fear of the bourgeoisie of direct government by the people which would inevitably turn against all forms of exploitation; whereas representative "democracy" is so organized as to protect capitalist exploitation. This opposition also corresponds to the specific function which ascending capitalism assigns to the state.

The bourgeoisie was violently hostile to any intervention of the public power into economic life. It demanded "total freedom of action" for every citizen. In practice, this freedom signified *freedom of competition* between the individual bourgeois, proprietors of the means of production, and unlimited *freedom of exploitation* of individual proletarians by the capitalists as a whole. The sole means of defense at the disposal of the workers was precisely their organized resistance, prohibited by law. The function of the state, acting as the arbiter between *the different factions of the owning class*, was thus limited to the supervision of this "free" play of social forces.

Parliament was actually the most suitable form of government for the execution of these functions. Additional guarantees were assured by the so-called "*independence of the three constitutional powers*." The executive power and the judiciary power, tightly held by the upper layers of the bourgeoisie, constituted the additional ramparts surrounding sacrosanct bourgeois property, if by any chance parliament should slip out of the complete control of the capitalists for a brief period.

## Imperialist "Democracy"

Toward the last quarter of the nineteenth century, this condition of classic equilibrium of bourgeois society began to be shaken by two opposite but parallel phenomena: the prodigious growth of the organized labor movement on the one side and the growth of capitalist groupings (cartels, trusts, monopolies) on the other. An inexorable process of *centralization* transformed bourgeois society from a resultant of conflicts between millions of individuals into an area where giant all-powerful organizations confronted each other. The maintenance of the capitalist regime was no longer assured by the "free play of social forces" but depended more and more on the direct use of state coercion.

The organization of the working class, the inevitable product of capitalism itself as was predicted by the *Communist Manifesto* several decades before it became a living reality, introduced a permanent twofold pressure into the bourgeois state. On the one side, the workers' organizations



fought for an improvement of the living and working conditions of the proletariat by means of *social legislation* promulgated by the state. On the other side, they struggled for *universal suffrage*, which tended to transfer the struggle between the representatives of the bourgeoisie and those of the proletariat into parliament.

On both levels, the struggle was often carried on by violent methods (general strikes in Russia, Italy, Poland, Austria, Belgium, etc.). Furthermore, this was precisely the period of the feverish rise of imperialism. By conquering the entire planet, the big bourgeoisie of the Western European nations were able to yield important concessions to their own proletariat. The new equilibrium of imperialist "democracy" which thus resulted, and which still brings sighs of longing from all the good reformists, was however paid for by the sufferings and the ruthless exploitation of four-fifths of mankind: the colonial and semi-colonial peoples.

This new equilibrium was expressed in the transformation of the function of the parliamentary bourgeois state and in the appearance of the centralized state machine as the *essential* weapon for the defense of the monopolists. Parliament and analogous organisms in the different echelons of national life became instruments of *class conciliation*. In exchange for the reforms which the workers' representatives received in parliament, they kept the class struggle outside of parliament, within a strictly legal framework, that is, within the framework of tacit acceptance of capitalist profits and colonial super-profits. But "political equality" never lost its *formal* character in the framework of this imperialist "democracy" because the vast concentration of wealth in the hands of the monopolists permitted them to enjoy an equivalent political power inside and outside parliament.

As a consequence of its structure, the bourgeois state in its upper echelons is entirely dominated by the ablest representatives of the big bourgeoisie, a product of a veritable *secular selection* (office-holders of the British Foreign Office, Colonial Office and War Office; French financial inspectors, etc.). In the beginning, the bourgeois state machine was only a simple executive organ responsive to the orders of the real bourgeois government, which coincided in this period with the official bourgeois government. The capitalists in this epoch wanted to limit this machine to the utmost to prevent the squandering of money. In fact toward the end of the nineteenth century, the United States was brought close to default.

But to the extent that parliament ceased to represent exclusively the interests of the bourgeoisie, the bourgeoisie ceased to consider parliament as its essential weapon. The *state machine* (office-holders and irremovable judges, the army, the clergy, the propaganda apparatus, etc.), endowed with the last word in technical progress, is perfected and becomes the *real center* of political power, the parliament is reduced to its shadow. Corresponding to the concentration of wealth in the hands of the monopolists is the concentration of real political power in its own hands exercised by the bourgeois state machine which they "hold" through family, financial and ideological ties.

### The Totalitarianization of the Bourgeois State

In the period of its highest prosperity (1878-1918), imperialist "democracy" thus appears as the product of the action of the labor movement plus the formation of monopolies upon classical parliamentarism. But this period of supreme prosperity does not last long. Soon imperialism is shaken by convulsions which grow out of its own laws of development (wars, organic crises) and the social contradictions which it builds up (revolutions, civil wars, colonial uprisings). The old framework of the "democratic" equilibrium becomes rapidly obsolete.

Unable to concede new sops to the proletariat, forced to progressively withdraw the old concessions, the bourgeoisie more and more looks upon "parliamentary legality" as an intolerable and superfluous luxury. They turn against the regime to the degree that the workers' representatives on their side can no longer adhere to "their" commitments in the tacit pact. Despite the presence of important workers' fractions in parliament, the extra-parliamentary class struggle assumes a more and more violent form. Finally, the organic crisis of capitalism attains such proportions that the least freedom afforded to the proletarian class struggle becomes a mortal threat to the domination of the bourgeois class.

*The state guarantee of capitalist profits* becomes the principal function of the state. This requires the complete regimentation of the life of nations under the orders of the monopolists, the organization of a frenzied and permanent campaign to artificially and violently repress the contradictions which threaten to shatter to bits the entire capitalist edifice. This is the characteristic form of the state in our time: the totalitarian state within whose framework the police dictatorship (open, as under fascism, or thinly veiled, as it is now in Greece, typical of the regimes now being established in several Western European countries) corresponds to the extreme concentration of economic and state power and to the permanent crisis of the regime.

The totalitarianization of capitalism is neither a uniform nor a direct process. It comes into being first in those countries where "national" capitalism is subjected to a particularly acute crisis resulting from peculiar historical factors (Germany, Italy, Japan). It knows how to adapt itself to peculiar national conditions and to conform to the specific social features of a given country (reactionary movements of petty-bourgeois revolt in Germany and Italy; elements of militarist traditionalism in Japan, etc.).

The extent of its realization depends in large part on the capacity of the workers to resist, and it is retarded by the existence of vast rational reserves (Great Britain, U.S.A.). But it penetrates in a thousand different forms in all countries and is expressed in a more and more rigid control over economic, social, political and cultural life by the state organisms ruled by the monopolists. This is the stage in which capitalism "negates" all the principles it held when it came into the world, but "negates" them in a *retrograde* manner without supplanting them through a higher order of principles.

*The supreme organization of capitalism is the organization of a bloody chaos.* This is the way the fundamental paradox of our epoch appears. Never before has there been such "organizing"—from the organization of infants to the manufacture of coffins—and never has society functioned in such a chaotic and convulsive way. Never before has all of life been submitted to so much regimentation and never has it appeared so unregulated, to such a point that it evades all human control. This paradox attains its ultimate expression in *war*, in whose framework all of humanity is rigidly regimented like an inanimate machine whose every piece functions in strictest order: but the machine in its entirety revolves in a void, sowing blind destruction around itself and completely evades the calculations of the most "genius-like" of its operators.

It is not difficult to disclose the profound causes of this lamentable situation. Economic centralization and prodigious technological progress have produced a genuine *socialization of labor*; the satisfaction of social needs requires a conscious coordination of all spheres of production. This coordination of hundreds of millions of men, of tens of billions of horsepower, of hundreds of thousands of productive centers and of thousands of different activities is only possible *from below*, by the consciously coordinated activity of the producers themselves. But capitalist "organization" tends toward the imposition *from above* of greater and greater restraint upon the producers, thus continually loosening their grip over production. In a word, the "organization" of the totalitarian states is an organization of *restraint of men* and not a *rational organization of things*.

The more the bureaucracies of state and industry swell in size, the less the individual "bureaucrat" depends upon his own judgment in making decisions; the more the entire machine is subordinated to the decisions of the handful of monopolists, the more the whole of regimented society slips out of all *effective* control. On the economic, political, social and cultural plane, the disequilibrium of the world is infinitely greater than in the time of "liberal" capitalism, when all regimentation was in disfavor. The more capitalist organization is perfected, the more it extends a bloody chaos over the entire planet.

### "Progressive Democracy"

In this formula—"to replace the rational organization of things for the restraint of men"—we have the whole secret and the essential content of socialism in our epoch. We find therein at the same time a precise gauge for measuring the progress and the retrogressive involution of the Russian Revolution and the lamentable results Stalinist reaction has brought about in the countries of its "strategic buffer-zone" which are called "progressive democracies." After flirting with the whole retinue of imperialist "democracy" during the years of the "anti-fascist war," the Stalinists are forced today by the cold war to present a criticism of this "democracy."

Superficially, this criticism seems to follow the grand lines of the criticism which Lenin already formulated so magnificently in his *State and Revolution*. The Stalinists

justly denounce the *formal* character of freedom of information in "Yankee democracy." The material means for the practical exercise of this freedom is kept as the prerogative of tiny groups of monopolists who rigidly control all the agencies and organs of information. No less formal is "freedom of the ballot," this most sacred rite of imperialist "democracy," which along with the monopoly of higher education and public information is in practice the preserve of the big bourgeoisie. In this manner the overwhelming majority of the voters are not permitted to gain an individual understanding of the events and the parties, while powerful political machines block the road to all new organizations, etc.

Political equality is a farce so long as the most crying social inequality exists. Human relations are not determined by the ballot one is permitted to cast every four years but rather by the material means at one's disposal, and these relations are veritable *relations of servitude* in a society based on the exploitation of man by man.

But it is something else again when the Stalinists couple with this justified critique of imperialist "democracy," a eulogy to the so-called "economic democracy" which prevails in the Eastern European countries and which is *no less formal*. It is true that the constitutions of most of these countries solemnly proclaim that the principal natural resources as well as the vital sectors of industry belong to the nation—just as equality among citizens is no less solemnly proclaimed in the bourgeois "democratic" countries.

But in practice, nationalization in these countries does not in any way whatever place the means of production in the hands of the *producers*, the workers. The means of production remain at the disposal of the bureaucrats, the functionaries of the "party," the state and the economy whose rights in the factories are far greater than yesterday's bosses and against whom the worker has no means of defense if he does not wish to risk the accusation of "sabotage." Not only are the workers deprived of all practical means to exercise their rights under the police dictatorship, but a new social inequality develops which, although limited to the sphere of distribution, calls into being a whole machinery of laws, judges and gendarmes for protection against "intolerable equalitarian tendencies."

This becomes all the clearer when one considers that Stalinism deliberately avoided the creation of state organs within whose framework the masses could make their voice heard and impose their will. When the old state machinery was destroyed in Yugoslavia, Poland, and partially in Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria, the workers in these countries in numerous cases seized the factories and even the power itself.

The establishment of the regimes labeled "progressive democracies" thus consisted in a veritable *political expropriation of the proletariat*, through the reintroduction of the machinery of the *bourgeois* state (parliament, irremovable judiciary, standing army, corps of functionaries, etc.). This was intended not so much at "appeasing" Western imperialism (we can see it better today) as to keep the proletariat in a tight bureaucratic straitjacket. But in

other countries (Hungary, Rumania, Finland and partially Bulgaria) they did not even touch the bourgeois state apparatus, which was taken over as a whole by the Stalinists who as a result preserved in its entirety the whole former arsenal of instruments of *mass* oppression.

The economic expression of this state of things was not long in being revealed. Grandiose economic possibilities, opened by the nationalizations, were not at all utilized in a rational way. The countries of Eastern Europe were kept in their narrow national framework in which all planning becomes a joke. The successive "plans" which were drafted were intended to satisfy the needs of the Russian bureaucracy and did not in the slightest correspond to the needs of the masses of these countries. They brought the workers nothing besides more work and less effective means for self-defense.

The workers' reaction expressed itself in absenteeism, lowering of output, the development of the "parallel" market, barter, etc. The bureaucrats concluded from this that the "backward" workers were "sabotaging socialist construction," that it was therefore necessary to strengthen the means of coercion. Everywhere similar arguments are voiced by the Stalinists. Thus the path is cleared for the reinforcement of the secret police, for the system of forced labor, for the effective suppression of all political freedom. Here also restraint upon men, as it becomes more and more rigid, renders the organization of things more and more chaotic.

### The Victory of the Bureaucracy in the USSR

Two decades ago, similar methods led to the degeneration of the first Workers' State in Russia. From a victorious revolution which, during its heroic years, witnessed a striking affirmation of the creative initiative of the masses, of voluntary discipline and indomitable courage of millions of proletarians, it has become a regime where restraint atrophies human potentialities in all spheres of social life, where "the organization" has lost all contact with the needs and real aspirations of the masses. In this sense, the isolated Russian Revolution has led to a *totalitarianization* parallel to that brought about by the evolution of the capitalist states.

From this the enemies of the October Revolution, from the reformists to the anarchists, draw the conclusion that this involution is the "logical" result of Bolshevik organization "methods" and of the seizure of power. This argument has no more truth than the observation that cancer is a "logical" product of life, since malignant tumors never appear in inanimate matter. The Bolsheviks did not at all take power in October 1917 for the purpose of building a socialist society "isolated" from the rest of the world in a backward country with a poor and culturally undeveloped proletariat. In their minds, their victory was to aid the proletariat of the advanced countries of Europe to build socialism on the basis of the high technological and cultural level of Central and Western Europe.

Between 1918 and 1923 the opportunities to realize this aim were many. Social Democracy, which remained the predominant organization of the workers in the West,

aborted the successive revolutionary uprisings in these countries. From this point on decadent capitalism in the West assumed more and more an abject totalitarian form, and the isolated Russian Revolution degenerated under the burden of the old Russian barbarism to produce the monster of Stalinism. In this sense we would be a thousand times justified in declaring that fascism and Stalinism are the legitimate offspring of the Social Democracy and the betrayals it perpetrated against the proletarian revolution during the decisive years 1918-23.

But we are not at all obliged to employ negative argumentation in defense of the October Revolution and the Bolshevik methods of taking power because of the Stalinist degeneration. The victorious proletarian revolution is the expression of a certain combination of material and moral forces favorable to the working class. The presence of a party, the conscious leadership of its class, humanly, organizationally and politically capable of assuring this revolutionary victory, is nothing but a specific form of expressing this same relationship of forces.

Then, the ebb of the international revolutionary movement and the exhaustion of the Russian proletariat modify this relationship of forces at the expense of the vanguard of the class. The triumph of Stalinism was the political expression of this modification. But this triumph could only be realized by the physical annihilation of the Bolshevik Party and by the police massacre of the whole generation which had led October to victory. Doesn't that prove in turn that Bolchevism is not "the father" but on the contrary the very antithesis of Stalinism?

That it is impossible "to await" a conjuncture of conditions in which the conquest of power by the proletariat is realized "peacefully" and in "ideal circumstances" ("favorable" international situation, propitious economic conjuncture, etc.) has not only been empirically demonstrated but it is moreover to be deduced from the laws of movement of decadent capitalism. In this historic stage, conditions for the realization of socialism do not improve but rather worsen from decade to decade with each missed opportunity to take power.

Kautsky explained learnedly in 1919 how dangerous it would be to take power in a chaotic international situation under the threat of civil war and with a disorganized productive apparatus. The result of this historic cowardice was the reconstruction of *capitalism* which led inevitably to the crisis of 1929, to the coming to power of Hitler, to the war of 1939 and to the total destruction of Germany in 1945.

The Stalinists, in turn, explained in 1944-45 that the international and economic situation was "too unfavorable" to take power in France, Italy, Belgium, etc. Can one doubt today that since the opportunity has been missed, the international situation has become infinitely more unfavorable and world economic chaos infinitely more aggravated, and that on the morrow this can lead to hundreds of millions of dead in the Third World War?

The historic merit of the Bolsheviks consists therefore in having dared for the first time to completely abolish the bourgeois state machine, to impose a severe and

absolutely indispensable dictatorship on the former ruling classes and on their counter-revolutionary frenzy, and to have permitted the real blossoming of soviet *proletarian democracy* during the most difficult years. One can argue about this or that specific measure which limited this democracy under the fire of enemy guns, but the fundamental question—the one which incorporates the need of building a new type of state, a proletarian state, in place of the old apparatus of the bourgeois state—has received definitive answers in Russia and in Spain and in all the tragic revolutionary experiences of the last three decades. All the heroism and all the sacrifices of the proletariat are completely in vain if does not succeed in taking power and in organizing its own government.

This in no way constitutes a *guarantee* for the march toward socialism, but is an *indispensable condition* for this march. It is in this sense that the Russian lesson must be understood. It is merely necessary for the structure and the function of the state to reflect the historic interest of the *proletariat*, to permit the progressive abolition of all political monopoly, the restriction of the whole body of permanent functionaries, and the exercise on a rotating basis of all executive functions by the masses of workers.

This, of course, can only be a *tendency*, only, moreover, a contradictory process which is applied on the basis of specific historic conditions of each country, and not an absolute norm to be imposed everywhere and under all conditions in the year X after the revolution. But an understanding of the relative character of this tendency does not in any way justify a pure and simple rejection of these fundamental criteria in the manner of the apologists of Stalinism.

### The Economic Significance Of Proletarian Democracy

The simple mechanistic “denial” of the anarchists—which raises the notion of individual freedom to the level of an absolute norm, where it becomes an absurdity—has its complement in the mechanist “affirmation” of the Bordigists who invite us to “abandon the fetishism of (workers’) democracy.” This conception leaves aside the decisive function of proletarian democracy in the organization of *genuine socialist planning*. There is no effective planning as long as the masses of consumers do not properly satisfy their needs; as long as the workers do not feel themselves the real masters of the factories; as long as production is not so organized as to guarantee in the first place the development of the technical abilities of the toilers, and to make them capable of progressively controlling and managing all the processes of production.

In other words: there is no real planning other than the one which is elaborated, executed and checked by the free and constant activity of thousands of *committees* which function from the factory to the top echelons of economic centralization in collective contact with the masses, which express themselves in a constant renewal of the committee personnel. It is only in this way that the great *socialist selection* will be realized in life and will lead the most downtrodden sections of humanity—the tens of thousands

of technical, organizational and scientific geniuses who will replace the present-day “elite” and the “technocrat candidates” and will guarantee a rapid suppression of all social inequalities.

Progress toward socialism is to be measured by the degree of adaptation of production to consumption, the degree of effective control of the producers over production, by the degree of development of all the latent possibilities of each producer. Otherwise, life and the real needs inevitably revolt against the bureaucratic “plans.” These revolts lead to a strengthening of the apparatus of coercion and the body of functionaries who, by arrogating material privileges to themselves, disorganize planning and accelerate the whole retrogressive involution. Proletarian democracy is therefore as indispensable a condition for the victory of socialism as the assumption of power and the abolition of the bourgeois state apparatus are the indispensable conditions for the victory of the socialist revolution.

### World Government and Workers’ International

The functional superiority of proletarian democracy over all other state forms consists then in this: that it permits the rapid fusion of the executive with the legislative functions, and that it allows for an *effective* democracy by facilitating the free development of every producer to the point where he becomes genuinely capable of taking his turn in all ruling functions. The administration of things is more and more substituted for the coercion of men and becomes more effective as the latter disappears.

It is no different in the sphere of international relations. The debate now raging between the representatives of American imperialism and the Russian bureaucrats on the “necessity of establishing a *world government*” versus the “safeguarding of *national sovereignty*” is just as absurd as the debate between the partisans of so-called “political democracy” and those defending so-called “progressive democracy.”

American imperialism is by no means ready to accept the decisions of any international body; its single purpose is the establishment of its imperialist rule over the entire world. The Russian bureaucrats have not “safeguarded” but crushed the national rights of the Ukrainians, Bielorussians, Poles, Germans and a score of other nationalities; its single purpose is to prohibit the trespassing of American imperialism on its preserves.

The inability of imperialism as well as of the Russian bureaucrats to even conceive of effective agencies of “international control” results from the very state of mind which gives rise to this conception. For Washington, as well as for Moscow, “control” and “world government” signify an “international” coercion which is superimposed on “national” coercion. Alongside of the national policeman there is placed an “international” policeman whose duty is to supervise at one and the same time the supervised and the supervisors. If this framework of national or continental “organization” has already produced indescribable chaos, a world “organization” of the same char-

acter would create incredible anarchy which would likewise produce within its midst tens of bloody conflicts.

A world government will only be effective when it extends genuine freedom, acquired by the workers in the principal nations, on a world scale, freedom based upon the disappearance of all forms of exploitation and oppression. The Socialist United States of the World, basing itself on the reintegration of the bankrupt "national economies" into a world market cleared of its capitalist barriers, will attain a dynamic synthesis between social and economic world unity and the individual diversity of nations.

Faced with the threat of an atomic war and a veritable destruction, stage by stage, of the human race, a world government of councils of workers and poor peasants constitutes the only realistic alternative which gives real promise of peace and abundance.

The workers' international long ago gave expression to the *principle* of the world solidarity of the toilers and the necessary *organization* for the daily political manifestation of this solidarity. By a dramatic reversal of events, at the very moment that technical progress places a world

government squarely on the order of the day, the workers' international appears to be weaker than ever, abandoning the field of universality to the class enemy. But this is only the superficial appearance of the situation. These same forces, while obliging official public opinion to preoccupy itself with the question of world government, render its realization absolutely utopian within the framework of decadent capitalism, and through a thousand detours and temporary retreats prepare the conscious forces which tomorrow will lead the proletariat to a genuine world government.

The construction of the Fourth International becomes the framework for the gestation of these forces. The first proletarian organization which combines within itself the best militants of the class in all the nations of the world, the most advanced as well as the most backward, on a footing of genuine equality, is at the same time the first organization which is building a genuinely *world* movement, policy and leadership. Therein resides its functional superiority over all the workers' organizations which preceded it and therein at the same time is a sure guarantee of its final success.

—September 15, 1948.

## “The Talented Tenth”

### *Negro Leadership and Civil Rights*

By J. MEYER

The preliminaries of the struggle over civil rights have already brought home to the Negro people that they can expect little from this Congress. The *Pittsburgh Courier* of February 26th expresses current Negro opinion editorially. "What reason was there for supposing that a Democratic Eighty-first Congress would be more 'impressive' than a Republican Eightieth Congress?" Its conclusion is also worth repetition: "The shadow-boxing going on in the Senate should be a post-graduate course to those whose political education has not gone beyond the campaign platform stage."

But this does not mean that Negro injustice is merely the victim of the same old run-around. Not in the slightest degree. The 1948 elections showed that never since the period of the Civil War has the Negro question so shaken the nation. And never since that period has Congress been so involved in the Negro question as in the present session.

To pass any civil rights bill demands firm rules to end filibustering. This involves a break with a not unimportant traditional procedural practice. Secondly, civil rights is being exploited as a political weapon by the Republican Party against the Democratic Party. Bricker, a Republican from Ohio, maliciously proposes to add anti-discrimination clauses to a national housing bill. A Democratic senator bitterly protests at this proposal which he says will ruin the chances of the bill.

The NAACP and others demand that new labor legislation should contain clauses denying NLRB facilities to labor unions which discriminate against Negro workers. Senator Taft announces his agreement. The *New York Times* of February 8th says that the bitterness of the exchanges on the Republican attempt to exploit the civil rights issue exceeds anything since the special session called by Truman in 1947.

Democratic congressmen are exploiting the demand for the repeal of the Taft-Hartley Law and the passing of social security legislation in an attempt to sidetrack the struggle on civil rights. Whatever may be the fate of the various issues and bills now before Congress, it is clear that the Negro question has stamped itself indelibly upon the life of this session.

The Negro question is the central issue of this Congress in another and deeper sense. Despite Truman's assumption by divine right of the most dangerous powers in the Taft-Hartley Act, the Democrats have two advantages in their maneuvers and evasions on this bill: 1) the Republicans are known to be in opposition; 2) the labor leaders are silent and covering up for Truman. But there is not the slightest cover for anybody on the civil rights program.

It was the issue above all on which Truman galvanized his party and won the sympathies of the people. The Dixiecrats dramatized the clash for him by splitting the Demo-

cratic Party. If Congress fails to make a reasonable, a passable demonstration of its willingness and ability to translate into action the wishes of the people then democracy, "the American Way," will receive a terrible blow; abroad in the deadly serious propaganda war with Russia, in the rank and file of the labor movement, in the consciousness of the American people as a whole, and above all among the Negroes who have during recent years given ample evidence that their patience is nearing its end. Finally the struggle in Congress puts squarely before the nation the role of the Southern politicians who have misrepresented the South and distorted the political life of the country for a hundred and seventy years.

### A Bold Political Maneuver

The administration knows this—knows it very well. Hence Truman and his political advisers have initiated and are resolutely carrying through a political maneuver of extreme boldness. They propose to split the Negro petty bourgeoisie from the Negro masses and attach them to the Democratic Party and the administration. They propose to use them as a weapon for stifling not only the actions but the very protests of the Negroes. Thus the educated, white-collar elements among the Negroes, whom many years ago Dr. Du Bois dignified with the phrase "talented tenth," are at last receiving some of the recognition he demanded for them. They are not receiving a gift or "justice."

Far more than the Congress is involved. The country as a whole is deeply stirred by the insoluble general crisis, and many are looking more and more to the Negro question as at least one issue which ought to be solved. The petty bourgeoisie is politically active on this question as never before. Many bourgeois industrialists are awaking to the fact that they cannot allow labor and "communism" to be the sole defenders of democratic rights. Catholic and Jewish organizations for good reasons of their own have joined in the battle. All of these, including the labor leadership, with unerring instinct realize that the Negro petty bourgeoisie represents, *for them*, the key to the situation. That the masses of the people are sincere, there is no doubt. We shall come to that later.

But from the president down, in their various ways all the leaderships have one common aim—to keep the *Negro masses* quiet and to blurt the sceptical working class. Thus the policy of President Truman and the administration is no cheap trick. It represents a response of capitalist society to social and political forces deeply rooted in the history of the nation and its present social structure. As the forces align themselves, and they are doing so with great rapidity, the question of civil rights for Negroes gives invaluable indications of more fundamental social conflicts involving the whole future of American society.

The administration and its supporters have taken the lead first of all on the question of propaganda. The Report of the President's Committee on Civil Rights was a landmark. Since that time we have had the plain-speaking, almost violent report on jim crow in Washington. Attorney-

General Tom Clark now finds himself on liberal bookshelves as the author of an opus (a very dull and pedestrian affair) attacking racial covenants and bearing the suggestive title of *Prejudice and Property*. As for the speeches and articles and messages of Senator Humphrey, Governor Bowles, and the rest, one has only to look back to Roosevelt's pitiful record from 1932 to 1945 to recognize the vast distance that the Democratic Party and the administration have traveled, under the whip of the Negro masses and the sympathy of the people. They are no longer on the defensive, as far as words are concerned. They have learned the trick of joining full-throatedly in the chorus of denunciation.

The administration recognizes how precious are its Negro spokesmen. Their presence on Democratic platforms and their signatures on Democratic documents are the sole certificate of Democratic purity on civil rights. Their control of the Negro masses is the slender barrier between the present turgid situation and bloody outbursts. Roosevelt (how he is being exposed these days!) used to appoint Negroes to posts dealing with Negroes. That is no longer satisfactory. Earl Brown, *Amsterdam News* columnist, quite recently made a blistering attack upon the Negro policy of the New Deal: "*In this period a number of Negroes were appointed to would-be advisory positions in the Government. All of these appointees were purely political mannikins who were yanked around by departmental or bureau heads at will. They had no power. Most of them never even learned what they were supposed to do.*"

Similarly, says Brown, Negroes in the diplomatic service were appointed only to posts dealing with Negroes. It is clear that in the minds of both whites and Negroes this must stop. Dr. Ralph Bunche, a Negro, after his success as mediator in Palestine, is mentioned by Leonard Lyons, *New York Post* columnist, as being seriously considered for the post of ambassador to Russia. (There is no question that a Russian post is higher than a post dealing with Negroes.) The truth of the rumor is not important. The rumor itself is.

The governor of the Virgin Islands is said to be slated for a federal judgeship or perhaps the Supreme Court. The Negro press notes with glee that he has been touring the South, hobnobbing with Southerners and Dixiecrats. This, it is claimed, is preparation for the judgeship.

The most startling appointment, however, is that of Mrs. Anna Hegemann as assistant to Social Security administrator Oscar Ewing. The post of Social Security Administrator has been recommended to Congress for cabinet status. The Negro press speculates with bated breath whether this would not mean that Mrs. Hegemann would occupy a post just below cabinet rank. Appetites are whetted by the career of Negro Congressman Dawson. He is now chairman of the Committee on House Expenditures. His secretary is a Negro, who now functions as secretary to the Committee.

In addition Truman has agreed to raise the status of the American and Liberian ministers to that of ambassador. The American minister, Edward Dudley, is expected to be

the first Negro ambassador. True, Liberia is a Negro state, but he can always be promoted to Russia or Communist China or some such place.

The little Trumanites everywhere are following the example. Chester Bowles appoints a Negro as his military aide, the Democratic congressman for a Bronx constituency appoints a Negro as his secretary. This is just the beginning. What is intended, particularly if mass activity continues, was made perfectly clear by the remarkable events that took place in Washington during the inaugural celebrations.

### "A Big Day for Democracy"

President Truman of Missouri and Vice President Barkley of Kentucky gave the jim crow tradition in Washington such blows as it has never been given before. To the inaugural ball 250 Negroes were invited. At a very special dinner given to Truman and Barkley as President and Vice President, four Negroes, two men and two women, were present. Negro Congressman Dawson was guest of honor at a dinner and parties in which Howard McGrath and numerous other Democratic magnates participated. Conversely, at dinners and parties given by the Democratic National Chairman and others, Congressman Dawson and numerous other Negroes from all over the country participated. At both the gala and traditional inaugural affairs, "the race" took an active part on and off the stage. For "the first time" in the annals of this country, three Negroes made a "command performance" before the Chief Executive at the same time. Lionel Hampton's band played for the pre-inaugural ball, and the next night at the inaugural ball when Benny Goodman fell ill, Hampton, a guest at the ball, substituted for Goodman as leader of the band. Negroes stayed at the Statler and the Shoreham.

It is not difficult to believe the rumor that President Truman bluntly made the Southerners understand that if they did not like it they could stay away. He himself spoke to Lena Horne, the Negro film star, during one of the parties, and Governor (Kissing Jim) Folsom expressed himself as willing to oblige a Negro photographer in democratically including Miss Horne in the peculiar brand of gubernatorial activity from which he gets his name. (The lady excused herself and thus both the Negro picture pages and democracy were cheated.)

For the Negro petty bourgeoisie the whole business was no laughing matter. Sections of the Negro press went wild with joy. *"It was a big day for democracy." "The two greatest days in modern history passed into the pages of democracy . . . leaving us with tired feet and happy heart. There's more . . . much more . . . which we will be remembering for days to come, but right now, our fatigued mind refuses to admit all of it into the frontal cranium or wherever it is that things go when they want to come out on paper."*

"Biggest thrill of the day came via radio when newscasters chortled over the snub given Dixiecrats Thurmond and Talmadge by President Truman and Vice President Barkley."

There is no question but that this is going to be repeated in New England, in Detroit, in Los Angeles. It may take time, but Truman's Negro guests were politicians and Negro supporters from all over the country. It is inconceivable that so radical a departure did not have the whole country in mind. Gone—for the time being—are the days when Frederick Douglass forced his solitary way into a reception given by Abraham Lincoln, when Theodore Roosevelt brought the roof down on his head by an invitation to Booker T. Washington to lunch with him at the White House. Gone too are the days of furtive little luncheons by Mrs. Roosevelt at the White House to selected Negro stooges. A new stage has been reached and passed.

At the same time the big industrialists have moved on to the scene. Five Howard University senior engineering students, all veterans of World War II, have been hired by the General Electric Company. There are already a few Negroes working as engineers with General Electric but it is obvious this is a new policy. M. M. Boring, Manager of Technical Personnel Division of G. E., Schenectady, New York, and his assistant personally visited the Howard School of Engineering and Architecture and after interviewing 14 students selected five. The Urban League has planned these policies with General Electric, General Motors, Merck (chemicals), Fairchild Aviation, International Harvester, American Telephone and Telegraph, Du Pont, Sinclair Oil, Ford Motor Co., Chrysler, Packard, and the Automatic Manufacturing Company. The Industrial Secretary of the National Urban League, Julius Thomas, explains very precisely that this move concerns "highly skilled" Negroes and "high-paying" jobs. No longer will the labor movement alone have the monopoly and credit of working side by side with Negroes. Careers, if even carefully rationed, are now open to the talents of the talented tenth.

### Cultivating a Privileged Caste

Thus the administration and heavy industry have embarked on a concerted drive politically, economically, and socially, in the primitive sense of that word, to win over a caste of Negroes to their side. It is nothing new; British imperial policy, in India and in the colonies, squeezed this particular orange dry. In the last days of British imperialism in India there were less than six hundred Englishmen in the Indian civil service. (Britain merely kept the army, the navy and the air force in its own hands.)

Some such drastic policy was necessary or the American bourgeoisie would face disaster on the Negro question with all its national and international repercussions. The fierce upheavals in Harlem, Detroit and elsewhere, the story, as yet untold, of the unceasing and often bloody fighting for their rights by Negroes in the army, were climaxed by the declaration of Randolph and Reynolds which startled not only the bourgeoisie but the Negro leaders. Forrestal called them together to aid him in the elaboration of a segregated policy for Negroes in the armed forces. They turned him down flat. Something had to be

done. It is being done. A new perspective has been opened for the Negro petty bourgeoisie. No one except a rabid reactionary can be otherwise than sympathetic to any body of Negroes who, after 300 years, find themselves to some small degree recognized as American citizens. The rights of Negroes to jobs is a right which must be relentlessly fought for, not only in the factory but in the office and *everywhere*. But that is not what is at issue here at all. What is of the first importance is the political motivation of those who are making the concessions and, above all, the political consequences for the Negroes and the country as a whole. These are already visible.

The fiasco of the civil rights program in Congress appears to be purely the work of the Democratic and Republican fakers and intriguers maneuvering with the Southerners. Particularly brazen were the Brooks Hays proposals. The Democratic Party was offered Southern support for a federal anti-lynching bill by which the federal government would intervene only after proved inability of the state authorities to deal with a lynching; there would be a federal FEPC, but the government would have no power to enforce any decisions. It now appears that the last word on this monstrous impudence rests not with the Democratic Party but with the Negro leaders who are swarming in Washington. If *they* accept it, then Truman's face is saved and it will be their task to pacify the Negroes and assure the rest of the country that "real progress" has been made.

### "Compromise" and "Dilemma"

Lem Graves, the *Courier's* Washington correspondent, reports in detail the opening moves. Graves states flatly the dilemma posed by the Brook Hays compromise. The Negro leaders will have to decide whether at some "prestige risk" they can work out an "honorable peace" with the Southern proponents of "honest and legitimate solutions" to the Negro problem "which might not go quite as far as the leaders have been asking the South to go. . . ." The other alternative is to reject all "enlightened compromises" from that quarter. The phrases that Graves uses show which side he is on. But though he gives moral support, he is under no illusions as to the risks the Negro leaders are running.

There is, he says, some danger in both moves. To make a deal, "*there is the danger in all social movements, the leadership will be discredited by any step away from the pedestal of contention they have occupied.*" In plain political terms: if they accept the compromise, the masses may leave them and they will be of no use whatever to the administration. He returns to this again and again. These leaders "*have to calculate the effect on their personal job and income status, of any retreat which would end the civil rights cold war. (This question of loss of face among one's constituents affects Southern politicians and civil rights lobbyists alike).*"

Graves is a little premature about any retreat by these Negro leaders "ending" the cold war. But his insight and particularly his frankness are none the less instructive. He poses the other alternative: refusing the "compromise."

This might anger the hard-pressed Southern Negroes. That is one of the few references to the Negro masses in all the reporting about the inaugural celebration and the new status of Negroes in Washington.

Graves says that he took a poll among the Negro leaders. He learns from these gentlemen that they want to know: 1) how "sincere" are the proponents of the compromise; 2) how much backing have the proposals in Congress. The third concern of these fakers can only be fully appreciated if quoted verbatim: 3) "If Negro leaders would consent to dickering on the basis of a 'compromise' (which seems quite doubtful) how much higher would the Southerners raise their sights in an effort to come close to effective legislation in the civil rights field and to a basis of honorable compromise *which would not leave the racial leadership holding the bag?*"

### The Millions Are Not Considered

We have underlined the last few words. The Negro leadership is prepared to go as far as possible in "honorable compromise" with the Southerners *as long as they can hold their own position as leaders*. What happens to the millions of Negroes is no concern of anybody. But with appointments in the offing to posts of policy-making status, with real social equality and invitations to cocktail parties and dinners with the highest in the land, and with an opening for high-paying white-collar jobs in industry for sons, daughters, nephews, nieces and proteges, the social basis of these fakers is widely extended. They are getting something to fight for. But if they are getting more they will have to do more. It will be their task not only to accept the "honorable compromise" but to sell it to the Negroes and the country.

Truman is ready to help them all he can. In the inaugural parade there were some segregated units. But there were also mixed units of cadets from West Point and Annapolis, mixed units of WACs and WAVEs, a mixed light-tank corps and a few others. This was a demonstration made to a million people from all over the country. The administration, there is not the slightest doubt, is preparing to make some token moves in regard to segregation in the armed forces. It is reported both in the capitalist press and in the Negro press that an end to segregation in the air forces is being prepared. We shall see.

But while the Negro press swoons with delight at the mixed units from Annapolis, it also reports that the number of officers in the navy under the new policy is about eight or eleven, or some such ridiculous figure. Still more revealing is the reality in Jersey. The governor has earned national publicity by insisting on no segregation in the National Guard but a Jersey correspondent asserts that there are eleven token Negro members of a white unit. That's all. The old realities are to continue behind a facade of Negro petty bourgeois incorporated into positions of privilege and petty profit.

We are at the very beginning of this new development. All of it of course, as always, is the result of the tremendous activity of the Negro masses. But it is neces-



sary to repeat that this deliberate policy of the administration is merely the crystallization of social and political developments in the nation at large. The American petty bourgeoisie today has "discovered" civil rights. If Congress and the administration are building up the Negro petty bourgeoisie on the one side, petty-bourgeois organ-

izations and activities are proliferating all over the country bolstering the Negro petty bourgeoisie on the other. This, its historical antecedents, its effect upon the Negro masses and the proletariat, and the role of the labor leadership, will be the subject of a second and concluding article.

# Starvation Ahead?

## *An Answer to Today's Malthusians*

By A. GILBERT

In the year 1798, the Reverend Thomas Malthus looked about him to discover starvation on the British Isles. Not discovering any additional source of food in the same glance he assumed that he had hit upon a natural law. The pessimistic parson held that population tended to outstrip food supply and would be held in check only by starvation, pestilence and war. The pressure of population against food would resolve itself into endless conflict between nations.

A century and a half later, another man with his eyes to the heavens—this time a bird-watcher, or ornithologist—resurrected substantially the same theory from the same unsubstantial type of evidence. William Vogt looked about him to discover starvation over the entire globe. Not discovering any additional sources of food himself, and not crediting the discoveries of others, he hastened to restate the Malthusian theory in his book *The Road to Survival*. (William Sloan Associates, N.Y.C.)

Vogt is merely one of several neo-Malthusian authors sharing the rather substantial sale of his literary efforts with Fairfield Osborn's *Our Plundered Planet*, and lesser works. Not the least reason for Vogt's current popularity in bourgeois circles is his pretentious efforts to substitute "natural" causes of world chaos for the contradictions and crises of capitalism in its death agony.

Both Vogt and Osborn call themselves ecologists, which Webster defines as "biologists dealing with the mutual relations between organisms and their environment." The falsity of their arguments may be traced to their disregard of the mutual relations between individuals and groups of the greatest organism—man. It will be the recognition and development of advanced relationships among men that will forever scotch the Malthusian delusion.

Mr. Vogt, presently the most notorious of the neo-Malthusians, is undoubtedly a man of certain scientific ability and standing. He is now chief of the conservation section of the Pan-American Union. His technical understanding of problems in soil and water conservation is, however, not matched by the acute sociological comprehension demanded by a subject as dialectical as ecology.

As an example of his over-all inconsistency, we can compare statements made in different sections of the same book. First, he shows a good measure of sense by saying with regard to soil depletion: "*One of the most ruinous factors is the capitalistic system,*" "*Free competition and the*

*profit motive have been disastrous to the land.*" But later on he contradicts himself: "We must . . . stop blaming economic systems."

Vogt takes a decidedly non-semantic view of the food and population problem. The fact that over half of the world's 2.2 billion population is now ill-fed, and that several million are dying of starvation every year, seems to blind him to both facts and prospects that promise to alleviate the present situation. Vogt ignores the special circumstances that have led to the current state of affairs as well as the new scientific developments in food production and the dynamics of human society itself. In addition to all this, he divides the food and population problem as if it were two separate and unrelated questions.

### Analysis of a Modern Cassandra

His evaluation of world food resources is both pessimistic and myopic. The press of past and present population has resulted in serious and permanent depletion of our soil, water, plant and animal reserves. The predicted future increase in population will not only further deplete our resources but at an accelerated rate. Soil conservation and restoration in the U.S. has not caught up with the present rate of depletion, and in most of the world, little or nothing is being done to check the ravages caused by man's disruption of the hydrologic cycle (erosion, floods, etc.) and his mining of the "biotic potential" of the soil. Present conservation practices are limited to treating the effect rather than the cause of depletion.

Irreplaceable topsoil has been and is being washed away, water tables lowered, and the very weather changed. It is practically impossible to rebuild lost top soil, yet we have lost a good portion of this precious asset already. It is almost impossible to farm new tropical soils, for as soon as the forest is cut away, the sun oxidizes the already poor soil and the tropical rains leach away the soil nutrients. There is not enough arable land in the world today to properly feed the present population, and there is little or no new land fit for exploitation. We are now getting near-optimum yields of food. Greater yields merely deplete the soil factor, and fertilization is limited by dwindling fertilizer supplies. Scientific advances in crop and animal breeding, hormone treatments, fertilization, pest and weed control, mechanical equipment, hydroponics and artificial

photosynthesis, as well as the possibility of now unpredictable discoveries, are all discounted as either impractical or visionary.

Responsible scientists refute these main arguments advanced by Vogt. They maintain that we now have both the soil and the scientific knowledge necessary to feed twice the present world population, and by the time the population has doubled, if it does—and that is debatable—there would undoubtedly be new discoveries. Land is not the only factor in food production, just as food is not the only factor limiting population growth. The U.S. Soil Conservation Service now maintains that we have reversed the trend of soil erosion and depletion here, and are now building up our food potential. Although the situation still is serious in other parts of the world, the conservation pattern has been set and is certainly attainable.

Robert M. Satter of the Agricultural Research Administration of the U.S. Department of Agriculture lists two methods of increasing food production: the more intensive and efficient use of land now being farmed, and the use of now undeveloped soil resources. He gives a conservative estimate of 1.3 billion additional acres of arable land that could be brought under cultivation. Limiting factors would be mainly lack of education and capital—both certainly not insurmountable.

### New Techniques of Soil Cultivation

Cultivation of this new land would require development of new techniques, as well as greatly increased use of fertilizers. The three principal fertilizer elements are nitrogen, phosphate and potash. Nitrogen can be manufactured by fixation from the atmosphere, and this source is unlimited. The known reserves of phosphate will last 5000 years, and potash 500 years. These figures do not allow for undiscovered reserves or for technical improvements in extractive methods.

A more universal use of "night soil" would not only furnish much additional fertilizer, but also stop a great deal of unnecessary water pollution. The additional production from this new land, plus the readily obtainable increase from our old soils, would provide an adequate diet for the estimated world population in 1960.

As an example of what can be done, the U.S. during the war years increased agricultural production by one-third, while agricultural manpower decreased by one-seventh. The output of food per man is ten times greater in the advanced than in the backward nations. On a comparable acre of soil, China produces twice the crop of India; and Japan, twice the crop of China. Thus, there is no ascertainable "biotic potential."

Man can greatly increase the carrying capacity of the land through the wise choice of plants to be grown and the proper use of those plants. If national and tariff barriers were removed, the land could always be used for the crops most adaptable or necessary. Shortages of calories, proteins, fats, minerals or vitamins; or agricultural labor; or a combination of any of these could be ironed out through a scientific selection of crops. Some plants produce more calories per acre than others, some produce less

calories but more proteins, some produce less units per acre but more units per man.

For example, an average acre of soil will produce 6,250,000 calories when planted to sugar beets, 1,545,000 calories in soybeans, and only 350,000 when feed is raised and fed to dairy cattle. If the emphasis is on protein, soybeans will yield 340 pounds per acre; milk cows, 39 pounds and sugar beets, none. Again, if labor is scarce, soybeans will produce the most calories per day of man labor—1,030,000; sugar beets—545,000; and milk cows—65,000. Of course, the protein from milk is worth more nutritionally than the protein from soybeans, due to the relative content of essential amino acids. Animal by-products, such as manure and hides, are also important factors for consideration.

The world diet is now made up of 73 percent grain, 12 percent vegetables and fruit, 6 percent sugar and 9 percent animal products. Animal products make up 3 percent of the Asiatic diet, 25 percent of the American diet and 36 percent of the New Zealand-Australian diet. On Asiatic standards, the present world food supply would support 2,800 million people; and on the American standard, 900 million. Adequate reserves of food in storage would increase still further our population capacity. The problem is, therefore, a complicated one, calling for intense planning on a scale not possible under present world or even national economic organization. However, economic organization is anything but static.

The possibilities of hydroponics—the growing of plants in "fertilized water"—are already proved and need only commercial adaptation. The dream of artificial photosynthesis—the process by which plants store up energy from the sun—is a distinct possibility now, and almost a certainty if research in this field is given the same measure of financial support as was research in nuclear fission. In fact, it is a by-product of atomic energy—carbon 14—that now offers the most promising key to the secret of plant life. Progress has already been made to the point where scientists now consider it perfectly feasible to "farm the sea."

### A Revolutionary Discovery

Under the sensational title, "News of Revolutionary Food Discovery Means That We Can Now Banish Hunger from the Earth," Nat S. Finney reports Dr. Richard Meier's analysis of world problems. (*Look*, Feb. 1, 1949.) Dr. Meier will publish his findings in a technical report to be released later this year.

The gist of the report is that food can now be produced in factories without using soil, and, in fact, is already being produced and utilized. Reference is made to a project in Jamaica in the West Indies, where crude molasses is being turned into a high-protein food yeast at the rate of five tons a day. One element of the new food-production team is chlorella, a green alga or single-celled plant, such as is found in the scum on ponds; the other element is the yeast cell. Like chlorella, it is independent of the soil.

The question concerning food supplies now posed is: Can and will all these steps be taken in time to obviate the Malthusian predictions of increasing starvation and world conflict? Historical analysis demonstrates that we must predicate our hopes for a world of plenty on a new social and economic order that does not pause to compute dollar profits before proceeding with essential action. The dislocations, delays and anarchy of capitalist organization give aid and comfort to the prophets of doom.

There is the story of the careless farmer who was urged to attend a meeting on soil conservation. "*There's no use my going to that meeting about farming better,*" he replied. "*I don't farm as good as I know how to now.*" It is no joke, however, that most farmers today cannot afford, under our present economic system, "to farm as good as they know how." In the past year, the prices of farm products dropped 20 percent while the cost of operating the farms dropped only 1 percent. Under capitalism, this complicates, to say the least, the problem of soil conservation.

Friedrich Engels gave a crushing answer to the Vogts as far back as 1865:

Too little is produced, that is the cause of the whole thing. But why is too little produced? Not because the limits of production—even today and with present day means—are exhausted. No, but because the limits of production are determined not by the number of hungry bellies but by the number of purses able to buy and to pay. Bourgeois society does not and cannot wish to produce any more. The moneyless bellies, the labor which cannot be utilized for profit and therefore cannot buy, is left to the death-rate. Let a sudden industrial boom, such as is constantly occurring, make it possible for this labor to be employed with profit, then it will get money to spend, and the means of subsistence have never hitherto been lacking. This is the vicious circle in which the whole economic system revolves. One presupposes bourgeois conditions as a whole, and then proves that every part of them is a necessary part—and therefore an "eternal law." (Letter to F. A. Lange. *Selected Correspondence of Marx and Engels*, page 199.)

The nub of the question for the neo-Malthusians is how to reduce the world's population. Here they have advanced little beyond the "fruit fly" theory of their mentor. Against such population-limiting measures as famine, pestilence and war, they offer the alternative of voluntary "population control"—a variant of the "continence" suggested by Malthus. A seeming improvement on the clergyman's rather sour advice, "population control" involves birth control through use of chemical or mechanical devices or through sterilization. The latter, our ornithologist crows, "does not interfere with sexual pleasure nor with physical satisfaction." Neo-Malthusian "science" now makes it possible for man to eat his cake and have it too.

Vogt and his co-thinkers do not explain exactly how they hope to evangelize almost two billion people, many of

whom do not want to be thus altered or inconvenienced, and most of whom live in an environment too backward to allow a proper understanding of what is expected of them. The proposal reflects only a complete lack of understanding of the whole science of population, and is the point of departure for dangerous and reactionary conclusions.

Vogt, for instance, has resurrected the old "yellow peril" falsification. With typical imperialist insolence, he advises against feeding starving millions in Asia and Europe, lest they use the additional food to support a larger population which in turn would eventually "overrun the West." He would rather divert human food to sustain "wildlife." War and pestilence he views in a favorable light because they reduce population and are more humane than famine.

He looks back with envy on ancient Greece, which avoided overpopulation by employing prostitution, infanticide, emigration and colonization. He admires Eire, which in the last hundred years has halved her population at the expense of leaving half of her adult population unmarried. He opposes higher living standards for farmers, as they are obtained, he maintains, through more intense exploitation of the land. Agricultural mechanization is to be opposed as it is more attractive than a horse economy, and will not act as a buffer to absorb the city unemployed as will a more primitive system of organization!

War, famine, pestilence and birth control missionaries—such are the nostrums of the voices of doom to save a doomed system. But we do not have to guess at the answer to unlimited population increase, for history has already provided it. Only economic progress—industrialization, urbanization, and higher living standards—will slow down and stabilize the birth rate. Only in the most backward countries does increased food supply result in increasing fecundity. No advanced country has yet attained a better standard of living by consciously restricting its birth rate. A declining birth rate is an effect, not a cause of economic progress. In the backward deep South, we have the same high birth and death rates as do the backward countries of Asia.

### **Problem of the Backward Countries**

In fear of the consequences of the agrarian revolution and of the socialist aspirations of the young proletariat, world imperialism has deliberately perpetuated this backwardness in the Far East. To expect capitalism to reverse this trend in a period of immense social conflicts and global wars is both utopian and reactionary. Just as utopian is the program of "agrarian reform" of the Chinese Stalinists. Giving the peasants back their diminutive parcels of land merely perpetuates the inefficiencies of a long outmoded social organization. To cure its population problem, China needs fewer farmers on larger mechanized farms, urbanization and industrialization.

Urban families simply have fewer children than do rural families. It is only a *seeming* contradiction that a reduction in the world's farming population is a condition for increasing the food supply. However, the initial impetus must come from the city, and with the urban bour-

geoisie decadent and impotent, the task reverts to the urban proletariat. The Chinese "Communists," distrusting and fearful of the workers as are the Stalinists everywhere, are left holding their own bootstraps.

An examination of the population curves of the advanced countries will give the lie to the Malthusian forebodings. In its incipient stages, industrialization is accompanied by an initial sharp rise in the curve, followed by a gradual leveling-off and stabilization. Only a suicidal rejection of the socialist future of mankind can lead to the

conclusion that this classic curve will not continue to characterize continued human progress.

But Vogt and the rest of today's Malthusians, who see starvation ahead unless the American imperialists impose rigid controls on what they like to call the "backward peoples," do not stand for continued human progress—on a world-wide scale. These are not the prophets who will lead the peoples of the world into lands "flowing with milk and honey." Only in a Socialist United States of the World will the benefits of scientific agriculture be given to all of the peoples of the world, because only a socialist economy can permit the rationalization of food production.

## Stalin Switches Slogans

### "People's Democracy" and "Dictatorship of Proletariat"

By M. PABLO

At the Fifth Congress of the Bulgarian Communist Party held in Sofia last December, a major speech was delivered by Dimitrov, who has been the spokesman of Stalinist strategy since the rise of Hitler and the close of the "third period." His report made public the new orders received from the Kremlin concerning the "problems of the New Democracy."

The first part of his speech was devoted to a condemnation of the entire policy of the Communist parties and the Third International before 1934, that is, prior to the launching of the "peoples' front" line.

Dimitrov charged the Communist leaderships of that time with having forgotten the Leninist teaching "of the necessity of revolutionary compromises." According to Dimitrov, this required the building of broad alliances with "as many other non-Communist parties as possible" so as to enable the working class first to help these "fronts" accomplish "the bourgeois-democratic revolution."

#### A Discredited Theory

It is only after this revolution succeeds and the working class attains a "dominant position" that the party (the Communist Party) representing the workers can turn against its erstwhile allies. This is the half-century old Menshevik theory—put to a sanguine test by Stalinism on the backs of the Chinese masses in 1925-27 and of the Spanish masses in 1935-38 (to mention only two examples). According to Dimitrov, this is "the theory of the two tactics formulated by Lenin and applied by Stalin."

Naturally it was not surprising to the falsifiers trained in the Stalinist school that Dimitrov in condemning the Communist leaderships before his "era" should accidentally forget two small facts: a) That these "arguments" refer in reality to the criticism of the "third period" which extended from 1929 to 1933. This followed a period (1925-28) of the crassest opportunist errors of the entire Third

International, a period in which "compromises" not only were not excluded but on the contrary pressed to their ultimate consequences. We need only mention the policy applied during the Chinese Revolution of 1925-27 and that of the Anglo-Russian Committee during the great general strike of the English miners in 1926. b) That those responsible for this policy, in 1925-28 as well as in 1929-33, were not only the Communist leaderships subordinated to the Kremlin, but above all the Kremlin and its master Stalin. But has "comrade Stalin" ever displayed the slightest sign of "self-criticism, a primary duty of every true Bolshevik"?

In reality this type of "criticism," *a posteriori* of the policy of the past, and the whole flood of "self-criticism" which the various Stalinist leaders, from Thorez to Zachariades, have been pouring forth since the condemnation of Tito by the Cominform, is only a device to permit "theoretical" readjustments which are necessary to justify the new exigencies of Stalinist policy throughout the world and especially in the "buffer-zone" countries. (This policy is dictated by the Kremlin and in the first place serves the special interests of the Soviet bureaucracy.)

Anyone duped by the "ideological" and "theoretical" presentation of this policy, who would seek to clarify his ideas by means of the Stalinist texts of "criticism" and "self-criticism," would introduce the greatest confusion in his mind, most perilous to normal reasoning.

Let us rather examine the second part of Dimitrov's speech which transmits the latest "theoretical" directives Dimitrov had recently obtained from Stalin, after a long visit with him prior to the Congress of the Bulgarian Communist Party. In Dimitrov's words, they are intended to "aid all the people's democracies in solving their theoretical problems." These "theoretical" directives can be reduced in essence to one point: Stalin concluded, after long meditation, that from the "Marxist-Leninist" standpoint

"the people's democracy" is after all only a "form of the dictatorship of the proletariat."

The Stalinist "theoreticians" used up a great deal of grey matter in theoretically "digesting" the social content of this formula which was issued on the day after the Second World War ended. Moreover in the absence of clear-cut directives from the Kremlin they generally avoided concrete definitions, contenting themselves with insipid rhetoric (as for example did Duclos who defined the "New Democracy" as "an enlarged and renovated democracy, concrete and living, invigorated by the people whose millions of heroes, martyrs and fighters have sculptured its luminous features," etc.). Others have bogged down in the most embarrassing equivocation: a hybrid, transitory, original regime, known for the "first time in history," etc. The one exception, it is true, has been the Yugoslav "Titoist" leadership which has always professed that the "people's democracy" is a distinct "stage" of the "dictatorship of the proletariat."

This enabled Tito to say with some justice in his speech at the Second Congress of the Serbian Communist Party (Jan. 21, 1949), that "Comrade Dimitrov in his speech at the Fifth Congress of the CPB set forth what we had assumed were the formulations on the character of the power in the people's democracies. However this had already been stated in our documents before and during the Congress of our party which was held several months prior to the Congress of the CPB."

### Yesterday's Snows

Nevertheless, despite the equivocation which prevailed before the Sphinx spoke, the Stalinist theoreticians were inclined to the view that it was better not to confound "people's democracy" with "dictatorship of the proletariat." The evidences of this are numerous. Let us cite a few of them. Franz Marek, a theoretician of the Austrian Communist Party, wrote in *Weg und Ziel* (No. 2, Feb. 1947, Vienna):

There are different roads to socialism but each of them signifies the struggle against capital and the liquidation of the state apparatus which serves the interests of capital. In our time, the people's democracy offers a new possibility of attaining socialism without civil war and without the dictatorship of the proletariat as it was introduced in Russia. . . . The people's democracies follow another road to socialism than the Bolsheviks.

E. Varga wrote in his article "A New Type of Democracy":

The social organization of these states (people's democracies) is different from anything we have known up to now, it is absolutely new in the history of humanity. It is not the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie but neither is it the dictatorship of the proletariat. (*Democratie Nouvelle*, No. 9, Sept. 1947, Paris.)

A. Leontiev wrote in his article "The Struggle Between the Old and the New":

It is sufficiently well known that Marxism-Leninism conceives the socialist transformation of society as taking place principally through the dictatorship of the proletariat which the working class establishes by the revolutionary method of overthrowing the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. . . . But at the same time the classics of Marxism-Leninism have emphasized many times that the

passage from capitalism to socialism presupposes an immense variety of social forms. . . . Neither Marx nor Lenin foresaw nor could they have foreseen this form (of liberation from imperialism and movement toward socialism represented by the new democracy). (*Democratie Nouvelle*, No. 9, Sept. 1947, Paris.)

The same Leontiev underscores the distinction between "the Soviet Union which has built socialism *on the basis of the dictatorship of the proletariat*" and the "people's democracies" which are building socialism by "other ways."

Finally let us quote the testimony of M. Thorez, which is no less indicative of the conceptions held by the Stalinist leaders up to now on the people's democracy:

This people's democracy, Dimitrov stated, is neither socialist nor soviet. It is the passage from democracy to socialism. It creates favorable conditions for the development of socialism by a process of struggle and labor. Every country will traverse to socialism through its own road. The advantage of this people's democracy is that the passage to socialism is made possible without the dictatorship of the proletariat. ("In the Service of France," speech at the Strasbourg Congress, June 25, 1947.)

### Dimitrov Buries the Past

With the most nonchalant air Dimitrov wrecked this conception from top to bottom. The people's democracy, he explained, "is in fact the dictatorship of the proletariat in a new form. . . . According to Marxist-Leninist principles, the Soviet system of government and the system of government in the countries with people's democracies are only two forms of one and the same power—the power of the working class in alliance with the toiling peasantry and leading it. They are alternate forms of the dictatorship of the proletariat. . . . (The) people's democracy assumes the functions of the Soviet power."

Thus is elucidated the enigma of the people's democracy whose advent was made possible, Dimitrov tells us again, "thanks only to the liberating mission of the Soviet Union."

Since this speech, the idea of the identity of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the people's democracy is discreetly making its way into the Stalinist press. One after the other, Stalinist leaders and journalists, exhibiting the same assurance they showed yesterday in placing the stress on "the diversity of ways for building socialism," now emphasize the basic identity which is hidden under the "diversity of political forms of power," the dictatorship of the proletariat.

So for example, Anna Pauker, leader of the Rumanian CP, writes in the organ of the Cominform, *For a Lasting Peace! For a People's Democracy!* Jan. 15, 1949:

The regime of the people's democracy victoriously realizes the functions of the dictatorship of the proletariat, that is, the functions of eliminating the economic positions of the exploiting classes, of crushing attempts to reestablish the old order, of attracting the laboring population in the work of building socialism under the leadership of the proletariat. In other words, the regime of the people's democracy is a form of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Pospelov, editor-in-chief of *Pravda*, speaking at a Lenin memorial meeting held in Moscow on January 21 gave his view:

Basing themselves on the help of the USSR and on the people's-democracy nations, personifying the power of the toilers led by the working class, [the regime of people's democracy] fulfills the functions of the dictatorship of the proletariat in suppressing and liquidating the capitalist elements and organizing the socialist economy. It fulfills the tasks of the transition period from capitalism to socialism. (*L'Humanite*, Jan. 24, 1949.)

### What Is Behind the Shift?

What are the shifts and motivations for this very important turn in the "theory" of the people's democracy? It is indisputable that the "people's democracies" are now at a much different level of political and economic development than they were from their inception to around the middle of 1948. The Communist parties now control and administer the state exclusively while the measures of nationalization and state control over the remaining private sectors of the economy (particularly the peasantry) have been extended everywhere.

This evolution can permit them to say that *in the present stage* (and not at the beginning) the power of the people's democracy is identified with the dictatorship of the proletariat—I am referring of course to those who hold the Stalinist concept and practice of the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

But the principal reason which impels the Kremlin to make this turn is certainly not their concern with adjusting theory to facts. Since the explosion of the Tito affair and the development of the centrifugal forces in the "buffer-zone" countries in a more tangible form, the Kremlin has been constantly preoccupied with fastening its grip in all domains, political, economic, ideological.

The unity of doctrine on people's democracy is necessary to bring to a halt any possible wandering in "diverse ways [permissible until now] for building socialism" and to once again reassert the principle of the primacy of the Soviet Communist Party and its "experience in the building of socialism" over all the others. Dimitrov was categorical on this point:

All Communists must realize the importance of a complete coordination of the activities of all the Communist parties in the world under the leadership of the Russian Communist Party. All Communist parties have a common policy and recognize the great Russian Communist Party as the leading party of the international workers movement.

The same idea is even better formulated in his article which appeared in the organ of the Bulgarian CP, *Rabotnichesko Delo*, December 18, 1948:

It must not be forgotten—despite the fact that the Communist International no longer exists—that all the Communist parties in the world form a single Communist front under the leadership of the most powerful and experienced Communist Party, the party of Lenin and Stalin; that all the Communist parties have a common scientific theory as a guide for action, Marxism-Leninism; that all the Communist parties have a leader and a teacher recognized by all, Comrade Stalin.

Unity of doctrine on people's democracy follows the same general direction as the greatest possible political coordination (Cominform) and economic coordination (Council for Mutual Economic Aid) and ideological coordination now pursued by the Kremlin to consolidate and maintain its control over all the "buffer" countries.

It is not excluded, on the other hand, that unity of doctrine on "the real basis" of people's democracy, which has now been discovered as the dictatorship of the proletariat, will prepare the road for structural assimilation, at least of some of the "buffer" countries and their incorporation in one form or another into the USSR. It is interesting for example to note the consequences of the change in the concept of people's democracy in Rumania, among the most backward of the "buffer-zone" countries at this time but nearest to the USSR and easier to digest than the others. Teohari Georgescu, Minister of the Interior, on January 12, 1949, placed before parliament a law providing for the creation of *People's Councils*. He declared:

"We, the government of those who toil, declare the dictatorship of the proletariat launched." The law provides for the constitution of "soviets" modeled on the USSR pattern (long since purely decorative). Until "elections" are held, these "soviets" will operate through *appointive* executive committees and will have as their principal task the protection of "the socialist order in local life, the mobilization of the masses for the realization of economic plans, the defense and development of the people's property."

Real power will in fact remain in the hands of the party, that is to say, in the hands of the uncontrollable, all powerful leadership of the party which is responsible solely to its masters in the Kremlin. In Stalinist language, such an organization of power is called "dictatorship of the proletariat" (whether or not it takes the form of people's democracy). Naturally, the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat as formulated by Lenin, practised in Russia in his day, and now defended by our movement is an entirely different one.

### What Lenin Wrote

Lenin, in his famous theses on bourgeois democracy and the proletarian dictatorship presented to the First Congress of the Third International, wrote:

The essence of the Soviet power consists in this: **that the constant and unique base of all governmental power is the organization of the masses formerly oppressed by capitalism, that is, the workers and the semi-proletarians.** These are the masses who, even in the most democratic of the bourgeois republics, while enjoying equality under the law, were in reality removed by thousands of customs and maneuvers from all participation in political life, from all exercise of democratic rights and liberties and who are now called upon to take a considerable and mandatory part, a decisive part in the democratic administration of the state.

Soviet power, that is, the dictatorship of the proletariat, is conceived of in a way that binds the laboring masses to the governmental apparatus. The same aim is intended in the fusion of the legislative and executive power in the soviet organization of the state as well as the replacement of territorial election districts by the units of work such as the factories and the shops.

These principles were genuinely applied by Lenin in Russia in building a pyramid of power based on real, living, democratic soviets which effectively administered and controlled the state as against the present chimera of power which is in reality concentrated in the hands of an omnipotent and uncontrollable bureaucracy.

For us as for Lenin, the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat are conceivable in no

other way than as *the organization of the proletariat as a genuinely ruling class*. But for all the Dimitrovs, the "people's democracy" is transformed into dictatorship of the proletariat" when control becomes absolute not only over formations of the bourgeoisie, yesterday's allies, but

also over the proletariat whose dictatorship they confound with the real dictatorships of the bureaucracy of the parties and the states they direct.

—January 1949.

# The Meaning of Hegel

By **GEORGE PLEKHANOV**

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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In 1891 the editors of *Neue Zeit*, theoretical magazine of the German Social Democratic Party, requested G. V. Plekhanov to write an article in connection with the 60th anniversary of Hegel's death. Few were better qualified to deal with this subject than Plekhanov, a profound student of philosophy and the best trained Marxist theoretician of Russia at the time. Plekhanov's philosophical writings, including his Hegel essay, were for the most part written in the heyday of his brilliant Marxist career, long before his desertion of the cause to which he owed his fame.

Engels, who chose his words carefully, especially on questions of theory,

One of the first places in the history of thought indisputably belongs to a man who died 60 years ago, on November 14, 1831. None of those sciences, which the French call "*sciences morales et politiques*," escaped the powerful and fructifying influence of Hegel's genius. Dialectics, logic, history, law, esthetics, history of philosophy and history of religion assumed a new aspect, thanks to the impetus given them by Hegel.

Hegelian philosophy trained and tempered the thought of such men as David Strauss, Bruno Bauer, Feuerbach, Fischer, Gans, Lassalle, and, finally, Engels and Marx. Even during his lifetime Hegel enjoyed world renown. After his death, from the '30s to the '40s, the practically universal enthusiasm for his philosophy became even more intense. But a reaction quickly followed. Hegel began to be treated—to use Marx's words—"in the same way as the brave Moses Mendelssohn in Lessing's time treated Spinoza, i.e., as a 'dead dog'." Interest in his philosophy disappeared completely among the "educated" circles. His influence in the academic world as well became so weak that to this day it has not occurred to a single specialist in the history of philosophy to define and point out "the lasting value" of Hegelian philosophy in the varied fields of knowledge it embraces.

We shall presently explain the reasons for this attitude toward Hegel. Suffice it to note here that in the near future we may expect a revival of interest in his philosophy and especially in his philosophy of history. The tremendous successes of the labor movement, which compel the so-called educated classes to concern themselves with the theory under whose banner the movement is developing, will also

praised Plekhanov's 1891 essay in the highest terms. Lenin's views on Plekhanov's philosophical writings were so emphatic that he took time out to recommend the study of Plekhanov's philosophical writings while the Civil War was raging in Russia. Exactly the same was Trotsky's view.

Lenin said that "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."

In 1922, Trotsky wrote: "The great Plekhanov, the true one, belongs entirely and wholly to us. It is our duty to restore to the young generations his spiritual figure in all its stature."

The essay on Hegel was first published in Russian in a collection of Plekhanov's articles entitled, *A Critique of Our Critics*, and was republished in Vol. VII of Ryazanov's monumental edition of Plekhanov's collected works (Moscow, 1923).

The translation by F. Forest was checked against both the original German and Russian texts.

compel these classes to become interested in the historical origin of this theory.

And once they do become interested in it, they will quickly discover Hegel, who will thereby become transformed in their eyes from "a philosopher of the restoration" into the forefather of the most advanced modern ideas.

And for this very reason we can predict that although interest in Hegel will revive among the educated classes, they will never show the same profound sympathy for Hegel as was shown 60 years ago in countries of German culture. On the contrary, bourgeois scholars will zealously occupy themselves with a "critical reexamination" of Hegel's philosophy; and many doctoral diplomas will be acquired in the course of the struggle with the "exaggerations" and the "logical arbitrariness" of the dead professor.

Naturally, from such a "critical reexamination" there will be only one gain for science, namely: the learned apologists of the capitalist order will again and again reveal their bankruptcy in theory, just as they have in politics. But not for nothing has it been said that it is always beneficial "to burrow around the roots of truth." The revival of interest in Hegel's philosophy will impel unprejudiced people to make an independent study of his works. Such mental labor will not be easy but it will be highly rewarding. Those who really strive for knowledge will find much to learn from Hegel.

In this article we shall try to evaluate the philosophic-historic views of the great German thinker. In general outline, this has already been done by the hand of a master in the excellent articles of Engels, *Ludwig Feuerbach and the Outcome of German Classical Philosophy*, which

were first published in the *Neue Zeit*, and later appeared as a separate pamphlet. But we think that the above-mentioned views of Hegel fully deserve a more detailed analysis.

The importance of Hegel in social science is determined, first of all, by the fact that he examined all social phenomena from the standpoint of the process *des Werdens* (of becoming), i.e., from the point of view of their rise and dissolution. To many this may not appear as a very great contribution since, it seems, it is impossible to look at social phenomena in any other way. But first, as we shall show later, this point of view even now is not really understood by many who consider themselves "evolutionists." Secondly, in Hegel's day, those engaged in the social sciences were even further away from this viewpoint. Suffice it to recall the socialists and economists of the period.

The bourgeois order was, to be sure, looked upon as a very great evil by the socialists at that time, but they nevertheless considered it as a perfectly *accidental* product of human *errors*. The economists, for their part, were delighted by the bourgeois order and were at a loss for words to praise it, but they considered it as no more than the product of an *accidental* discovery of the *truth*. Neither the Utopians nor the economists went beyond this *abstract counterposing of truth to error* although the teachings of the Utopian socialists already contained *inklings* of a more correct approach to things.

To Hegel such an abstract counterposing of truth to error was one of those absurdities into which "rational" thinking so often fell. J. B. Say considered as worthless the study of the history of political economy because prior to Adam Smith all economists had advanced erroneous theories. To Hegel, on the other hand, philosophy was only the intellectual expression of its time.

At each stage every "transcended" philosophy was *the truth of its time*, and for this reason alone Hegel could never have discarded all previous philosophic systems as something worthless, as old rubbish. On the contrary. "In philosophy," he writes, "the latest [philosophic] birth of time is the result of all the [philosophic] systems that have preceded it, and must include their principles."\* At the basis of this view of the history of philosophy lay, of course, the purely idealistic conception that the "Architect has directed the work i.e., the work of philosophic thought] and that Architect is the one living Mind whose nature is to think, to bring to self-consciousness what it is, and, with its being thus set as object before it, to be at the same time raised above it, and so to reach a higher stage of its own being." (*Ibid.*)

But the most consistent materialist will not deny that every given philosophic system is only the intellectual expression of its time.\*\* And if, in returning to the history of political economy, we ask ourselves from what point

\*"The Logic of Hegel," translated from *The Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Science*, by William Wallace, Oxford University Press, London, 1931, Sec. 13.

\*\*Of course it can be, and always has been, the expression only of a specific aspect of its time. But this does not change the matter in its essence.

of view must we approach it at the present time, then we will immediately see how much nearer we are to Hegel than to J. B. Say. For example, from the point of view of Say, that is, from the point of view of the abstract antagonism between truth and error, the mercantile system, or even the physiocratic system, must and did represent no more than an absurdity which accidentally befell the human mind. But we know today to what extent each of the above systems was the necessary product of its time:

If the monetary and mercantile system single out international trade and the particular branches of national industry directly connected with that trade as the only true source of wealth or money, it must be borne in mind that in that period the greater part of national production was still carried on under forms of feudalism and was the source from which producers drew directly their means of subsistence. Products, as a rule, were not turned into commodities, nor, therefore, into money; they did not enter into the general social interchange of matter; did not, therefore, appear as embodiments of universal abstract labor; and did not in fact constitute bourgeois wealth. . . . True to the conditions as they prevailed in that primitive stage of bourgeois production, those unrecognized prophets held fast to the pure, tangible, and resplendent form of exchange value, to its form of a universal commodity as against all special commodities. (Marx, "Critique of Political Economy," pp. 216-17.)

Marx explains the polemic between the physiocrats and their opponents as a dispute over which kind of labor "it is that creates surplus value." (*Ibid.* p. 64.) Is it not clear that this question was completely "timely" for the bourgeoisie which was then preparing to become master of everything?

But it is not philosophy alone that appears to Hegel as the natural and necessary product of its time. He regards both religion and law in this same way. Moreover, one has to recognize that, according to Hegel, philosophy, law, religion, art and even technique (*Technische Geschicklichkeit*) are most closely interrelated: "Only in connection with this particular religion, can this particular political constitution exist; just as in such or such a state, such or such a philosophy or order or art."\* This, again, can appear somewhat trivial. Who does not know how closely interrelated are all aspects and manifestations of national life? At present this is familiar to every school child.

### The Laws of Reciprocity

But Hegel did not at all understand the interrelation of the varied aspects and manifestations of national life in the same way as it is understood to this very day by many "educated" persons and school children. This relation is regarded by them as a simple reciprocal action of the aspects and manifestations referred to. In addition to this, there is, first of all, the interaction itself which remains entirely unexplained. Secondly—and this is of primary importance—it is entirely forgotten that there must be one common source from which all these interrelated aspects and manifestations originate.

Thus this system of interaction appears to be based on nothing, hanging in mid-air: law influences religion;

\**Philosophy of History* by G.W.F. Hegel, translated by J. Sibree, The Colonial Press, 1900, p. 53.



religion influences law, and each of them and both together influence philosophy and art, which, in their turn, influence one another; influence law and religion, etc. Such is the wisdom of this universally familiar doctrine of the primary schools. Let us grant that for any particular period we can be satisfied with such an exposition. But after all we would still be left with the question of just what conditioned the historical development of religion, philosophy, art, law, etc., right up to the particular historical period.

Generally, reciprocity itself is adduced in answering this question. Thereby, in the long run, it ends up by explaining nothing. Either we have pointed out to us some accidental causes influencing this or that other aspect of national life, and having nothing in common with one another—or, finally, the whole matter is reduced to a question of the subjective logic of individuals. For example, it is said that the philosophic system of Fichte logically flows from the philosophic system of Kant, the philosophy of Schelling logically flows from the philosophy of Fichte and the philosophy of Hegel—from the philosophy of Schelling. In this same way the changes in the different schools of art are likewise “logically” explained. Undoubtedly, contained here is a grain of truth. Unfortunately, it explains absolutely nothing.

We know that sometimes the transition from one philosophic system, or from one school of art, to another, is accomplished very rapidly, in the course of a few years. At other times, however, centuries are needed for a transition. Whence does this difference arise? The logical connections between ideas do not explain it at all. Nor do the references of academic wisdom to reciprocity and to accidental reasons. But the “educated” circles are not embarrassed by this. Having uttered profundities concerning the reciprocal action of the different aspects of national life, they remain satisfied with this “manifestation” of their own profundity and stop thinking exactly where *rigorous scientific thought first fully comes into its own*. Hegel was as far removed from such profundities as heaven is from earth.

“If we get no further than looking at a given content from the standpoint of reciprocity,” Hegel says, “we are taking an attitude which is really unintelligent. We are left with a mere dry fact; and the call for mediation, which is the chief question in applying the relation of causality, is left still unanswered. And if we look more narrowly into the dissatisfaction felt in applying the relation of reciprocity, we shall see that it consists in the circumstance that this relation cannot possibly be treated as an equivalent for the notion, and ought, instead, to be known and understood in its own nature. And to understand the relation of action and reaction we must not let the two sides rest in their state of mere given facts, but recognize them . . . as factors of a third and higher order . . .” (*Enzyklopedia*, Sec. 156, *Zusatz*.)

What Hegel means by this is that we must not, when speaking about different aspects of national life, for example, be satisfied simply to point out their reciprocity, but must search for an explanation in something new, something “higher,” i.e., something which conditions both

their very existence as well as the possibility of their acting and reacting upon one another.

Where, then, are we to search for this new, this “higher” something?

### Hegel's Idealism

Hegel answers that one must search for it in the “notion”—in the peculiarities of the national spirit. And this is entirely logical from his point of view. For Hegel, all history is only “the development and realization of the universal spirit.” The movement of the universal spirit takes place in stages.

“Every step in the process, as differing from any other, has its determinate peculiar principle. In history, this principle is . . . the peculiar National Genius. It is within the limitations of this idiosyncrasy that the spirit of the nation, concretely manifested, expresses every aspect of its consciousness and will—the whole cycle of its realization. Its religion, its polity, its ethics, its legislation, and even its science, art, and mechanical skill, all bear its stamp. These special peculiarities find their key in that common peculiarity—the particular principle that characterizes a people; as, on the other hand, in the facts which history presents in detail, that common characteristic principle may be detected.” (Cf. *Philosophy of History*, pp. 63-4.)

There is nothing easier than to make the brilliant discovery that Hegel's view of world history as set forth above is permeated with *idealism of the purest water*. As Hegel would have put it, this is obvious to everyone, even those who never studied in a seminary. There is also nothing easier than to limit the “critique” of Hegelian philosophy of history to a contemptuous shrug of the shoulders because of its extreme idealism. This is often done by people who are themselves incapable of any consistent thinking—people who are not satisfied with the materialists because they are materialists; and who are not satisfied with the idealists because they are idealists, and are overly satisfied with themselves because their own world outlook is supposedly free from all extremes. Actually, their own outlook is nothing more than a completely undigested hash of idealism and materialism.

### “Not a Grain of Eclecticism”

The philosophy of Hegel possesses, in any case, the undisputed merit that it contains not a single grain of *eclecticism*. And if its mistaken idealistic basis does make itself felt all too often; if it does place extremely narrow limits to the development of the genius thoughts of a great man, then precisely because of this should we study the philosophy of Hegel all the more closely, for it is precisely this which makes it so highly instructive. The idealistic philosophy of Hegel contains the best, the most irrefutable proof of the inadequacy of idealism. But at the same time it teaches us consistency in thinking. He who will devotedly and conscientiously pass through this severe school will forever acquire a healthy aversion to eclectic hash.

We now know that world history is not at all “the development and realization of the world spirit.” But this does not mean that we can rest satisfied with academic banalities to the effect that the political order of a given

nation influences its customs, while its customs influence its constitution, etc. We must agree with Hegel that both the customs and the political structure arise from a common source. What this source is, is exactly what the modern materialist analysis of history tells us. Suffice it here to limit our remarks on this subject to stating that Messrs. Eclectics have as great a difficulty in understanding historical materialism as they have in penetrating into the secrets of the diametrically opposed idealistic views of Hegel.

Every time Hegel undertakes to characterize some great historic people, he reveals encyclopedic knowledge and great penetration. He gives truly brilliant and profoundly instructive characterizations, punctuating them with a whole series of the most valuable remarks about different aspects of the history of a particular people. He fascinates you until you are ready to forget that you are dealing with an idealist. You are ready to acknowledge that he actually "*die Geschichte nimmt, wie sie ist*" ("takes history as it is"), that Hegel strictly adheres to his own rule: "to keep to the historical, empirical soil."

But why does Hegel need this historical, empirical soil? To determine the *peculiarities of the spirit* of each particular people. The spirit of a particular people is, as we already know, no more than a stage in the development of the universal spirit. But the peculiarities of the universal spirit are not at all derived from the study of world history. On the contrary, knowledge of it is *introduced into the study of world history* as knowledge which is ready-made and completely finished from all sides.

### The Contradictions in Hegel

Therefore, this is what takes place: so long as history does not contradict the "notion" of the universal spirit and the "laws" of the development of this spirit, history is taken "as it is"; Hegel "keeps to the historical, empirical soil." But as soon as history not so much contradicts the "laws" of development of the universal spirit but rather falls outside the orbit of this assumed development, and appears as something unforeseen by the Hegelian *logic*, then no attention whatever is paid to it.

Obviously such an attitude toward history should have at least saved Hegel from contradicting himself, but actually this is not the case. Hegel is far from being free of contradictions. Here is a sufficiently striking example. Hegel writes about the religious conceptions of the Hindus as follows:

On the one hand Love-Heaven—in short everything spiritual—is conceived by the fancy of the Hindus; but on the other hand, his conceptions have an actual sensuous embodiment, and he immerses himself by a voluptuous intoxication in the merely natural. Objects of religious worship are thus either fantastic forms produced by art, or those presented by Nature. Every bird, every monkey is a god, an absolutely universal existence. The Hindu is incapable of holding fast an object in his mind by means of rational predicates assigned to it, for this requires Reflection. (Cf. *Philosophy of History*, p. 157.)

On the basis of this characterization, Hegel considers animal worship—zoolatry—as the natural consequence of

the circumstance that the spirit of the *Hindu people* represents one of the *lowest stages in the evolution of the universal spirit*. Ancient Persians, worshipping fire and also "the sun, the moon and five other luminaries," recognizing them as "the honorable images of Oromaz," are placed by Hegel on a higher plane than the Hindus. But let us now listen to what Hegel himself has to say about animal worship among the ancient Egyptians:

Egyptian Cult is chiefly zoolatry . . . To us zoolatry is repulsive. We may reconcile ourselves to the adoration of the material heaven, but the worship of animals is alien to us. . . . Yet it is certain that the nations who worshipped the sun and the stars by no means occupy a higher grade than those who deify animals, but contrariwise; for in the animal world the Egyptians contemplated an inner and incomprehensible principle. (Cf. *Ibid.* p. 211.)

Depending upon whether the Hindu or the Egyptian is under discussion, the very same animal worship assumes, in Hegel's eyes, an entirely different meaning. Why is this so? Is it really true that Hindus deified animals in an entirely different way from the Egyptians? Not at all. The whole point here is this, that the Egyptian national "spirit" represents a "transition" to the Greek, and therefore occupies a comparatively high stage in the Hegelian system of classification. For this reason, Hegel does not wish to indict the Egyptians for those same weaknesses for which he indicted the lower-ranking Indian national spirit.

In the same way, depending on whether he meets them in India or in Egypt, Hegel takes a different attitude toward *castes*. Indian castes "become natural distinctions," and therefore the individual in India has even less value than in China where there exists the unenviable equality of all before the despot. Regarding the Egyptian castes we are told that they "are not rigidly fixed, but struggle with and come in contact with one another; we often find cases of their being broken up and in a state of rebellion." (*Ibid.* pp. 204-5.) But even from what Hegel himself says about the castes in India, it appears that in India, too, there was no lack of struggle and contact between the castes.

### Achilles Heel of Idealism

In this case, as on the question of zoolatry, Hegel, in the interests of a rather arbitrary logical scheme, has to attribute completely different meanings to completely analogous phenomena of social life. But this is not all. The Achilles heel of idealism reveals itself before us especially in those cases where Hegel has to deal either with the shift of the center of gravity of the historical movement from one people to another, or with a change in the *inner* condition of a given people.

In such cases, there naturally arises the question of the causes behind these shifts and changes, and Hegel as an idealist seeks the answer in the attributes of the very same *Spirit*, the realization of which comprises, in his view, history. For example, he asks himself why did ancient Persia fall while China and India survived. Hegel's answer is prefaced with the following remark:

In the first place we must here banish from our minds the prejudice in favor of duration, as if it had any advantage as compared with transience: the imperishable

mountains are not superior to the quickly dismantled rose exhaling its life in fragrance. (*Ibid.*, p. 221.)

In no case is it possible to consider this prefatory comment as an answer. There then follows argumentation like this:

In Persia begins the principle of Free Spirit as contrasted with imprisonment in Nature; mere natural existence, therefore, loses its bloom, and fades away. The principle of separation from Nature is found in the Persian Empire, which, therefore, occupies a higher grade than those worlds immersed in the Natural.\* The necessity of advance has been thereby proclaimed. Spirit has disclosed its existence, and must complete its development. It is only when dead that the Chinese is held in reverence. The Hindu kills himself—becomes absorbed in Brahma—undergoes a living death in the condition of perfect unconsciousness—or is a present god in virtue of his birth.\*\*

"Here we have no change; no advance is admissible, for progress is only possible through the recognition of the independence of Spirit. With the "Light" [the fire-worship] of the Persians begins a spiritual view of things and here spirit bids adieu to Nature. It is here, then, [sic!] that we first find . . . that the objective world remains free—that the nations are not enslaved,\*\* but are left in possession of their wealth, their political constitution, and their religion. And, indeed, this is the side on which Persia itself shows weakness as compared with Greece. (*Ibid.* p. 221.)

### Idealism Barrier to Explanation

In all this lengthy argument only the last few lines, relating to the inner organization of the Persian kingdom as a cause of the weakness revealed by Persia in its conflict with Greece, can be considered as an attempt to explain the historic fact of Persia's fall. But this attempt at explanation has very little in common with the idealist interpretation of history which Hegel held. The weakness of the inner organization of Persia stands in a very dubious connection with the "Light of the Persians." Precisely where Hegel remains true to *idealism*, the best he is able to do is to hide that fact which needs explanation behind an idealistic curtain. In his hands, idealism invariably ends up this way.

Let us take as another example the question of the internal disintegration of Greece. The Greek world was, according to Hegel, the world of beauty "and of beautiful moral ethics."† The Greeks were a superior people, deeply devoted to their fatherland and capable of every self-sacrifice. But they achieved great feats "without Reflection."

For a Greek, "the fatherland was a necessity without which he could not live." Only afterward "did the sophists introduce principles"; there appeared "a subjective Reflection," "moral self-consciousness," the teaching that "each must behave in accordance with his convictions." From then on there set in the disintegration of the above-mentioned "beautiful moral ethics" of the Greeks; the "self-freeing of the inner world" led to the downfall of Greece.

\*That is, the Chinese and Indian "world."

\*\*As a Brahmin.

\*\*\*That is, those nations which became part of the Persian kingdom.

†As is well known, Hegel drew a sharp distinction between morals and ethics.

One of the aspects of this inner world was *Reflection*, or thinking. Consequently, we meet here with the interesting historic phenomenon that the force of *thinking* acts, among other things, as a "principle of corruption." Such a view merits attention if only because it is considerably more profound than the one-sided view of the Enlighteners for whom success of thinking of any people must lead inevitably and directly to "progress."

Nevertheless, there still remains the problem—whence comes this "self-freeing of the inner world"? The idealistic philosophy of Hegel answers: "the Spirit could only for a short time remain on the plane of beautiful moral ethics." But this again is of course no answer, but merely a translation of the question into the philosophic language of Hegelian idealism. Hegel himself seems to feel this and therefore hastens to add that the "principle of disintegration displayed itself first in the external political development—in the contest of the states of Greece with each other, and the struggle of factions within the cities themselves." (*Ibid.*, p. 265.)

### Anticipating the Materialist Interpretation

Here we find ourselves already on *concrete* historic soil. The struggle of "factions" inside the cities came, in the words of Hegel himself, as a result of the *economic* development of Greece. In other words, the struggle of political parties was only an expression of the unfolding *economic contradictions* in the Greek cities. And if we recall that the Peloponnesian war—as is clear from a reading of Thucydides—was only the class struggle which spread throughout Greece, then we will easily arrive at the conclusion that one must seek the principle of the disintegration of Greece in its *economic* history. Thus in Hegel we find the anticipation of the materialist interpretation of history, although to him the class struggle in Greece is only a manifestation of the "principle of disintegration."

To use Hegel's terminology, materialism manifests itself as the truth of idealism. And we continually run up against such surprises in the Hegelian philosophy of history. It is as if the greatest *idealist* had set himself the goal of clearing the road for *materialism*. When he speaks of the medieval cities, immediately after paying due tribute to idealism, he analyzes their history on the one hand as a struggle of citizens against the priesthood and the nobility, and on the other hand as a struggle of different strata of citizens among themselves, of "rich citizens against the common people."\* When he speaks about the Reformation, he again first reveals to us the secrets of the "universal spirit," and then makes the following remark—entirely surprising on the lips of an idealist—regarding the spread of Protestantism:

In Austria, in Bavaria, in Bohemia, the Reformation had already made great progress, and though it is commonly said that when truth has once penetrated men's souls, it cannot be rooted out again, it was indisputably stifled in the countries in question, by force of arms, by stratagem or persuasion. The Slavonic nations were

\*Hegel himself explicitly explains the emergence of Sparta "as a result of the inequality of possessions."

agricultural. This condition of life brings with it the relation of lord and serf. In agriculture the agency of nature predominates; human industry and subjective activity are on the whole less brought into play in this department of labor than elsewhere. The Slavonians therefore did not attain so quickly or readily as other nations the fundamental sense of pure individuality—the consciousness of Universality . . . and could not share the benefits of dawning freedom.\* (Ibid., p. 420.)

### Economic Development as the Source

With these words Hegel tells us clearly that the explanation of the religious views and of all those liberating movements which arise in their midst, must be sought in the economic activity of the given people. But that is not all. Hegel's state reveals itself to be nothing else than *the product of the economic development*, although, according to his idealistic explanation, the state "is the actuality of the ethical Idea. It is ethical mind *qua* the substantial will manifest and revealed to itself, knowing and thinking itself and accomplishing what is known and in so far as it knows it." \*\*

"A real state," Hegel says, "and a real government arise only after a distinction of estates has arisen, when wealth and poverty become extreme, and when such a condition of things presents itself that a large portion of the people can no longer satisfy its necessities in the way in which it has been accustomed to do." ("Philosophy of History," pp. 85-6.)

Exactly in the same manner Hegel considers the historic appearance of *marriage* to be closely related to the economic history of mankind:

The real beginning and original foundation of states has been rightly ascribed to the introduction of agriculture along with *marriage*, because the principle of agriculture brings with it the formation of the land and consequently exclusively private property . . . ; the nomadic life of savages, who seek their livelihood from place to place, it brings back to the tranquillity of private rights and the assured satisfaction of their needs. Along with these changes, sexual love is restricted to marriage, and this bond in turn grows into *care for a family, and personal possessions*.†

We could cite many similar examples. But since space does not permit, we shall limit ourselves to denoting the significance Hegel attached to the "geographical basis of world history."

Much has been written *before* as well as *after* Hegel, regarding the significance of the geographic environment in the historical development of humanity. But just as up to Hegel, so after him, the researchers often sinned by having in mind the exclusively *psychological* or even *phys-*

\*Hegel remarks: "In contemplating the restless and ever-varying impulses that agitate the very heart of these cities and the continual struggle of factions, we are astonished to see on the other side industry—commerce by land and sea—in the highest degree prosperous. It is the same principle of lively vigor, which, nourished by the internal excitement of question, produces this phenomenon." (Philosophy of History, p. 386.)

\*\*Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*, translated by T. M. Knox, Oxford University Press, 1942, Sec. 257.)

†Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*, Sec. 203. There is no point to discussing the fact that Hegel's view on the primitive history of the family and property could not distinguish itself by any great definitiveness owing to the state of science at the time; but what is important is that he sensed where it is necessary to search for the key.

*iological* influence of the natural environment on man. They entirely forgot the influence this environment exerts on the development of the social *productive forces and, through them*, on all social relations of people along with all the ideological superstructures.\* Hegel was entirely free of this great error in the *general posing* of the question, although not in this or that particular aspect. According to Hegel, there are three characteristic distinctions in geographic environment: (1) the arid elevated land with its extensive steppes and plains; (2) the valley-plains, criss-crossed by big rivers; and (3) the coastal regions directly adjoining the sea.

In the first, cattle-breeding predominates; in the second, *agriculture*; in the third, trade and handicraft. In conformity with these basic distinctions there are also the variously formed social relations of the people inhabiting these areas. The inhabitants of the plateaus—for example, the *Mongols*—lead a patriarchal, nomadic life and have no history in the real meaning of the word. Only from time to time, assembling in great masses, they descend like a storm on civilized land, leaving behind them everywhere devastation and destruction.\*\* Civilized life begins in the valleys, which owe their fertility to the rivers.

Such a Valley-Plain is China, India . . . Babylonia . . . Egypt. In these regions extensive Kingdoms arise, and the foundation of great states begins. For agriculture, which prevails here as the primary principle of subsistence for individuals, is assisted by the regularity of seasons, which require corresponding agricultural operations; property in land commences, and the consequent legal relations . . . (Philosophy of History, p. 89.)

But the agricultural people inhabiting these valley-plains are characterized by great inertness, immobility, isolation; they are incapable of utilizing in their mutual relations all those means which nature provides. This shortcoming is foreign to the peoples who populate the coastal regions. The sea does not divide people, but unites them. That is why it is precisely in coastal regions that civilization, and together with it human consciousness, reaches the highest degree of development. It is not necessary to go far for examples. It is sufficient to point to ancient Greece.

Perhaps the reader is acquainted with the book of L. Mechnikov, *Civilization and the Great Historical Rivers*, which appeared in 1889. Mechnikov indubitably has idealistic inclinations, but in general he nevertheless takes a materialist viewpoint. And what is the result? The view of this materialist on the historical significance of geographic environments coincides almost entirely with the views of the *idealist* Hegel, although Mechnikov undoubtedly would be very astonished to hear of this similarity.

Hegel also explains the appearance of inequality among more or less primitive societies as a result, in part, of the

\*Thus, for example, Montesquieu in his *Esprit de Lois* engages in many discourses on the influence of Nature on the physiology of man. He tries to explain many historical phenomena through such influence.

\*\*Plateaus lead to narrow mountain valleys, inhabited by peaceable mountain peoples, herdsmen, engaged partially in agriculture. Such are the Swiss, Hegel says. Such people one also meets in Asia, but, on the whole, they are of no importance.

influence of geographical environment. Thus he shows that *before the time of Solon* the difference between estates in Athens (by "estates" Hegel designates the various more or less well-to-do classes of the population: the inhabitants of the plains, the hills and the shores) rests upon the difference in localities. And undoubtedly the difference in localities and the difference in *occupations* connected with them must have exerted a big influence on the *economic* development of primitive societies. Unfortunately, contemporary researchers very seldom consider this aspect of the question.

Hegel hardly concerns himself with *political* economy; but the genius of his mind in this case as in many others helped him grasp the most characteristic and most essential side of the phenomena. More clearly than any economist of his time, not even excluding Ricardo, Hegel understood that in a society based on private property the growth of wealth on one side must inevitably be accompanied by the growth of poverty on the other. He categorically asserts this both in his *Philosophy of History* and especially in his *Philosophy of Right*. According to him, "this dialectic"—namely, on the one side, a living standard for the majority of the population so low that they cannot adequately satisfy their needs, and, on the other side, a great concentration of wealth in comparatively few hands—must of necessity lead to a situation where civil society, despite

"the superfluity of wealth, is insufficiently wealthy," i.e., has not the means sufficient to eliminate the superfluity of poverty and of pauperized dregs (*des Pobels*).

As a result of this, civil society\* finds itself forced to go outside of its own boundaries and search for new markets, to turn to world trade and colonization. Of all the contemporaries of Hegel, Fourier alone was distinguished by such clarity of views, and understood as well the dialectic of bourgeois economic relations.

The reader has undoubtedly noted that, for Hegel, the proletariat is nothing more than "*Pobel*," incapable of benefiting from the spiritual advantages of civil society. Hegel did not suspect how greatly the modern proletariat differs from the proletariat of the ancient world, say, the Roman proletariat. He did not know that in modern society the oppression of the working class inevitably arouses the opposition of this class, and that in this society the proletariat is destined to far outdistance the bourgeoisie in intellectual development. But after all, the Utopian socialists—for whom the proletariat also was no more than "*Pobel*," deserving every sympathy and help, but incapable of any kind of initiative—did not know all this either. Only scientific socialism has been able to comprehend the great historic significance of the modern proletariat.

\*Hegel has here in mind mainly England.  
(Second part in next issue.)

### Triumph of Aristocracy in Early America (II.)

## Destruction of Indian Communal Democracy

By WILLIAM F. WARDE

In "A Suppressed Chapter in the History of American Capitalism" (*Fourth International*, January 1949), we refuted the contention that capitalist America was not based on conquest, by setting forth the real historical facts about the wars of extirpation against the Indians. From their false premise about the virgin birth of bourgeois society the capitalist apologists draw an equally false conclusion. For example, in his anti-Marxist polemic at the New York Herald Tribune forum in October 1948, Harvard President Conant declared that "we have nowhere in our tradition the idea of an aristocracy descended from the conquerors and entitled to rule by right of birth." This assertion is no better-grounded in historical fact, and is indeed the opposite of the truth, as we propose to show.

So far as the relations between the Indians and the whites are concerned, the subjugation of the natives initiated the distinctions between conquerors and conquered along the racial lines which have survived to this day. From the landing of the Spanish conquistadors, through the crushing of the last insurgents among the Plains Indians by federal troops up to the present government policy of "enlightened guardianship," the American whites have

maintained a hostile attitude toward the Indians. They have taken for granted that a paleface is better than an Indian; that the Indian has no rights the overlord is bound to respect; and that the white man is entitled by right of birth to the red man's submission and humiliation.

The bearers of capitalism introduced on North American soil the cleavages and conflicts between master and slave, exploiters and exploited, idlers and toilers, rich and poor which have flourished ever since. Alongside the degradation and suppression of the Indians by the whites there developed profound antagonisms between diverse sections of the new society.

Since the planting of the first colonies, white America has never been without privileged possessing classes at its head. In colonial days the masses were dominated by aristocrats of birth and money; after the War of Independence, by Northern capitalists and Southern slaveholders; since the Civil War, by millionaires and billionaires. These ruling minorities have all elevated themselves above the common people—not to speak of outcasts like foreign immigrants, Negroes, Latin Americans and Orientals—and subordinated to their narrow class interests whatever demo-

cratic institutions the people have acquired.

This darker side of the social transformation wrought by the impact of European civilization upon ancient America is usually passed by in silence, or at least slurred over without explanation, by bourgeois historians. Yet the emergence of class stratifications formed one of the essential lines of demarcation between Indian collectivism and white society.

### Fountainspring of White Supremacy

Conant's own mind has been warped by these unspoken traditions and betrays their influence in refined forms. The disdain of the Anglo-Saxon conqueror can be discerned in his dismissal of the existence and struggles of the Indians. What is this but an unconscious—and thereby all the more meaningful—evidence of that racial arrogance and antipathy which induces white scholars to disparage the real role of the colored races in American history? This comes from that white-supremacy prejudice which American palefaces have for centuries aimed not only against the red races but against the black and yellow.

Bourgeois scholars distort and deny the distinguishing traits of tribal equalitarianism, the truly democratic nature of Indian institutions and of the whole net of social relations stemming from primitive communism just as they suppress the motives for the destruction of this system. Both cast discredit on the bourgeois past.

Despite their backwardness in other respects, far more genuine democracy prevailed among the Indians than among their successors. Village and camp were administered by elected councils of elders. The tribes discussed and decided all important issues in common. Military leaders and sachems were chosen for outstanding talents and deeds, not for their wealth and birth. Even where chieftainship was hereditary, the chiefs could not exercise arbitrary authority or command obedience without consent of the community. Military service was voluntary. The Indians knew no such coercive institutions of modern civilization as police, jails, courts, taxes, conscript or standing armies.

The equalitarianism and primitive humanism of Indian relations surpassed the proudest claims of bourgeois society. Mutual assistance was the watchword of the community. The tribe cared for all the aged, infirm, sick and young. Hospitality was a sacred obligation, and the Indian was considerably more generous toward the needy and the stranger than the bourgeois who scorned him as inferior. So paramount was this law of hospitality that even an enemy who came without threats had to be given food and shelter.

William Bartram, the naturalist, noted in 1791 that the Creeks had a common granary made up of voluntary contributions "*to which every citizen has the right of free and equal access when his own private stores are consumed, to serve as a surplus to fly to for succor, to assist neighboring towns whose crops may have failed, accommodate strangers and travelers, afford provisions or supplies when they go forth on hostile expeditions, etc. . . .*"

In his description of *The Indians of the United States*, Clark Wissler, Dean of the Scientific Staff of the American

Museum of Natural History and an outstanding authority on Indian life, writes that the Indian "was not really a communist, but he was liberal with food. So long as he had food, he was expected to share it" (p. 225). This is a typical effort to obscure the communist character of Indian customs. The bourgeois scientist cannot refrain from trying to convert the Indian into a philanthropic "liberal," whereas the habit of sharing possessions with others was an integral aspect of their primitive communist mode of life.

Anyone in the tribe, for example, could borrow without permission the belongings of another—and return them without thanks. There were no debtors or creditors where private property and money were absent. William Penn wrote: "Give them a fine gun, coat or any other thing, it may pass twenty hands before it sticks. . . . Wealth circulateth like the blood, all parts partake, and . . . none shall want what another hath."

How this tribal solidarity was broken up by civilization can be seen from the following petition by the Mohegan Indians to the Connecticut State Assembly in 1789:

Yes, the Times have turned everything Upside down. . . . In Times past our Fore-Fathers lived in Peace, Love and great harmony, and had everything in Great plenty. . . . They had no Contention about their lands, it lay in Common to them all, and they had but one large dish and they Could all eat together in Peace and Love—But alas, it is not so now, all our Fishing, Hunting and Fowling is entirely gone, And we have now begun to Work on our Land, Keep Cattle, Horses and Hogs And we Build Houses and fence in Lots, And now we plainly See that one Dish and one Fire will not do any longer for us—Some few that are Stronger than others and they will keep off the poor, weake, the halt and the Blind, and will take the Dish to themselves . . . poor Widows and Orphans must be pushed to one side and there they must Set a Craying, Starving and die.

This pathetic petition concludes with a plea "That our Dish of Suckuttush may be equally divided amongst us," if it had to be divided.

To this day the traditions of communal equality are so ingrained among Indians uncontaminated by civilization that they put capitalist society to shame. Recently when oil was found on lands allotted to Jecarilla Indians in northern New Mexico, the individual owners could have legally insisted upon taking the entire income for themselves. This would have meant riches for a few and nothing for the others. However, after deliberation in council, all the Indians made over their mineral rights to the tribe so that whatever was gained should be applied to the good of the whole people. How remote are these "backward" Apaches from the standards of bourgeois "moralists."

### Perplexing Christian Double Standards

The Indians found incomprehensible many traits of the whites: their disregard of pledges considered inviolate by the native; their fondness for indoor life; their intolerance of other people's ways; their lust for material possessions and money, etc. As primitive hunters and warriors, the Indians were accustomed to slay not only wild game but rivals who interfered with their essential activities; they scalped enemies, tortured and burned captives. These customs were justified and sanctified by their religious beliefs. But they could not understand the duplicity of

Christians who preached peace and good-will and yet waged relentless war upon them.

The Indian was repelled by the inhumanity displayed by members of the same white community toward each other, the heartless egotism which flowed from class society and bourgeois anarchy. There was greater equality in work and play, in distribution and enjoyment of goods, in social intercourse and status among the Indians than among the whites. Every member of the tribe shared alike in good times or in bad, in feast or in famine, in war as in peace; no one went hungry while a few had more than enough to eat. "They think it strange that some should possess more than others, and that those who have the most should be more highly esteemed than those who have the least." (*The Evolution of Property* by Paul Lafargue; p. 35.)

This spirit of equality extended to women, children and even to those war captives adopted into the clan and tribe. Women not only stood on an equal footing, but sometimes exercised superior authority. The Indian elders rarely abused or whipped their children. There was no servant class—and therefore no masters.

The forms of society which displaced Indian tribalism surpassed it in a great many respects—but, we repeat, they were never more equalitarian. The American natives lacked many things known to the white man, but they did not suffer from a ruling aristocracy of birth or wealth. The institution of aristocracy in general is bound up with the growth of property and the concentration of wealth in private hands—and these were indeed "alien importations" of white civilization.

The contrast between the contending cultures was most sharply expressed in their attitudes toward the acquisition of private wealth. The passion for property had hardly awakened among the Indians. On the other hand, the quest for riches was the most powerful driving force of the new society, the principal source of its evils and the most conspicuous trait of its outstanding representatives.

The precious metals were the quintessence of wealth, prestige and power in Europe and the Holy Grail of the pioneer explorers in the "Age of Geographical Discovery." In a letter written to Ferdinand and Isabella from Jamaica in 1503, Columbus rhapsodized: "Gold is a wonderful thing! Whoever owns it is lord of all he wants. With gold it is even possible to open for souls a way to paradise!"

Imagine his astonishment when the Haitians, who used the metal for ornament but not for money, freely handed over gold to the Spaniards in exchange for trinkets. This served only to inflame their greed. After stripping the natives of the gold they possessed, Columbus and his men drove them to forced labor for more. But the Caribbeans did not yield their liberty as readily as their gold.

These chattel slaves were worked to death. So terrible was their life that they were driven to mass suicide, to mass infanticide, to mass abstinence from sexual life in order that children should not be born into horror. Lethal epidemics followed upon the will to die. The murders and desolations exceeded those of the most pitiless tyrants of earlier history; nor have they been surpassed since. (*Indians of the Americas*, by John Collier, p. 57.)

The Aztec chief Tauhtile thought that "the Spaniards were troubled, with a disease of the heart, for which gold was the specific remedy." What this naive Aztec diagnosed as a "disease" was really the normal mode of behavior of the white invaders. As the subsequent conquests of Mexico and Peru demonstrated, nothing sufficed to quench their thirst for the precious metals.

Although Sir Walter Raleigh and other English colonizers hoped to emulate Cortez and the Pizarros, they found no ancient civilizations on the North Atlantic coasts to plunder. Their conquest of the Indians, although inspired by similar sordid motives, was conducted along somewhat different lines. The traders cheated and debauched the natives; the settlers seized their hunting grounds and massacred the tribes; the governments incited one band of Indians against another while destroying the rights and freedom of all! This despoiling of the Indians by the whites dominates the entire historical record, from the first settlements in Virginia to the recent attempt by the Montana Power and Light Company to deprive the Flathead Indians of their territorial rights.

Belonging as they did to incompatible levels of social existence, both the Indians and whites found it impossible to reach any mutual understanding for any length of time. The Indians, baffled by the behavior of these strange creatures from another world, could not fathom their motives. Not only the Aztecs but the North American tribes had to pass through many cruel experiences before they realized how implacable were the aggressions of the whites—and then it was too late. They may be excused for their lack of comprehension. But the same cannot be said of bourgeois historians of our own day who still fail to understand them after the fact.

The founders of the capitalist regime in North America had a double mission to perform. One was to subdue or eliminate whatever precapitalist social forms and forces existed or sprang up on the continent. The other was to construct the material requirements for bourgeois civilization. The destructive and creative aspects of this process went hand in hand. The extirpation of the Indian tribes was needed to clear the ground for the foundations of the projected new society.

The overthrow of the Indians had contradictory effects upon the subsequent development of American life. The installation of private property in land and the widening exchange of agricultural products at home and in the world market provided the economic basis and incentives for the rapid growth of colonization, agriculture, commerce, craftsmanship, cities and the accumulation of wealth. These conditions fashioned and fostered the virile native forces which prepared and carried through the second great upheaval in American history, the colonists' revolt against England.

The rise of the English colonies in North America and their successful strivings for unhampered development form one of the most celebrated chapters in modern history. But an all-sided review of the process must note that a price was paid for these achievements, especially in the sphere of social relations.

## A Prediction...

"The United States had Marxists in the past it is true, but they were a strange type of Marxist, or rather, three strange types. In the first place, there were the emigres cast out of Europe, who did what they could but could not find any response; in the second place, isolated American groups, like the De Leonists, who in the course of events, and because of their own mistakes, turned themselves into sects; in the third place, dilettantes attracted by the October Revolution and sympathetic to Marxism as an exotic teaching that had little to do with the United States. Their day is over. Now dawns the new epoch of an independent class movement of the proletariat and at the same time of —genuine Marxism. In this, too, America will in a few jumps catch up with Europe and outdistance it. Progressive technique and a progressive social structure will pave their own way in the sphere of doctrine. The best theoreticians of Marxism will appear on American soil. Marx will become the mentor of the advanced American workers."

—Leon Trotsky in his introduction to the *Living Thoughts of Karl Marx*.

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