

# Fourth International

## **THE BOMB-MURDER OF HARRY T. MOORE**

***New Dangers and New Tasks  
Facing the Negro Struggle***

*By George Breitman*

•

## **What the Steel Convention Revealed**

*By Harry Frankel*

## **The Tragedy of Harold R. Isaacs**

*By George Clarke*

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## **LENIN BEFORE OCTOBER**

*By Leon Trotsky*

*January-February 1952*

25c

## Manager's Column

Orders for extra copies of the November-December issue of **Fourth International** are still coming in from Socialist Workers Party branches. **Oakland** and **Minneapolis** sold out their first and second bundles and are now selling their third bundle of this issue. Orders for additional copies from **Akron, Chicago, Cleveland, New York** and **Pittsburgh** also reflect the serious response and added consciousness inspired by the World Congress issue.

**New York Literature Agent Ethel Swanson** writes that "this is not an issue just to be read, but to be studied. It's a kind of milestone in our analysis of world events." **Ethel** believes in the possibility of broader sales of the **FI** at schools and meetings and comments on some experiences of **Militant** and **FI** salesmen with the latest issue which bear this out. "On occasions when we had one particular salesman who didn't just have the **FI** along with other literature," she writes, "we had very successful sales. At one of the schools where two comrades sell **The Militant** regularly with the **FI**, we tried selling with one salesman holding the **FI** only. Our sales were more than twice as large. I sold four in this way at a Stalinist civil rights meeting. My approach was on the basis of the contents rather than on the general basis that this is our theoretical magazine. Sales at our own meetings were very good also. One of the reasons for this is that the comrades did not leave the selling up to the person at the literature table but pointed out to friends that 'this is an issue you just have to read.'

"I think it is the unanimous opinion of comrades that the World Congress issue is the best since the one on 'Asia in Revolt.' We feel that it is very important to organize meetings around it since it contains a synthesis of all our discussions in the past few years on the vital questions of Eastern Europe, Yugoslavia, China, and in general on the Stalinist influenced movements. Also, with issues like these, we have to make more concrete campaigns to get the **FI** into the hands of advanced workers, students and radicals."

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"The new **FI** went over with a bang," writes **Chicago Literature Agent Bert Deck**. "As you know we sold out our regular bundle within the first week of its arrival. Half of our second bundle is now gone. And I have no doubt that the few remaining will soon find anxious readers. We are planning a series of discussions around the magazine for the near future. **Mitch** and **Manny** were the sparkplugs on **FI** work. **Manny** arranged to have this issue sold at a campus newsstand and **Mitch** sold 15 copies to friends on the campus."

**Lillian Russell, Oakland Literature Agent**, writes, "Please send us extra copies of the new **Fourth International** as soon as possible. This one we don't even have to sell."

**Jean Simon** writes to increase **Cleveland's** bundle. The September-October issue was completely sold out, she reports. Extra copies were needed also of the November-December issue. "We're having a series of discussions on the World Congress resolutions and speeches," **Jean** writes, "so the **FI** which contains them is

indispensable. It has to be studied, not just read."

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**R.D.** writes for a group of **FI** readers in **Toronto, Canada**: "Just received the latest issue of the **Fourth**. Really excellent. Have rushed out to get a money order for extra copies. We will probably want more, but this will do as a starter."

**T. Burns**, a friend in **London, England**, wishes to compliment the editors on the last issue. "The issue of your splendid magazine carrying the 64 page report on the Third World Congress of the **Fourth International** is one of the most remarkable achievements of our movement. It is especially so coming from within that bastion of imperialism which now heads world reaction. The splendid layout, technical and political efficiency, which in themselves emphasize the seriousness of those responsible, also in their own way serve notice on Washington that one day the mighty giant which is U.S. labor will rouse itself and combine the advanced technique of its present day capitalist production methods with the firm Marxist understanding so ably expounded by **Fourth International**. On that day the bankers of Wall Street, their flunky politicians in Washington and Hoover of the FBI will find their plans for world enslavement ground to dust by the greatest of all forces, the American working class."

**J.S.**, a friend in **Saskatchewan, Canada**, writes, "I am 75 years old and am still looking forward to seeing socialism in action. If not complete at least on the correct road. And I hope to do my bit to help. I am reading the last issue, the November and December **Fourth International**, with intense interest, especially the report on the Third World Congress. I completely agree and appreciate every word of it. I would be sending more money but the farmers here are getting a slap in the face this year more than ever. I sure am glad to have **The Militant** and **Fourth International** to read. They both are excellent reading for anyone who really wants to know the truth and have an analysis of world trends and events. I have also read 'The Road to Peace' by **JPC**. He sure deserves credit for such an excellent piece of work."

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# FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

VOLUME XIII

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 1952

NUMBER 1

## *New Dangers and New Tasks Facing the Negro Struggle*

# The Bomb-Murder of Harry T. Moore

By **GEORGE BREITMAN**

Two days before Christmas, *Parade*, the Sunday picture magazine, devoted an entire page to a report from Key West, Fla., where President Truman had just completed another of his many vacations. It was the story of a 12-year old boy named Johnny Lawler, who had been encouraged by his parents to hang around for a chance to see Truman, and who finally succeeded and even shook Truman's hand and then was so thrilled that he did not wash his own hand for several days. Johnny was quoted as asking his father, "Say, how did Mr. Truman get to be President?" By working hard, his father replied, and then Johnny said, "I'll do the same because some day I want to be President."

There is something horrible in the thought that people are actually educating their children to emulate a man like Truman, the biggest strikebreaker in U.S. history, the one who ruthlessly gave the order to murder hundreds of thousands of helpless civilians with the atom bomb; the hypocrite who advocated civil rights laws to get elected and then dropped them like a hot potato; the initiator of a witch hunt that is destroying our civil liberties.

Truman worked hard, all right — he worked hard obeying the orders of a crooked machine politician named Pendergast, and he has been working hard since then obeying the orders of the capitalist class, up to and including the order to intervene in a so-called police action that has already cost the U.S. over 100,000 admitted casualties in Korea.

Johnny Lawler would be far better off if he hitched his wagon to another star. And what a star there was in his own state — a Negro, unknown to almost everyone until his death, a man who never committed any crimes but who also became great by working hard. That was Harry T. Moore, a hard worker, but one who worked on the side of the people and not against them.

### **Harry Moore: A Truly Noble Man**

It seems a shame that we never heard of Harry T. Moore until after Christmas night, when his life and his wife's life were ended by a bomb that blew up their home in Mims, Florida. Because he was a truly great and noble human being, the kind of man we should look up to for guidance in how to live our lives, a man whose memory we should keep forever fresh and green.

He was a school principal, and better off than most Negroes in the South. But he was not content to think only of himself. He joined the fight to win equal salaries for Negro teachers, and for doing that was fired from his job. That would have silenced some people, as it has intimidated many teachers of liberal or radical views and others menaced or victimized by the witch hunt. But it did not frighten Harry T. Moore.

On the contrary, it increased his determination to fight for justice. He became more active than ever in the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and in struggles to win and protect the right to vote for Negroes in his state. And when he was confronted with the Groveland "rape" frameup, he became a thorn in the flesh of the white supremacists and Ku Kluxers and their protectors in high office. He went around organizing and speaking at scores of meetings, fearlessly defending the Groveland victims and boldly demanding that McCall, the lyncher with a sheriff's badge, should be tried for the murder of Samuel Shepherd.

### **Knew What He Faced**

We know now that he was taking his life into his hands when he did these things. He must have known it too. But it did not stop him. His mother says that when she cautioned him to be more careful not long ago, he replied, "Every advancement comes by way of sacrifice, and if I sacrifice my life or my health I still think it is my duty for my race."

That is why it is correct to call Harry T. Moore a martyr of the Negro struggle and of the general struggle of the working people for a better world. He saw his duty and he did it, despite the costs it entailed. He wanted to live too and to be happy, but he could not be happy unless he offered his resistance to the misery and injustice around him. In other words, he was a really moral man, setting an example that should shine brightly for all time for the youth of all races. He was a true son of great predecessors — of people like Nat Turner and Harriet Tubman and John Brown and others who were ready to risk their lives in the fight against oppression. We would be ingrates, unworthy of the sacrifice he made, if we were content to merely mourn his passing and then forget about him

instead of devoting ourselves to avenge his death and to complete the struggle he led so well.

### Misleading Figures on Lynching

*The Nation* (Jan. 5) was absolutely correct when it insisted that such crimes as the murder of Harry T. Moore "cannot be understood as senseless acts of depraved or prejudiced individuals. On the contrary, they were essentially political crimes, crimes deliberately committed for a purpose." And the purpose cannot be completely understood without examination of a new trend that has appeared in the last few years.

At the end of 1951 the Tuskegee Institute, a Negro institution which issues annual lynching figures, announced that the total of lynchings last year was — one. This report was widely publicized here and abroad by the propagandists of capitalism; for them this constituted proof that lynchings are diminishing year by year, that America is more and more becoming the land of freedom and equality for the Negro people, and that one of these days we will wake up and find that they are treated just like other people.

They would be very happy if they could get the 15 million American Negroes and the colored people who form a majority of the earth's population to believe in this picture of progress that goes ever onward and upward until the arrival of the millenium. Because if what they said was true, it might not be necessary to *fight* to end the Jim Crow system — maybe people could just afford to sit back and wait for it to die a natural death.

But it is a lie. The reason the capitalists and their political errand boys in Washington go to the trouble of peddling this lie is that they have set themselves the objective of dominating the whole world. Part of their program for achieving this depends on force — economic force through the dollars they are pumping into the dying capitalist system all over the world, military force through armament that they are trying to impose on unwilling countries in Europe, Asia and the Middle East. But part also depends on propaganda — the propaganda that the U.S. is the champion and paragon of democracy.

The colored people abroad find that hard to swallow. "If you are such lovers of democracy," they ask, "then how is it that you have become the partner of so many lifelong bitter enemies of democracy like Chiang Kai-shek, Syngman Rhee, Franco, the Nazi and Japanese generals and most of the other dictators who are not behind the iron curtain?" Along with that question goes another: "If you love democracy so much, why do you treat Negroes as second-class citizens, deny most of them the right to vote, discriminate against them at the hiring gate or bar them from the better jobs when you do hire them, subject them to humility and brutality, segregate them in the armed forces and in so many parts of your educational system, deny them the protection of anti-lynching and anti-poll tax laws — why, if you love democracy so much and talk to us about it so much, don't you practice what you preach?"

This makes the U.S. ruling class, its politicians, diplomats and Voice of America squirm like fish on a hook.

And needless to say, the representatives of the bureaucrats in the Kremlin never miss a chance, inside the United Nations and outside, to make them squirm some more. Many people, including some "radicals" who expect capitalism to end Jim Crow, wonder why the U.S. government does not rid itself of this embarrassment, disarm foreign suspicions and deprive the Kremlin of one of its most effective propaganda themes. All they would have to do is quit discriminating against Negroes and begin treating them the same way as other citizens. But they don't do it, for reasons to be discussed later. Instead, they seek to get around their embarrassment by juggling figures to show that lynching is diminishing and conditions are improving, etc.

When we say this is a lie, we do not mean to challenge the official lynching figures compiled every year. It is true that they have declined temporarily. What we mean is that lynching has assumed new forms. Everyone knows that lynchings are violence resulting in death committed by a mob, by more than a few people — if only one person does the killing, it is listed by the Tuskegee Institute as a murder and not a lynching. (Harry T. Moore was not officially listed as a lynch victim, presumably because it has not been proved that more than one person killed him.) But there is another and more crucial aspect to lynching — its purpose. The purpose is not so much to take a life — that can just as easily be done by so-called legal procedure, in a Jim Crow court, that is, by "legal lynching." The purpose of a lynching is not so much to take a life as it is to frighten, terrorize, silence, demoralize other people who are permitted to go on living, but who are expected to cringe as long as they live and not dare to organize or vote or go to court — just to live and work like a mule for the benefit of others. That is the real aim of a lynching, and if it does not have that effect it is not considered a success.

### New Trend in Anti-Negro Terror

The point can be illustrated by the Groveland case. In Groveland, Lake County, Fla., a large number of Negroes were working and living under conditions of virtual peonage, a system about half-way between slave labor and wage labor. After the war the Negro workers began to complain about their conditions and talk about doing something to improve them. When their employers heard about this, they decided to do something drastic to throw the fear of god into their employees. That was the background of the Groveland case in 1949, and when a white woman yelled rape the employers had just what they wanted. They unloosed a reign of terror that lasted over a week; Negro homes were burned, Negroes were shot at if they ventured out of doors, and finally 400 Negro families had to flee out of the county. One Negro was shot dead by a posse, three others were almost lynched and later were convicted; one was given life imprisonment, two were sentenced to death; when the Supreme Court ordered a new trial for the latter, a sheriff shot them in cold blood, murdering one and leaving the other for dead. But it was not these victims the ruling class was most concerned about — they wanted blood and some bodies

burning in the electric chair so that they could point to them and remind the remaining, living Negroes of what they could expect if they tried to alter the wonderful American way of life as it is practiced in the South.

### **Real Aim: To Frighten the Living**

To frighten the living — that is the real aim of lynching. When that is understood, we can see that there may be less of the old-style type of lynchings, where mobs are used, but that lynchings have continued as much as before, only in new forms. Today, when they want to achieve the purpose of lynchings, they send out only two or three men to shoot down a Negro who will serve as an example to others, or they may even send out only one man, armed with a bomb, which he can throw under a house where people are sleeping at night. And in some cases they use the police instead. Because these people who are so brave about murdering sleeping men and women don't like to take any risks, and even small vigilante committees face a risk that their victim may resist. But with the police taking over the function of the lynch mob there is practically no risk. The police have always been noted for their brutality toward Negroes. Now, in addition, in ever-increasing numbers, they are killing Negroes too, in the North and the South.

It is estimated that in the city of Birmingham alone almost 100 Negroes have been shot or beaten to death on the streets or in the police stations during the last 2½ years alone. Nobody knows what the national total is, but it surely equals any annual total of "official" lynchings recorded in the U.S. since the early days of the Ku-Klux Klan. It is not a matter of punishing individual Negroes or of letting the police work off their sadistic frustrations — the main aim is to paralyze the members of the Negro community with fright, to make them shudder every time they see a cop, to keep the memory of broken and bloody bodies on their minds so that they will be afraid to talk back or stand up for their rights. In other words, the same aim as the old-style lynchings, only now committed under guise of law, now protected by the police badge and uniform, now masked as "resisting an officer" or "trying to escape."

That is one of the new trends in the struggle for Negro equality. The Negro people have been pressing forward — it is estimated that two million of them will go to the polls in the South this year as compared with about one million in 1948. Unable to sweet-talk them into accepting second-class citizenship, the ruling class and its political agents have decided to beat them into submission. It is impossible to exaggerate the dangers presented by the new forms of lynching. If they are not stopped where they are already being committed, then they will spread into every state and city where the ruling class wants to keep the Negro people down — that is, every state and city where Negroes live.

### **Danger Evident Not Only to Radicals**

Revolutionary socialists are not the only ones who understand what is happening. The Psychology Department of the City College of New York, 20 educators, sent

a wire to Truman last November after the sheriff of Lake County took the two handcuffed Groveland defendants for a ride and shot them. They noted that the pattern for denying Negroes their constitutional rights has shifted from mob violence "to the more subtle forms of quasi-legal executions or violence at the hands of 'law enforcement' officers." The new pattern, they said, would give "the aura of official sanction to racial murders" and would expose all the people to "the dangers of a capricious, jungle-like state." (This is an acute observation, because once the cops get such powers of life and death in their hands they will not confine their use to Negroes but will employ them against whites as well.) And they warned that "only the most immediate and strongest action of the federal government can prevent the legal murder of a great many more Negroes in the near future." Events have already begun to confirm this warning.

Another conservative source, Walter White, in his annual report for the NAACP, declared: "At times during the year justice and human rights in America seemed to be standing still or even moving backward . . . we saw in our country a resurgence of violence — rioting, home burning, bombings, police brutality and mockery of the revered American concept of 'equal justice under law.' Cicero, Martinsville, Groveland, Birmingham, Miami and Mims, the horror names of 1951, drove home more strongly than ever the continuing and increasing need for the NAACP."

### **Why No Action from Washington?**

The International Executive Board of the CIO Auto Workers — not one radical among them — protested the Groveland killing, the murder of an NAACP member who had filed suit for the right to vote in Louisiana and was shot down by a deputy sheriff, and the murder of a Negro steward at sea by a white captain. These crimes were designated as signs of "an intensification of terroristic aggression against Negroes by officers charged with upholding and enforcement of the law." Urging Attorney General McGrath to arrest, indict and try the killers for murder, the UAW Board wrote: "Failure to take such action subverts all of our lofty professions of democratic principles. The hour is late. Action now is imperative."

The hour certainly is late, but no action has been forthcoming, despite thousands of appeals to Truman for the government to step into the picture and do something to stop the terrorism. Not one legal or semi-legal lyncher has been punished. Not one cop has been fired. Not one bomb-thrower has been apprehended. The strongest government in the world seems to be helpless, or else tries to give that impression. The mighty FBI has found nothing. The Department of Justice can't seem to get the wheels of justice moving. Are they really so inefficient?

The answer is that it all depends on whom they are hunting. When they want to catch a radical, nothing seems to stop them. The whole machinery of the government is thrown into high gear, thousands of cops and FBI agents labor ceaselessly, no financial expense is too high, they tap wires and open mail, they set up a stoolpigeon system extending across the whole country. And they get results — when they really want them. So when they don't get

results we have good reason to believe they don't want them.

They arrest radicals and prosecute them and send them to jail, not for employing force and violence — there has not been a single case of this kind — but for allegedly conspiring to advocate force and violence, a frameup assault on the Bill of Rights. But when it comes to those who do not advocate but clearly commit force and violence, the government seems paralyzed, bumbling, impotent. They are great at hounding people whose only crime is that they express their opinions but a complete dud when it comes to catching and punishing fascistic elements who commit crimes in violation of all the federal, state and local laws. Liberals think this is accidental, but it is not. The truth is that the government is not really disturbed by fascistic elements while it is afraid of ideas and free speech and free press. This gives a better and sharper insight into the true character of the government and the capitalist ruling class than can be gotten in almost any other way.

### Our Warnings Confirmed

What is the government doing about the murder of Mr. and Mrs. Harry T. Moore? Look first of all at Truman, the so-called "great civil libertarian and humanitarian. Not one word. He can't be bothered by such trifles. When U.S. airmen fly over Hungarian territory in violation of international law — you can imagine what would happen if a Soviet or Hungarian plane flew over U.S. territory without permission — and then are arrested and fined, there is a great hubbub, Truman demands restitution and firm action, and even after they are released he vindictively demands that the case be taken before the U.N. But when people are murdered in his own country, in the state where he takes his vacations, Truman is silent (and no newspaper reporter questions him about it at his press conferences). Not that it would mean anything if he did say something about the Moore case because he has proved that his promises cannot be trusted anyhow. Action speaks louder than words. And the inaction of the Truman administration also speaks louder than words.

Attorney General McGrath promises "the full facilities of the FBI." Eventually he sends down two (2) FBI agents, who, when added to those already stationed in Florida, make a grand total of nine (9). Which is less than one-tenth as many as he set into action like bloodhounds when four Stalinists convicted under the Smith Act jumped bail last summer. Evidently expressing opinions that Truman and McGrath do not like is a more heinous crime than murder. The FBI agents in Florida have achieved exactly nothing. The whole thing is a farce. Because even if they should arrest someone for "violating the federal civil rights" of Mr. and Mrs. Moore, the penalty — the maximum penalty — would be one year in prison and a few thousand dollars in fine! (Provided a Southern jury could be found to convict the defendant.) That is the way the government acts, that is the way it intends to keep acting — unless and until it is compelled to do otherwise by the mass pressure of the American people.

When Harry T. Moore was murdered, the Socialist Workers Party immediately sounded the alarm. It warned

that if his killers were not punished, they would feel free to spread their violence to maintain white supremacy and to extend their attacks to white workers and the labor movement. This warning was confirmed almost as soon as it was uttered. Recent issues of *The Militant*, by printing a number of small news items that are lost in the back pages of most papers, have shown that the bomb is joining TV and comic books as symbols of American capitalist culture (which is ironical when we recall that the favorite cartoon stereotype of a revolutionist used to be a man with a bomb in his hand).

A white evangelist in Florida is warned that he will get the "Mims treatment" if he does not stop preaching against sin so vigorously (Moore's home was in Mims). A crusader against vice in Alabama comes home to find his house in smoke and his son blown 30 feet through the air by a bomb, and he decides to move his family out of the state (why he sent them to Florida for protection from bombs is a mystery). The white sheriff of a North Carolina county complains that his deputies cannot do their job at night in the rural areas because the Klan has been flogging so many people that the residents have become jittery and start firing their shotguns as soon as they hear a noise outside; the sheriff says if this kind of thing goes on, why, it will not be possible for his deputies to preserve law and order much longer. The United Press reports a dynamite explosion near a Negro night club in Dallas, Tex., and calls it the third such "apparently pointless" bombing in less than a month. And now the scene shifts North, to Chicago, where a black-powder bomb is exploded outside the new headquarters of the AFL Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen's Union, shattering 40 windows and rocking the whole area; the police began an investigation, of course — not of the labor haters, not of the anti-union racists or the White Circle League, but of the CIO United Packinghouse Workers Union!

### What Is Being Done?

What is being done by the groups that are directly affected by this new wave of terrorism? The NAACP, which is most vitally involved, denounced the outrage, offered a reward for the killers of Mr. and Mrs. Moore, held memorial meetings for them, and urged McGrath to appoint a special prosecutor and grand jury (which he refused to do). And then, two weeks after the bombing, it voted to consult the labor leaders for a nationwide work stoppage, something it had never done before and something which it did almost on the spur of the moment under the pressure of the mass indignation over the Moore case. All these measures were justified and progressive — but inadequate.

The leaders of the labor movement too know they are involved, and knew it before the bombing of the Chicago AFL union. They know that union organizers and members will be next on the death list, that the forces behind lynch terror are the same ones that seek to smash unions. But beyond sending a few telegrams of protest, they do nothing. An editorial in the Jan. 9 *AFL News-Reporter* concludes by "wondering" if maybe "reactionaries every-

where won't stop to think whether stirring up race hatred in order to win an election is worth the damage it helps to cause." This is not a summons for the people to fight the reactionaries but an appeal to the reactionaries to think over what they are doing and decide if the terrorism really benefits them — as if the reactionaries do not know what they are doing.

The Socialist Workers Party takes an altogether different approach. Farrell Dobbs, National Chairman and presidential candidate of the SWP, wrote a letter to the NAACP, AFL and CIO and 22 other powerful national organizations scheduled to meet in Washington on Feb. 17-18 to lobby for a change in Senate rules that make it possible to filibuster all civil rights legislation to death. Speaking on behalf of the SWP, Dobbs urged them to revise the plans for their conference — to turn it into a broader affair, to summon a mass march on Washington by tens of thousands instead of staging a lobby with a few hundred polite representatives; to call mass meetings and demonstrations in cities all over the country at the same time; to endorse the proposal for a nationwide work stoppage; and to support the idea of forming defense guards to protect lives and homes and liberties which the authorities have failed to protect.

### The Need for Defense Guards

The proposal for defense guards originated in Florida, and not with the SWP. For several months in Miami bombs have been thrown or planted in Negro housing projects, Jewish synagogues, and a Catholic church. When the police failed to stop this, here is what happened, according to the Jan. 2 *New York Times*: "Members of the Jewish War Veterans recently suggested that 325 of their members be deputized to guard synagogues, but this was turned down after several rabbis had issued a statement declaring that to resort to 'vigilante action at this time is to succumb to hysteria and panic.'"

The subsequent killing of Mr. and Mrs. Moore, undoubtedly encouraged when the racists saw they could act with impunity in Miami, proves how blind those rabbis were to put their confidence in the police. In the first place, defense guards need not be deputized; when needed, they can and should be formed without getting the recognition or approval of the police, who usually act in connivance with the lynchers anyhow. In the second place, formation of defense guards is not "vigilante action" but its very opposite — protection against vigilante action. And in the third place it is not panic or hysteria to protect your life when the police fail to do so — but good sense.

The bombers respect only those who can oppose them effectively; they will think twice about going out to take another life when they see Negroes and Jews and workers banding together and promising to resist. Even the police will think it over before clubbing a helpless victim if they know he has friends who will come to his aid. Without ever having heard of the Socialist Workers Party, the Jewish veterans in Miami sensed this; so did 18 whites who stood armed guard around the church of the preacher threatened with the Mims treatment in Jacksonville; and so did the Negroes who formed a guard around the home

of a Negro farmer in North Carolina after a bomb had been exploded there.

### What Impedes the Leaders?

Farrell Dobbs' proposals were not answered by the labor, Negro, liberal and civic organizations. But they made it clear that they rejected them by changing the name of their lobbying conference in February to the "Leadership Conference on Civil Rights" — an obvious refusal to call for mass action. But what about the proposal for a nationwide work stoppage, which was made first by the NAACP itself? The NAACP authorized the setting up of a committee to consult the labor leaders. What happened? Was it set up, and if it was set up, why isn't it functioning? If it is functioning, why is the NAACP so silent about the whole thing, which was their idea and not ours? If the labor leaders refuse to go along with the proposal, why doesn't the NAACP announce this so that the people can do something about it? Why, if they say this is a situation of crisis, don't they act accordingly? What are they waiting for?

The answer can be found by examining the new form of propaganda that both Negro and labor leaders have become very fond of in recent years. This has already been done in *The Militant*, but it bears repetition and amplification. Today this propaganda is being applied to just about every public issue that can be thought of. When Truman asks for another five billions in new taxes, he seeks to justify this unpopular demand by its necessity for the struggle against communism. But his Republican opponents say new taxes are out of the question for the same reason — they would hurt the economy and weaken the struggle against communism. When Philip Murray asks for a steel wage increase, he explains it is needed so the steel workers can contribute their maximum effort to the fight against Stalin. Fairless of U.S. Steel retorts that a wage increase would undermine the steel industry, which would please no one so much as Stalin. Of course the class struggle continues just the same. The steel workers are not impressed with Fairless' arguments, nor he with theirs. This shows that propaganda has certain limits, and while it can mix things up it cannot change the realities of social life and struggle.

### False Propaganda Paralyzes Action

But it can mix things up, which is why it must be paid some attention when it is applied to the Negro question, where the argument runs like this: Jim Crow, discrimination, segregation, bombings are all crimes because they help Stalin, and should be ended so that Negroes will be able and willing to go all-out in the crusade against communism. This was the theme sounded over and over by Philip Murray and Walter Reuther at the last CIO convention, and given a timely application by Walter White, secretary of the NAACP, when he said the murder of Harry T. Moore was "one of the greatest services that could have been performed for Joe Stalin."

The duty of leaders, labor or Negro, is to educate the people, teach them to know causes and effects — otherwise, no lasting progress is possible. Specifically, it is their

job to teach the masses what causes Jim Crow oppression, who benefits from it, how all workers are harmed by it, why they should fight it, and how to fight it effectively. The basic cause is the profit system, and the beneficiaries are the capitalists who do everything they can to keep the workers divided along any lines possible — racial, geographic, religious, sexual, etc. Because the more the workers are divided, the easier it is for the employers to exploit them and squeeze the maximum profit out of their labor. The workers have to be shown that Jim Crow benefits the ruling class, and that anything that perpetuates Jim Crow is harmful to their own interests. It must be made plain that Jim Crow is not the product of Stalin. This is not said in defense of Stalin, but of a historically incontrovertible fact. Jim Crow is the product of capitalism, American capitalism; its seat is in Washington, not Moscow. Any propaganda that obscures this fact is harmful and not helpful to the Negroes and their white allies.

### **The Roots of Jim Crow**

The workers must be encouraged and taught to figure out their problems from the standpoint of how their problems affect the class and individual conditions and liberties of the masses themselves. When the question of a strike comes up, workers should be conditioned to ask: "Will this strike help me and the other workers, or will it help the capitalists, who benefit from our losses and lose from our gains?" They should not be bamboozled into introducing extraneous questions, like: "Will this strike help Stalin, or hurt him?" Trying to figure out what is going on in Stalin's mind (something the masterminds in Washington have not done with perceptible success) can result only in confusion, lack of determination, demoralization and inactivity — which are of benefit only to the capitalists and the white supremacists.

The argument is not altogether new; only the form is. In World War II it had a slightly different wording, namely, will this or that action help Hitler? For some groups this became the sole and supreme criterion for everything. The Communist Party was most guilty of this. If workers wanted to resist speedup, or if Negroes wanted to march on Washington to protest Jim Crow, the Stalinists opposed and fought them on the grounds that such action was disruptive of "national unity" and therefore helpful to Hitler. The Stalinists became the most vicious and virulent opponents of labor and Negro struggles because their policy of considering everything from the viewpoint of how it allegedly affected Hitler led them to shut their eyes to how these things affected the workers and Negroes, and to subordinate and oppose every progressive struggle under the guise of fighting Hitler. Those who use this method in its new form will do the same and will play into the hands of the reactionary ruling class, which is already stressing the idea that there must be no more conflicts in this country because Stalin wants us to be fighting one another instead of him.

### **Who Really Benefits from Terrorism?**

But even if it is conceded for the sake of argument that the murder of Mr. and Mrs. Moore is a service for Stalin

(in the sense that he makes use of it, not that he committed it) — so what? Is that all it is? On the contrary, it is also a service for the American ruling class — in fact, a much bigger service for them than for him. The purpose of Jim Crow terrorism, as we noted earlier, is to keep the Negro "in his place." That is where American capitalism has tried to keep him since 1876 when they made a deal with the Southern landlords, businessmen and Ku Kluxers at the expense of the Bill of Rights and the Negro people, and that is where they are trying to keep him today. Stalin may reap certain indirect propaganda benefits from Jim Crow terrorism, but American capitalism benefits from it directly, politically and economically, and in a big way. That is why they do nothing to stop it.

The Moore murders embarrass them in the United Nations. But not enough so that they want to end Jim Crow at home. For them it is cheaper to pay the price of being embarrassed than of having anything done to overthrow the Jim Crow system. So Walter White is telling only half the truth. The murder of Harry T. Moore is a service for Truman as well as for Stalin.

White, Murray and Reuther make a great deal of noise about how embarrassing Jim Crow is to American capitalism. The Truman administration, which would not be in power without the support of the South, knows all about this embarrassment, even better than its labor and Negro supporters. But that does not stop them from maintaining the Jim Crow system. Why this is so, why the ruling class retains the "embarrassment" of Jim Crow and desperately resists all efforts to end it — that is the question which White, Murray and Reuther never even think of asking. But it is the decisive question and must be answered.

### **Why Washington Prefers "Embarrassment"**

Abolishing Jim Crow is no easy thing. Even if they decided in Washington to do it, it would still not be easy. Because the ruling class in the South would not like the idea. That is putting it very mildly. They know that Truman's only interest is in getting Negro votes and not in threatening the South's sacred way of life, but they go wild with rage every time he utters a few innocuous words about poll taxes or FEPC. And if the government actually tried to end Jim Crow in the South, we would be confronted with the threat of another civil war.

In other words, the only way to abolish Jim Crow in this country is by making a revolution in the South, which is the powerhouse and breeding ground of the Jim Crow system. The present Southern ruling class would have to be thrown out of power, and that would be a revolution, a political revolution. But no matter how started, such a political revolution would inevitably tend to develop into a social and economic overturn, which in turn would upset the whole national structure. And that is why the capitalists who are running things will never consent to the abolition of the Jim Crow system. And nothing will shake them in this. They would much rather risk alienating the whole world than risk a revolution threatening their own profits and privileges at home.

The final note in the White-Murray propaganda is a plea to the ruling class to end their great "inconsistency."



How, they ask, can you get ready to fight a war for democracy in Europe and Asia and continue to treat the Negro at home in the most undemocratic fashion? Can't you see that to be consistent you must give the Negro democracy in America too?

But since the capitalists know that they are not preparing for a war for democracy in any respect, this alleged inconsistency does not bother them at all. Their foreign policy and their domestic policy, despite what the labor and Negro leaders say, are cut from the same cloth. They are not getting ready to bring the blessings of democracy to the people of Asia or Europe any more than they are getting ready to extend them to American Negroes. On the contrary, they intend to enslave the people both at home and abroad, and are proceeding to destroy civil liberties at home precisely so that nobody here will be able to interfere with their reactionary program abroad.

### Where There Is a Contradiction

Walter White and Philip Murray regard the war in Korea as a crusade for democracy, but millions of American Negroes, when they heard Truman give the order for U.S. intervention, which he called a "police action," must have thought to themselves: "I sure feel sorry for the Koreans if they get the same kind of 'police action' we've been getting." And they do — the police action against colonial masses in Korea is qualitatively the same thing as police action against minorities here at home, although on a bigger scale and with bigger weapons.

So there is a great contradiction, but it is with the labor and liberal leaders who act as apologists for the imperialists. They have got to make a choice themselves. If they keep on supporting capitalism and its foreign policy and its wars then they will have to subordinate labor and Negro struggles, shove them into the background the way the Stalinists did in World War II (and as the liberals are already half-doing by their timorous policy on the Moore case). Or else they will have to increase their opposition to Jim Crow, the wage freeze, high prices, big profits and the witch hunt, and break with the imperialist foreign policy that conflicts with every progressive movement and struggle in the world today.

That is their problem, and they will have to meet it. Revolutionary socialists have made their choice, and nothing will swerve them from it. They are and will remain implacable opponents of capitalism and its Jim Crow, and nothing will persuade them to moderate or abandon that struggle for a single day, rain or shine, war or peace, Murray or White, Truman, Taft or Eisenhower. Because they understand that if the struggle is stopped, if the fight is weakened, then things will become even worse than they are now.

### An Instructive Lesson from Jewish History

Nothing could be more deadly for the Negro people than a fatalistic belief in progress — automatic, self-moving progress, the chief staple of liberalism and reformism. This is borne out by what happened to the Jews. Before the first world war, when he was still a Marxist, Karl Kautsky wrote a book which was revised after the war and translated

into English under the title, *Are The Jews A Race?* This book is still worth reading as an example of the conceptions of the socialist movement about the Jewish question at that time. It contains some historical and anthropological material, an analysis of economic causes of anti-Semitism, etc. But its most interesting chapter is the one on the assimilation of the Jews, containing a number of tables of statistics showing that gradually the Jews were intermingling more and more with Christians and intermarrying with them at a really remarkable rate — in some European countries during the early part of the century, one out of every three or four Jews was marrying non-Jews and great numbers of them were being converted to Christianity.

All in all, there seemed good ground to accept the prevailing belief, shared even by the socialists, that the Jewish question was solving itself through the assimilation of the Jews. An appealing notion — but how appallingly false! It proves that history, and especially the history of oppressed groups, does not move forward in a straight line but that it zigs and zags, that conditions can arise which will wipe out in a single decade all the gains that have been painfully accumulated in a century of strenuous effort. How empty and remote the statistics in Kautsky's book appear alongside of the single, lone statistic we became acquainted with after World War II — six million Jews exterminated under Hitler in a few brief years.

And so the Negro people must be warned: Remember what happened to the Jews. They too were told in assuring tones about how things were getting better day by day and all they had to do was wait and be patient with the "gradual" method and then the happy day of equality would dawn by itself. Remember what happened to the Jews in Europe and do not let anybody lull you with consoling statistics! The day may come in this country too when the ruling class, determined to conquer the whole world, will try to drown the Negro people in blood as an example and scapegoat for the other victims of capitalism.

### A Century of Experience in Negro Struggle

The idea that the Negro question would solve itself, so to speak, seemed to have validity once upon a time. This capitalist system we live under was progressive in its youth. Less than a hundred years ago the capitalists united, although reluctantly at first, with Negroes and workers and farmers to wage a bloody civil war that ended in the smashing of the chattel slave system. There was reason then to think that under capitalism Negroes could eventually prosper or at least breathe the free air of equality. Then, after the Civil War, came the period of Reconstruction, whose first stages were the brightest chapter in the book of American history, when the capitalist government did not hesitate to suppress the former slaveholders and to keep them suppressed and to use federal troops and guns in support of the Negroes' struggle for freedom.

But that was when capitalism was young and thriving and moving ahead. Today this profit system is old and decrepit, attacked by incurable diseases, demented by illusions of grandeur and vain hopes that it can succeed in

the program of world conquest that Hitler failed to achieve. It's a different animal now. Since the betrayal of Reconstruction, which gave the reins of power in the South back to the former slaveowners, there has been no reason whatever to expect anything progressive from the capitalists. Besides, why should the Negro people expect that their capitalist oppressors are going to grant them more rights at a time when the capitalists are busily engaged in withdrawing rights from the white workers, staging a witch hunt to destroy freedom of speech and press and association for the white workers? Preparations for an imperialist world war do not portend the flowering of democracy for the Negro people — they signify an attempt, already under way, to wipe out the democratic rights of all the masses. Even without the evidence of new and spreading forms of lynching and terrorism, it does not take much vision to see that the prospects for things getting better by themselves are very slim, and are going to get slimmer unless they are resisted vigorously, militantly, in the spirit of Harry T. Moore.

### Moore Pointed to the Road

The solution is not easy, and anyone who thinks it is, is fooling himself. These are not easy times in which to make progress. Many people who know that the answer lies in struggle have been frightened by the witch hunt and have retired to the sidelines. But struggle is still the only answer, and no slick or cheap substitutes will do. Sending petitions to Truman will not bear any better results now than in the past. Proposals for a boycott of Florida citrus fruits and vacation centers are not harmful as such — unless the idea is created that they are the answer. By themselves they do no harm, but they cannot do much good either. Struggle, backed up by the readiness to sacrifice that Harry T. Moore exhibited, remains the only answer.

The nature of the struggle is primarily political. If the government wants to, it can put an end to terrorism in the South, which is itself a political thing. Because the government does not really want to, the government must be changed. Not changed by shifting from control by one capitalist party to control by another capitalist party, but changed from a government representing the interests of the capitalist class to one representing the interests of the workers, Negroes, working farmers, housewives and youth — representing them, controlled by them, responsible to them and replaceable by them. If the government wants to, it can end discrimination in industry. Because it does not want to, it must be changed. And so it goes with all the other problems facing the labor and Negro movements — they are political problems, which can be solved only through political action and struggle.

We revolutionary socialists are not able by ourselves alone to set into motion our program for combatting terrorism. That is because we are still a small minority. But even a small minority, armed with a correct program, can exert a tremendous influence. The Abolitionists also started out small, a persecuted minority whose leaders were tarred and feathered and jailed and lynched, but within a few decades they ended up by seeing two-thirds of the nation take up arms to defend the anti-slavery principles

they had stuck to so persistently during dark and troubled times.

### Future Belongs to Revolutionary Socialism

And revolutionary socialism will not remain a minority; because our ideas conform to reality and are right, they will attract the majority of the people, and they will triumph. Some have been scared off by the witch hunt, and others have been corrupted into compliance and apathy by "prosperity" — but the ruling class cannot stop ideas or their spread because it cannot do away with the reactionary conditions of life that produce those ideas and it cannot prevent the rise of new generations, young people on whom the future rests and who will not want the future to be like the past. Our confidence in the future is not the result of wishful thinking or of an ability to hop ourselves up, but the product of scientific study and understanding of society and history and the class struggle.

Some people think that it is visionary, hopelessly impractical and idealistic to continue a struggle to end capitalism against such seemingly great odds. The same view was held by most people 100 years ago when a minority suggested that it was advisable, necessary and possible to end the system of slavery. "The slave system is here to stay," they were told, "and only crazy fanatics will refuse to try to live with it, and maybe fix it up, patch it or reform it here or there." But from their own experience with the slave system, the majority of the American people were forced to the conclusion that slavery had to go, and they had to accept the program of the revolutionists whom they had derided as crackpots.

Experience with capitalism, especially with capitalism in its death agony, is going to have the same consequences in our own time. It is going to teach the people that if they want to live, capitalism must die, and that if they want peace and dignity they will first have to employ militancy in taking power away from the capitalists. It is not the revolutionary socialists, primarily, who will teach these things, but capitalism itself. The Harlem paper, the *New York Age*, says: "The blast (that blew up Harry T. Moore's home) exploded all hopes that the fight for equality in politics, education, the courts and other spheres of life in the South could be won with little or no bloodshed."

We have said that too, but events say it better. We're educating all whom we can reach to the best of our ability — but capitalism is educating them too and in a way that will have deeper, more lasting, profound and revolutionary effects than any words we can speak or write.

The enemies of Jim Crow, war and thought control are still on the defensive. But that is no reason for despair. *The Nation* is correct when it observes that the Moore bombing "is likely to bring about an imponderable change in the political thinking of American Negroes" and when it notes that pressure for militant action is coming from "rank-and-file Negroes whose patience is utterly exhausted not only with Dixiecrat provocation but with the relaxed middle-class attitude of some of their leaders, who have been quite willing to issue further political bills of credit to Mr. Truman on the basis of his stale civil rights speeches of 1948 and the lesser evil premise." A similar process is

certain to develop among the white workers. Whether it likes it or not, capitalism is forced to continue to produce all kinds of opportunities for awakening the masses and driving them into struggle against conditions as they are. If the politically advanced workers know how to stick to

their guns and grab hold of all the opportunities offered them, then they will win to their side all the other workers whose needs are satisfied by the program of revolutionary socialism, and then it will be goodbye forever to capitalism, and all of its products like Jim Crow terrorism.

*From the Arsenal of Marxism*

# Lenin Before October

By **LEON TROTSKY**

## INTRODUCTION

In commemoration of the Twenty-Eighth Anniversary of Lenin's death we publish below one more chapter from Leon Trotsky's reminiscences, *On Lenin*, which he finished in April

1924 and which were published in book form the same year by the State Publishing House, Moscow.



Vladimir Ilyich  
LENIN

Born April 22, 1870  
Died Jan. 21, 1924

As eye-witness, leading participant and Lenin's closest collaborator in the entire period of the Russian Revolution of 1917, Trotsky was in a better position than anybody else to evaluate the personality and historical role of Lenin. In the lines that follow the reader will find the living Lenin and not the petrified ikon into which the Stalinists have sought to transform Lenin. Further, the attentive reader will find corroborative proof of how decisive for the fate of the proletarian victory in Russia was Lenin's arrival in April 1917 from abroad, his subsequent re-arming of the Bolshevik Party, and his incomparable guidance of the Bolsheviks to the assumption of power against the recurring sluggishness, dilatoriness and outright opposition of the most

prominent Party Chiefs, in particular of Stalin, who was at that time in alliance with Zinoviev, Kamenev and others.

In addition to illuminating the critical stages of the Great Russian Revolution through the person of Lenin, Trotsky's 1924 reminiscences cast light on the beginnings of the Stalinist counter-revolution which reached its first climactic point immediately after Lenin's death. Suppression of key historical documents, in preparation for the wholesale falsification that was to follow in later years, had already begun by 1924.

Kamenev, as editor of the First Russian Edition of Lenin's *Collected Works*, played a central role in the trickery of "omitting" important documents, in particular, Lenin's letter to the Bolshevik Central Committee on the internal party dispute over participation in Kerensky's Pre-Parliament, on the eve of October. Lenin backed the "boycottist" minority, headed by Leon Trotsky. Lenin's praise of Trotsky — "Bravo, Comrade Trotsky!" — was the principal reason for the suppression of this important letter in 1924. This decision was made by the then ruling Triumvirate ("Troika") of Zinoviev, Kamenev and Stalin. They had set themselves the task of fabricating a "special" Trotsky line as against that of Lenin, and simultaneously of blotting out from the record the real line of political opposition to Lenin, in which they themselves — and not Trotsky — were personally involved. In this respect, the document below also helps set the historical record straight.

The translation from the Russian original is by John G. Wright. — Ed.

That Lenin arrived in Petersburg and had come out against the war and against the Provisional Government at workers' meetings, I learned from American newspapers at Amherst, a concentration camp for German prisoners in Canada. The interned German sailors began to take an immediate interest in Lenin, whose name they had come across for the first time in the news dispatches. These were all men avidly waiting for the war to end; it would open for them the gates of this prison camp. They listened with utmost attention to every voice raised against the war. Up to this time they had known of Liebknecht. But they had been told time and again that Liebknecht was a paid agent of the Entente. Now they learned of Lenin. They learned from me of Zimmerwald and Kienthal. Lenin's anti-war speeches won many of them over to Liebknecht.

In my passage across Finland I was able for the first time to obtain current Russian newspapers and in them found dispatches reporting the entry of Tseretelli, Skobelev and other "socialists" into the Provisional Government. The situation was thus made perfectly clear. With Lenin's

April 4 Theses I acquainted myself on the second or third day after reaching Petersburg. These theses were just what the revolution ordered. Lenin's article, "The First Stage of the First Revolution," which he had sent much earlier from Switzerland, I read in *Pravda* much later.

Even today one may, as one should study most attentively, and therewith profit politically from these early and extremely shadow-like issues of *Pravda*. Against the background of its columns in which the revolution was being simulated, Lenin's "Letter From Afar" stands out with all of its concentrated force. Completely calm and theoretico-expository in tone, this article resembles a huge, tightly coiled spring of steel, which was presently destined to unwind and, as it expanded, to encompass the entire content of the revolution.

## Bolsheviks and "Internationalists" in 1917

I arranged with Comrade Kamenev, on one of the first days after my arrival, for a visit with the editorial board of *Pravda*. Our first meeting must have taken place

on May 5 or May 6. I told Lenin that there was nothing separating me from his April Theses and from the entire course followed by the Party since his arrival: and that I was personally faced with the choice of immediately entering the Party organization "as an individual," or of trying to bring along with me the best section of those who stood for unity in the [*Mezhrayontsy* — Inter-District] organizations in Petersburg. This organization numbered about 4,000 workers and contained many precious revolutionary forces: Uritsky, Lunacharsky, Joffe, Vladimirov, Manuilsky, Karakhan, Yurenev, Posern, Litkens, and others. Antonov-Ovsevenko had by that time already joined the Party: so did Sokolnikov, I believe. Lenin did not express himself categorically in favor of either course. He found it necessary, above everything else, to acquaint himself more intimately with the situation and the men. Lenin did not exclude collaboration, of one sort or another, with Martov and generally with the section of Menshevik-Internationalists just returned from abroad. Along with this it was necessary to see how the mutual relations among and with the "Internationalists" would turn out in practice. In view of our tacit agreement, I, for my part, did not try to force the natural development of events. We had one and the same policy. At meetings of workers and soldiers I used, from the first day of my arrival, the formula of "We Bolsheviks and Internationalists," and inasmuch as the constant repetition of this conjunction "and" kept burdening my speech, I soon abbreviated it to: "We Bolshevik-Internationalists." The merger politically thus preceded the organizational fusion.\*

### Lenin's Effect on the Reformists

I visited *Pravda's* editorial staff two or three times, at the most critical moments before the July days. In these initial meetings, and more so, after the July days, Lenin gave the impression of most intense concentration, and awe-inspiring inner composure — all this under an outer shell of complete calm and "prosaic" simplicity. Kerenskyism in those days appeared all-powerful. Bolshevism was regarded as an "insignificant little handful." The Party itself was not as yet cognizant of the power it would generate on the morrow. And at the same time Lenin confidently led the Party toward its supreme tasks. . .

Lenin's speeches at the First Soviet Congress (June 1917) aroused anxious bewilderment among the S. R.-Menshevik majority. They sensed dimly that this man was taking aim at some long-range target. But to discern this target was beyond them. And these little citizens of the revolution kept asking themselves: "Who is he? What is he? Simply a maniac? Or is this an historical projectile of explosive force never known before?"

Lenin's speech at the Soviet Congress where he argued the necessity of clapping 50 or so capitalists in jail was, if you like, not an "oratorical" success. It was nonetheless of exceptional significance. Comparatively few Bolsheviks in the audience gave the speaker a brief applause as he left

the platform with the look of a man who had not spoken everything he had in mind, nor perhaps, had at all said what he wanted to say in a way he should have liked to. . . But just the same, a breath of the unusual swept over the hall. It was the breath of the future, felt momentarily by everyone, as bewildered looks accompanied this man, so commonplace and yet so enigmatic.

Who is he? What is he? After all, did not Plekhanov in his paper say that Lenin's first speech on the revolutionary soil of Petersburg was the raving of a man in fever? After all were not the delegates, elected by the masses, in their large majority members of the S.R.'s and the Mensheviks? After all, did not Lenin's views evoke sharp antagonism among the Bolsheviks themselves?

### An Apparent Contradiction

On the one hand, Lenin demanded a complete break not only with bourgeois liberalism but also with every variety of defensism. Inside his own Party he organized a struggle against these "old Bolsheviks, who," as Lenin said, "had already, more than once played a melancholy role in the history of our Party, and who are now thoughtlessly repeating a formula *learned by heart* instead of *studying* the peculiarities of the new, living reality." (Lenin, *Collected Works*, First Russian edition, vol. XIV, part 1, p. 28.) From a superficial point of view Lenin was thereby weakening his own Party. And, at the same time, he declared, on the other hand, at the Soviet Congress: "It is not true that there is no party in Russia which is ready today to take upon itself the whole power: there is such a party. Our Party."

Isn't there, after all, a monumental contradiction between the position of a "propaganda circle" which differentiates itself from everybody else, and this public claim to assume power over this entire vast country, so shaken to its foundations? And so the Soviet Congress did not understand in the least what this strange man wanted, nor what he hoped for, this ice-cold fanatic, writing little articles for a little newspaper. And there was laughter — when at the Soviet Congress, Lenin declared with beautiful simplicity, which was taken for simplemindedness by authentic simpletons: "Our Party is ready to assume power, the whole power." "You may laugh all you want to," said Lenin. He knew that he who laughs last, laughs best. Lenin loved this French saying, because he was firmly determined to have the last laugh. And he went on calmly to prove that it was necessary, as a beginning, to clap in jail 50 to 100 of the biggest millionaires and to proclaim to the people that we regard all capitalists as bandits and that Tereschenko was no better than Miliukov, only a bit more foolish. Terrible, astounding, deadly-simple ideas! And this representative of a small section of the Soviet Congress, a tiny minority which, from time to time applauded him discreetly, told the whole Congress: "Are you afraid of assuming power? Not we. We are ready to take it." In answer there naturally came — laughter. Laughter which at that moment was almost condescending, but somewhat troubled, just the same.

\* N. N. Sukhanov in his history of the Russian Revolution erects a special political line, allegedly mine, as against Lenin's line. But Sukhanov happens to be a notorious "erector."—L.T.

### "Put More of a Squeeze on the Bourgeoisie"

And for his second speech Lenin selected the dreadfully simple words from some peasant's letter to the effect that it is necessary to put more of a squeeze on the bourgeoisie so as to make it burst at all the seams; then the war would come to an end. But that if we did not put such strong pressure on the bourgeoisie, everything would go to pot. And this simple, naive quotation — is this the whole program? How can this fail to puzzle? And again there comes a trickle of laughter, condescending and troubled. And, in fact, these words "put more of a squeeze on the bourgeoisie" do not carry much weight, taken abstractly as the program of a propaganda group. However, the puzzled audience failed to understand that Lenin had faultlessly overheard the growing squeeze of history upon the bourgeoisie and knew that as a consequence of this squeeze the bourgeoisie would inescapably "burst in all its seams."

It was not without reason that Lenin had explained to Citizen Maklakov (a Russian liberal) in May that "the 'country' of workers, peasant-poor, and poorest peasants is a thousand times farther to the Left than the Chernovs and Tseretellis" and "a hundred times farther to the Left than our own Party." Therein is the fountain-source of Lenin's tactics. Through the newly-fresh, but already quite turgid, democratic pellicle, he had deeply probed this "country of workers, peasant-poor, and poorest peasants." And it showed itself ready to carry out the greatest of revolutions. But the country was not yet able to express this, its readiness in political terms. Those parties which continued to speak in the name of workers and peasants, were deceiving them. Our Party was as yet not known at all to millions of workers and peasants; they had not yet discovered it as the articulator of all their aspirations, and at the same time our Party did not as yet understand its own potential dynamism and was in consequence a "hundred times" to the Right of the workers and peasants. It was necessary to level off the one with the other.

It was necessary for the many-millioned masses to discover the Party, and for the Party to discover the many-millioned masses. It was necessary not to rush too far ahead, but also urgent not to lag behind. It was necessary to keep on explaining patiently and persistently. What had to be explained were very simple things: "Down With the Ten Capitalist Ministers!" The Mensheviks refuse? So be it. Down with the Mensheviks! They laugh? There is a season for everything. . . He laughs best who laughs last.

### Sverdlov and His Role

I recall proposing a motion to the effect that the Soviet Congress place first on its agenda the question of the offensive then being prepared at the front against the Germans. Lenin approved of this idea, but evidently wanted to discuss it first with other members of the Central Committee. To the first session of the Soviet Congress, Comrade Kamenev brought a draft Bolshevik declaration on this offensive, hastily sketched by Lenin. I do not know if this document has been preserved. The text — I no longer recall the reasons for it — proved unsuited for the Congress, so far as both the Bolshevik and Internationalist

deputations, were concerned. Among those who objected to the text was also Posern, whom we had chosen to bring the matter up on the floor. I hastily drafted another text which was used. The organizational side of presenting this declaration was, if I am not mistaken, in the hands of Sverdlov, whom I met for the first time during this Soviet Congress. He was chairman of the Bolshevik Soviet fraction.

Although short and slight of build, which gave the impression of poor health, Sverdlov's figure was notable, emanating quiet strength. He presided quietly and smoothly, without any noise or backfire, just like a perfectly functioning motor. The secret was not, naturally, in the art of presiding but in this, that Sverdlov was thoroughly acquainted with the composition of the gathering and knew exactly what he wanted. Every session was preceded by his conferring with individual delegates, by interrogations, here and there by admonitions. Even before a session convened, Sverdlov had a general idea of the lines it would follow. But even without preliminary conferences, he knew better than anybody else just what the attitude of this or that worker would be toward the issue under discussion. The number of comrades of whose political horizon he had a clear conception was very large considering the size of our Party at the time. He was a born organizer and arranger. Every political question presented itself to him first of all in its specific organizational form, as a question of reciprocal relations between individuals and groupings inside our Party; and of reciprocal relations between the Party as a whole and the masses. Into algebraic formulas he instantly and almost automatically introduced arithmetical numbers. So far as revolutionary action was concerned, he thereby furnished a most important verification of political formulas.

### Lenin's Evaluation of Opponents

Following the cancellation of the June 10 demonstration, when the atmosphere of the First Soviet Congress became white-hot, with Tseretelli threatening to disarm the Petersburg workers, I along with Comrade Kamenev went to *Pravda's* editorial offices; and there after a brief exchange of views, I drafted at Lenin's suggestion an address of the Bolshevik Central Committee to the Executive Committee of the Soviet Congress.

At this meeting Lenin made a few remarks concerning Tseretelli, while commenting upon Tseretelli's speech (on June 11): "He was once a revolutionist; how many years he spent in prison! And now this complete renunciation of his own past." There was nothing political in these words; they were spoken not for political effect, but came simply as the product of a fleeting reflection upon the sad fate of a former prominent revolutionist. Lenin's voice was tinged with regret, with umbrage, but he spoke laconically and dryly, for nothing was so repugnant to him as the slightest hint of sentimentality and psychological slobbering.

On the 4th or 5th of July, as I recall, I met Lenin (along with Zinoviev?) in the Tauride Palace. Our offensive had been beaten back. Among the ruling circles malignant rancor against the Bolsheviks had reached its peak. "Now

they will shoot us down," said Lenin. "It is the most advantageous moment for them." His basic thought was to sound retreat and go underground to the extent that this might prove necessary. It was one of the abrupt turns of Lenin's strategy, based as always on a swift appraisal of the situation. Later, in the days of the Third Congress of the Communist International, Vladimir Ilyich happened to say: "In July we did many foolish things." He was referring here to the premature military action, to the over-aggressive forms of the July demonstration, neither of which corresponded at the time to our forces on the national scale. All the more remarkable was the sober resoluteness with which on July 4-5 he weighed the situation not only from the side of the revolution but also that of the counter-revolution, and came to the conclusion that "for them" it was just the time to shoot us down. Fortunately, our enemies still lacked both such consistency and resolution. They confined themselves to the chemical concoctions of Pereversev (the then Minister of Justice). It is quite likely, though, that had they succeeded in the first days following the July demonstration to lay their hands on Lenin, they, that is, their officer clique, would have treated Lenin exactly as less than two years later, the German officers dealt with Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg.

### Facing Savage Attacks of Reaction

There was no definitive decision made at the foregoing meeting to hide or to go underground. Kornilovism was gathering momentum gradually. Personally, I put in public appearances for two or three days and spoke at some Party and organizational conferences on the topic: *What to do?* The savage attack upon the Bolsheviks seemed insurmountable. The Mensheviks labored might and main to extract maximum profit from a situation that had been created not without their own personal intervention.

Once I had to speak, I recall, in the library of the Tauride Palace, at some meeting of trade union representatives. There were altogether a score or so present, that is, the top union leadership. The Mensheviks dominated. I argued for the necessity of the trade unions to protest against the charge that the Bolsheviks were in any way tied up with German militarism. My recollections of this meeting are hazy, but I do remember quite exactly two or three joyfully malignant faces, verily pleading that their ears be boxed. . .

The reign of terror meanwhile intensified: Arrests went on. A few days were spent by me, in hiding, at Comrade Larin's home. Then I began going out again, made my appearance at the Tauride Palace and was shortly imprisoned. My release came already in the days of the Kornilov monstrosity and of the incipient Bolshevik flood-tide. By this time we had succeeded in consummating the entry of the pro-unity (Inter-District) tendency into the Bolshevik Party. Sverdlov suggested that I meet with Lenin who was then still in hiding. I no longer recall who guided me to the hide-out in a worker's flat (was it not Rakhia perhaps?) where I met Vladimir Ilyich. Also present was Kalinin, whom V. I. (Lenin) kept questioning in my presence concerning the mood of the workers; whether they were

ready for a fight, whether they would go to the end, whether it was possible to take power, and so on.

### Lenin's Mood at the Turn of the Tide

What was Lenin's frame of mind at the time? If one were to characterize it in a couple words, one would have to say, that it was a mood of restrained impatience and deep anxiety. He saw clearly that the moment was nearing when everything would have to be poised on a razor's edge and at the same time it seemed to him, and not without good reason, that among the top Party circles all the necessary conclusions were not being drawn. The conduct of the Central Committee he regarded as too passive and dilatory. Lenin did not consider it possible to return openly to work, because he justifiably feared that his arrest would consolidate and even strengthen the dilatory mood among the Party chiefs, and this would unavoidably lead to letting slip of an exceptional revolutionary situation. . . This was the reason why Lenin's vigilance in these days and weeks reached its climax, as did his pouncing upon every sign of "Fabian strategy," every intimation of dilatoriness and indecision. He demanded an immediate start toward correctly organized conspiratorial work: Let us catch the enemy by surprise and wrest the power — and then we shall see. This, however, provides a subject for a more detailed and independent study.

The future biographer of Lenin will have to treat with and pay the utmost attention to the very fact of Lenin's return to Russia, and his coming in touch with the mass of the people. Except for a brief interlude in 1905, Lenin had spent more than a decade and a half in foreign exile. All this while, his sense of reality, his sensitivity to the living, toiling human being did not become enfeebled, but had, on the contrary, grown stronger owing to the activity of his theoretical thought and his creative imagination. From sporadic, chance meetings and observations he caught on the wing and recreated the likeness of the whole. Nonetheless he had lived an exile's life during that period of his life when he completely matured for his coming historical role. He arrived in Petersburg with fully finished revolutionary generalizations, in which was summed up his entire life's socio-theoretical and practical experience.

Hardly did he set foot on Russian soil, than he issued the slogan of the socialist revolution. But this marked only the beginning of the verification, by the living experience of the awakened toiling masses of Russia, of everything that Lenin had accumulated, thought out to the end, and made his own. Lenin's formulas withstood the test. More than this, only here in Russia, in Petersburg, did these formulas become filled with day-to-day, invincible concreteness and thereby with insuperable power. It was now no longer necessary to recreate a panoramic likeness of the whole by way of reconstructing it from separate, more or less accidental specimens. The whole made itself known, speaking with all the tongues of the revolution. And here Lenin showed, and perhaps felt fully for the first time himself, to what measure he possessed the ability to hear the still chaotic voice of the awakening masses. With what profound organic contempt did he watch the mouse-play

of the leading parties of the February revolution, these waves of "mighty" public opinion which ricocheted from one newspaper to the next; with the same contempt he watched and noted the myopia, the narcissism, the noisy loquacity, in brief — Official, February Russia.

### Attuned to the Rumbling of Revolution

Behind this scene, set with democratic decorations, he heard the rumbling of events of an entirely different order. Whenever skeptics used to call his attention to all the great difficulties in the way, to the mobilization of bourgeois public opinion, the existence of the elemental petty-bourgeois mass, he would set his jaws, and his prominent cheekbones would jut out more angularly than ever. This was a sign that he was holding himself back from telling these skeptics, clearly and pointedly, what he really thought of them. He saw and understood the obstacles no less than others did, but he apprehended, lucidly, tangibly, nay, physically those titanic forces accumulated by history that were now ripping into the open in order to cast aside all the obstacles. He saw, he heard and apprehended, before all the Russian worker, whose class had grown in numbers, who had not yet forgotten the experience of 1905, who had behind him the school of war, who had passed through its illusions as well as through the tinsel and lie of defensism, and who was ready now for the greatest of sacrifices, and for exertions never seen before.

Lenin physically felt the soldier, stunned by three years of hellish slaughter — meaningless, aimless — and now, awakened by the thunder of the revolution, preparing to pay back for all these meaningless sacrifices, all those humiliations and cuffs on the ear by way of an explosion of raging hate that spares nothing. Lenin heard the *mouzbik*, who still dragged the century-old chains of serfdom, and who now thanks to the upheaval caused by the war, sensed for the first time the possibility of settling accounts, terribly, ruthlessly, with the oppressors, the slaveholders, the gentry, the nobility. The *Mouzbik* was still helplessly milling around hesitating to choose between Chernov's bunk-ology and his own "measures." i.e., the great agrarian mutiny. The soldier still kept shifting from one foot to the other, seeking for pathways in between patriotism and frantic desertion. The workers still listened, but already mistrustfully and semi-hostilely, to the last tirades of Tseretelli. Already the steam gurgled impatiently in the boilers of Kronstadt warships.

The sailor, combining in his person the razor-edged hate of the workers and the muffled bear-like wrath of the *mouzbik*; the sailor, seared by the flames of the horrible slaughter, was already dumping overboard all those who in his eyes personified the various species of feudalistic, bureaucratic and military oppression. The February revolution was about to jump the track and roll over the embankment.

The rags and patches of Czarist legality were gathered up by the Compromisist saviors, smoothed out, sewn together and converted into the thin pellicle of democratic legality. But underneath it, everything gurgled and seethed, all the wrongs of the past sought for outlets; hatred toward the cop on the beat, toward the police captain, the district

inspector, the chief of police, the police commissioner, the registrar, the manufacturer, the usurer, the landowner, the parasite, the lily-handed one, the reviler, the face-slapper — this hatred prepared a revolutionary eruption, greatest on record.

It was this that Lenin heard and saw; it was this that he felt physically with invincible clarity, with absolute conviction, when, after a long absence, he came in touch with this land seized by paroxysms of the revolution.

### Grime-Covered Workers in Ballerina's Palace

"You little fools, you petty braggarts, you dolts, you think that history is made in drawing rooms where upstart democrats rub elbows with titled liberals; where yesterday's nonentities from among provincial lawyers hastily learn the art of bowing and kissing little hands of illustrious ladies? You little fools! You little braggarts! You dolts! History is being made in the trenches where, intoxicated by the nightmarish fumes of war, the soldier plants his bayonet in an officer's belly and then rides the freight-train tops, deserting to his native village, there to let the red cock loose over the manor house. Does this barbarism offend your souls? Don't burn yourselves out with anger. History has this to say to you: You are welcome to all I have. . . These are merely the end-products of everything that had gone before. You seriously imagine that history is made in your Contact Commissions? Nonsense, infant prattle. Delusions! Cretinism! History, for your information, has this time chosen as its trial laboratory the palace of Kshesinskaia, the dancer, former mistress of a former Czar. And from here, from this structure-symbol of Old Russia, history is preparing to liquidate your entire Petersburgish-Czaristic, bureaucratonoble, landlord-bourgeois rot and indecency. Hither, to this palace of a former Imperial ballerina, are streaming grime-covered factory delegates, greivish, pock-marked and lice-ridden foot-messengers from the trenches, and from here they spread all over the land the new, prophetic words."

The Ministers-in-Woe of the revolution met in council after council on how to restore this palace to its lawful owner. Bourgeois, S.R.'ist, Menshevist papers bared in rage their rotten teeth because Lenin, from Kshesinskaia's balcony, broadcast the slogans of the socialist revolution. But these belated efforts were to no avail. They added neither to Lenin's hate of Old Russia, nor to his will to settle accounts with it. The first as well as the second had already approached its limit. On Kshesinskaia's balcony, stood the same Lenin who two months later was to hide in a haystack, and who, within a few weeks, was to assume the post of Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars.

### Party Moods and the Masses

Seeing all this, Lenin also saw that inside the Party itself there existed a conservative resistance — at first not so much political as psychological in character — to that great leap which had to be made. Lenin watched with anxiety the widening lack of correspondence between the

moods of a section of Party chiefs and the millions of workers. He was not satisfied for a moment with the formal adoption of the armed-uprising formula by the Central Committee. He knew the difficulties of transition from word to deed. With all the force and resources at his command he strove to subject the Party to the pressure of the masses and the Party's Central Committee to the pressure of its rank and file. He summoned individual comrades to his place of refuge, gathered reports, checked them, arranged for cross-interrogations, and in every conceivable way, from below, from deep inside, by circuitous paths and in every criss-cross way, he sped his slogans into the Party in order to confront the top Party circles with the need to act and go the limit.

### Unbounded Faith in Masses

To form a correct estimate of Lenin's conduct in this period, it is essential to establish one thing, namely: that he had unbounded faith in the desire and ability of the masses to accomplish the revolution; but he did not have the same confidence in regard to the Party staff. And at the same time Lenin understood with a clarity beyond all clarity that there was not a minute to lose. A revolutionary situation cannot be arbitrarily preserved, like a vegetable, until the moment when the Party is ready to make use of it. We have seen a similar experience recently in Germany. Not so long ago we had to listen to a view that if we had not taken power in October, we would have done so two or three months later. A gross delusion! Had we not taken power in October, we would not have taken it at all. Our strength prior to October lay in the uninterrupted flow of the masses to us, the influx of those who believed that this Party would do what the rest had failed to do. If the masses had perceived any vacillation on our part at this moment, any delay, any discrepancy between our word and our deed, then in the course of the next two or three months, the masses would have ebbed away from us, just as they previously did from the S.R.'s and the Mensheviks. The bourgeoisie would have gained a breathing spell and would have used it to conclude a peace. The relation of forces could have changed drastically, and the proletarian overturn would have been postponed to an indefinite future. It was just this that Lenin understood, apprehended and felt. From this sprang his alarm, his mistrust and his fierce pressure which proved to be the salvation of the revolution.

### Inner-Party Disagreements Flare

The inner-party disagreements which flared stormily in the October days, had already manifested themselves in a preliminary way during several prior stages of the revolution. The first collision, the most principled one but still calmly theoretical in tone, arose immediately upon Lenin's arrival. It was the conflict over his (April 4) theses. The second muffled clash occurred in connection with the armed demonstration of April 20. The third — around the projected armed demonstration of June 10: The "moderates" held that Lenin wanted to foist an armed demonstration upon them with a view toward an uprising.

The next and much sharper conflict flared up in connection with the July days. The differences broke into the press. A further stage in the development of this internal struggle was reached on the question of the Pre-Parliament. This time in the Party's parliamentary fraction two groupings collided breast to breast. Were any minutes taken of this session? Were these minutes preserved? I do not know. But these debates are unquestionably of extraordinary interest. Two tendencies were delineated quite clearly: the one, in favor of taking power; the other, in favor of playing an oppositional role in the Constituent Assembly. The partisans of boycotting the Pre-Parliament were in the minority, but it was a minority almost as large as the majority. To these debates in the fraction and the decision adopted by it (in favor of participating in the Pre-Parliament) Lenin, from his hide-out, reacted swiftly by way of a letter to the Central Committee. This letter, in which Lenin declared himself, in more than vigorous terms, in solidarity with the boycotters of the "Buligynite Duma" of Kerensky-Tseretelli, I have been unable to locate in the second part of Volume XIV of Lenin's *Collected Works*. (The Buligyn Duma was convened by the Czar in 1905 in order to try to head off the then unfolding revolution.) Has this extremely valuable document been preserved?

### Probings and Reconnoiterings

The differences reached their highest tension immediately before the October stage, when under discussion was the final adoption of the course toward the uprising and the setting of a date for it. And finally, even after the October 25 overturn, the differences grew sharp in the extreme over the question of a government in coalition with the other socialist parties.

It would be interesting in the maximum degree to reconstruct, down to the last detail, Lenin's role on the eve of April 20, on the eve of June 10, and of the July days. "We did many foolish things in July," Lenin used to say later in private conversations and, as I recall, he repeated it at a conference with the German delegation on the March events in Germany in 1921. Of what did these "foolish things" consist? Of vigorous, or rather over-vigorous probings; of active, or rather much too active reconnoiterings. Without such reconnoiterings, from time to time, we could have fallen behind the masses. But on the other hand, as everybody knows, an active reconnoitering action may sometimes pass involuntarily into a general battle. This was almost the case in July. But the signal for retreat was given in plenty of time. And in those days the enemy lacked the courage to force matters to a showdown. And it was by no means accidental that this courage was lacking. Kerenskyism is half-and-half by its very nature; and this cowardly Kerenskyism tended to paralyze Kornilovism all the more, the more Kerenskyism itself stood in fear of Kornilovism.

April 1924.



## Important Internal Developments in the USWA

# What the Steel Convention Revealed

By **HARRY FRANKEL**

The Special Convention of the United Steelworkers of America, held January 3rd and 4th at Atlantic City, was the first opportunity for the rank and file of that union to make an important decision affecting the national strategy of the union. For the first time in the union's history, the ranks were called in and told: Here are the alternatives. We strike now, or we postpone our strike and go to the Wage Stabilization Board with our case.

Originally, the convention call was issued in conjunction with a strike call for January 1. However, even after the strike was postponed at Truman's request the need for the convention remained. Philip Murray was compelled to call the Special Convention in order to give the ranks a chance to exert maximum pressure on the steel companies during the period of negotiations. If Murray were to accept the terms of the steel magnates and the war mobilization officials, the resulting contract would be absolutely disgraceful, even by present generally accepted standards in the union movement. It is impossible for Murray, head of the CIO, to sign such a contract. Faced with a blank wall, both in Pittsburgh and in Washington, he found the pressure of the ranks indispensable. Therefore, the Special Convention, with all stops pulled insofar as militant speeches are concerned. Therefore the appeal to the ranks that characterized the Special Convention.

### **Departure from Traditional Procedure**

As it turned out, the decision of the convention was a purely formal one. That is, the decision made by Murray to postpone a strike was simply approved by the convention without dispute. Nevertheless, this first departure from traditional procedure, despite the fact that it came as a "gift" from the union bureaucracy, is a step along the road to a democratic steel union. This particular decision was not opposed by the ranks because there was hardly any sentiment for an immediate strike. However, decision-making is a heady liquor: it is habit forming. There is every indication that the steel workers will profit by this experience, and seek to arrogate to themselves more and more in the future, the power to make decisions. This habit will become especially marked when the ranks come into conflict with the policies of the top bureaucracy.

The internal development of the steel union, which we want to examine in this article, has been peculiar and unlike that of most of the other industrial unions of the CIO. These peculiarities arise both from the special circum-

stances of the industry and of the way in which the union was organized.

### **Key Position of Steel**

Steel is the backbone of American industry. This is true in a twofold sense; both physically and socially. Steel is the structural material upon which all of industry is draped. The steel industry is also the basic concentration of American capital. Thus the loss of any significant portion of annual steel output, particularly under present conditions of war-drive and steel shortage, throws the whole of industry into a crisis. Indeed, it is not too much to say that a prolonged steel strike in the present period could produce a great nationwide social crisis. Even the wartime coal crises, when the pits were strikebound by the militant miners, could not produce so severe a convulsion as would be caused by a similar steel shutdown. As a matter of fact, the seriousness of the mine strikes lay primarily in the fact that after several weeks, they began to cut into steel production by halting the flow of coking coal to the nation's blast furnaces.

The only industry that rivals the key position held by steel is the railroad industry. Here, however, another important characteristic of the steel union enters. The steel union is an industrial union; the railroad workers are scattered in segmented craft units. Moreover, the steel workers enjoy the added power of industry-wide bargaining. Roughly three-quarters of the steelworkers are covered by contracts that expire at the same time. These industry-wide negotiations, taken together with the central position of steel in the economy, carry latent within them the possibility of an explosive social crisis each time the union and corporations meet around the polished table to open contract talks.

It is this potentiality of social crisis, inherent in all conflicts in the steel industry, which hangs over the heads of the negotiating parties. It is this potentiality of crisis which supplies the element of extreme tension to steel negotiations.

### **Leaders Fear Power of Ranks**

The fact that a steel shutdown would place a strangler's noose around the neck of all American industry would appear at first glance to be a great asset in the hands of the union negotiators. Actually, however, because of the defend-capitalism-first line of the heads of the United

Steelworkers of America, that very asset is turned into a liability by the leaders of the union. They fear the power that is in their hands. They enter each negotiation session in deathly terror lest the arrogant steel barons challenge them to shut the industry down in support of the union's demands. Philip Murray would undoubtedly enter into negotiations with the industry with a much lighter heart were he dealing with the paper box or toy manufacturers of the U.S., and had at his back only a scattering of workers in secondary industry. The 1,100,000 steel workers behind him frighten Murray more than anything else connected with the conflicts in steel which he is called upon to guide.

That is why the steel union leaders have set exceptional curbs upon the ranks of the steel workers in the form of tight bureaucratic control over the union membership. The steel workers have shown time and again that, while they are no more anxious than any other workers to lose badly-needed pay through strikes, they have no Murray-like inhibitions about the use of the strike weapon when they see no other way to win important demands. They are not troubled by any fears of a social crisis. They correctly leave such worries to the industrial and financial magnates who have usurped the power of ruling this country.

### **Birth of the Union**

It must be recalled that peculiar circumstances attended the birth of this union. Steel mills, grouped in small towns dominated by the coal and steel oligarchy, were part of an almost feudal barony up to 1936-41. After the defeat of the great Homestead strike in 1892, organization was limited to top layers of the most skilled men, and was never strong even among them. When, in 1919, the Herculean effort of the steel workers to organize themselves was defeated, primarily through the weaknesses of the craft union divisions imposed upon the workers by AFL bureaucrats, steel unionism fell to a low point. Further, the large scale importation of Negroes from the South into the steel centers and their employment as scabs introduced a division in the ranks of the workers that was to hinder new organization efforts.

In late May and early June of 1937, the CIO drive in the steel mills came to a climax in the Little Steel strikes. All the principal basic steel mills of the nation, with the exception of the plants of the U.S. Steel Corporation, "Big Steel," were closed down tight. But, outside of Jones and Laughlin, these strikes were also defeated by a combination of union inexperience, faulty leadership, and chicanery plus force employed by the "New Deal" governmental apparatus.

However, by this time, the chief union contract of the industry had already been signed, in the form of a "sweetheart" agreement between the U.S. Steel Corp. and the Steel Workers Organizing Committee. This contract was signed in March 1937, and in the years following, similar agreements were signed in the other important steel plants. The only big strikes that occurred were in Bethlehem Steel, during the early part of 1941. In sum, it can be said that while most of the steel strikes over a 50 year

period were defeated, the industry as a whole succumbed to the general power of the CIO drive of the late Thirties rather than to the direct offensive of the steel workers.

### **What Made Murray Dominant?**

In these circumstances, the steel union and its gains took on the appearance of a gift from the top leadership to the ranks. This was heightened by the fact that the powerful United Mine Workers, by pouring in money and experienced personnel fresh from the great unionizing drive in the mine-fields, gave an imposing appearance of strength to the top directors of the Steel Workers Organizing Committee.

Philip Murray and the other UMW men in the steel setup were not in the least averse to taking credit for this "gift" and used every opportunity to claim the credit, not only for the union, but also for the great gains which the steel workers received from unionization. And the gains were exceptionally great in steel. The steel workers had been among the most bitterly oppressed in the nation. Fantastically brutal conditions of labor and miserably low wages had ruled in the steel mills. Moreover, the steel workers had lived all their days under the iron heel of a vicious dictatorship. The company towns of western Pennsylvania, eastern Ohio and the Chicago district were owned lock, stock and barrel by the steel and coal lords, and in Pennsylvania, the mounted Coal and Iron Police supplemented the terror of local authorities with the added terror of private capitalist armies. When this dictatorship was at last smashed, the result was a minor social and political revolution. Much of the thanks for these gains went to the top leaders and became a source of great prestige which is enjoyed by Philip Murray to this very day. This prestige is large in proportion to the vast improvements in conditions in the steel areas, and should not be underestimated.

### **Stifled Development of Militants**

Because of this combination of factors, the bureaucracy of the United Mine Workers was able to move into steel, and to saddle the new union with a tightly bureaucratic apparatus from the very beginning. Although the steel union was organized in June, 1936, it existed in the form of the Steel Workers Organizing Committee until May, 1942. Thus the union didn't even have a constitution for the first six years. Top officers, directors of the districts into which the union is divided, and the staff representatives of the union were all appointed from the top, and formed themselves into a self-perpetuating machine. This machine has a tight clique character; far more so than in most other CIO unions, where the ranks have been able to intervene, stir things up, and break up top cliques. The steel union bureaucrats stick close together. The District Directors today remain virtually the same as those appointed during the SWOC days, with minor changes made from the top. The union staff of International representatives, many of whom have secured their jobs through friendship or "pull" rather than by struggle on behalf of the ranks, get protection from the top in holding on to those jobs. An official is rarely fired from the staff in the

steel union. If he is too scandalously incompetent, if the stink get too bad, he may be transferred to another district.

The general result of this top bureaucratic domination has been a serious stifling of local and rank and file education, training and initiative. Local leaders have been slow in developing, and, with some exceptions, are not of the highest caliber. The staff is probably less generally competent in the important steel union than in most other CIO unions, despite the poor general quality throughout the whole trade union movement. Full time local officials, paid by the local unions are rare, although many large locals with good dues incomes exist in the steel union. Indications have been that the International office frowns upon the practice of putting local union officials on full time. Local union newspapers are also a rarity, and the International paper, *Steel Labor*, does not even meet the mediocre standards set by most papers of the U.S. trade union movement.

The domination by a strong top bureaucracy and the general conditions of backwardness in the union have tended to stifle the political development of the ranks. Left-wing political tendencies, experience has shown, are indispensable for the education of the ranks, for the stimulation of a lively internal life, and for the general forward movement of unions. The Communist Party at one time had a very strong position in the steel union. However, because of the fact that this position was not securely based among the ranks but was dependent on appointed offices, and because of the role played by these Communist Party forces in the betrayal of the Little Steel strikes into the hands of the New Deal government, it was quite easy for Murray to root out the C.P. many years ago, and since that time neither the C.P. nor any other radical tendency has had any widespread influence in the union.

### Effect of War and Postwar Strikes

The foregoing general picture of the steel union would be most accurate as a portrayal of the union of six or eight years ago. The present picture, while not very greatly altered, shows some signs of change. The increasing experience of the ranks and of local leaders in class battles with the steel industry underlies this change.

The second world war had an effect upon the steel union similar to that which it had upon most other unions. The progress of the union in terms of improved conditions and better pay was temporarily slowed, but the union grew tremendously in size (600,000 members in 1942, 1,100,000 today) and in stored-up, potential power. In 1946, this power exploded in one great steel strike, and in 1949 in a second. These strikes were fully supported by the ranks. The mills were shut down tight, every company attempt at strikebreaking was smashed, and the strikes ended in victories: in both cases a significant portion of union demands were won.

These strikes were not comparable to such upsurges as the auto strikes that compelled union recognition between 1936 and 1941, or to similar great organizing struggles. They did not require a maximum of rank and file initiative or organization. They began with a signal from the

top, they were completely solid, and all that was required of most local bodies of men was to stay out, with the prospects of victory good all the time. Never at any time was the existence of the union itself directly endangered.

However, despite the semi-automatic character of the two great strikes, they necessarily worked certain changes throughout the ranks. The workers gained more confidence in the union, and pride in its great power. Smallscale organizational experience in strike problems, such as picket organization, food supply, issuance of printed material and the calling of strike mass-meetings accumulated throughout the ranks. Officials and local leaders were tested in struggle, and the habit of judgment of their capacities was formed.

### Experience in "Guerilla Warfare"

Even more important than these two industry-wide strikes, so far as the education of the ranks is concerned, is the continual guerilla warfare at the plant and district level. Plant policies relating to seniority, local premium-payment plans, hiring and firing, job duties, crew sizes and speedup, and all the innumerable other matters that go to make up working conditions have never settled down into any set grooves in the steel industry. Neither the union nor the company has as yet emerged predominant in this respect. Thus a large section of the local unions of the United Steelworkers of America has been involved in a series of bitter struggles with the companies over these conditions. The fights have become particularly intense during the past two years, due to an increasing company offensive spearheaded by the U.S. Steel Corporation. Indeed, although it is hard to get statistics on such a matter, it seems that there have been far more local strikes, stoppages, slowdowns and even lockouts in the steel industry over the period of the past year or two than in any other industry.

Moreover, the top officials of the union have not put clamps on the membership in the recent period. Every indication is that, unlike the bureaucrats of the United Auto Workers and many other unions, they are not carrying on a terror campaign against their own ranks, punishing or permitting companies to punish "wildcat" strike leaders, etc. From all appearances, top officials are not getting in the way of local struggles, and, to a certain degree, are even protecting and defending militants in the mills. This is undoubtedly due to the fact that the bureaucracy finds itself in need of a counter-balance to the increasing arrogance of the corporations, an arrogance which often appears to be on the verge of challenging the very existence of the union. Here the present contrast between a Reuther and a Murray becomes clear. Reuther has no need of developing and encouraging the militancy and initiative of the ranks. Quite the contrary, because of the history and traditions of the auto workers' union, there is so much of it that it threatens to engulf him; he must try to stifle and restrict it. Reuther need never fear an insufficient reaction on the part of the ranks of the union in case of any attempt to destroy it. Murray, on the other hand, is at times troubled by the backwardness of the steel union, of which he himself is one of the chief causes.

Thus he has been, for the last few years, attempting to encourage the development of a militancy, which he wants to be able to turn on and off like a water tap, to back him up in negotiations. This contradictory process makes the hide-bound conservative leader of a backward union appear more militant than the Social-Democratic leader of the most dynamic union in the country.

### Early Resistance to Bureaucracy

Results of this process of education-by-struggle have been seen within the union. Already in 1942, a series of flareups occurred at the founding convention. Despite tight machine control, there were many among the 1700 delegates to that convention who fought the machine on such issues as the surrender of overtime pay for Saturdays and Sundays (the union gave up this demand during the war at the "request" of President Roosevelt, and has not won it yet; it is one of the 22 demands in the present negotiations), on the appointment of International representatives, and on the portion of the dues money going to the Pittsburgh headquarters office. At this convention, the delegates got a little taste of Murray methods in dealing with an opposition. The dues question brought half the convention to its feet clamoring for the floor. Murray refused to allow any debate, stepping to the mike and saying: "Now I'm going to do a little blitzkrieg on my own." He spoke for a solid half-hour, hammering the opposition, but despite the harangue and the machine-control, 300 of the 1700 delegates stood up in opposition to the Murray proposal.

The floor protest against a constitutional provision for continuing the appointment of organizers was almost as big. Murray, in speaking for the provision, said:

"The union is only six years old. We cannot run the gamut of democratic procedure to the point of license. You are only taking the first step in the direction of a democratic setup. Good as your intentions are, you should not assume the hazard of placing the union in jeopardy. And that's what you would do if you threw this convention into confusion, and tried to elect officers, etc."

Murray appealed to the delegates, in other words, to be patient. However, after ten years, the union now being sixteen years old, staff organizers are still appointed, and the period of time between election of top international officials has been doubled. The promised "democracy" has failed to materialize, and will never materialize so long as the ranks wait for Murray to give it to them.

### Incipient Revolt of 1946

In May 1944, at the second Constitutional Convention, another protest flashed in the meeting hall. A stormy 1½ hour outburst against the no-strike pledge took place. For the first time, an attempt by Murray to close debate was overridden, and the delegates asserted their right to continue talking. About a quarter of the convention voted against the continuance of the no-strike pledge.

As could be expected, the biggest show of rank and file independence came at the May 1946 convention immediately following the victorious steel strike of earlier that year. The ranks, flushed with triumph, came to the con-

vention feeling their oats and ready to take on Murray if he stepped on their toes. Protests were made against the policy of the International in arrogating to itself the sole right to pass on contracts. Other delegates demanded that the International pay part of the cost of arbitration procedure. The biggest clash came on the issue of convention representation. The Murray proposal to reduce representation from one delegate for each 100 members to one delegate for each 500 members met with bitter and open rebellion. For the first time, the delegates to a steel convention succeeded in defeating an International-sponsored proposal. At that time, many saw in this the "coming-of-age" of the steel union, and felt that a powerful left-wing opposition to Murray was on the order of the day.

This feeling was heightened by the fact that, at the International elections the following year, held as usual by referendum, a number of District Directors faced opposition candidates sponsored by rank and file groupings. In one case, District 26 (Youngstown and environs), the incumbent director was actually defeated by such a grouping.

### Effect of New War Preparations

However, this process of rank-and-file revolt was halted by the onset of the preparations for World War III. The top leadership of the CIO was just beginning its reactionary offensive against the Communist Party in the unions, and along with the C.P. against radicals and militants who showed any sign of independence from the machine. The growing self-assertion of the ranks of the steel union fell victim temporarily to this drive. Thus at the May 1948 convention the lowest point in the union's history was reached, insofar as bureaucratic domination is concerned. The bureaucrats indulged themselves in an orgy of red-baiting that would have done credit to a Senator Joseph McCarthy. A constitutional provision banning Communist Party members from any union office was passed.

However, the C.P. was not the sole target at this convention. This was shown by the fact that the proposal which had been defeated at the previous convention, reducing convention delegations to one for each 500 members, was jammed through at this convention. In addition, dues were raised from \$1.50 a month to \$2.00, the term of office of International and District officers was increased from 2 years to 4, and the officers' salaries were raised.

It was at this low point in the union's history that Philip Murray made his famous discovery; to wit: "Collective bargaining has become less and less a contest and more and more a collaboration." One national steel strike and the threat of another since that time may have disabused him of that notion. If Murray's dream could have come true, if his fantasy of a "collaboration" in the place of a "contest" had any reality, he might well have been able to continue the trend of 1948 and grind his own union members under the iron heel of absolutism within the union.

### Murray's Dilemma

Unfortunately for Philip Murray and all bureaucrats, unions are not built that way. Organized for struggle against a vicious and implacable enemy, they have the quality of restoring within themselves the conditions for struggle regardless of the intentions of leaders. Often, they compel leaders to choose a course of action the very opposite of that which they would like. That is what has been happening in the steel union since 1948.

The Special Convention of the union, held at the start of this year, was a graphic instance of this process. Murray was there compelled, against his whole trend and inclination, to call upon the ranks for help, to denounce the steel barons in violent terms, and to give encouragement to precisely that portion of the ranks which is most likely in the future to come into conflict with him and his machine. Moreover, in sharp contrast with the last two regular conventions of the union, the machine men who parrot Murray were pushed into the background. Discussion from the floor was not limited, but encouraged. As a matter of fact, the day-and-a-half of this Special Convention probably saw more discussion than two or three of the five-day regular conventions combined.

The coming May convention of the union may see more of the same. Murray, in a sudden and unexplained outburst at the close of the special convention, told the cheering delegates:

"You will have great work to perform there (at the May convention). I know and I am going to help you perform some of that work in that convention because whatever life I have got shall be dedicated to bringing this organization closer to you.

"There are going to be no little dictatorships in this union; there are going to be no connivances; there is going to be no bribery. There is going to be no money used out of the treasury of this organization to buy the friendship of anybody in this union to promote any man to any office in this organization. And you are going to help the officers of this union, when the convention comes around, to see to it that you have the kind of constitution that will permit you, the owners of this organization, to play a part in the operation of its affairs."

### Premises for Growth of a Left Wing

If Murray wanted to give the delegates food for thought, he certainly succeeded. Everyone knows that the money which Murray and his machine in all parts of the country have used out of the union treasury has not been paid out for the purpose of buying anybody's enmity. Certainly Murray demands absolute personal and policy loyalty for "his" money. Thus this blast and call for a change in policy must be connected with some elements of the present situation in which the steel union finds itself. They may be bound up with the general appeals for rank and file support which Murray has been throwing out. More likely, they stem from clique and personal fights going on at the top of the union. Such fights, long rumored, may have intensified as rival groups jockey for first place in the succession to the ill and aging Murray.

However, Murray's intentions do not count for everything. If the rank and file breaks through a bit in the course of the discussion at the May convention, it will not

be the first time that honest militants in the ranks have taken advantage of quarrels between top bureaucrats in order to make their own voices heard.

No real militant opposition to the steel union bureaucracy can be expected until there are big changes in the political thinking of the militants. So long as they have nothing to offer in place of the Murray program of supporting the war-policy of American imperialism, they are limited. A left wing, and in this the steel union is in precisely the same position as the whole union movement, can only be expected to arise on the basis of a heightened class consciousness and an independent political consciousness among the workers. This heightened consciousness waits on the American social crisis, which in turn, appears to wait on the coming war. Keeping this in mind, we can turn to certain considerations which apply primarily to the steel union.

A special handicap faced by the militants in the steel union is that there is no tradition of internal struggle. Disagreements are taboo. Murray rules the conventions with an iron hand. He gets the power to do this, firstly, because he faces an unorganized membership; secondly, because of great personal prestige; thirdly, because of the sheer physical weight of his paid machine, and fourthly, because of certain personal talents and abilities. Thus Murray does not usually entertain motions to open or close debate. He personally decides when he wants to do those things, and only very rarely, perhaps only in the one instance cited above at the '44 convention, has he been forced to yield to the ranks. Murray doesn't even say he is closing discussion. His regular procedure is to stand quietly for a moment while several dozen delegates clamor for the floor, and then intone: "Will the delegates please be seated." This is a signal to the machine-lackeys that Murray is about to speak, and they raise a flurry of applause, after which Murray proceeds to a one or two hour harangue on the question under discussion, or on any other matters that may cross his mind. This type of procedure, impossible in most CIO unions, is still typical of many local steel union meetings, with the local "boss" taking the role of Murray.

This atmosphere can be broken only by the determined opposition of organized militants, who are prepared to fight for democratic procedure until they get it.

It would be an unwarranted inference from the foregoing account that there is any big opposition to Murray shaping up at present. The process of awakening and education of local leaders and rank-and-file spokesmen is all that is going on right now. Moreover, this awakening is going on, at the moment, more under Murray's wing than in opposition to him. As we have seen, he is calling upon the union's militants for help in his attempts to compel the corporations to sign contracts that are not completely disgraceful.

But the potentialities for a left-wing in the steel union, in the coming times of crisis, are truly enormous. The striking picture presented by the steel union, and made graphic at its conventions, is that of an enormous mass of powerfully organized and militant steel workers on the one side, and Murray on the other, with very little in between. The machine has power only when the ranks are

dormant, but when the ranks move the machine counts for little. It possesses only money and brute force. It exhibits very little of the talent and maneuverability that are indispensable in diverting a movement of indignation (for example, Walter Reuther and his many fancy talkers and fancy-Dan maneuverers), and in making that movement stop at some halfway house.

Thus the situation in the steel union encourages the conclusion that when dissatisfaction with the present Murray program grows strong and crystallizes, the ranks will show great power and will face only weak barriers. They will produce great rank and file leaders, even better than those of 1936 and 1937, and will push these new leaders directly into power in the steel union.

## Forrestal: Symbol of Imperialism in Crisis

# General of the Cold War

By JOHN WILKINS

THE FORRESTAL DIARIES, edited by Walter Millis. Viking Press, New York, 1951. \$5.

James Forrestal was appointed U.S. Secretary of the Navy in 1944 and resigned as America's first Secretary of Defense in March 1949. This book contains his private notes, letters, reports and recorded conversations during those five years, ably edited by two newspapermen and carefully censored by the Department of Defense. Forrestal played a key role in forming and applying the "cold war" policy, especially in its military aspects. His diaries are extremely useful for glimpses into the inner councils where the Roosevelt and Truman administrations forged their foreign policy and for revealing insights into the mentality of the members of the Cabinet, Congress and Pentagon who now run the show in America and who are bent on mastering the world.

Forrestal himself typified the kind of men who staff the commanding posts in Washington's imperialist hierarchy today. He was a Wall Street banker, president of the leading investment house of Dillon, Read, when he was first called into government service by Roosevelt in 1940 to take the newly created job of Under-Secretary of the Navy. As many notations in his diaries indicate, Forrestal approached all problems, foreign or domestic, military or civilian, from the standpoint of the American plutocrats. Without sympathy for the working masses or any understanding of the motives of their struggles, he functioned like an accountant with an adding machine for a head, carrying forward the schemes of the U.S. ruling class. This did not prevent him from burnishing the most predatory and warlike aims with a gloss of altruism and pacifism.

### A Businessman's "Philosophy"

Forrestal was a principal promoter of that sinister cabal of military figures and big business and banking representatives which dictates national policies and directly administers the affairs of state under Truman. The main article of his social creed was to entrust the world and its salvation to the American businessman. He expounded this philosophy at a Cabinet meeting on March 7, 1947 when

Truman and his colleagues were about to launch the cold war:

"I said that it would take all of the talent and brains of the country, just as it had taken all of them in the war, and that these abilities and talents should be harnessed in a single team. By that I meant that we would have to turn to business if what we are talking about is in reality holding out the hope to people in stricken countries that they again may make a living, and the way to provide a living for them will have to be opened up by business. Government alone cannot do the job, and business cannot do it unless it has the full-out support of government both inside and outside, and by that is meant the lifting of as many restraints and time-consuming irritations as possible, so that businessmen have time to devote themselves to the real problem."

### Hostile to Labor

Naturally Forrestal was hostile to the trade unions and urged Truman to approve the Taft-Hartley Act. He was equally repelled by the British Labor Government and its nationalizations. He noted with approval the objection voiced in August 1947 by his fellow banker, W. Averell Harriman, now chairman of the North Atlantic Council, against "underwriting the stability of a government whose objectives seem to be moving farther to the left. . ."

These diaries provide several significant sidelights on the conservatism of the top labor bureaucrats on both sides of the Atlantic, and their disregard for labor's welfare. He tells of meeting in 1944 with half a dozen U.S. union leaders, including William Green and Philip Murray, on a project for enacting universal military training. "The reaction of the labor people present was sympathetic and cooperative," he commented.

Even more repulsive is his report of a conversation with Ernest Bevin after Labor's victory in July 1945, on the matter of saving the Japanese Emperor. Bevin was opposed to destroying the "Emperor concept" and Forrestal goes on to say,

"He then made a rather surprising statement — for a liberal and a labor leader: 'It might have been far better for all of us not to have destroyed the institution of the Kaiser after the last war; we might not have had this

one if we hadn't done so. It might have been far better to have guided the Germans to a constitutional monarchy, rather than leaving them without a symbol and therefore opening the psychological doors to a man like Hitler. . . "

Forrestal was primarily occupied in working out U.S. foreign policy in the postwar period. As one of the principal artisans of its military implementation, he viewed the ending of World War II as the beginning of preparations for World War III. While jubilant cries of peace were echoing through the land, Forrestal was already engaged in developing new plans for America's conquest of the world. As early as September 1945, he set forth the general strategic aims of the Navy Department in the following testimony before the House Naval Affairs Committee: "In the future as in the past, the key to victory and to the freedom of this country will be in the control of the seas and the skies above them." As he moved toward the office of Secretary of Defense, he added to these not inconsiderable goals control of the major land masses in Western Europe and in Asia. For these purposes, he demanded a big army, the most powerful navy and air force, a monopoly and stepped-up production of atomic explosives, as well as the introduction of universal military training in peacetime.

### Plans for World Conquest Frustrated

At this juncture, however, America's militarists ran up against an unexpected barrier — resistance by the men in uniform and the rest of the American people. It is clear from the complaints in Forrestal's diary, that the GI's sweeping "want to go home" demonstrations coupled with the irresistible demand of the mass of the American people for quick resumption of peacetime life, frustrated the ambitions of the Pentagon in the immediate postwar period. It was pressure from these sources that forced rapid demobilization and has delayed up to now the imposition of universal military training.

At the same time that the American people were blocking further advances by militarism at home, Forrestal and the entire administration were extremely alarmed about the revolutionary surge throughout Europe and Asia. The diaries record Harriman's observation in May 1945 that "we must face our diplomatic decisions from here on with the consciousness that half and maybe all of Europe might be communistic by the end of next winter, and that if we support Communist armies in China against Chiang Kai-shek, we should have to face ultimately the fact that two or three hundred millions of people in China would march when the Kremlin ordered."

In July 1945 the American Ambassador to France told the President that unless France got some coal from the U.S. for the coming winter, "there would inevitably be communism and possibly anarchy." Next morning at J. P. Morgan's in Paris, Forrestal was told "there was no leadership left among the top industrial people in France; they were all under constant attack and all very discouraged. . . "

Such apprehensive estimates of the situation confirm the judgment made at the time by the Trotskyist movement that the Stalinist leaders, then carrying out the Kremlin's

line of direct collaboration with the capitalists, spoiled an exceptional opportunity to mobilize the masses in Western Europe for the elimination of the bourgeois regimes.

### Three Stages of U.S. Foreign Policy

While Forrestal was at the helm from 1944 to 1949, U.S. foreign policy passed through three main stages. First was the period of concluding the Second World War when the Big Three alliance prevailed and all energies were concentrated on defeating Germany and Japan. Then followed the demobilization period during the last half of 1945 and 1946, when an unfavorable correlation of forces in Europe and Asia and other circumstances beyond their control compelled the executives of American imperialism to restrict their objectives to consolidating their gains and mark time for a while in their expansionist program.

The third, and most important, phase began in March 1947 with the announcement of the Truman Doctrine and the "cold war" strategy. Because of their global scope, it is impossible to treat all the facets of foreign policy disclosed in these diaries. Forrestal, as Navy Secretary, was especially concerned with the Pacific, which was the main theater of naval operations and the chief prize of World War II. He was determined to make the Pacific into "an American lake" and told the President at a meeting of top State, War, and Navy representatives in October 1946 that "the ultimate security of the U.S. depends in major part on our ability to control the Pacific Ocean." Toward this end he maneuvered to keep all the Pacific Islands taken from Japan for Naval bases and expressed concern lest the United Nations try to exercise some supervision over them in the form of trusteeship. He wanted no interference from any other power in this strategic area.

Even before Japan surrendered, he posed the question to the Cabinet about future political objectives in the Far East in reference to the Soviet Union: "What is our policy on Russian influence in the Far East? Do we desire a counter-weight to that influence? And should it be China or should it be Japan?" These questions were settled however, not by the desires of the strategists in Washington, but by the actions of the Chinese people. Consequently, it is defeated Japan that is today being prepared as a counter-weight and military base of operations against the USSR — and not China.

### Intrigues, Warships and Bribes

Forrestal acquired considerable unpopularity at home and in Democratic Party circles by openly opposing the partition of Palestine and the setting up of the state of Israel. The motives for his position were exclusively imperialist. He worried about harm to the interests of the American oil monopolies by the Arabs in the Middle East and wanted to ensure ample supplies of oil there for the U.S. Navy. Truman was unable to go along with him because, as it was explained to Forrestal, American Jews were heavy donors to Democratic Party campaign funds and could turn the elections in a number of key states. It was this opposition that later led to Forrestal's departure from the government.

Forrestal was instrumental in sending U.S. naval squadrons for the first time into the Mediterranean. This was part of a calculated policy to buttress Greek and Turkish resistance to the Kremlin, save Italy from "Communist engulfment," and in general to see that America replaced Britain as "ruler of the waves." "It is my hope," he wrote to the commander of the American naval forces in the Mediterranean "that the American policy will be to have units of the American Navy sail in any waters in any part of the globe."

Forrestal's intervention in Europe was not limited to official channels. There is a hint in these notes of a large private fund he is known to have raised among his rich friends to buy votes in the March 1948 elections in Italy and prevent a victory for the left. This combination of warships and bribes has not proved very effective. Forrestal has gone — but the Italian workers remain strong and radical.

### **Bewilderment Over China**

China and the USSR presented the two most troublesome problems for the Truman administration and Forrestal in the field of foreign affairs. So far as the facts are concerned, the diaries do not tell much more about the Chinese situation than has previously been published in the State Department's White Paper and other writings on China. But they confirm the impression of postwar helplessness and confusion of the U.S. policy-makers in respect to China. Despite their military victory, the imperialists found themselves bewildered and disoriented by the complicated problems and fast-moving events that culminated in the Third Chinese Revolution and the fiasco of their own intervention.

Washington had staked everything on Chiang Kai-shek — and this was done in collusion with the Kremlin. Marshal Stalin told Harry Hopkins on his mission to Moscow in May 1945 "there is no other leader strong enough to unify China and he indicates that he will back Chiang in spite of some reservations. Stalin said that the U.S. was the only one with resources capable of rebuilding China and the Soviet will have all it can do to keep itself alive economically, and can offer little help."

### **"Tough" Anti-Soviet Policy**

In line with this policy the State Department tried to cement a coalition between Chiang and the Chinese Communists through the Marshall mission. When conflict between the contending camps again flared up, Washington faced the following dilemma as Forrestal saw it: "If the unification of China and Manchuria under Chinese national forces is to be a U.S. policy, involvement in fratricidal warfare and possibly a war with the Soviet Union must be accepted, and would definitely require additional U.S. forces far beyond those previously available in the theater to implement the policy."

1946 was not yet 1950 and China did not then become a Korea. Washington felt at the time it could neither raise the forces nor extort consent from the American nation for full participation in civil war on the Chinese mainland. The administration had to content itself with chafing on

the sidelines, hoping for some miracle to save Chiang from himself and the vengeance of the aroused Chinese millions. Truman's officials were well aware of the rottenness of the dictator and continued their aid to Chiang with a heavy heart and vocal forebodings of total disaster. But they could find no practical alternative to serve their imperialist ends in that area.

With Chiang's overthrow by Mao Tse-tung's forces, any of Washington's plans pivoted on control of China collapsed. The bankruptcy of Washington's policy toward China portrayed in these diaries and emphasized by later events demonstrates that, despite the tremendous material resources at their command, the rulers of the U.S. are far from almighty. They can propose and they can plot along imperialist lines. Yet in the last analysis it is not their blueprints or even their legions and bombs that decide the course of events and fundamental questions, but the power of the masses drawn into life-and-death struggles. Just as the GI demonstrations backed by the folks at home had forced and hastened demobilization against the will of the Army high command, so the insurgent Chinese masses upset the Pentagon's schemes on the Asiatic continent in the late Forties.

The diaries give much important information on the evolution of relations with Moscow. Even during wartime, Forrestal aligned himself with the "tough" anti-Soviet elements in the Cabinet as contrasted with Roosevelt and Wallace, who were for the maximum of concessions to maintain the alliance with Stalin. He was, however, then in no position to determine the main lines of policy toward the Soviet Union. His opportunity for influence came as conditions began to change in the closing months of the war.

The first serious signs of conflict among the Big Three manifested themselves in the spring of 1945. At a State-War-Navy meeting on April 2, 1945 "the Secretary of State advised of serious deterioration in our relations with Russia. The President has sent a strong message to Stalin, deploring this condition, which he points out is brought to a focus by the request to have the Lublin Poles invited to San Francisco. He recites the fact that the ties between Russia and this country, knit together by the necessities of war, are in grave danger of dissolution, and asks the most serious consideration by the Marshal of the questions involved."

Several weeks later Forrestal saw Averell Harriman, then American Ambassador to Russia, who insisted on "much greater firmness" toward Russia. "He said the outward thrust of Communism was not dead and that we might well have to face an ideological warfare just as vigorous and dangerous as fascism or Nazism." The following July at lunch with General Clay and Harriman in Germany during the Potsdam conference, Harriman continued: "Russia was a vacuum into which all movable goods would be sucked. He said the greatest crime of Hitler was that his actions had resulted in opening the gates of Eastern Europe to Asia."

Forrestal took advantage of the growing anti-Soviet sentiments in top circles to conduct a vigorous campaign to preserve the American monopoly of the atom bomb and withhold knowledge of its processes from the wartime



allies, especially from the USSR. Replying at a Cabinet meeting on Sept. 21, 1945 to Henry Wallace, who favored giving atomic information to the Russians, Forrestal declared that "the Russians, like the Japanese, are essentially Oriental in their thinking . . . it seems doubtful that we should endeavor to buy their understanding and sympathy. We tried that once with Hitler. There are no returns on appeasement."

By that time the Yalta honeymoon was definitely over and quite different notes were being sounded in the Washington atmosphere. 1945 and 1946 witnessed an increasingly sharper attitude toward Moscow, although the strategists at Washington had not yet abandoned all hopes for a new *modus vivendi*. The fact is that they were in no position to act otherwise. On the one side, although victorious, the U.S. did not possess enough forces "in being" to undertake far-flung military operations. On the other side, the still unsubsidized revolutionary sweep in Europe and Asia stayed their hand.

### Evaluation of Military Problem

In December 1947 Forrestal summarized the international military situation as follows: "There are really four outstanding military facts in the world at this time. They are: (1) the predominance of Russian land power in Europe and Asia; (2) the predominance of American sea power; (3) our exclusive possession of the atomic bomb; (4) American productive capacity."

It was first imperative to cope with this predominance of Russian land power by creating far more powerful combat divisions in the U.S. and in Western Europe. This was necessary, Washington thought, not only in the event of war, but also for the success of further negotiations with the Kremlin.

On March 10, 1946 Forrestal saw Churchill who remarked that "he was very gloomy about coming to any accommodation with Russia unless and until it became clear to the Russians that they would be met with force if they continued their expansion." This comment gives a clue to Churchill's present attitude in negotiations with the Kremlin as well as to subsequent developments in U.S. policy. In fact, Washington's change in line was heralded by Churchill's speech at Fulton, Missouri, which was warmly applauded by Forrestal. Washington's last effort at securing a compromise with Moscow was the offer by Secretary of State Byrnes at the London meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers in 1946 for a 5-year, four-power pact against German rearmament — a suggestion which looks like ancient history in the light of the contemplated integration of Western Germany into the Atlantic war councils.

The new course in American foreign policy was announced with the Truman Doctrine in March 1947, which has led on through the Marshall Plan, the Berlin Blockade and the Atlantic Pact to the Korean War. Forrestal's diaries indicate that this crucial turning point was immediately precipitated by the British withdrawal from Greece and continued Russian pressure on Turkey. But it marked a far more basic reorientation of U.S. policy toward the USSR. The cold war was designed to contain

Soviet influence by all means, to construct a ring of armed bases and airfields around the perimeter of the USSR and build up the armed strength of the U.S. and its satellites to redress the unfavorable balance in the military arena.

Having participated in the formulation of this policy and effected an agreeable unification of the Army, Navy and Air Force, Forrestal's work was done. He was relieved from office soon after Truman's reelection in March 1949.

### Revealing Characteristics of U.S. Rulers

The Forrestal diaries show many interesting things about the directors of the U.S. government. They are extremely sensitive in their reactions to trespasses upon the interests of American capitalism in any part of the world and aggressively resolved to dominate the planet. Yet they have no thought-out conception of the forces at work in the world today, or even of their own international program. They have evidently proceeded in a pragmatic manner, meeting problems by rapid improvisation as they arose, trusting to luck and their seemingly inexhaustible wealth and resources to see them through.

At the same time, they stand ready to plunge the country into the most reckless adventures overnight when they are unexpectedly thrust into a tight corner. Forrestal reveals, for example, that Truman was set to risk war with the Soviet Union in 1946 if the Kremlin insisted on moving against Turkey over the Dardanelles. The decision to enter the Korean War four years later was apparently taken on the spur of the moment in a reversal of previous policy.

This mixture of opportunism and light-minded adventurism in the foreign field has characterized the Chief Executive and his advisers in recent years. How dangerous this is for the American people when the ultimate decision on going to war is actually concentrated in the Presidency alone! One word from the White House — and the globe can go up in flames.

A second feature mirrored in Forrestal's diaries is the gross ignorance of the monopolists about the main social forces existing in the world they expect to rule. Forrestal and his fellows thought and acted as though nothing counted in the settlement of great questions involving the lives of nations but billion-dollar appropriations and armed force. They believe that any reluctance by the American people to follow the plutocrats could be simply disposed of by deceitful propaganda campaigns. The diaries contain some instructive entries on the ways and means by which the militarists used radio commentators, movies and newspapers, whenever they wished to put over a costly or unpopular measure. These professional "democrats" invariably displayed utter contempt for the intelligence of the people.

### Forrestal's Suicide: A Symptom

Finally, it is not difficult to discern from these pages that, all reservations to the contrary, the "cold war" is regarded by the more ruthless Pentagon minds as preliminary steps toward the inevitable direct assault upon the USSR. Among the many congratulations Forrestal received when he became Secretary of Defense was this message from Myron Taylor, ex-head of the U.S. Steel

Corporation and then the President's envoy at the Vatican: "May this (great honor) lead to world peace. *If that is impossible, then to effective war and enduring peace in timely sequence.*" This was the only letter of congratulation Forrestal preserved in his confidential files, and it very likely reflected his private hopes and the real perspectives of the militarist-monopolist clique he belonged to.

Almost all the entries in these note-books are impersonal. They do not betray any symptoms of the inner conflicts which exploded in the nervous breakdown and mental unbalance quickly following Forrestal's retirement from office. At one point in the last months of his life,

he ran out into the streets madly shouting: "The Russians are coming!" He flung himself from a hospital window to his death soon after.

Nor do his diaries exhibit the least comprehension of the colossal social conflicts within the capitalist structure or the profound contradictions in the positions of the U.S. imperialists at home and abroad that have already checked their aggressions at several key points and will eventually lead to their downfall. There is a dramatic symbolism in Forrestal's crackup and suicide. It prefigures the fate of the system and the ruling class he worked so hard to preserve.

## Vandal at Work

# The Tragedy of Harold Isaacs

By **GEORGE CLARKE**

One of the minor crimes of our times is the defacement of the book, *The Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution* by its author, Harold R. Isaacs.\* In its first edition published in 1938, this writer saw tragedy in the defeat of the 1925-27 revolution by Chinese reaction allied to world imperialism. Now, in revised form, after the vandal finished his work, the "tragedy" of the Chinese revolution is its victory in 1949 over the associated forces of warlords, landowners, usurers and feudal bandits headed by Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek and his foreign imperialist masters. From a weapon in the struggle against imperialism, the book has been transformed into a treatise of pinkish, courtier-type advice to save the rulers from impending disaster. The most devastating blow struck at world capitalism since the Russian Revolution is depicted in funereal terms by the frightened, renegade author as a triumph of "totalitarianism."

The truth is, however, that Isaacs is more the victim and the instrument of totalitarianism — "democratic" American totalitarianism — than the New China which he so bitterly attacks. The rewriting of books to completely alter their meaning in order to conform to the regime in power, to buy favor or survival for the hapless writer is a practice perfected by the Stalin dictatorship in the Soviet Union, but it is common to all forms of tyrannical rule. This and other aspects of totalitarianism are more and more becoming a regular part of American life. The organized denunciation of "Communists" and former "Communists" by official and unofficial agencies the recurrent purges from government and private employment of those so branded, has as its counterpart confessions of the accused and of others not yet accused, abject repudiations of past ideas and actions, capitulation

to the reigning ideology, no matter how revolting or reactionary.

There are various degrees of capitulation which are determined by the renegade's condition of life, the prominence of his past activities, his ambitions and other considerations. Budenz goes directly from the editor's chair on the Daily Worker to the Catholic church and the informer's bench. Isaacs passes from revolutionary Marxism to the camp of the "liberal" defenders of capitalism. Variations are still possible because totalitarian reaction is not yet completely in the saddle — but they remain in essence variations on a totalitarian theme.

## A Book With a Life of Its Own

The revision of *The Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution* fits into this pattern. As originally written, it was far more than a narrative of the 1925-27 revolution. It was a Marxist study of the most decisive event in the Orient up to that time; it was a critique from the standpoint of revolutionary politics of a strategy in a revolution; it was thus a guide for leaders of the colonial liberation movements in the struggle against imperialism; it was a declaration of faith and partisanship by the author. In his enthusiastic introduction, now omitted, Trotsky honored Isaacs with "the Marxist label" saying that he "belongs to the school of historical materialism," that he "approaches the revolution as a revolutionist." Trotsky, as was only human, over-rated the author, but he didn't overestimate the book.

*The Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution* had a life of its own. Long after the author had abandoned revolutionary politics for the flesh-pots of bourgeois journalism, the book was having a continuing impact on political thought, particularly in the Far East. Revolutionists in China had contrived to bring out a bootleg edition which Isaacs says in the preface to the revised version had a wider circulation than the expensive edition published in London.

\* *The Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution* by Harold R. Isaacs, Stanford University Press, 1951. 382 pp. \$5.

"Copies of it turned up," he says, "in different parts of the world in later years." In 1944 a condensed version in mimeographed form was circulating in India. The book has been out of print and virtually unobtainable for many years, but there was always the possibility that revolutionists somewhere would scrape together the pennies for its republication. Isaacs, we are told, was directly approached in India or Ceylon during the war to help finance a new edition — a request he refused.

Try as he might, Isaacs could not escape his book. Like Banquo's ghost, it kept reappearing. The Chiang Kai-shek government refused Isaacs a visa because of the views expressed in the book. Since then, he says, there have been many "direct inquiries" about it and "many of the original readers will want to know whether its point of view has changed." Alter the tense to its past form and you will get a more truthful picture of the effect of the old book on the presently respectable "authority on China," who writes for accepted academic periodicals and lectures for "Americans for Democratic Action." Isaacs, of course, is an opponent of witch-hunting and McCarthyism, but he is not blind to its present power which has some bearing on his own fortunes. The question of where he stands must have arisen time and again even in "parlor pink" circles as is indicated in his petulant statement that: "If a label be needed, its [the book's] bias can be described as democratic socialist [whatever that means] although one feels compelled to add that political labeling nowadays has become virtually a form of abuse, driving one to make a political philosophy out of the defense of human decency." How Isaacs has begun to apply his new "political philosophy" is another matter.

### A Sample of Isaacs' "Decency"

Apparently he does not believe he has overstepped the bounds of "decency" by failing to inform the readers that in addition to omitting Trotsky's introduction and re-writing the last three chapters, he has transformed chapter 3 from top to bottom, giving it a new caption: "World Crisis: The Russian Impact." From an international guide to the Chinese Revolution, the chapter has become a work in anti-Bolshevism, throwing confusion and doubt on the main original theme, which still stands. Isaacs pretends also that he revised the original literary presentation "to eliminate polemical excesses, subjective comments, and repetitious comments." The stylistic alterations have a different purpose, however. They seek to remake the author from a fervent partisan of a revolutionary program into a learned commentator so far as the past is concerned, and an outright opponent now. In keeping with this metamorphosis of the author, he has replaced the original dedication "To the heroic martyrs and the living fighters of the Chinese Revolution" with a dolorous, self-pitying rumination by William Morris.

It became urgent for Isaacs to revise his book and get the bowdlerized version in print. The "decent" thing for him, of course, would have been to publish the original version unchanged, together with his nauseating recantation. But that was not possible. The book was an integrated work, its "political philosophy" so clearly Marx-

ist, or Trotskyist, that the whole theme of the book led unerringly, ineluctably to the conclusion of support of the Mao regime — regardless of criticisms of its program, its lack of democracy — in its struggle against foreign imperialism and the counter-revolutionary gang of parasites working to restore the barbaric old regime. What else was the meaning of Trotsky's scathing attacks on the policy of Stalin's Comintern if not that it had advised a capitulation to Chiang Kai-shek and through him to the landowners, warlords and foreign imperialism?

With all of its alterations, the contradiction between what remains of the original work and the new conclusions is glaring enough. We can safely predict that Isaacs will be reminded of it many times in the future by those for whom no repudiation is complete until the last "i" is dotted and the last "t" is crossed. For the time being, in the rapidly vanishing "democratic" climate, the present confession will probably have its uses in confusing some leftward-moving intellectuals in India, Indonesia and other parts of the awakened Orient, where Washington is trying to establish its influence.

### Trotsky and "The Tragedy"

The reader may object that after all it was Isaacs' book and as author he has the right to change it. No. It was not Isaacs' book. It was Trotsky's. Every important idea, every clue to the complicated events had already been contributed by Trotsky in his extensive writings, speeches, resolutions, etc., during his polemic with the Stalin-Bukharin leadership of the Comintern and afterward. Separated from the revolution by thousands of miles, Trotsky followed events daily, meticulously, with a passionate interest. He not only predicted the terrible outcome, inevitable if Stalin's policy of conciliating the Kuomintang at all costs prevailed, but he foresaw each new stage as the revolution moved from crisis to crisis in its conflict with Chiang Kai-shek. It was this masterful critique, exposition and analysis that attracted Isaacs to Trotsky.

"The Tragedy" is nothing more than the popularization of Trotsky's *Problems of the Chinese Revolution* and of his other writings on the subject. It rearranges the ideas and facts Trotsky had presented in polemical form in a running, historical account of the events. At the time, there was no question about Isaacs' part in the project. He applied his journalistic skills to tools which had been fashioned and along a pattern that had already been drafted by others. It was an important, even a brilliant work, but in no sense could it be called original. Isaacs provided the "manual" labor for Trotsky's intellectual creation. It was written and rewritten in close collaboration with the great Marxist thinker and it was thanks to him that Isaacs then avoided the woeful superficiality of contemporary journalism.

Isaacs' role in the work is now glaringly demonstrated in the new revised edition. Wherever he departs from the ideas of the original text, we find a stale hash of political ignorance or shibboleths borrowed from soul-sick, cynical intellectuals who are also guided primarily by emotion or venality.

Take, for example, his ruminations on the Soviet Un-

ion. For Isaacs it is a vital problem since his central theme now, like Acheson's and McCarthy's, is that China succeeded in liberating itself from imperialism only to fall victim to the new "Russian empire" and its supposed imperial ambitions for world domination.

### Isaacs and the Soviet Bureaucracy

He now rejects the view he held when the book was written that Russia was "a workers state. . . deformed by a usurping bureaucracy, but playing a progressive role in world affairs." That was, he says, "a rationalization," "the epitaph for a whole generation of revolutionists in Russia and elsewhere." We impatiently await the scientific discovery that will replace the "rationalization." But none is forthcoming. "The precise nature of the bureaucratic state in Russia" is not to be learned from him; "it still awaits adequate description." From Isaacs we get only the screaming invective of the yellow press about the "adolescent tyranny" of 1925-27 growing "into a totalitarian monster imposing its weight not only upon China but upon the whole world."

What are the economic compulsions driving the "monster" to "impose its weight on the world"? Here Isaacs assays an answer. "Russia," he says, "is certainly not a source of capital goods on any vast scale. (It) is engaged in the primitive accumulation of capital. . . ." Once again, Isaacs left to his own devices, doesn't know what he's talking about. The similarity between the primitive accumulation that marked the transition between feudalism and capitalism, paving the way for the capitalist empires, and the so-called "primitive accumulation" of the Soviet Union is that its "history. . . is written in letters of blood and fire." That's all. "Primitive accumulation," Marx said "is nothing else than the historical process of divorcing the producer from the means of production. It appears as primitive, because it forms the pre-historic stage of capital and of the mode of production corresponding to it."

Where the capitalists began by divorcing the guildsman and the independent artisan from his tools and workshop, the Soviet bureaucracy found itself obliged to appropriate the capitalist from his property in Eastern Europe. Where the early capitalists drove the peasantry from the communal land, the Soviet bureaucracy after the first stages of agrarian reform, drove the peasantry into the collective farms. Besides, the mode of production in the Soviet Union, which today turns out atom bombs and more steel than any other European country, never corresponded to the pre-historic stage of capital, not even in the period preceding the Five Year Plans. On the contrary, it stands on a par with the most industrially advanced countries but unlike them, as Isaacs admits, is not a source of capital goods.

The only truthful resemblance with imperialism he can find is in plunder, and, of course, Isaacs bangs on this point like a child beating on a tin drum. But its plundering merely shows the reactionary character of the bureaucracy. It is not indigenous to the system of nationalized property and planned economy but in mortal contradiction to it. Most of the plundering in Eastern Europe and in Manchuria occurred in the period before the social fate

of these countries was decided. Once the bourgeoisie was driven out, the plundering ceased — it had to.

Now, contrary to the status of the colonies under capitalist imperialism, which maintains them as backward suppliers of raw materials, the Soviet satellites are being pushed into industrialization at a break-neck pace. What remains then of this fatuous theory of "Russian imperialism"? Nothing but a miserable distortion of Trotsky's characterization of the parasitic nature of the bureaucracy, which is not only in conflict with the economy but which generates the forces for Stalinism's own destruction.

### More Samples of "Original" Thought

Another "original" thought of Isaacs is his conclusions about "the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat." So far as fundamentals go, you see, his recantation doesn't stop half-way. "This (the Russian) experience has taught us that the contradiction between authoritarianism and democratic socialism is complete. The one-party monopoly of political life, developing into a bureaucratic oligarchy, an outcome that clearly rose out of the basic premises of Bolshevism, cannot serve socialist ends. No broader democracy can come from a political system based on force and lacking in institutional safeguards against the corruption of power and violence."

This is the old rubbish about Stalinism being the legitimate heir of Bolshevism. We don't have to waste time on this drivel because it was scattered to the four winds by Trotsky himself answering the many "Isaacs" of his time in his famous pamphlet *Stalinism and Bolshevism*. The fact that Isaacs, who on the very next page loudly proclaims his "great respect" for Trotsky, is well aware of this pamphlet but consciously ignores it, shows how little "simple human decency" is really left in this ardent foe of "totalitarianism." But how can anyone have respect for these "ideas" of this man who saw Hitler come to power without violence in strict conformity with all the "institutional safeguards" of the Weimar Republic erected by the German "democratic socialists," while Stalin, although unhindered by constitutional barriers, had to carry out the bloodiest purge in history in order to assure his ascent to power.

Having cut himself adrift from the axis of Trotsky's thought, Isaacs becomes merely a facile scribbler whose sole criterion for the vast world revolutionary developments now unfolding is "democracy." This is how Isaacs staggers into the unforeseen and complicated developments of the Chinese Revolution and then staggers out as its opponent. Everything would have been different, so runs the main theme of his funeral dirge, had the revolutionary movement of 1925-27 in China triumphed. "The whole world balance of forces would have been tipped in different directions, with inevitable effects upon the external, and therefore the internal, position of Russia." The Stalin regime might never have consolidated itself; instead of defeats of workers' revolutions in the thirties there might have been victories. In China itself the revolutionary forces led by "urbanized intellectuals" (Isaacs' kind, no doubt) and basing themselves on an active working class would have brought a new flowering of "democracy." But for the last part, this hypothesis, borrowed from the Trotsky-

ists, is in its main lines correct, except that on Isaacs' lips it is converted into a nostalgia for "the snows of yesterday." Its most questionable side is that which deals with China.

### False Analogies With Hitler and Stalin

Let us look a little closer at this "new totalitarian dictatorship" of the Mao regime which has sent Isaacs to the wailing wall to shed a bucketful of tears over "the opening of a new act in the unending tragedy" of the Chinese people — and incidentally to pronounce his apostasy to their cause. How does it compare with the "totalitarianism" of Hitler and Stalin? Superficially the application of the term seems perfect: There is a "one-party" dictatorship in China, terror, elimination of political opponents, idolatry of the leader, etc., etc. But the analogy remains nonetheless superficial.

The totalitarianism of the Nazis was the means of preserving the rule of the industrial and financial oligarchy and the outlived system of capitalism. It bound the country in an iron strait-jacket, smashed the organizations of the proletariat, provoked the Second World War in order to save Germany from its overripe socialist revolution.

Under the "totalitarianism" of the Mao regime and the Chinese Communist Party, China has been going through its most progressive era, the accomplishment of the principal tasks of its democratic revolution. The country has been unified for the first time in its history, irreparably smashing the power of warlord rule based on local particularism; the agrarian reform moves steadily forward undermining the landowners and rooting out the age-old curse of feudal, paternalistic relationships on the countryside; foreign imperialism has been humbled and driven out of the country, never to return except by a major war.

Hitler's victory not only saved German and European capitalism from socialism but armed it with unprecedented imperialist drive and power. Mao's victory, on the contrary, has undermined the very foundations of world imperialism and by eliminating the old ruling classes has laid the first stones for the new socialist society. A slight difference!

The absence of democracy in the Chinese C.P., its lack of a clear Marxist program and the absence of direct, conscious participation of the proletariat will undoubtedly become a brake upon the Chinese Revolution and a source of the greatest dangers for it as it approaches its socialist stage. But to discuss that problem with Isaacs would be as futile — as Lenin once said — as discussing dialectical materialism with a man who makes the sign of the cross in front of each church he passes.

The analogy with Stalin's "totalitarianism" fares no better. The Soviet bureaucracy rose to power by crushing all the living dynamic forces of the Russian Revolution. It based itself on the forces of reaction, inertia and passivity of Russian society after the civil war. Its victory was the antithesis of the revolution and the undoing of the active forces which had led it.

The victory of the Chinese C.P. on the contrary did not occur as a *result* of the degeneration of the victorious proletarian power. It was the "October" of the Chinese Revolution, for all its differences with the Bolshevik

triumph, and not its "Thermidor." To smash the Kuomintang rule, the Chinese C.P. was obliged to engage in civil war, not against the revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat (which was the essence of the Stalinist purges in the USSR), but against the forces of reaction. It was obliged to stoke the fires of peasant rebellion and to unleash the centuries-old dynamite of popular discontent on the Chinese countryside so vividly described by Jack Belden in his magnificent *China Shakes the World*.

To compare "the bureaucratic caste" which rules in China with that of the Soviet Union, as Isaacs does, is out of all relation to time and space. The Soviet bureaucracy rose to its present power not overnight but over a period of years, and its power was vastly increased by the growth of its privileges, extracted from the industrialization of the country. The privileges of the so-called "bureaucratic caste" in China are wretched by comparison. We do not thereby deny that the same type of bureaucratic monstrosity could develop in China if it had before it many years of reaction in the working class and colonial movement, and of maneuvers with imperialism and collaboration with it. But just the contrary is the case: revolutionary developments in the world and particularly in the colonies are not ebbing but reaching high tide. If Stalin began his career in power by opposition to the German revolution of 1923, Mao's first important international action was to come to the assistance of the revolutionary forces in the Korean civil war. Impending developments in Indo-China, Malaya, Burma and elsewhere in Southeast Asia indicate that Korea was not the end but the beginning of China's involvement in revolution — which will have a continuing effect on the nature of the regime, and will determine its internal direction and the strata of Chinese society on which it must lean.

The contradiction, which Isaacs can never understand, is that the very forces and conflicts — i.e., the clash with the Chinese landowners and bourgeoisie and with world imperialism — which led to the creation of the "one-party" state, are also those which undermine bureaucratic rule and are undermining the strength of the Kremlin as well.

### What Happened to the "Bloc of 4 Classes"?

Isaacs sees the development of the Chinese Communist Party as a "party of de-urbanized intellectuals and peasant leaders whose main strength lay in military force. . . ." Over the years, he says, it learned how to maneuver between the various layers of the peasantry and local gentry, dispensing reforms here, cracking down there, veering, shifting, conciliating, compromising, fighting. To the mind haunted by fears of "totalitarianism," all of this represents nothing but the cunning of unscrupulous men. One has only to ask why it was that the Chinese Stalinists defeated Chiang Kai-shek who was hardly more burdened with scruples but who had, in addition, far greater material and military means.

The Communist Party leaders, it is true, had been trying to cheat history over a period of years in the service of the Kremlin and as a result of their own misconceptions. They didn't aim to create a "one-party state" but rather what they called a "bloc of four classes" in which the Communist Party would be only one of many parties, repre-

senting different classes in the government. Time and again this aim was broken up by the conflict of these very classes which were supposed to unite. The year 1937 saw a re-institution of the Stalinist alliance with Chiang Kai-shek in which the C.P. again agreed to abandon the fight for agrarian reform and to give up its own independence in return for Chiang's promise to fight the Japanese invader. The capitulation had the same type of outcome as the preceding ones, taking the form of a Kuomintang attack on the Communist Fourth Army in 1941. But the defeat was less disastrous because this time the Stalinists were based on their own power in a large provincial region which supplied the peasant man-power for their own army. On the other side, the Kuomintang forces were divided internally and retreating before the Japanese. The policy of the Chinese Stalinists and of the Kremlin was oriented to the right and to capitulation, but events and the relationship of class forces were pushing them to the left and to greater independence. The "bloc of the four classes" was being blown up in life although it still remained in the C.P.'s program and theoretical baggage.

Again in 1946, under the pressure of Stalin's deals with western imperialism and in accordance with their own policies, the Mao leadership moved to a new compromise with Chiang Kai-shek which again included cessation of land reform and the acceptance of a subordinate position in the Kuomintang government. And again there arose the combined pressure of a peasantry that would not be mollified or quieted, and of an army, which had become strong and self-confident in years of armed combat against the Japanese, the Kuomintang and in the peasant wars, and could not simply be abandoned or dispersed by a decision from the top. At the very time these pressures were making themselves felt, Chiang Kai-shek broke the alliance by beginning a war-to-the-end against Mao's forces. Despite "the bloc of the four classes" to which he still adhered, Mao was compelled to take the road to power.

### What Forced a "One-Party" Regime

Nor was the matter definitively settled when the Stalinists drove the Kuomintang from the Chinese mainland and took the power. Again they sought for some form of compromise with the Chinese bourgeoisie and even some form of arrangement with imperialism, though on different terms, of course, than those they had accepted in the past. The coalition government set up in Peiping was as much or more a government of many parties as any that had existed in modern Chinese history. Naturally, because the Stalinists firmly held the reins of power, for Isaacs all of this was nothing but another totalitarian maneuver. The facts demonstrate something else.

The Stalinists deliberately withheld the land reform in the most important area of China, south of the Yangtze, where their bourgeois allies in the government had important economic interests. In many parts of this area the Mao regime permitted the local warlords to remain the governing power. It was not Mao but American imperialism which split this multiple party government asunder by its attack on Korea, its open defense of Chiang's rule on Formosa, its blockade of China's coast, its active sup-

port of internal counter-revolution. It was the totalitarianism of imperialism which pushed the C.P. to complete power in China, to a "one-party" government.

Isaacs suavely describes the new internal mobilization of the forces of reaction, guided and financed from abroad by Chiang Kai-shek as "rising dissent." And again his bitter tears at the "terror" and the "purge. . . in the same places the Kuomintang had drenched in blood in the same manner when it came to power twenty-four years earlier." Yes, "the same places" and perhaps "the same manner," since people die and heads roll in all periods of terror, but this time it was the heads of landowners, usurers, the wealthy and well-placed and their hirelings — and not the communist workers, union militants, peasant fighters, as had happened twenty-four years earlier. The revolution was rising in its own defense as it had done under Robespierre in France in the 18th Century and under Lenin and Trotsky in Russia in 1918.

### Relations Between China and Russia

The key piece in Isaacs' "totalitarian" house of cards, however, is not to be found in China but in the Soviet Union. He must recognize that the "Chinese Communists. . . unmistakably came to power by their own momentum." Naturally, he omits the real story of the Kremlin's underhanded treachery and sabotage of the armed struggle waged by the communist armies. Yet the evidence is compelling enough to make him say: "The contrast between the Russian-made debacle of 1927 and the Chinese-engineered victory of 1949. . . is [not] totally absent from the consciousness of at least some of the older Communist leaders." He must also speak of social, political and economic "potential sources of conflict" between the new China and the Kremlin bureaucracy. For Isaacs, however, all of this conflict has virtually disappeared with the outbreak of what he calls the Russian-inspired Korean war in which the "Chinese Communist leadership. . . had subordinated itself to Russia's strategy in the world power struggle. . ."

Undoubtedly one of the aims of the Kremlin rulers was to increase China's dependence upon them through the Korean war. Another was to force the capitalist powers to arrive at an agreement with them, with the Korean workers and peasants, among others, to be sacrificed as part of the bargain. But the logic of the class struggle proved more powerful than ulterior bureaucratic motives. Instead of bringing an agreement closer, the Korean war aggravated the conflict between world imperialism and the Soviet Union, hastening the "rearmament" program, the creation of the North Atlantic Army. Above all, it made Asia a new front of the "cold" and the hot war. Thus while China became more dependent on the Kremlin in its need for tanks and planes, the Kremlin became dependent on China to halt the imperialist assault on Korea from moving through Manchuria to the Siberian frontier. Stalin would otherwise once again, as before the defeat of Japan, have been confronted with powerful military foes poised on the eastern as well as the western extremities of the Soviet Union.

China's direct participation in the Korean civil war

after the known failure of the Kremlin to supply planes to the North Koreans when victory was within their grasp, has lowered the stock of the Soviet bureaucracy, while it has raised the prestige of the Mao regime in the eyes of the colonial peoples and the workers under Stalinist control throughout the world.

Far from it being considered the action of a mere pawn, China's magnificent resistance on the Korean battle-fronts has kindled the flames of the colonial revolutions, now moving like a flame driven in the wind to the Arab world of the Middle East and North Africa. Stalin's real plans — "peaceful co-existence with capitalism" — are being shattered to bits in this sweep. Responsible capitalist journalists like James Reston of the *New York Times* and statesmen like Anthony Eden, whose principal task, unlike Issacs', is not that of finding apologies for imperialism but of trying to devise the means for its survival, see in this rising struggle the unleashing of "uncontrollable forces" which they cannot put down and the Kremlin cannot dominate. They, not Isaacs and the Stalinophobes, are right. This world-wide revolutionary struggle will break the back of imperialism and before it is over it will sweep the parasitic Soviet bureaucracy into the dustbins of history.

That struggle, in whose interests Isaacs first wrote *The Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution* is now being join-

ed. But it finds Isaacs on the other side, against the colonial peoples, against the revolutionary workers and the Soviet Union, lecturing, pleading with imperialism to change its stripes, to stop being capitalist in the western world and to stop being imperialist in the Far East and in Africa.

Answering a question of an Asian Revolutionist as to how he, who had written the splendid study on China could have abandoned the fight, Isaacs, we are told, replied that some men are capable of only one great deed in their lives and some writers of only one good book. We do not quarrel with the notion. Only the vandalized version of "The Tragedy" leads us to make an amendment. Some of these men cannot live without trying to destroy that one deed or one literary creation. In the end, however, it is not the work that is destroyed, but the man.

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