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Book Reviews

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AN ORGAN OF REVOLUTIONARY MARXISM

# THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

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A BI-MONTHLY ORGAN OF REVOLUTIONARY MARXISM  
OFFICIAL THEORETICAL ORGAN OF THE WORKERS PARTY OF THE UNITED STATES

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# OUR VOICES MUST BE HEARD!

THE revelations of comrade Anton Ciliga, former leader of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia who compelled the Soviet authorities to release him from imprisonment and allow his departure from the Union, give a truly shocking picture of the conditions of revolutionary political prisoners under the present Stalin régime. They are supplemented by the articles written on the same subject by comrade A. Tarov, the Russian Bolshevik-Leninist who escaped from Soviet imprisonment, and by additional authentic information that has reached us from other sources in the Soviet Union.

The picture of savage and treacherous persecution which the Bonapartist clique of Stalin carries on against impeccable proletarian revolutionists, far exceeds anything that we have hitherto known the situation to be. Literally thousands and tens of thousands of members of the Soviet Communist Party and youth organization are continually expelled for "Trotskyism" or even for being suspected of holding views that interfere with the bureaucrats' work of undermining all the conquests of the Russian revolution. Expulsion from the Soviet party under such circumstances is a matter of the gravest consequence, for in most cases it means that the victim of Stalinist vengeance is deprived of his means of life. In a vast number of instances, the police régime does not stop at mere expulsion but sentences the heretic to imprisonment or exile to one of its concentration camps.

The prisons, the remote places of exile

and the concentration camps of Stalin are packed to bursting with these sterling revolutionists, most of them of the present generation, men and women who, despite the fierce conditions of repression, refuse to accept as revolutionary doctrine the reactionary theories and practises of the ruling clique. In addition to the new generation of Bolsheviks whose number already greatly surpasses the number of political prisoners of all the labor parties under Czarism, there are hundreds of old Bolsheviks of Lenin's generation who have fallen into the displeasure of the Stalinist court and made to suffer the unspeakable consequences. In most cases, they are treated worse than common criminals. Their quarters are unfit for habitation; their food allowances are scant and wretched; correspondence and reading matter are usually forbidden them. The régime makes them pay for their incorruptible revolutionary steadfastness and devotion by the most vindictive persecution and torment imaginable. More than one Bolshevik of Lenin's school has already been tortured and hounded to death because he refused to acknowledge that all the virtues of mankind are concentrated in the prison of J. V. Stalin. The latest to die in Stalinist prison is Solntzev.

Russian Bolsheviks are not the only victims. Ciliga reports numerous cases of revolutionary workers and leaders in the capitalist countries whose freedom is irksome to the bureaucracy of the Comintern and who are disposed of by the

treacherous device of inviting them to Moscow for "discussions." Shortly after they have crossed the frontiers of the Soviet Union, the G.P.U., which has become nothing more than a factional police instrument in the hands of the bureaucracy, is set into motion with the result that the rebels disappear into one of the Stalinist dungeons or concentration camps. Hungarian revolutionary opponents of Bela Kun, Bulgarian opponents of Dimitroff, Yugoslav opponents of Gorkic, Polish opponents of the Stalinist appointee in the Polish Communist Party—have either received this treatment, or, as during the period of the Kirov assassination, have simply been shot on framed-up charges.

If the lives of thousands of revolutionary militants are to be saved, if the best heritage of Bolshevism in the Soviet Union is to be preserved from physical annihilation, the voices of the class-conscious workers of every country must be raised in a protest so loud and vigorous that it will penetrate the walls of the Kremlin bureaucracy and compel it to relinquish the victims of its political vengeance. Protest is not ineffective, as can be seen from the case of Victor Serge who was finally released and grudgingly granted permission to leave the Soviet Union for a country of his choice. *Let our voices be heard!* It is a crime to remain silent in the face of the systematic extermination of the flower of revolutionary Marxism.

# THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

## A BI-MONTHLY ORGAN OF REVOLUTIONARY MARXISM

VOLUME III

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## In Opposite Directions

### *The Cleveland Convention of the Socialists and the Swing to the Right of the Stalinists*

**D**EVELOPMENTS of the greatest importance are taking place in the two main sections of the American radical labor movement. Reflecting, each in its own way, the stirring events we have lived through in this country and abroad for the past few years, both the Socialist and Communist parties are alive with movement. Neither of them has been able to stand stock still under the impact of the great social events. First anchored at opposite ends, the winds have driven them from their old moorings and toward each other. But because the ships are differently constructed, differently manned and differently ballasted, they have not only failed to meet anywhere in midstream, but have actually passed each other by and are continuing to sail in opposite directions.

This singular phenomenon has been recorded in recent times to one degree or another in virtually all important countries. In the United States, however, for a number of reasons, the development is more marked than in most other lands. Briefly, before us is a situation where the traditional party of the Left is moving swiftly to the Right while the party of reformism is moving distinctly to the Left. At least in this country, the two parties have all but changed places politically on a number of fundamental positions in the proletarian movement. It is hard to find an analogous evolution in the history of the modern working class. Its importance, therefore, is perfectly obvious and requires the close attention of the revolutionary Marxist.

What the two parties were in the first post-war decade, is fairly well known. The Socialist Party had declined to an insignificant force. In 1919 its dominating Right wing drove out of the party more than half the membership, partisans of the Russian revolution and the Third International; in 1921 the last of the Left wing that had remained in the Socialist Party departed from it. The party that had risen to a membership of almost 120,000 during the World War was left with a bare 5,000 adherents, a figure around which the debilitated Right wing organization hovered feebly for the following period. For the next decade the S.P. was ruled by its ossified conservative leadership, which gained for it a most unenviable reputation among the class conscious militants in this country. The S.P.—that was Hillquit, Cahan, Oneal, Berger, the reactionary bureaucracy of the needle trades unions, the hated Jewish *Forward*, the virulent anti-communists, the embittered enemies of the Russian revolution.

The Communist Party, however much it suffered from the ailments of childhood and adolescence, nevertheless made a persistent effort to implant the ideas of revolutionary Marxism in the soil of the American labor movement. Not a diletante "friend" of Soviet Russia, but flesh of its flesh, it incarnated the reborn spirit of progress after the reaction of the war years. Add together all its errors, and it nevertheless remains the centralizing force that as-

sembled and clarified the forces of militancy and progressivism in the world's most conservative trade union movement. It was painfully beginning to make a rounded conception and practise of revolutionary Marxism a political force in this country—and who had ever done it before?

If the tersest general balance-sheet were drawn up of the first decade of the coexistence of the Communist Party and the Socialist Party, it would say: the latter acted as the brake on progress in the labor movement; the former acted as accelerator. The C.P. revived the best traditions of Marxism as elucidated by the experiences of the post-war struggles in Europe, above all in Russia. The S.P. was reduced to a miniature edition of all that was decrepit, reformist, conservative in the retrograde European social democracy, but without the latter's power to inflict the same injuries on the working class.

The decay of the official communist movement in the post-Lenin period, which is not unconnected with the revival of the socialist movement, fills the longer part of the second post-war decade. The connection is quite clearly discernible in the United States. Given a generally correct policy and a democratic internal régime that could correct the policy if it was not correct, there is no reason to believe that the Communist Party in this country would not by now have become a truly powerful political force without a serious social democratic rival. In the absence of both correct policy and régime (missing in the rest of the world as well as in the U.S.), the Socialist Party not only found a basis for revival but it has become one of the most important channels through which the Leftward movement of the American workers is flowing.

The simple fact is: those elements who, awakening to radical consciousness, are drawn into the Communist Party, have their development arrested and diverted into opportunistic bypaths. The brutally rigid internal régime of the party makes practically impossible any organized resistance to this devastation of potential revolutionary power. Out of the old Socialist Party, however, is emerging a new and virile movement which, unhampered by the bonds of a bureaucratically state-controlled régime, has responded to an encouraging extent to the signs and needs of the time in the revolutionary movement.

What tremendously important events have we not experienced in the last few years! The most terrific crisis capitalism has yet recorded in its convulsive career; the obvious triumph in the Soviet Union, despite the wasteful and reactionary bureaucracy, of the socialist principle of planned economy over the anarcho-capitalist principle of production for the market; the stupefying collapse of the apparently powerful Socialist and Communist parties in Germany and the subsequent collapse of the Austrian social democracy.

All together, they have had opposite effects on the two big parties in this country. To the Communist Party, enfeebled to the nation-

alistic Soviet bureaucracy, they have meant a change of line in the direction of classic Kautskyanism. To the Socialist Party, enriched by the influx of young and militant elements, they have meant a change of line away from Kautskyanism, away from the principles and practises which wrought such havoc in the world labor movement, away from the policies that dominated the S.P. when the self-styled Old Guard held sway. The parties are traveling roads that lead in opposite directions. Both of them are still in motion; neither of them has yet come to rest at the final position which their movement logically indicates. But to Marxists able to read signposts and to draw arrows over a line of march, the *tendencies* represented by the two parties is unmistakable.

Take a few of the fundamental questions of Marxism: the struggle for power, imperialist war and civil war, bourgeois democracy and Fascism.

In all these questions, the Stalinist party has taken a position (in the post-"Third period" period) that is infinitely closer to the position of the Old Guard and the Second International than it is to the present-day Socialist Party. In every essential, the old social democratic theory and practise of the "lesser evil" is now official dogma in the Stalinist ranks. To prevent Fascism—support bourgeois democracy; support actively or at least "tolerate" Azaña, Benes, Cardenas, Blum-Daladier and—not quite directly but by obvious indirection—Roosevelt. On the crucial question of imperialist war, the Stalinists are in the same camp as the social-patriots of 1914. As the latter defended the "democratic" imperialists and the "small nations" against the "reactionary" imperialists, the former announce their intention of defending their "democratic" fatherland and "poor little Czechoslovakia" (read: "poor little Belgium" or Serbia) against the "Fascist" imperialists. Where Kautsky revised Marx to read that between the capitalist and socialist societies lies the peaceful transitional period taking the political form of a coalition government, the Stalinists, for all their purely reminiscential and formal references to the "dictatorship of the proletariat", merely substitute a re-worded formulation of the same concept. According to the latest revelation (read: plagiarism from Kautsky), between the rule of the bourgeoisie and the rule of the proletariat, there lies the peaceful, parliamentary conquest of power by some ectoplasmic supra-class force known as the "government of the People's Front." After having cunningly removed from power the bourgeoisie without the latter's knowledge, it turns over this power, just as unobtrusively and peacefully, to the proletariat itself, led, it goes without saying, by the Communist Party.

That there exists a poisonous hostility—in this country—between the social democratic Old Guard and the Stalinists, should blind nobody to their political kinship. During the war, for instance, the French and German social democracies were massacring each other in the trenches because they served the ruling bureaucracy of their respective capitalist fatherlands; but politically there was no difference between them. The Stalinists merely serve the Bonapartist bureaucracy of the Soviet Union; the Old Guard aspires to serve the capitalist bureaucracy of a "democratic" America. Both bond and antagonism between the two are determined by these facts.

That is why, of late, the Stalinists have ceased to level criticisms of *principle* against the Old Guard and have confined themselves to purely episodic, conjunctural and tactical recriminations against Cahan-Waldman-Oneal. The latter "are against the Soviet Union"; yet their recent pronouncements (*cf.* John Powers' highly significant comments in the Right wing *New Leader* on Stalin-Litvinov's foreign-political "realism" with regard to the League of Nations, "democracy vs. Fascism", etc.) have showed them to be much closer to the Stalinist bureaucracy than the *Daily Worker* would

care to admit. The only other criticism that the Stalinists make with any spirit against the Old Guard is the latter's refusal to join them in a united front. But that is hardly a matter of principle . . . and when it comes to principles the C.P. must strain every muscle to find the line of demarcation. Astounding as this may seem, it is the all-too-incontrovertible fact.

The events that produced this breath-taking swing to the Right of the Stalinist camp, have had a contrary effect in the ranks of the Socialist Party. They have moved away from the Old Guard and its policies and *towards* the policies of revolutionary Marxism. The word "towards" is intentionally italicized to indicate two things: 1) that it is a question of the direction in which the main stream of the S.P. is moving, even if jerkily; and 2) that the S.P. is far from having arrived *at* the positions of revolutionary Marxism. But what is important about a party which is in a state of flux is not so much—and sometimes not primarily—the official programmatic position that it occupies on paper at a given moment, but the main line of the direction in which it is moving.

The Cleveland convention of the S.P., two years after the Detroit convention at which the Militant group first ousted the Old Guard from its long tenure of office, marked the second big milestone along the road which the party has been traveling. What needed to be said about the vacillations of the Militant leadership, its political trepidation, its penchant for compromise, its hesitancy, its inconsistency and ambiguity on fundamental questions, has often been stated on the pages of our review and, even today, easily bears reiteration. Nevertheless, what is decisive is that one plain, big, highly important fact stands out after Cleveland, a fact which loses none of its *objective* validity and significance simply because the Militants did not strive consciously and consistently to make it a fact. We refer to the final, organizational separation from the Socialist Party of the Old Guard. Whatever may have been the desires of some of its leaders, the Socialist Party is now split in two distinct parts: the party under the leadership of the Militants and the Social Democratic Federation under the leadership of Waldman, Cahan, Oneal, Lee and other premature nonagenarians. That many Right wingers, politically indistinguishable from Waldman and Co., still remain in the Socialist Party, hardly modifies the significance of the split. In the first place, the departed Old Guard represents the head and backbone and heart of the Socialist Party's Right wing; in the second place, those who have remained in the official party have given anything but an enthusiastic indication of their determination to stay much longer.

Nor can the significance of the split be vitiated by reference to the fact that leaders of the Socialist Party pleaded, to the very last minute, with the Old Guard and urged it to remain within the party, insisting that there was room for it and its ideas in the one organization. If one assumes that the Old Guardists are not clique politicians or political bandits who fight merely for spoils and place, but are men with a clear-cut political program, then the fact that they turned a deaf ear even to the most conciliatory proposals and were adamant on the split, should be proof enough that the political *tendencies* represented by those who left and those who remained, far from being identical, have such a gulf between them as to have made reconciliation a practical impossibility. Only tyros and old gossips can conclude that the split was caused by the conflicting desires for leadership of Norman Thomas and Louis Waldman, or any other such puerile superficiality. Neither consciousness nor unconsciousness determines being; that many followers of the Militants are not conscious, or fully conscious of the fact that a great *political* division caused the final break with the Old Guard, does not alter the situation fundamentally.

If further indication of the distance the Socialist Party has

traveled on the road to Marxism is required, the Stalinists supply it in their criticism. Read Browder's latest book; or better yet, Bittelman's pamphlet, *Going Left*, which devotes itself specifically to criticism of the Militants' draft program. It is not where the program is really weak that Bittelman aims his dull shafts, but where its strong points are to be found. What the Old Guard says irascibly, Bittelman, like a mellowed elder statesman who fondly chides the impetuous youth for follies which he himself, thank God! has outgrown, says condescendingly: ". . . sectarianism is creeping into" the Left wing (p. 33); and—unmentionable horror!—the "American labor movement [read: the Stalinist appointees] is too vitally interested in the success of the Left wing to let it, under Trotskyite counter-revolutionary influence, ruin its prospects".

What are the positions that would "ruin the prospects" of the Left wing about which Bittelman expresses such touching paternal solicitude? The Militants' refusal to accept the Stalinist social-patriotic position on war, their healthy recoil from the treacherously seductive "People's Front", that is, positions in which are *implicit* the dividing lines between reformism and revolutionary Marxism.

Therein, however, also lies the outstanding deficiency of the Left wing movement: what is *implicit* in it has not yet been made *explicit*; it has not yet drawn the full implications of its tendency to

their logical, fully revolutionary conclusions. The Cleveland convention, with all its numerous shortcomings, was a long step in this direction and, by virtue of the split between the Left and the Right, confronted the revolutionary Marxists in this country with a new situation and new problems.

The revolutionists who stand under the banner of the Fourth International have no narrow sectarian interests and are guided by none. However exacting they are in their demands for clear-cut clarity in principle, they are at all times conscious of the need of rooting these principles in an ever larger mass movement. The Socialist Party today represents the largest concentration of class conscious militants moving in the direction of consistent Marxism. Its promise is great, and so are the responsibilities which our epoch puts upon its shoulders.

Such responsibilities of the Socialist Party also imply responsibilities for the much smaller group of the Fourth Internationalists. There is every reason to believe that the Workers Party, embracing the vanguard forces of principled fighters for Marxism, will not stand aloof from the movement unfolding before it. Like a comrade-in-arms, it will march side by side with this movement, seeking to help it draw the full lessons of its struggle so that it may reach its logical goal more truly, more smoothly and more speedily than in the past.

M.S.

## The End of Locarno

**A**T THE WORLD economic conference in Genoa in 1922, the Soviet Union and Germany were equally outlaws. None of the victorious Allied countries was prepared to make concessions either to Bolshevism or to defeated Germany. Even though it was then more than natural, it required the greatest efforts on the part of the "Red Baron" von Maltzahn, attached to the German delegation, to convince the principal delegates, Wirth and Rathenau, of the need of a pact with the Russians. And it was only after every effort to arrive at an understanding with England, France and the U.S.A. had failed, that Rathenau and Wirth accepted Chicherin's offer. The agreement which thereafter bore the name of Rapallo was later signed in that locality, neighboring on Genoa, which served as the quarters of the Soviet representative. To the victorious states, the Rapallo treaty came as a painful surprise, for it was not believed that the German bourgeoisie would have so much courage. Most horrified of all, however, was, without doubt, the German social democracy. Its Ebert, then president of the Reich, whose opinion nobody had bothered to inquire about before signing the treaty, declared: "I am through with Rathenau and his clique." And the pusillanimous Rathenau, who still appears to be a personality amid the poverty of political talent in post-war Germany paid with his life for his signature to the Rapallo treaty.

The year 1923 opened the eyes of the Western powers and the U.S.A. to the dangers of continuing a policy of intransigence towards Germany. Came the American loans, and came the negotiations for a positive settlement of the political and economic relations between Germany and France, eagerly demanded by England, which set itself against too presumptuous a rule of France on the continent. Yet the German social democracy also sought with all its strength for a Franco-German agreement. The alliance with the Soviet Union, with which certain currents in German foreign policy (Brockdord-Rantzau, Maltzahn) and certain circles

in the staff of the Reichswehr (Hammerstein) were flirting, was an abomination to reformism. Too vigorously did the existence of the workers' state remind it of its own treachery. The Franco-German negotiations were crowned in 1925 in the Locarno pact concluded between Briand and Stresemann,<sup>1</sup> the pact in which Germany once more recognized as unassailable the Western frontier established by the Versailles Treaty and renounced any militarization and fortification of the Rhineland, and in which France pledged itself to the gradual clearing of the occupied region. And the year after the five Norwegian small-country philistines who hide behind the anonymity of the "Nobel Committee", handed the Peace Prize founded by the deceased Swedish dynamite king to the "creators" of the Locarno pact, the same Stresemann who during the world war defended the political demands of the megalomaniacal Ludendorff and who, as late as 1918, still dreamed of the annexation of Belgium and the Baltic provinces, and the same Briand who, as a member of the French war cabinet, came out in favor of the annexation of the left bank of the Rhine.

Quite different from the Nobel Committee was the judgment of the Locarno pact made by the Soviet bureaucracy which had meanwhile saddled itself upon the workers' state. It explained the pact as directed exclusively at the Soviet Union. And in the struggle against the Left Opposition, which was approaching its decisive moment, the Stalinist bureaucracy adduced the Locarno Pact as a weighty argument for an imminent danger of intervention, with which it frightened the supporters of the Opposition and the non-party masses in the Soviet Union. In reading into the Locarno pact an immediate danger of intervention, it erred no less than did the Nobel Prize distributors who saw in it a hope for a durable organization and stabilization of world peace. Every Eu-

<sup>1</sup> England, Belgium and Italy also signed the Locarno Pact; but for our purposes we may confine ourselves to the Franco-German question.

ropean power still bled from the wounds inflicted upon them by the world war, and none of them yet dared to think of a new campaign on a large scale. It is also likely that the Stalinist bureaucracy, unscrupulous in its choice of weapons, deliberately exaggerated the danger of intervention. In this manner, although the anti-war propaganda and demonstrations of the Comintern in these years lulled the masses to the *real* danger of a coming war, it did help the Stalinist bureaucracy to consolidate its position.

Yet a real fear of intervention did exist. Not least of all under its pressure, the first Five-Year Plan came into being, aimed primarily at the creation of a modern heavy and armaments industry for the Soviet Union. The prevention of intervention, however, became to an increasing extent the only task of the Comintern, degraded by the theory of socialism in a single country to a mere instrument of Soviet foreign policy. His epigones learned from Lenin that it is the art of revolutionary politics to utilize the antagonisms between the imperialists. But whereas with Lenin the goal of promoting the revolution always stood behind this utilization of the antagonisms, with the epigones, this conception was replaced by the goal of merely preventing a war against the Soviet Union. One of the main goals of Soviet policy consisted, therefore, in thwarting, at any price, the Franco-German agreement in order thereby to secure the Western frontier of the Union. And this is the goal towards which the policy of the Comintern was directed, above all after its Sixth World Congress. The Stalinist bureaucracy rightly considered reformism the main prop of the Locarno policy, for the wretched remnants of the miserable Party Board of the German social democracy was still saying in its manifesto of March 7, 1935: "The German social democracy was, from the very outset, the pillar of the idea of the Franco-German agreement. It was the driving force of the foreign policy which led to the signing of Locarno." This is precisely the fact upon which the struggle of the Comintern against the social democracy as the "main enemy" was erected; in it lies the explanation of the theory of social-Fascism. The policy of the German C.P. from 1929 to 1933 acquires meaning only when one keeps clearly in mind the goal of maintaining the Franco-German antagonism set by Soviet diplomacy while neglecting the goal of revolution in Germany. From the standpoint of defending the interests of the proletarian revolution, the theory of social-Fascism, the Red Trade Union Organization policy, the struggle against Versailles, Dawes and Young, the temporary alliances with the National-Socialists against the social democracy ("Red" referendum), the program of national and social emancipation, the rodomontades of Lieutenant Scheringer about the war of national liberation, etc., etc., appear to be the outgrowth of insanity. The policy of the C.P.G. was a malicious caricature of those ideas of the first post-war years which Lenin characterized as "ultra-Leftist infantile maladies" and which led to the founding of the Communist Labor Party of Germany. However, the C.L.P.G. could not be denied a certain revolutionary *élan*, even if it soon disappeared up the chimney. The bureaucratized C.P.G., on the other hand, lacked any revolutionary *élan* whatsoever, its leaders defended ultra-radicalism not out of conviction (Lenin's work against the ultra-Leftists had not remained unknown to at least a number of them), but as obedient marionettes of the bureaucratic center in Moscow.

The C.P. of France functioned in this period as an auxiliary of the C.P.G. It too combatted the Versailles Treaty; it even arranged meetings against the Versailles Treaty with Thälmann as the speaker. Naturally, the struggle against Versailles in France has a more significantly revolutionary character than in Germany and is part of the elementary duties of French communism, for it is after all directed against the bourgeoisie at home. But all sense of

proportion was lost in the Comintern campaign, the anti-Versailles struggle of the C.P.F. had no independent character, it was a lifeless attempt to coördinate the policy of the C.P.F. with that of the C.P.G., mere theatrics which nobody took seriously, least of all the "anti-Versailles warriors" à la Cachin.

After the C.P.G. had thus contributed to the best of its ability towards lifting Hitler nationalism into the saddle,<sup>2</sup> Soviet diplomacy discovered that it had speculated falsely. Reënforced German nationalism turned to a far lesser extent against France than against the Soviet Union. The foreign political goal of the Third Reich consists in being taken back into the graces of the Great Powers as a pioneer fighter against Bolshevism. Yet, France regards the military rebirth of German imperialism with distrust, and even though it has no great objections to a campaign against the U.S.S.R. as such, a German-Russian war nevertheless threatens France's domination over the Little Entente. Soviet foreign policy consequently made a turn about of 180 degrees and thenceforth puts its hopes in France. The most important factor hindering a Soviet Russian-French alliance—the Comintern—had long ago become a mere trading commodity in the hands of the Bonapartist Soviet bureaucracy. To the extent that the negotiations with France for an alliance progressed, the now inopportune struggle against Versailles declined; Stalin and his foreign-political penholder, Radek, discovered in the *status quo* of Versailles and the League of Nations erected on it a "refuge of peace". And in conclusion, the C.P.F. hoisted the tricolor and sang the *Marseillaise*.

What tremendous historical irony is contained in the fact that the Soviet Union and the Comintern sought to out-howl French imperialism at the time when Hitler trampled upon the "anti-Soviet pact" called the Locarno pact. Several scribes of the Comintern even shed touching tears over the destroyed work of peace of Briand and Stresemann. At the following international conferences, Litvinov appeared side by side with Titulescu as the vassal of France. Molotov again assured the correspondent of *Le Temps*, the organ of the *Comité des Forges*, that the Soviet Union would fulfill its contractual obligations towards France in the event of war; indeed, one cannot avoid the impression that the politicians of the Soviet Union are driving France to a belligerent offensive against Germany. When Trotsky, in 1931, excoriated the insane policy of the C.P.G. and revealed the inevitability of the decisive conflict between Fascism and the proletariat, he spoke, among other things, of the fact that—were matters to reach the point of open civil war in Germany and the outcome was uncertain—it would be the duty of the Red Army to stand by for the German revolutionists. Thereupon the journalistic crew of the Comintern raised a terrific cry: Trotsky is provoking a war of intervention and God knows what else. To be sure, comrade Trotsky asked for too much; the Bonapartized Red Army was no longer usable in the struggle for the interests of the German proletariat; but to defend the *status quo* of Versailles, the "communist" marshalls have no reservations whatsoever. Let us not be misunderstood. We Bolshevik-Leninists have never disputed the right of the Soviet state to conclude an alliance with one capitalist state against the threat of another. Our theses, which appeared more than 2 years ago, fully acknowledge this right and comrade Trotsky has expressed the same ideas in numerous articles and brochures. What we guard against with all our strength, how-

<sup>2</sup> Dimitroff's precursor in the general secretariat of the Comintern, Piatnitsky, went so far as to explain the victory of the Nazis by the fact that the C.P.G. was not sufficiently national-istic and this idiocy is still current today, when the whole Comintern is already crawling on its belly before the victors of Versailles.

ever, is that in these negotiations the interests of the international proletariat are unscrupulously traded off. Now, what should be said about the big-mouthed boasting recently contained in *Pravda* which assures us at every step that the Soviet Union is in a position to defend itself from any attack from the East or the West, by itself and without any assistance from without? What should be said when the foreign-political collaborator of *l'Humanité*, the organ of the C.P.F., babbles the same way? In *l'Humanité* of March 10, this adept of Stalin lets loose with the following:

"Has the question been asked, against whom is this threat [Hitler's march into the Rhineland] aimed first of all? It is without doubt aimed at the U.S.S.R., but after all everybody knows that the U.S.S.R. is capable of defending itself without any assistance from without."

Up to now, the foreign policy of the Soviet Union and the policy of civil peace of the French, Czechoslovakian and Rumanian Communist Parties which they have realized even before the outbreak of war, has been explained on the grounds that all this is occurring for the sake of preserving the U.S.S.R. Even though this could in no case be considered a *justification* of the policy of civil peace, it was nevertheless a half-way plausible *explanation*. But now we learn that it is not at all a question of the U.S.S.R.; it is capable—as *Pravda* and *l'Humanité* say, and they ought to know—of defending itself without any aid from abroad. Then it is not a question of the U.S.S.R.; what *is* it a question of? Molotov assures France of military support by the Red Army, and the French "communists" speak of France's "just cause" (Cachin in *l'Humanité*, March 9). Is it, then, simply and clearly a question of French imperialism? The defense of thieving-oppressive French finance capital, its blood-sucking domination of North Africa, Indonesia, Syria, its indirectly exploitative rule of Czechoslovakia and Rumania—is all this a task of the world proletariat? In point of fact, M. Péri accomplishes even this cynicism. In the article of his which we have just quoted, he continues:

"Much more directly are the peoples of Central Europe and the Danube affected by the Hitler threat, peoples who are the confederates ['associés'; M. Péri might better have written: 'vassals'] of France, upon the collaboration with whose states France has founded its policy. These are the peoples who will offer the slightest resistance to the adventure of the Nazis. The question must therefore be answered: 1) whether France will permit these powers to be cut off; 2) whether France will permit the war to be launched in the East and Southeast of Europe, a war which will threaten the whole of Europe a few hours later. This plan threatens not only the security of individuals. It threatens the security of all, British security not excepted."

Let us note in passing that the French Stalinists make it their business to worry not only about the security of their own imperialism, but of British as well. In any case, the Péri article which we have quoted presents a clear-cut picture of how the communo-imperialism of the Third International, even before the outbreak of the new war, puts in the shade anything that the social-imperialism of the Second International had to offer during the World War.

It is not astonishing that the standpoint of French imperialism finds numerous supporters also in the camp of the German emigration. Least astonishing of all is the so-called Party Board of the German social democracy. When the bloody terror set in in Germany in March 1933 and the foreign papers of the Second International wrote about it, the Honorable Wels withdrew, for this reason and upon Hitler's order, from the Bureau of the Second International. Twice, on March 24 and on May 17, 1933, at the two last sessions of the Reichstag that Hitler permitted the social

democracy to participate in, these honorable personages expressed their confidence in Hitler's foreign policy. And only because Hitler simply refused to permit them to be for him, the Honorable Wels and the Honorable Hilferding now come forward in favor of the interests of the French bourgeoisie, just as they were for the German bourgeoisie from 1914 to 1933. That the C.P.G. emigrants are likewise for France, is founded in the logic of things. Just as the C.P.F. was yesterday an auxiliary of the policy of the C.P.G., the modest remnants of the C.P.G. are today an auxiliary of the C.P.F. The "pioneer fighters" against Versailles, Dawes and Young as the henchmen of Versailles—that is a rude, but by no means undeserved fate for the Piecks, Ulbrichts and comrades. As to the emigrated liberals à la Bernhard and Schwarzschild, things are even simpler. With them it is a question of: "Whose bread I eat—his song I sing." As for the political dillettantes, the writers Heinrich Mann, Lion Feuchtwanger, etc., who have blundered into this company, one can only wish that they understand the memento left them by the suicide of Kurt Tucholsky. Let us record in passing that in addition—how should it be otherwise?—the *Neue Front* (organ of the S.A.P.) also makes its bows to the civil peace in France (March 15, 1936).

Fortunately, the civil peace is by no means unanimous. The seed of the Fourth International is already beginning to sprout powerful shoots. Hitler's march into the Rhineland was its first general test. The French journals fighting under the banner of the Fourth International, *Révolution* and *La Commune*, and the organizations behind them (*Jeunesse Socialiste Révolutionnaire*, *Groupe Bolchévick-Léniniste*, *Parti Communiste-Internationaliste*), which we hope will soon merge into a united organization, continued their resolute struggle against French imperialism, for the liberation of the French proletariat and the colonial peoples oppressed by French imperialism. Only with them do we feel ourselves allied, but not with the miserable henchmen of the *Comité des Forges*, the Blums and Jouhauxes, the Cachins and Thorezes.<sup>3</sup>

It can easily be imagined that the social-imperialists and communo-imperialists will calumniate us, supporters of the Fourth International, as agents of Hitler. *l'Humanité* has sent up more than one trial balloon in this sense. To lie and calumniate a political opponent out of existence has long been a beloved weapon of all

<sup>3</sup> A group of radical French pacifists also took a position against their own imperialism. The journal *Le Barrage* published a manifesto which bore, among others, the signature of the confusionist and French S. A.P.ist, Marceau Pivert, but also those of such notable writers as Magdeleine Paz and Marcel Martinet. This manifesto says, among other things: "It is necessary that an air pact prevents any possibility of a sudden attack from the air until general disarmament prevents the possibility of any war. It is correct for a régime of equality with regard to the colonies and an equal distribution of raw materials to be realized. . . . It is also correct for the statute of the League of Nations to be separated from the Versailles Treaty," etc., etc., in the same style. Although this language (on the French side) seems to be more worthy of respect than

the chauvinism of *l'Humanité*, we cannot, nevertheless, emphasize sharply enough the abyss that separates us from pacifists of this stripe. Revolutionists trust as little in an air pact between imperialist robbers as they did in the recently broken Locarno pact. Nor do they look forward to the prevention of imperialist wars by general disarmament, but rather by the international victory of the armed proletariat over the imperialist robbers. They demand no repartition of the colonies, but the direct and immediate abolition of all colonial oppression. Germany's economic difficulties do not lie in its lack of raw materials but in its capitalist management, and our concern is not with the reorganization of the League of Nations but with the creation of the united Socialist Soviet Republics of Europe and the whole world!

reactionary and oppressive parties. And the Comintern of the period of decline has done all that was humanly possible against the Bolshevik-Leninists in this respect. This does not prevent us from raising our voices, for we know from historical experience that the power of lie and calumny is a limited power, and that the knowledge of truth will prevail.

In its time we sharply criticized and combatted the "policy of national and social emancipation" of the C.P.G. We pointed out that the main enemy of the German proletariat is not the victor states of Versailles but the German finance capitalists, the Rhenish-Westphalian big industrialists, the East Elbian Junkers. Back in 1931, comrade Trotsky warned: Hitler's victory means war against the U.S.S.R. The C.P.G. threw all these warnings to the wind and helped Hitler to power by its policy, capitulating to him cravenly and without struggle. And today the foreign apparatus of the G.P.G. only stands in the way of the struggle to overturn German Fascism. Don't these gentlemen really understand that their miserable capitulation to French imperialism must bring the German people to the point of rallying around Hitler, just as the wretched hypocrisy of English imperialism in the Italo-Ethiopian affair first made Mussolini's raid popular among the Italian people?

Don't we need what England needs? the embittered Italian asked himself. Don't we need what France needs? asks the average German. France built the Maginot line and they want to prevent us from stationing troops in the Rhineland? Only that current can hope to win the blinded masses of all countries that takes a stand against the claims of *all* the imperialists to war and oppression. You will only burn your fingers with the cry of "Agents of Hitler", Messrs. Communo-imperialists! In the last war, Rosmer and Monatte in France were calumniated as agents of the Hohenzollerns, Karl Liebknecht as an agent of the Czar and Lenin, again, as an agent of the Hohenzollerns. This did not prevent the masses, in the course of the war, from beginning to recognize everywhere their true friends. And if you come to us today with the calumny that we are working in Hitler's service, we reply: We are neither Germany nor France, neither England nor the U.S.A., we are the international proletariat. For its historical interests, only the supporters of the Fourth International are fighting today. That is why the future belongs to it and to it alone.

Walter HELD

PARIS, April 13, 1936.

# Wages and Prices in the Soviet Union

## 1. *The Leap from the One Thousand and One Types of Ruble to the Unit (Standard) Ruble.*

SINCE THE inception of the "Great Plan", from 1927-1928, the state organs of the Soviet Union no longer published *price indices*. The currency broke down. The purchasing power of the ruble on the "open" state and kolkhoz market, and in the "open" state stores, restaurants, hotels, etc. (i.e., those accessible to all citizens without special permits) was approximately equivalent to the purchasing power of two pre-war kopecks [*ca.* one cent U.S. at par].

In addition, however, there was a vast amount of "privileged" rubles, the same paper tokens, the purchasing power of which ran the gamut of a thousandfold variations in the "closed" enterprises depending upon the industry, institution or bureau in which the particular Soviet citizen worked, depending upon the post which he occupied on the political, administrative, technical and, therefore, also social ladder. If a French paper recently called the German Reichsbank president Schacht the "Father of the Forty Types of Mark", then Stalin in recent years could have been praised (or damned) as the "Father of the 1001 Types of Ruble". This resulted in such social "price perversions" that the best-paid layers, especially in the party and state apparatus, as well as the highest-paid engineers, directors, architects, artists, etc., received in their "closed" stores better goods in greater variety and at cheaper prices. Similar social price perversions prevailed in the "closed" restaurants: in the factory canteen, the worker earning 120 to 200 rubles a month received for 80 kopecks a plate of watery cabbage soup, a portion of buckwheat gruel and a slice of black bread of poor quality (rye flour mixed with soy bean flour); the chief engineer with his 2,000 to 10,000 rubles a month paid one rouble and 20 kopecks for a menu of three courses, whereas the "Kremlin people" did not pay even as much as 60 kopecks a day in the Kremlin restaurant for a menu of five courses plus free drinks. These people received monthly tickets for noon and evening meals (the latter of three courses) for the total sum of 28 rubles.

Finally, there was the Torgsin ruble (Torgsin means trade with

foreign tourists), which, however, we do not need to consider, inasmuch as it occupied almost no place in the budget of the broad working masses of the Soviet Union. The purchasing power of the paper ruble in the hands of a foreigner who could buy in the Insab stores (Insab means provisions for foreigners), was approximately equivalent to the purchasing power of the ruble in the hands of a minor state and party functionary.

With the abolition of the card system and the creation of a standard (unit) domestic ruble, with the liquidation of the Torgsin Stores, the period of the 1001 types of ruble comes to a close—at least in domestic circulation—and the unit ruble, money in the real sense of the term, is again restored to its old use (or abuse).

## 2. *The 1001 Types of Ruble and the Fairy Tales of the 1001 Nights.*

It is said, and not without justification that statistics lie. But many more lies can be produced when depraved fantasy is not in the least bound within certain limits of statistical rudiments. The period during which there was no price index, the period when there as an untold number of prices for one and the same article, in short, the period of the 1001 types of ruble, was the boom period of the tellers of fairy tales, who told of the living conditions of the Russian toiling masses. Because of the 1001 types of ruble, each reporter, who published fairy tales from the 1001 Nights about the Soviet Union in the foreign press, could assume the air of being "objective". He either took the real value of his own privileged ruble for the "Soviet ruble as such" or, depending upon the political aims he pursued, he simply took any one type of ruble and juggled it as if it were a "unit ruble". In this little game the ball was batted back and forth between the so-called Friends of the Soviet Union and its Enemies. The former figured out a fabulously high standard of living for the Russian worker, and the latter an impossibly low one. The Enemy of the Soviet Union who in his Intourist hotels paid 20 rubles for a noon-day meal and 35 rubles on the open state or kolkhoz market for a kilo of butter, sought to prove that the Russian worker with his average wage of 140 rubles at that time, could not even afford seven real noon day meals a month, let alone fulfill his other needs.



The Soviet "Friend" recounted, on the other hand, the well-worn fairy tale of the Soviet paradise. He abstracted away from the 1001 types of ruble, if not when it came to wages, then when it was a matter of prices, and identified Soviet prices with the commodity prices of his own capitalist country, thereby placing the Soviet ruble on the gold standard. For these story tellers, and the masses who believed them, the average wage of 140 rubles a month was approximately equivalent to the purchasing power of 290 German marks, 2,800 Czechoslovakian kronen, or 155 Dutch guilders. Thus, the notorious Münzenberg *A.I.Z.* in 1933, the year of greatest crisis, published photographs depicting the life of female servants who, in addition to getting free lodging and food, earned 40 rubles a month or "85 marks". The *A.I.Z.* naturally forgot to mention that at that time in the open state stores (necessities could not be purchased in closed coöperatives by servants) a pair of shoes cost 150 rubles, a simple silk dress 300 rubles, a pair of stockings 17 rubles, etc.

The currency reform, the liquidation of the Torgsin ruble and the creation of a unit domestic ruble will put a stop to all this cheap clap-trap. A standardized currency means standard prices. Wages and prices will again become the measuring rod for the standard of living of the Russian toiling masses. The Soviet reporter, the politician and the economist will once more be forced by the currency reform to use real figures and, whether he likes it or not, to make the leap from the fairy tale of the 1001 Nights to the domain of statistics. *Hic Rhodus, hic salta!* Here are the prices,—here are the real wages of the Russian worker!

### 3. Prices and the Purchasing Power of the Ruble.

In the following analysis of the standard of living of the Russian workers we shall use only the official Soviet figures on prices and wages in the Soviet Union. We shall compare these prices and wages with the prices and wages in Czechoslovakia.

In the following table, we list in the first column the prices in rubles for various foodstuffs per kilo, which were paid on January 1, 1935 by workers for definitely set amounts in the "closed" stores. We ought to note incidentally that in the course of the last three years these prices had risen about sixfold.

The figures in the second column show the prices per kilo of the respective commodities which had to be paid on the same day, January 1, 1935 for supplies in any desired quantity on the open state market. The figures in the third column represent the new prices after October 1, 1935. In the last column we list the prices per kilo for the same commodities in Czechoslovakia (in kronen; the Czech Krone is worth about 4.15 cents U. S. at present exchange).

Foodstuffs per kilo	Jan. 1, 1935		Oct. 1, 1935	In
	In "closed" stores (in rubles)	In "open" stores	"Free" trade only (in rubles)	Czechoslovakia (in kronen)
Rye bread	.54	1.10	.95	2.40
White bread	.68	1.20	1.10	2.60
Rye flour	1.70	2.30	1.80	2.60
White flour	2.10	2.55	2.20	3.20
Buckwheat	.42	2.30	2.20	2.60
Farina	1.00	5.10	4.60	3.60
Rice, Grade B	2.00	7.00	5.50	2.20
Meat, Grade A	2.70	17.00	7.60	14.00
Meat, Grade C	1.60	15.00	5.00	7.00
Sausage	4.60	20.00	12.00	15.00
Gran. sugar	2.00	6.50	4.50	6.00
Cube sugar	2.20	7.50	4.90	6.30
Butter	6.00	34.00	15.00	20.00

What does the above statistical comparison show? From the first three columns of figures we can see that the last year ushered

in a considerable improvement only in this respect: that the bureaucratic card system has been liquidated and food supplies are once more available in any desired quantity although the prices are much higher than the prices for previously cheaper, rationed supplies. The Russian worker does not say as does the Communist correspondent, "We are living more cheaply", but, "We must buy all goods in the expensive stores at higher prices, even though these prices are lower than the old open market prices. Therefore we must earn more, we must exceed the labor norm, work more if we want to get enough to eat." This was also the most important driving force of the so-called Stakhanov movement.

To ascertain the buying power of the Soviet ruble only the last two columns of figures are of interest to us: the present prices for a series of the most important food supplies in the Soviet Union (in rubles) and the prices of the same food supplies in Czechoslovakia (in kronen).

#### The purchasing power of 1 ruble when buying:

	Is equal to	2.50	Kronen
Bread	"	1.45	"
Flour	"	1.20	"
Buckwheat	"	.50	"
Rice	"	1.30	"
Sugar	"	1.33	"
Butter	"	1.40-1.80	"
Meat	"		

As is well known, the most important Russian food even today is bread. Of the above-listed necessities buckwheat is of extremely great importance in the budget of the Russian worker or peasant. Rice, on the other hand, is a luxury food.

According to this tabulation the average purchasing power of a ruble for foodstuffs is equal to the purchasing power of 1.60-1.80 kronen (i.e., 6-7-8 cents U. S.).

The situation is much worse when it comes to most of the commodities for mass consumption—clothes, shoes, household articles, etc. Shoes of such quality as would cost 50-60 kronen in Czechoslovakia are sold in Russia for 80-160 rubles. A pair of under-drawers costs 17 rubles there, the same quality article in Czechoslovakia is purchasable for 25 kronen. In general, prices for industrial products in Russia, as compared with pre-war prices, are twice as high as the prices for agricultural products, so that in relation to industrial products the purchasing power of the Soviet ruble is approximately equivalent to the purchasing power of .80-.90 kronen.

Inasmuch as the rent paid by the Russian worker is one half to one sixth of that paid by the Czech worker (depending on whether he lives in a new or an old building), we shall come most closely to the real situation if we set the average purchasing power of the Soviet ruble as equal to the purchasing power of 1.80 Czechoslovakian kronen.

### 4. The Wages of the Russian Worker.

The average wage of the Russian worker according to the official Soviet figures is 170 rubles. This corresponds to the purchasing power of 306 kronen (170 x 1.80). Thus the average wage of the Russian worker is still about 50% below the average wage of the Czech worker, which is 600 kronen per month. A monthly wage of 170 rubles, however, is still 32% below the average wage of a factory worker in Czarist Russia. The average wage of a factory worker in 1913 (Czarist statistics are confined solely to this category) was 22 gold rubles, i.e., 443.52 kronen. At 306 kronen, which are equivalent to 15 gold rubles, the present average Russian wage is about 68% of the average wage of the Russian factory worker under Czarism. The shorter working day (the Soviet worker works 7 hours a day, 6 days a week; the Czarist worker worked 12 hours a day and more, 7 days a week) is of tremendous political, social and cultural importance but plays no part in computing the standard of living.

To be sure, Russian wages have risen, as compared with the years of crisis, 1932-1933. In 1934 the then average wage of 149 rubles was equivalent to the purchasing power of the meager sum of 11 pre-war rubles. In 1932-1933 the real wage of the Russian worker had fallen as low as or even lower than the average wage during the hunger year of 1921, during which according to official Soviet statistics the average wage was equal to 6.95 pre-war rubles or 31.6% of the pre-war wage.

Whoever mechanically compares the present living standard of the Russian worker with the standard of living during the year 1921 and deduces therefrom a tremendous and steady rise of real income is committing a great statistical and *political* blunder. He forgets the fact that between 1921 and 1930 lies the period of the Leninist New Economic Policy (the N.E.P.) and that in 1924 the pre-war level of the average wage of 22 gold rubles, was attained. In the following years, wages rose steadily and finally, in 1926, reached the sum of 75 rubles (nominal value), an amount equivalent to 35 pre-war rubles; that is, they were 60% above the average wage of 1913.

In order to show the dynamics of the average wage scale we reproduce the following statistical table:

	In Rubles (Gold)	In Percentages (1913 as standard)
1913	22.00	100.
1918	8.99	40.9
1919	8.71	39.6
1920	7.12	32.4
1921	6.95	31.6
1922 (1st half)	8.22	37.4
1924	22.00	100.
1926-27	35.00	160.
1932-33	6.50	29.
Jan. 1, 1936	15.00	68.

On the same day, on January 1, 1936, a Stakhanovist earned 1,500-2,000 rubles or 136-182 pre-war rubles, thus earning 560%-830% of the average wage of the factory workers in 1913.

To summarize briefly: the present average wage of a Russian worker is 32% below the pre-war wage of a Russian factory worker; the average wage of a Stakhanovist is 6-8 times above the average wage of 1913 and 9 to 12 times greater than the average wage of the Russian working class as a whole. According to official Soviet figures over 12,000,000 Russian workers receive a wage of 170 rubles or less. Among them there are extremely low wages of 60-80 rubles, especially for women doing unskilled work. In addition, there are over half a million invalids and pensioners who, according to the statistics of the Commissariat of Labor, receive less than 40 rubles, that is, less than 72 kronen a month. We have left out of our analysis the standard of living of the special "reserve army" which the Russian state has created.

At the beginning of the Russian industrial revolution (the realization of Stalin's "great Plan") the ratio between the lowest and the highest wages was 1 to 6; the ratio between the dole to the unemployed which in the Moscow zone, for example, was 15 to 20 rubles a month, and the maximum wage was 1 to 10. The party maximum, i.e., the highest wage which a party member could receive, regardless of his position in the state apparatus, in industry, in the party or in the trade unions, amounted to 175 rubles at that time. In 1932 the party maximum was abolished. Today, the ratio between the minimum and the maximum wage in the working class between 60 rubles and 1,800 rubles is 1 to 30; between the most poorly paid workers (60 rubles) and the most highly paid government officials, engineers, etc. (8,000 to 20,000 rubles per month) it is 1 to 300 and greater.

### 5. Who is the Beneficiary?

A glance at the above differentiation in present-day Russian society shows who has become the beneficiary by the new Stalinist system. In 1921 Lenin said the following about drawing bourgeois specialists into industrial construction:

"The best organizers and the most outstanding specialists can be made use of by the state either in a bourgeois way as hitherto (i.e., at high salaries) or in a new proletarian way (i.e., by a system of planning and control from below which embraces the entire country and which inevitably and by itself will subordinate and draw in the specialists). We now find ourselves compelled to resort to the old bourgeois method and are forced to assent to extraordinarily high salaries in return for the 'services' of the most outstanding bourgeois specialists."

The Soviet government has now given up utilizing its statesmen, party officials, engineers and Red officers, i.e., all the supporters and beneficiaries of the régime, in a "proletarian way", and utilizes them instead—to use Lenin's expression—in the "old bourgeois way", that is, in capitalist fashion. The Russian proletariat has been deprived of the creative right of participating in decisions ("control from below"—Lenin). In 1932, the trade unions were practically liquidated by their merger with the People's Commissariat of Labor. After the abolition of the last rights of democratic centralism the party has been turned into an apparatus which merely executes blindly, dumbly and uncritically the commands of the highest bodies. The Soviets have been rendered completely impotent. Molotov recently complained of the "bureaucratic degeneration" of the Soviets and posed as their real task the care of the cultural needs of the masses, and the words of this highest statesman of the Soviet Union depict most clearly the complete political disfranchisement of the Soviets.

In modern Soviet society a new class is crystallizing ever more sharply: the class of the beneficiaries of the New Course. Between it and the proletariat—for several months now—stands, as the social support of the ruling stratum, a new labor aristocracy in the factories, the Stakhanovists.

Whither is Soviet society heading? The struggle of the workers against the Stakhanov movement marks the stages through which the Russian labor movement will pass. When the official trade union paper, *Trud*, in its November 12, 1935 issue, complains of the bitter struggle of the Russian worker against the Stakhanovists and states that "one is reminded at every step of the class struggle", it is unconsciously expressing a great social and political truth. With great speed the Russian working class is again passing through all those stages for which the Western European working class required decades of bitter experience and struggle in the nineteenth century. If at the beginning of the industrial plan, especially in 1931-1932, the Russian workers "smashed the machines", destroyed parts in huge quantities, cut the belts and threw stones and sand into the machines until the Soviet government introduced the death penalty for damaging machinery; if today the method of individual terror is being used against the Stakhanovists, the new labor aristocracy, the "labor lieutenants in the factories" then, according to reports from various parts of the Soviet Union there are also signs of the first beginnings of the building of an independent Marxian labor movement in the Soviet Union. From the utopia of machine-smashing, from individual terror against the Stakhanovists, the Russian worker, who has not forgotten the mighty experiences of the Revolution of 1905, and especially of 1917, and who has passed through decades of Marxian schooling, will quickly find the way to science, to the formation of an illegal socialist labor party.

PRAGUE, April 1936.

Erich WOLLENBERG

# Engels' Letters to Kautsky

THE YEAR 1935 marks the fortieth anniversary of the death of Friedrich Engels, one of the authors of the *Communist Manifesto*. The other author was Karl Marx. This anniversary is notable, among other things, for the fact that Karl Kautsky, having passed his eighty-first year, has finally published his correspondence with Engels.<sup>1</sup> To be sure, Kautsky's own letters have been preserved only in rare instances, but almost all of Engels' letters have come down to us. The new letters of course do not reveal a new Engels. His enormous international correspondence, as much of it as was preserved, has been published almost in its entirety; his life has been subjected to ample study. Nevertheless this latest book is a very valuable gift to those who are seriously interested in the political history of the final decades of the last century, the course of development of Marxian ideas, the destiny of the working class movement and, finally, in the personality of Engels.

During Marx's lifetime, Engels, as he himself put it, played second fiddle. But with his co-worker's last illness, and especially after the latter's death, Engels became the direct and unchallenged leader of the orchestra of world socialism for a period of twelve years. By that time Engels had long rid himself of his commercial ties; he was entirely independent so far as money was concerned, and he was able to devote his entire time to editing and publishing the literary legacy of Marx, to pursue his own scientific researches, and to engage in an enormous correspondence with the Left wingers of the working class movement in all countries. His correspondence with Kautsky dates to the closing period of Engels' life (1881-1895).

Engels' personality, unique in its purposefulness and lucidity, has been subjected to diverse interpretations in the ensuing years—such is the logic of the struggle. Suffice to recall that during the last war, Ebert, Scheidemann and others portrayed Engels as a German patriot, while the publicists of the Entente pictured him as a Pan-Germanist. On this, as well as other points the letters help to strip away tendentious encrustations from Engels' personality. But their gist does not lie here. The letters are remarkable primarily because they are characteristic of the man. One can say without fear of exaggeration that every new human document pertaining to Engels reveals him to have been finer, nobler and more fascinating than we had previously known.

The second party to the correspondence has also a claim to our interest. In the early Eighties, Kautsky came to the fore in the rôle of the official theoretician of then German social democracy, which in its own turn, became the leading party in the Second International. As was the case with Engels during Marx's lifetime, so Kautsky, too, played at best second fiddle while Engels lived—and he did his playing at a great remove from the first violinist. After Engels' death, the authority of the disciple grew rapidly, reaching its zenith during the epoch of the first Russian Revolution (1905). . . . In his commentary to the correspondence, Kautsky describes his agitation on his first visit to the homes of Marx and Engels. A quarter of a century later, many young Marxists—in particular the writer of this article—experienced the very same agitation as they climbed the stairway of the modest, tidy house in Fridenau, in the suburbs of Berlin, where Kautsky lived for many years. He was then considered the outstanding and unchallenged leader in the International, at any rate, upon questions of theory. He was referred to by opponents as the "Pope" of Marxism.

But Kautsky did not long maintain his high authority. Great

events during the last quarter of the century dealt him crushing blows. During and after the war Kautsky personified irritable indecisiveness. What had hitherto been suspected only by a few was now fully confirmed, namely, that his Marxism was essentially academic and contemplative in character. When Kautsky writes Engels from Vienna, during a strike, in April 1889, that ". . . my thoughts are more on the streets than at this writing table" (p. 242), these words seem utterly unexpected and almost false coming even from the pen of a young Kautsky. Throughout his whole life, the writing table remained his field of operation. He looked upon street events as hindrances. His is a claim to a popularizer of the doctrine, an interpreter of the past, a defender of the method. Yes, this he was, but never a man of action, never a revolutionist, or an heir to the spirit of Marx and Engels.

The correspondence lays bare completely not only the radical difference between the two personalities but also something utterly unexpected, for the present generation at any rate—the antagonism that existed between Engels and Kautsky, which finally led to a break in their personal relations.

### "The General"

Engels' insight into military matters, based not only upon his extensive special knowledge but also upon his general capacity for a synthesized appraisal of conditions and forces, enabled him to publish in the London *Pall-Mall Gazette*, during the Franco-Prussian War, remarkable military articles, ascribed by fame to one of the highest military authorities of the time (the Messrs. "Authorities", doubtless, surveyed themselves in the mirror not without considerable astonishment). In his intimate circle Engels was dubbed with the playful nickname of the "General". This name is signed to a number of his letters to Kautsky.

Engels was not an orator, or it may be that he never had the occasion to become one. Towards "orators" he displayed even a shade of disrespect, holding, not without foundation, that they incline to turn ideas into banalities. But Kautsky recalls Engels as a remarkable conversationalist, endowed with an inexhaustible memory, remarkable wit, and precision of expression. Unfortunately, Kautsky himself is a mediocre observer, and no artist at all: in his own letters Engels stands out infinitely more clearly than in the commentaries and recollections of Kautsky.

Engels' relations with people were foreign to all sentimentalism or illusions and permeated through and through with a penetrating simplicity and, therefore, profoundly human. In his company around the evening table, where representatives of various countries and continents gathered, all contrast disappeared as if by magic between the polished radical duchess Schack and the not at all polished Russian Nihilist, Vera Zasulich. The rich personality of the host manifested itself in this happy capacity to lift himself and others above everything secondary and superficial, without departing in the least either from his views or even his habits.

One would seek in vain in this revolutionist for bohemian traits so prevalent among the radical intellectuals. Engels was intolerant of sloppiness and negligence both in small and big things. He loved precision of thought, precision in accounting, exactitude in expression and in print. When a German publisher attempted to alter his spelling, Engels demanded back several galleys for revision. He wrote, "I would no sooner allow anybody to foist his spelling on me than I would a wife" (p. 147). This irate and at the same time jocose sentence almost brings Engels back to life again!

In addition to his native tongue, over which his mastery was that of a virtuoso, Engels wrote freely in English, French, Italian; he read Spanish and almost all Slavic and Scandinavian languages. His knowledge of philosophy, economics, history, physics, philology, and military science would have sufficed for a goodly dozen of ordinary and extraordinary professors. But even apart from all this he possessed his main treasure: winged thought.

In June 1884, when Bernstein and Kautsky, affecting Engels' own likes and dislikes, complained to him of the incipient pressure of all sorts of "erudite" philistines in the party, Engels said in reply, "the main thing is to concede nothing and, in addition, to remain absolutely calm" (p.119). While the General himself did not always retain "absolute calm" in the literal sense of the term—on the contrary, he was wont on occasion to boil over magnificently—he was always able to rise quickly above temporary mishaps, and restore the necessary balance between his thoughts and emotions. The elemental side of his personality was optimism combined with humor towards himself and those close to him, and irony towards his enemies. In his optimism there was not a modicum of smugness—the term itself rebounds from his image. The subsoil springs of his joy of living had their source in a happy and harmonious temperament, but the latter was permeated through and through with the knowledge that brought with it the greatest of joys: the joy of creative perception.

Engels' optimism extended equally to political questions and to personal affairs. After each and any defeat he would immediately cast about for those conditions which were preparing a new upswing, and after every blow life dealt him he was able to pull himself together and look to the future. Such he remained to his dying day. There were times when he had to remain on his back for weeks in order to get over the effects of a rupture he suffered from a fall during one of the "gentry's" riding to foxes. At times his aged eyes refused to function under artificial light which one cannot do without even during daytime in the London fogs. But Engels never refers to his ailments except in passing, in order to explain some delay, and only in order to promise immediately thereupon that everything would shortly "proceed better", and then the work will be resumed at full speed.

One of Marx's letters has a reference to Engels' habit of playfully winking during a conversation. This helpful "winking" passes through Engels' entire correspondence. The man of duty and of profound attachments bears the least resemblance to an ascetic. He was a lover of nature and of art in all its forms, he loved the company of clever and merry people, the presence of women, jokes, laughter, good dinners, good wine and good tobacco. At times he was not averse to the belly-laughter of Rabelais who readily looked for his inspiration below the navel. In general, nothing human was alien to him. Not seldom in his correspondence do we run across references to the effect that several bottles of good wine were opened in his house to celebrate New Year, or the happy outcome of German elections, his own birthday, and sometimes events of lesser importance. Rarely do we come across the General's complaints about his having to remain prone on the sofa "instead of drinking with you . . . well, what is postponed is not yet lost" (p. 335). The writer was at the time over 72 years of age. Several months later, a false rumor circulated through the press that Engels was gravely ill. The 73-year old General writes, "So, anent the rapidly ebbing resistance, and the hourly expected demise, we emptied several bottles" (p. 352).

Was he, perhaps, an epicurean? The secondary "boons of life" never held sway over this man. He was genuinely interested in the family morals of the savages or in the enigmas of Irish philology but always in indissoluble connection with the future destinies of

mankind. If he permitted himself to joke trivially, it was only in the company of untrivial people. Underlying his humor, irony and joy of living one always feels a moral pathos—without the slightest phrase-mongering or posturing, always deeply hidden but all the more genuine and ever ready for sacrifice. The man of commerce, the possessor of a mill, a hunter's horse and a wine cellar was a revolutionary communist to the marrow of his bones.

#### *Marx's Executor*

Kautsky does not exaggerate in the least when he states in his commentary to the correspondence that in the entire history of the world it would be impossible to find a parallel instance of two men of such powerful temperaments and ideological independence as Marx and Engels who remained throughout their entire lives so indissolubly bound together by the evolution of their ideas, their social activity and personal friendship. Engels was quicker on the uptake, more mobile, enterprising and many-sided; Marx, more ponderous, more stubborn, harsher to himself and to others. Himself a luminary of the first magnitude, Engels recognized Marx's intellectual authority with the self-same simplicity that he generally established his personal and political relationships.

The collaboration of these two friends—here is the context in which this word attains its fullest meaning!—extended so deeply as to make it impossible for anyone ever to establish the line of demarcation between their works. However, infinitely more important than the purely literary collaboration was the spiritual community that existed between them, and that was never broken. They either corresponded daily, sending epigrammatic notes, understanding each other with half-statements, or they carried on an equally epigrammatic conversation amid clouds of cigar smoke. For some four decades, in their continual struggle against official science and traditional superstitions, Marx and Engels served each other in place of public opinion.

Engels looked upon providing Marx with material assistance as a most important political obligation; and it was chiefly on this account that he bound himself to many years' drudgery in "accursed trade"—a sphere in which he functioned as successfully as he did in all others: his estate grew and together with it the well-being of Marx' family improved. After Marx died, Engels transferred all his cares to Marx' daughters. The old servant of the Marx couple, Helene Demuth, who was an indissoluble part of the whole family, became immediately the housekeeper of Engels' home. Towards her Engels behaved with a tender loyalty, sharing with her all his interests that were within her grasp, and after she died he complained how much he missed her advice not only in personal but in party matters. Engels willed to the daughters of Marx practically his entire estate, which amounted to 30,000 pounds, outside of the library, furniture, etc.

If in his younger years Engels withdrew into the shadows of the textile industry in Manchester in order to provide Marx with the opportunity to work on *Das Kapital*, then, subsequently, as an old man, without complaining, and one can say with assurance, without any regrets, he put aside his own researches in order to spend years deciphering the hieroglyphic manuscripts of Marx, painstakingly checking translations, and no less painstakingly correcting his writings in almost all the European languages. No. In this "epicurean" there was an altogether uncommon stoic!

Reports about the progress of the work on Marx' literary legacy provide one of the most constant *leitmotifs* in the correspondence between Engels and Kautsky, as well as other co-thinkers. In a letter to Kautsky's mother (1885)—a rather well-known writer of popular novels at the time—Engels expresses his hope that old Europe will finally swing into motion again, and he adds, "I only

hope that sufficient time will be left for me to conclude the third volume of *Das Kapital*, and then, let her rip!" (p. 206.) From this semi-jocular statement is clearly to be gathered the importance he attached to *Das Kapital*; but there is also something else to be gathered, namely, that revolutionary action stood for him above any book, even *Das Kapital*. On December 3, 1891, i.e., six years later, Engels explains to Kautsky the reasons for his protracted silence: ". . . responsible for it is the third volume, over which I am sweating again." He is busy not only deciphering the chapters in the murderous manuscript on money capital, banks and credit, but he is also studying at the same time literature on the respective subjects. To be sure, he knows in advance that in the majority of cases he can leave the manuscript just as it came from the pen of Marx, but he wants to secure himself against editorial errors by his auxiliary researches. Added to all this there is the bottomless pit of minute technical details! Engels carries on a correspondence whether or not a comma is needed in such and such a place, and he especially thanks Kautsky for uncovering an error in spelling in the manuscript. This is not pedantry—but conscientiousness to which nothing is unimportant that bears upon the scientific sum-total of Marx' life.

Engels, however, was furthest removed from any blind adulation of the text. Checking over a digest of Marx' economic theory written by the French socialist Deville, Engels, according to his own words, often felt the temptation to delete or correct sentences here and there, which on further examination turned out to be . . . Marx's own expressions. The gist of the matter lies in the fact that "in the original, thanks to what had preceded, they were clearly qualified. But in Deville's case, they were invested with an absolutely generalized, and by reason of this, incorrect meaning" (p. 95). These few words provide a classic characterization of the common abuse of the ready made formulas of the master ("*magister dixit*").

But this is not all. Engels not only deciphered, polished, transcribed, corrected and annotated the second and third volumes of *Das Kapital* but he maintained an eagle-eyed vigil in defense of Marx's memory against hostile attacks. The conservative Prussian socialist Rodbertus and his admirers claimed that Marx had used the scientific discovery of Rodbertus without making any reference to the latter—in other words, that Marx plagiarized Rodbertus. "A monstrous ignorance is required to make such an assertion," wrote Engels to Kautsky in 1884 (p. 140). And once again, Engels applied himself to the study of the useless Rodbertus in order fully to refute these charges.

The letters to Kautsky contain an equally illuminating reflection of the episode with the German economist Brentano, who accused Marx of falsely quoting Gladstone. Engels, if anyone, was acquainted with the scientific scrupulousness of Marx, whose attitude towards every idea of his oponent, no matter how absurd, was akin to the attitude of a bacteriologist towards a disease-bearing bacillus. Time after time in Engels' letters to Marx and to their common friends one runs across his chiding the excess of conscientiousness on Marx's part. It is not at all surprising, therefore, that he put all other work aside in order angrily to refute Brentano.

Engels carried around in his mind the idea of writing a biography of Marx. No one could have written it as he, for, of necessity, it would have been in large measure Engels' own autobiography. He writes to Kautsky: "I will get down to work at the first possible moment upon this book on which I have so long pondered with pleasure." (p. 382.) Engels takes vows not to be sidetracked: "I am now 74 years old—I have to hurry." Even today

one cannot think without sorrow that Engels could not "hurry" and fulfill his project.

For the oil portrait of Marx which was in preparation in Switzerland, Engels supplied through Kautsky the following color-description of his deceased friend: "A complexion as dark as it is generally possible for a South European to be, without much color on the cheeks: . . . mustaches black as soot, tinged with white, and snow-white hair on head and beard" (p. 149). This description makes clear why Marx received the nickname of the Moor in his family and intimate circle.

#### *The Teacher of Leaders*

During the first two years Engels addressed his correspondent as "Dear Mr. Kautsky" (the term "comrade" was not then in current use); after they had drawn closer in London, he abbreviated the form of salutation to merely "Dear Kautsky"; from March 1884, Engels adopted the familiar form of address in writing to Bernstein and Kautsky each of whom was 25 years younger than himself. Kautsky writes not without good reason that "from 1883 Engels looked upon Bernstein and myself as the most reliable representatives of the Marxian theory" (p. 93). The transition to the familiar form of address no doubt reflects the favorable attitude of a teacher towards his pupils. But this outward familiarity is no proof of actual intimacy: this was hindered chiefly by the fact that Kautsky and Bernstein were imbued with philistinism to a considerable measure. During their long sojourn in London, Engels assisted them to acquire the Marxian method. But he could not ingraft in them either revolutionary will or the ability to think boldly. The pupils were and remained the children of another spirit.

Marx and Engels awakened in the epoch of storms, and they passed through the revolution of 1848 as full-fledged fighters. Kautsky and Bernstein went through their formative period during the comparatively peaceful interval between the epoch of wars and revolutions from the years 1848 to 1871 and the epoch that had its inception with the Russian Revolution of 1905 through the world war of 1914, and has far from come to its conclusion even today. Throughout his entire and lengthy life Kautsky was able to circumnavigate those conclusions that threatened to disturb his mental and physical peace. He was not a revolutionist, and this was an insurmountable barrier that separated him from the Red General.

But even apart from this there was too great a difference between them. It is indubitable that Engels only gained from personal contact: his personality was richer and more attractive than anything he did and wrote. In no case can the same be said of Kautsky. His best books are far wiser than he was himself. He lost greatly from personal intercourse. It may be that this in part explains why Rosa Luxemburg, who lived side by side with Kautsky, had gauged his philistinism before Lenin did, although she was inferior to Lenin in political insight. But this relates to a much later period.

From the correspondence it becomes absolutely self-evident that there always remained an invisible barrier between the teacher and the pupil not only in the sphere of politics but also in the sphere of theory. Engels, who was generally chary of praise, sometimes referred with enthusiasm ("*Ausgezeichnet*") to the writings of Franz Mehring or George Plekhanov; but his praise of Kautsky was always restrained, and one senses a shade of irritation in his criticism. Like Marx, when Kautsky first appeared in his home, Engels, too, was repelled by the omniscience and the passive self-satisfaction of the young Viennese. How readily he found answers to the most complex questions! True, Engels himself was

inclined to hasty generalizations; but he, in turn, had the wings and vision of an eagle, and as years passed he adopted ever more Marx' merciless scientific conscientiousness towards himself. But Kautsky with all his capabilities was a man of the Golden Mean.

"Nine-tenths of the contemporary German authors," thus did the teacher warn his pupil, "write books about other books." (P. 139.) In other words: no analysis of living reality, no progressive movement of thought. Using the occasion of Kautsky's book on questions of primitive society, Engels tried to instill in him the idea that it was possible to say something really new in this enormous and dark province only by a thoroughgoing and exhaustive study of the subject. And he adds quite mercilessly, "Otherwise books like *Das Kapital* would not be so rare." (P. 85.)

A year later (September 20, 1884) Engels again chides Kautsky about his "sweeping assertions in spheres in which you yourself do not feel at all certain" (p. 144). One finds this note passing through the entire correspondence. Chiding Kautsky for having condemned "abstraction"—without abstract thinking, no thinking is generally possible—Engels gives a classic definition which shows the difference between a vivifying and a lifeless abstraction: "Marx reduces the common content in things and relations to its most universal conceptual expression; his abstraction consequently reproduces in concept form the content already lodged in things themselves. Rodbertus, on the other hand, creates for himself a more or less imperfect mental expression and measures all things by his concept, to which they must be equated." (P. 144.) Nine-tenths of the errors in human thinking are embraced in this formula. Eleven years later, in his last letter to Kautsky, Engels, while paying due recognition to Kautsky's researches on the *Precursors of Socialism*, once again chides the author for his inclination toward "commonplaces wherever there is a gap in the research". "As to style, in order to remain popular, you either fall into the tone of an editorial, or assume the tone of a school teacher." (P. 388.) One could not express more aptly the literary mannerisms of Kautsky!

At the same time, the intellectual magnanimity of the master toward his pupil was truly inexhaustible. He used to read the most important articles of the prolific Kautsky in their manuscript form, and each of his letters of criticism contains precious suggestions, the fruit of serious thought, and sometimes of research. Kautsky's well-known work, *Class Antagonisms in the French Revolution*, which has been translated into almost all the languages of civilized mankind, also, it appears, passed through the intellectual laboratory of Engels. His long letter on social groupings in the epoch of the great revolution of the eighteenth century—as well as on the application of the materialist methods of historical events—is one of the most magnificent documents of the human mind. It is much too terse, and each of its formulæ presupposes too great a store of knowledge for it to enter into general reading circulation; but this document, so long kept hidden, will forever remain not only the source of theoretical instruction but also of æsthetic joy to anyone who has seriously pondered the dynamics of class relations in a revolutionary epoch, as well as the general problems involved in the materialist interpretation of historical events.

#### *Kautsky's Divorce and His Conflict with Engels*

Kautsky asserts—not without a purpose in back of his mind, as we shall see—that Engels was a poor judge of men. Marx was no doubt to a larger measure a "fisher of men". He was better able to play on their strong and weak sides, and gave proof of this, for instance, by his rather difficult work in the extremely heterogeneous General Council of the First International. However, Engels' correspondence is the best possible proof that while

he did not always manoeuvre happily in his personal relationships, this flowed from his stormy directness and not at all from his inability to understand people. Kautsky, who himself is very myopic on questions of psychology, adduces as examples Engels' stubborn defense of Aveling, the friend of Marx' daughter, a man who with all his indubitable capacities was a person of little worth. Cautiously, but very persistently, Kautsky strives to purvey the idea that Engels did not give evidence of psychologic sensibility in relation to Kautsky himself. This is his purpose in raising the particular question of Engels' capacity as a judge of men.

All his life Engels had a particularly tender attitude toward women, as those who were doubly oppressed. This citizen of the world with an encyclopædic education was married to a simple textile worker, an Irish girl, and after she died he lived with her sister. His tenderness to both was truly remarkable. Marx' inadequate response to the news of the death of Mary Burns, Engels' first wife, raised a little cloud in their relations, to all signs, the first and last cloud throughout the forty years of their friendship. Towards Marx' daughters, Engels behaved as if they were his own children; but at a time when Marx, apparently not without the influence of his wife, attempted to intervene into the emotional life of his daughters, Engels gave him carefully to understand that such matters concern nobody except the participants themselves. Engels had particular affection for Eleanor, Marx' youngest daughter. Aveling became her friend; he was a married man who had broken with his first family. This circumstance engendered around the "illegal" couple the stifling atmosphere of genuinely British hypocrisy. Is it greatly to be marvelled at that Engels came to the strong defense of Eleanor and her friend, even irrespective of his moral qualities? Eleanor fought for her love for Aveling so long as she had any strength left. Engels was not blind but he considered that the question of Aveling's personality concerned Eleanor, first and foremost. On his part he assumed only the duty to defend her against hypocrisy and evil gossip. "Hands off!" he stubbornly told the pious hypocrites. In the end, unable to bear up under the blows of personal life, Eleanor committed suicide.

Kautsky also refers to the fact that Engels supported Aveling in politics. But this is explained by the simple fact that Eleanor, like Aveling, functioned politically under the direct guidance of Engels himself. To be sure, their activity far from gave the desired results. But the activity of their opponent Hyndman, whom Kautsky continued to support, also resulted in shipwreck. The cause for the failures of the initial Marxian attempts must be sought in the objective conditions of England so magnificently dissected by Engels himself. Engels' personal antagonism towards Hyndman arose in particular from the latter's stubborn persistence in slurring over the name of Marx, justifying himself by the aversion of the English to foreign authorities. Engels, however, suspected that in Hyndman himself there was lodged "the most chauvinistic John Bull extant" (p. 140). Kautsky tries to invalidate Engels' suspicion on this score, as if Hyndman's shameful behavior during the war—not a word about this from Kautsky!—had not laid bare his rotten chauvinism to the core. How much more penetrating did Engels prove to be in this case as well!

However, the chief instance of Engels' "inability" to judge men relates to Kautsky's own personal life. In the correspondence just now published, a considerable, if not the central place, is occupied by Kautsky's divorce from his first wife. This ticklish circumstance no doubt kept Kautsky so long from making the old letters public. Today, for the first time, the entire episode is given to the press. . . . The youthful Kautsky couple spent more than six years in London in constant and unclouded communion with Engels and

his family circle. The General was literally thunderstruck by the news of the divorce proceedings between Karl and Luise Kautsky that came almost immediately after their arrival on the Continent. The closest friends willy-nilly all became the moral arbiters in this conflict. Engels immediately and unconditionally took the wife's side and did not change his position to his dying day.

In a letter of October 17, 1888, Engels writes in reply to Kautsky: "One must first of all weigh in the balance the difference between the positions of men and women under the present conditions. . . . Only in extreme cases, only after mature deliberation, only if it is absolutely clear that such a step is necessary, should a man resort to this most extreme measure, but even then, only in its most prudent and mildest form." (P. 227.) Coming from the lips of Engels, who well knew that matters of the heart concern only the parties involved, these words ring with an unexpected moralizing. However, it was no accident that he addresses them to Kautsky. . . . We have neither the occasion nor the basis for analyzing the marital conflict, all the elements of which are not at our disposal. Kautsky himself almost refrains from any remarks upon his family episode which has long since receded into the past. From his reserved comments, however, one must conclude that Engels came to his position under the one-sided influence of Luise. But whence this influence? During the divorce both parties remained in Austria. As in Eleanor's case, Kautsky obviously evades the gist of the matter. By his entire make-up—all other things being equal—Engels was inclined to come to the defense of the underdog. But it is obvious that in his eyes "all other things" were not equal. The very possibility of Luise's influencing him, speaks in her favor. On the other hand, there were many traits in Kautsky's personality that clearly repelled Engels. This he could pass over in silence so long as their relations were confined to questions of theory and politics. But after he was drawn into the family quarrel upon the initiative of Kautsky himself, he spoke out what was in his mind without any particular condescension. A man's views and a man's morals are, as is well-known, not at all identical. In Kautsky, the Marxist, Engels clearly sensed a Viennese petty-bourgeois, self-satisfied, and egotistic and conservative. One of the most important measuring rods of a man's personality is his attitude towards women. Engels was obviously of the opinion that in this sphere Kautsky, the Marxist, still required certain precepts of bourgeois humanism. Whether Engels was right or wrong, that is precisely the explanation for his conduct.

In September 1889, when the divorce had already become a fact, Kautsky, with an obvious desire to demonstrate that he was not at all so hard-hearted and egotistic, wrote carelessly to Engels about his feeling "sorry" for Luise. But it was precisely this word that brought down upon him a new outburst of indignation. The irate General thundered in reply: "In this entire affair, Luise has deported herself with such heroism and womanhood . . . that if, in general, any one is to be pitied, it is not Luise of course." (P. 248.) These merciless words—which follow upon a more conciliatory statement that "you two alone are competent to judge, and whatever you approve, we others must accept" (p. 248)—provide a perfect key to Engels' position on the question and serve well to illumine his personality.

The divorce case dragged on for a long time, so that Kautsky found himself compelled to spend a whole year in Vienna. On his return to London (Autumn 1898) he no longer received from Engels the warm welcome he had become accustomed to. Moreover, Engels, almost demonstratively, invited Luise to become the manager of his household that had been orphaned by the death of Helene Demuth. Luise soon married for the second time and lived in Engels' house with her husband. Finally, Engels made Luise

one of his heirs. The General was not only magnanimous but stubborn in his attachments.

On May 21, 1895, ten weeks prior to his death, Engels from his sick-bed wrote a letter to Kautsky, extremely irritable in tone and full of splenetic reproaches, *à propos* of a really accidental matter. Kautsky swears categorically that these reproaches were entirely unfounded. Maybe so. But he received no answer to his attempt to dispel the old man's suspicions. On August 6, Engels passed away. Kautsky attempts to explain away the break so tragic to himself by the sickly irritability of the master. The explanation is obviously inadequate. Along with the angry reproaches, Engels' letter contains evaluations of complex historical problems, gives a favorable estimate of Kautsky's latest scientific work, and generally testifies to a highly lucid state of mind. Besides, we know from Kautsky himself that the change in their relations occurred seven years prior to the break and immediately assumed an unequivocal character.

In January 1889, Engels was still firmly considering to appoint Kautsky and Bernstein as his and Marx' literary executors. Soon, however, he renounced this idea so far as Kautsky was concerned. He asked, under an obviously artificial pretext, that Kautsky return the manuscripts already given him for deciphering and transcribing (*The Theories of Surplus Value*). This took place in the same year, 1889, when there was no talk of sickly irritability as yet. We can only venture a guess as to the reasons why Engels expunged Kautsky from the list of his literary executors; but they imperatively flow from all the circumstances in the case. Engels himself, as we know, viewed the publication of Marx' literary heritage as the main business of his life. There is not even a hint of such an attitude on the part of Kautsky. The young, prolific writer was too much preoccupied with himself to pay to Marx' manuscripts the attention Engels demanded. Perhaps the old man feared that the prolific Kautsky, consciously or unconsciously might put several of Marx' ideas to use as his own "discoveries". This is the only explanation for the replacement of Kautsky by Bebel who was theoretically less qualified, but who had the complete confidence of Engels. The latter had no such confidence in Kautsky.

While up to now we have heard from Kautsky that Engels, *in contradistinction to Marx*, was a poor psychologist, in another place in his commentaries, he brackets both his masters. He writes, "They were obviously not great judges of men." (P. 44.) This statement seems incredible, if we recall the wealth and the incomparable precision of personal characterizations which abound not only in Marx' letters and pamphlets but also in his *Kapital*. It may be said that Marx was able to establish a man's type from individual traits in the same manner as Cuvier reconstructed an animal from a single jawbone. If Marx in 1852 was not able to see through the Hungarian-Prussian provocateur, Banya—the only instance to which Kautsky makes reference!—it only goes to prove that Marx was neither a clairvoyant nor a witch-doctor but was liable to make mistakes in evaluating people, particularly those who turned up accidentally. By his assertion, Kautsky obviously seeks to obviate the impression of the unfavorable reference made by Marx about him after Marx' first and last meeting with him. Completely contradicting himself, Kautsky writes two pages later that "Marx had well mastered the art of handling people, showing this in the most brilliant and indubitable manner in the General Council of the International" (p. 46). A question remains: how is a man to manage people, and "brilliantly" to boot, without his being able to plumb their character? It is impossible not to conclude that Kautsky has drawn a poor balance-sheet of his relations with his teachers!

*Appraisals and Prognoses*

Engels' letters abound in characterizations of individuals and in succinct appraisals of events in world politics. We shall confine ourselves to a few examples. "The paradoxical litterateur, Shaw, is very talented and witty as a writer but absolutely worthless as economist and politician." (P. 338.) This remark made in the year 1892 preserves its full force even in our time. The well-known journalist, V. T. Stead, is characterized as "an absolutely hare-brained fellow but a brilliant horse-trader" (p. 298). Of Sidney Webb, Engels briefly remarks: "ein echter Britischer politician" (a genuinely British politician). This was the harshest term in Engels' lexicon.

In January 1889, in the heat of the Boulanger campaign in France, Engels wrote: "The election of Boulanger brings the situation in France to a breaking point. The Radicals . . . have turned themselves into flunkeys of opportunism, and thereby they have literally given nourishment to Boulangerism." (P. 231.) These words are astonishing in their modernity—one need only put Fascism in place of Boulangerism.

Engels lashes the theory of the "evolutionary" transformation of capitalism into socialism as the "pious and joyful 'growing over' of hoary swinishness into a socialist society". This epigrammatic formula prognosticates the balance-sheet of the controversy which was to be taken up many years later on.

In the same letter Engels rips apart the speech of a social democratic deputy, Vollmar, "with its . . . excessive and unauthorized assurances that the social democrats will not remain on the sidelines if their fatherland is attacked, and will consequently help defend the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine. . . ." Engels demanded that the leading organs of the party publicly disavow Vollmar. During the Great War when the social-patriots tore into tatters the name of Engels in every-which way, it never entered Kautsky's mind to publish these lines. Why bother? The war caused sufficient worries without that.

On April 1, 1895, Engels protested against the use made of his preface to Marx' *Class Struggles in France* by the central organ of the party, *Vorwärts*. By means of deletions, the article is so distorted, Engels fumes, "that I am made out to be a peaceful worshipper of legality at any price". He demands that this "shameful impression" (p. 383) be removed at any price. Engels, who at that time was nearing his 75th birthday, obviously had not yet made ready to renounce the revolutionary enthusiasm of his youth!

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If one were to speak at all of Engels' mistakes in people, then

one should cite as examples not Aveling, the sloven in personal matters, and not the spy Banya, but the outstanding leaders of Socialism: Victor Adler, Guesde, Bernstein, Kautsky himself and many others. All of them, without a single exception, betrayed his expectations—to be sure, after he was already dead. But precisely this all-embracing character of the "mistake" proves that it does not involve any problems of individual psychology.

In 1884, Engels, referring to the German social democracy, which was scoring rapid victories, wrote that it was a party "free from all philistinism in the most philistine country in the world; free from all chauvinism in the most victory-drunk country in Europe" (p. 154). The subsequent course of events proved that Engels had visualized the future course of revolutionary development too much along the straight line. Above all he did not foresee the mighty capitalist boom which set in immediately after his death and which lasted up to the eve of the imperialist war. It was precisely in the course of these 15 years of economic full-bloodedness that the complete opportunistic degeneration of the leading circles of the labor movement took place. This degeneration was fully revealed during the war and, in the last analysis, it led to the infamous capitulation to national socialism.

According to Kautsky, Engels, even back in the Eighties, was of the alleged opinion that the German revolution "would first bring the bourgeois democracy to power, and the social-democracy only later on". In counterpoise to which, Kautsky himself foresaw that the "impending German revolution could only be proletarian" (p. 190). The remarkable thing in connection with this old difference of opinion, which is hardly reproduced correctly, is that Kautsky fails even to raise the question of what the German revolution of 1918 really was. For in that case he would have had to say: This revolution was a proletarian revolution; it immediately placed the power in the hands of the social democracy; but the latter, with the assistance of Kautsky himself, returned the power to the bourgeoisie which, proving incapable of holding onto power, had to call on Hitler for help.

Historical reality is infinitely richer in possibilities and in transitional stages than the imagination of the greatest genius. The value of political prognoses lies not in that they coincide with every stage of reality but in that they assist in making out its genuine development. From this standpoint, Friedrich Engels has passed the bar of history.

Leon TROTSKY

OSLO, October 1935.

## Criminology and Society

**T**HERE ARE several schools of thought in criminology, each picking a segment of the relevant facts for emphasis according to social prejudice and whim. Here we are concerned with outlining those schools which locate the causes of crime within the structure of the individual criminal, usually defining them as hereditary.

1. *The straight heredists.* Many investigators, determined to make a case for a preconceived conviction, have held that criminality is of and by itself a personality trait, transmitted from one generation to the next. This is the simplest explanation for the conformist, and flourished in its least subtle forms in the early days of crime study (retaining its power today in disguised "scientific" garb). So Lombroso, the founder of the scientific study of crime, advanced his theory of the born-criminal, who was supposed to be

set off from the "average" population by peculiar morphological traits of an atavistic nature; that is, the criminal is a throwback to our primitive ancestors, distinguished by low brows, prominent ears, submicrocephaly, etc. The criminal, it seems, is a bloodthirsty ape with a thin veneer of culture.

More recently, Dugdale and Goodard, in their respective studies of the Jukes and the Kallikaks, concluded that, in both of the lines studied, high rates of criminality, alcoholism, and degeneracy were symptoms of bad blood. Again, Lange has attempted to prove that crime is an inherited character by establishing this thesis: among identical twins (from the same ovum, therefore possessing identical genetic backgrounds), when one twin is a criminal, there is great probability that the other will be so also; whereas, with fraternal twins (developed from different eggs, therefore with different gen-



etic constitutions), the probability of concordance in criminality is much lower. Finally, some investigators have attempted to show that crime rates vary from one race to another; it is contended that this variance is accounted for by peculiar racial genetic constitution.

The arguments may be taken up in order:

(a) When Lombroso's theory is put to the test of anthropometric measurement, it is found that criminals tend to differ from control groups (students, soldiers, etc.) only as regards stature and body weight. According to Burt, "defective physical conditions are roughly speaking one and one-fourth times as frequent among delinquent children as they are among non-delinquent children from the same schools and streets". Can these differences be attributed to heredity? Gillette and Reinhardt state that they are due rather to "differences in occupation and social standing. The criminal classes as a rule come from the more economically insecure elements in the population and hence would apparently not be so well fed and well groomed as a large proportion of the non-criminal population." Further: "Physical defects may easily be incidental rather than causal. For example, physical defects might be caused by poverty, resulting in early malnutrition, overwork, and so forth, which factors may cause criminal conduct." Strange that it does not occur to the hereditists to interpret physical earmarks as signs of socio-economic inferiority rather than as evidence of ornery blood. But such an interpretation, of course, would immediately entail a serious criticism of society. Far less disturbing to denounce the ancestry of the lower classes.

(b) The hereditists must assume that some sort of criminal instinct is rooted in, and transmitted through, the genes. But if there is no evidence for the existence of even the most elementary "instincts", the theory that an inherited unit-drive is responsible for such a complex activity as crime is still more speculative. Elliott and Merrill: "It is an established psychological fact that the overt behavior patterns involved in criminal conduct could not possibly be inherited." The proponents of the theory of inherited criminality disregard the fact that there is *cultural* as well as *genetic* inheritance. Attitudes are contagious, although they have no root in the germinal cells. Besides, it cannot be claimed that the illegitimate Kallikak line, for instance, was inferior by inheritance to the legitimate one, if simply because the two strains differed in the economic dimension, the one far down the scale and the other among the privileged classes. Comparisons can be made only when all variables, including the economic one, are controlled and equatable. Finally, is it justified to assume a fundamental difference between the socially supreme classes—the judges, statesmen, lawyers of the legitimate Kallikaks—and the underdogs—the drunkards, thieves, degenerates of the illegitimate Kallikak offshoot? Surely theft, gangsterism and degeneracy are not basically changed by giving them social sanction and calling them individual initiative, enterprise, ingenuity, etc. A rose by any other name. . .

(c) Lange too assumes an untenable theory of inherited unit-drives as the motivating forces of criminality, yet even he is forced to admit that these "natural tendencies" turn individuals into criminals "under our present system". He contends that criminality must be inherited since the identical twins whom he studied tended to be concordant in their criminal behavior, even though they were reared apart. But these twins were without exception workers or members of the slum proletariat. To prove his stand, therefore, it would first have to be disproved that there are certain environmental influences and incentives to crime widespread in the working class as a whole. And other research on identical twins seems to refute his contention, or at least to lay it open to serious question.

(d) It is a common fallacy, Brinton notes, "that nearly all Negroes are potential, if not actual law-breakers. . . ." Yet there is decisive evidence that the high Negro crime rates occur in the worst slum sections, while those Negroes who live in the best residential sections seem to avoid the grim clutches of the law as well as the "superior" whites residing in similar happy surroundings. If the average rates for the Negro population as a whole are somewhat higher than those for the white population as a whole (and this is by no means established), then it is equally true that the Negro is, on the average, socially and economically inferior. The sub-standard position of the Negro worker is not an insignificant factor—nor is the picture complete without mention of Jim Crow discrimination (are the Scottsboro boys born-criminals?) and the arrest of Negroes as "ornery critters" without the slightest provocation, on such charges as vagrancy or idleness. Reid: the causes of Negro crime "lie in the social structure for which the white American is primarily responsible". The logic of the argument holds, *mutatis mutandis*, for "high" crime rates among other races.

2. *The endocrinologists.* Now the emphasis shifts from genes of destiny to glands of destiny. Berman maintains that "glandular preponderances are determining factors in the personality, creating genius and dullard, weakling and giant, cavalier and puritan". Kretschmer maintained that body build is an endocrine product which determines temperament and criminal conduct. Dr. R. A. Reynolds finds that 10 to 15% of the prisoners at San Quentin show obvious symptoms of endocrine disorder, which he states (in the absence of any data for comparison) is a higher percentage than found in the general population. And Schlapp and Smith dismiss the hereditists contemptuously, but repudiate the environmentalists also; how, they ask the latter (and this is a stock question) can you explain the fact that two children have identical social backgrounds, yet one turns out to be a thug, the other a high official with "distinct idealistic trends"? They insist that the thug suffers from chemical (endocrine) disbalance, caused by a "disbalance of the blood and lymph chemistry of the mother at the time of gestation, in turn producing an inhibition of the formative cell process in the foetus. . ."

Here again we might suggest that the difference between thug and idealistic official is largely one of terminology and social approval (by the powers that be). But more important is the question, what causes the endocrine upset in the pregnant mother which affects the embryo so deleteriously? Schlapp and Smith reply: In many cases the mother, during the period of pregnancy, was overworked, in wretched financial circumstances, worried about adequate provision of the coming child, etc. Merely setting the problem back one generation, then, does not obscure the environmental etiology of chemical disbalance. But it also remains to be proved that criminals show abnormally high rates of endocrine disorder. There is no confirming evidence on that score whatsoever. Thus, even if it should be established that these disorders are in some measure hereditary, it would not follow that criminality is hereditary, for it has not been demonstrated that the ductless glands play any part in the production of criminal behavior. The fact that so many social scientists have seized upon endocrine malfunctioning to stigmatize the criminal, betrays a touching solicitude for the inviolacy of the social order.

3. *The psychologists: the emphasis upon mental deficiency and abnormality.* When the theory of criminality as a unit-character of inheritance became too absurd to hold water, the hereditists were not one whit abashed. It became necessary to sneak heredity in the back door, in more subtle forms. The endeavor became, not to determine whether, after all, the criminal really is a distinct

personality—this being one of those principles upon which our mind-sets have been nourished—but rather to elaborate *other* respects in which the criminal is different; this attempt is so persistent, in the face of ever-growing contradictions, that it can only be a symptom of deep-rooted bias in favor of the social structure, a gesture of conformity and class loyalty. So the psychologists began to emphasize other internal factors considered as heritable—feeble-mindedness and insanity—and to relate these to criminality. Thus the genes creep in again, this time at one remove but omnipresent as ever.

Goddard insisted "that at least 50% of all criminals are mentally defective". Another investigator discovers that "probably 80% of the children in the juvenile courts in Manhattan and Bronx are feeble-minded". Judge Harry Owen (undoubtedly one of the high-minded, idealistic public officials?) laments the fact that "mental deficiency lies equally at the bottom of all crime, the type of crime depending upon the nature and extent of the defect". And, as the emotions have come to the center of attention in the study of motivation, crime students have adjusted themselves nicely. Is the feeble-mindedness argument perhaps a little dated? Very well, the *Missouri Crime Survey* retorts, changing the stand of the social scientist with chameleon-like rapidity: "It is the psychopathic individual who furnishes us with our delinquent problem—the unstable, neurotic, poorly balanced, weak-willed individual with marked character defects and personality handicaps, *but often with good intelligence*, is the most difficult problem we have to meet in handling criminals." Groves and Blanchard consider that "it is indeed a conservative statement when we claim that one-half of the criminal class is so by virtue of mental abnormalities." Thus, if the criminal is not a moron, he must, according to theory, be a maniac. Either way, the theory runs into difficulties:

(a) Those who locate inferior intelligence at the root of criminality have to account for such facts as the following: Doll and Adler both found, by comparing the army white draft and prison inmates of New Jersey and Illinois, that the prison groups and free adult males are about the same in point of intelligence; Murchison, Mohr and Gundlach found, disconcertingly enough, that native white criminal groups are *superior* in intelligence to the white draft on the Army Alpha tests. In the second place, definitions of normality and feeble-mindedness are prejudiced at the outset against those who commit anti-social behavior; for if you define criminality as a *symptom* of feeble-mindedness, then you have no serious difficulty in showing that criminals are feeble-minded by *definition*: Miner, for example, insists that "a borderline case which has also shown serious and repeated delinquency should be classed as feeble-minded. . . ." Only a facile social scientist can make a factor both a symptom and a cause of the same deviation. Besides, no one can pretend to know what is measured by the intelligence tests; the Thomases observe that "tests are devised to measure intelligence whose exact nature is unknown, and then intelligence is defined in terms of performance on the tests". And the results of these tests are largely a function of the tester's personal attitudes and criteria: Sutherland shows that as tests are based on more recent data and methods, there is observed a decisive trend toward lower rates of "inferiority" among prisoners. Finally, the criminals cannot be compared to other groups, since they are not equatable so far as the socio-economic variables are concerned.

(b) The difficulty in attributing psychopathia to the criminal is exactly what it is in all other attempts to assign deviational traits to him: there is no acceptable definition of normality, no evidence as to standards for the general population, no way to control other variables in the groups compared, no clear-cut meaning for the concepts of insanity and psychopathic personality. In such a situ-

ation it is a simple matter for the investigator who is swayed by the compulsives of his milieu to set up biased criteria in favor of that milieu, and to work on the premise that the criminal is abnormal. Here also is a difficulty: *Recent Social Trends* informs us that "the expectancy of supposedly sane persons born in the state of New York of becoming so mentally diseased in one form or other as to be patients in institutions is 4.5%"; approximately one person out of every 22 becomes a psychopathic patient during his lifetime. With such "normal" rates of insanity, it is hardly likely that criminals are more psychopathic than the general, law-abiding run of people.

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All of the above schools of thought, regardless of their concentration-points, are one in their attempt to *internalize* the causes of crime. We offer the following considerations as significant:

(1) *Frequency of economic crimes.* Mary van Kleeck: "Crimes against property constitute by far the largest group of offences for which men are serving terms at Sing Sing. . . ." *Recent Social Trends*: "Homicide, rape, aggravated assault and robbery, crimes 'against the person', in 1931 averaged 11.1% of the total of major offenses; and burglary, larceny and auto theft, crimes 'against property', 88.9%. If robbery be considered a crime 'against property', then this latter group accounts for 95.1% of the total." Glueck: of the delinquents studied, 75% were brought into court for larceny and burglary.

(2) *Class origins of the criminal groups.* Bonger: "Proportionately the non-possessors are more guilty of crime than the possessors." Sullenger: "Of 500 cases [of juvenile delinquency] selected at random from 1,245 in Omaha, 225, or 45%, were registered as having received aid from relief agencies." (In this case social workers characteristically concluded that 46% of the fathers in these dependent families were shiftless anyhow.) Show and McKay: "There is a marked similarity in the variation of rates of family dependency and rates of juvenile delinquency." Glueck: at least 80-85% of the parents of the delinquents studied were proletarians. Lumpkin: of the correctional school sample studied, "95% came from the classes recognized as least advantaged in income and opportunity, and about two-thirds of these particular homes had been given community assistance of one kind or another." Caldwell: "67% of the occupations of the parents of the delinquent boy group are below the skilled occupations, which is approximately 15% more than for the general population." Cyril Burt: 56% of delinquents come from the lower economic strata, whereas only 30% of the general population falls within this category. Lund: the economic classes which furnish 66% of the delinquents are only 26% of the population.

(3) *Effects of unemployment and the business cycle.* Mary van Kleeck: 52% of the Sing Sing prisoners studied were unemployed at the time the crime was committed. Cincinnati Bureau of Governmental Research: "40% of all misdemeanor arrests are of the unemployed classes, which comprise only 8% of the total population of Cincinnati." Reid: of the social factors in crimes committed by 80 Negro offenders, unemployment was the most frequent, occurring in 59 cases. Winslow: "Findings . . . are fairly conclusive with reference to the tendency for crimes against property to increase during periods of economic depression and decrease during prosperity." Miss van Kleeck: in Massachusetts, "fluctuations in employment and in crime synchronize to a remarkable degree in those crimes in which obtaining property [burglary and robbery] or the lack of it, as in vagrancy, is a constant factor." Dorothy Thomas: "There is a marked similarity in the variation of rates of family dependency and rates of juvenile delinquents. . . ." Magistrate Brodsky, of the Manhattan Family Court: "I

should say that in about 98% of the cases now coming before the court, unemployment is the main factor." California State Unemployment Commission: "All major crimes committed by adults, and all serious offenses charged against juveniles show a sharp increase since 1930."

The above facts were selected at random from a great mass of available data. They seem to warrant these conclusions: (1) Crimes against property, i.e., crimes with an economic motive, form the great bulk of all crimes. (2) A disproportionately large amount of criminals come from the lower economic classes. (3) Unemployment is a serious cause of crime. How would the hereditists analyze these facts? Are the underdogs perhaps more feeble-minded, more psychopathic, cursed to a greater degree by degenerate ancestry, than the nice people? Of course: here the class logic works beautifully: crime is a symptom of abnormality, of inferiority; therefore, the lower classes are abnormal, inferior.

It might have been expected, in the face of the above facts, that some investigators would come to doubt whether a thyroid deficiency or a skeleton in the family closet explains the simple fact that a man steals bread when he is hungry, or that a child nourished on the degeneracy of slum life turns out to be a vicious, anti-social type. A new trend of thought has appeared: that which we may call the *eclectic* school. Their special contribution to the problem has been confusion worse confounded. For, they tell us, the environment is undoubtedly of prime importance in tracing out criminal motivation—but there are innumerable factors to be taken into account when analyzing the social environment; we must consider them all indiscriminately.

Ploscowe: "The professional criminal is the final product of a long series of demoralizing social influences. His attitudes may be understood only in terms of these influences, and his actions only in terms of his attitudes." Chapin: "The history of thought about crime causation has passed beyond the hypothesis that the chief cause is the defective-minded individual, and it has now arrived at the hypothesis that environmental factors are the chief causes of crime." This is encouraging; but Ploscowe immediately cautions us that crime is "a complex phenomenon and its complexity must be taken into account both in searching for causes and also in suggesting methods of treatment". There are so many causal factors, Healy and Bronner insist, that any "unitary conception" of crime therapy would be sadly inadequate.

What are these "complex causes"? Watts elaborates: "Any attempt to explain . . . changes in the criminal rate on the basis of a 'single cause' proves inadequate. It must be sought through an examination of the total situation—including such factors as changes in the age and sex groupings of the population; nationality and cultural backgrounds; economic status; growth and shifting of population centers; world disturbances, wars, business depressions, famines, and political upheavals; the passage of new legislation." *Recent Social Trends* gives us a list of contributing factors which covers admirably every aspect of American history since 1776. White, who recognizes that "the great majority of crimes are committed against property", becomes more definite: "The correlation of felonies and certain other social factors, particularly economic factors, suggests that any action by social agencies and the city government to improve living standards, housing conditions, health, and free employment service might have the effect of reducing the felony rate. Some of these improvements would depend considerably upon both rates and wages and regularity of employment. Whatever concerns the functioning of the present system of private property is apparently a factor in the crime situation."

We seem to be getting warm here. But, if the problem is really so complex, we must proceed slowly, with infinite caution; what we need, to understand the multitude of causal factors, is "thorough, consistent, and scientific study" (Anderson in the *Wickersham Report*)! Understanding must precede action; social science offers us, therefore, as its contribution to crime prevention, a project for the accumulation of more data. Thus the need for immediate drastic activity is avoided—the "independence" of the investigator is extended; but this attitude is, in objective results, nothing but passive acceptance of the *status quo*: dominant social principles and institutions are freed once more from the rigorous attack which a courageous social science would have to launch upon them. The demand for more data has been the keynote of the social sciences since their very inception (with, of course, the prospect of "practical application"—once understanding has been achieved!), but these sciences have, unfortunately, played no part whatsoever in determining the direction of social development—other than that of "scientific" sanction of That Which Is. If investigators hesitantly suggest that slum clearance, housing projects, higher wages, etc., would be of some help in eliminating crime, their capitalist overseers are not particularly worried; capitalism cajoles its sincere reformers but never so much as considers their reforms. "Yes," they agree; "but right now you'd better get us more data; the facts are inadequate." And the scientists loyally bury their heads in the sand once more.

It cannot be denied, of course, that the causes of crime are many and varied. But to lump all possible factors together indiscriminately is to obscure an elementary truth. Broken homes, family tensions, slum areas, gang activities, unemployment and insufficient income, lack of recreational facilities, poor educational methods and opportunities—all these things are indubitably involved in the etiology of crime. But—and this is what the eclectics fail to see—this is just another way of saying: *Capitalism causes crime*. For what are all these "complex" factors but aspects of our decaying bourgeois culture? What are they but crying illustrations of an outmoded system of private property? "No," the "progressive" sociologist answers; "the economic factor is but one of a bewildering number of equally important causes."

The Marxian viewpoint is invaluable here because it shows us the interrelation of causes; it makes clear which factors are primary, which derivative; it explains how various elements are intertwined in a dynamic cultural pattern. The Marxist does not insist that *all* crimes are economic in character (although the evidence indicates that the great majority of crimes are such); he does, however, make it plain that the economic structure of society determines the cultural facts which orthodox theorists hold are *non-economic* in essence. Is the broken home a contributing factor in the origin of crime? Very well, but is not the broken home a manifestation of decay of capitalist culture, particularly prevalent in those unprivileged areas where unemployment, etc., inevitably disrupt normal family relations? Are slum clearance and housing projects important? Quite so: but the slum is an inevitable product of capitalist development, and the utopianism of hoping to achieve adequate housing under an outmoded system of private property is evident from what has come out of the none-too-laudable housing schemes under the New Deal. Poor educational opportunities, lack of recreational facilities—what are these but proof-by-example of class oppression? Mere enumeration of possible causes is not enough; what is necessary is a social theory (conceiving of society both as structure and as process) which indicates which factors are basic, which of a reflex or secondary nature. The Marxian analysis, which relates cultural factors to the economic bedrock of society, makes it clear that the social scientists who

enumerate multitudinous factors as *isolated* causes are guilty of the therapeutic error of symptom treatment: they are attempting to cope with factors (education, housing, unemployment, etc.) which are on the periphery of social reality. The primary fact is capitalist class society, organized on the basis of private property and private profit; from this basic economic fact flow the surface evils with which muddled sociologists are preoccupied. Economic crisis, now such a fundamental feature of our anachronistic property relations, admittedly produces devastating results in terms of personal suffering and criminal activity; but, *Recent Social Trends* hastens to caution us, "whether these recurrent episodes of widespread unemployment, huge financial losses and demoralization are an inescapable feature of the form of economic organization which the western world has evolved can be answered only by further study and experiment"!

We noted at the outset that social scientists attribute to dominant principles (the profit motive, individual initiative, etc.) and to approved modes of behavior an enduring normality; most of these investigators, it seems, consider the social structure only in its spatial, static aspect (implying by this attitude that the present structure must be permanent); they are thus able to abstract certain factors and consider them in isolation. But to determine the causal relations between these factors, to uncover the *dynamic* aspect of society and of its definition of normality—these are the functions which only Marxism can fulfill.

The Marxist recognizes that in our class society, with the controlling social stratum enabled through its monopoly of the means of production to exploit the non-owning groups in the interests of its own material profit, there exists a fundamental clash of interests, which takes overt form in such phenomena as strikes, revolutions—and criminal acts. All of these expressions of class conflict represent, more or less directly, an attack upon the right of private property by the non-owning, or working, class. Individual criminal acts are products of direct economic oppression, or of attitudes and sentiments engendered by class divisions, or of both. The principles of contemporary social organization (which find expression in our legal system) are dominated by outmoded concepts and traditions, whose progressive nature has been transformed into a reactionary, socially retarding, one; these principles, because society is dynamic, have become only restraints upon the activities, both social and economic, of the great majority of people. Since there is a clash between social need and lagging legalistic restrictions (whose purpose is to safeguard inviolate private property), with no prospect of adjustment, there is produced "discomfort, irritation, and unrest which find natural expression in disrespect for government and in disregard for or resistance to law" (Anderson). Crime and organized revolt, then, are but two expressions, the one primitive and futile, the other conscious and purposive, of the same fundamental class conflict. This conflict grows out of the disparity between the competitive principle of private property, exercised in the interests of a distinct minority, and the demands of social welfare in the present era of mass production. The development of American capitalism has produced the widest extremes of wealth and poverty in the western world; created enormous slum districts and underprivileged areas; participated in one or more wars in every generation; formulated a most elaborate system of checks and restraints upon individual and social conduct, while lawlessness and crime have been ever increasing; has, in the sacred interests of private profit, pulled the economic underpinnings of most people out from under them, leaving in their place the tensions of insecurity which sooner or later resolve themselves in organized revolt, and always assert themselves in criminal behavior. And, as the breach between classes has

widened, as the "fundamental unity of interest" between boss and worker has become more and more ephemeral, the ideological checks upon anti-social behavior, dispensed from school, pulpit and press, have begun to slip. More and more repressive laws have been created, more and more agencies of enforcement established. That is, as the ties of custom break down, criminal attacks upon property rights must be prevented by the principle of deterrence through fear. The present period of Fascist development, vigilante committees for the protection of law and order, etc., testifies to the need for forcible oppression, to the breakdown of customary servility. Capitalist society thus necessitates in ever-increasing degree the policing of one class by the agents of the other. But in defending its material interests through repression, the capitalist class is laying the psychological, as well as the economic, basis for crime and rebellion. ". . . the bourgeoisie produces its own grave-diggers."

From an historical perspective, then, rising crime rates are an index of social instability and a precursor of rebellion. Rozengart (*Le Crime Comme Produit Social et Economique*): ". . . revolt can take different forms. Prepared in advance, organized as much as possible, and executed by the entire working class in an open and audacious manner, *it is called revolution*; but carried out by one or a few individuals in a hurried manner, with fear and in the shadow of the night . . . *it is called crime*."

Surely, from the therapeutic point of view, the solution lies, not in family-welfare agencies or elaborate clinics designed to deal with symptoms, but in the provision of employment and security. That capitalism can no longer supply even these elementary prerequisites is now plain enough. The great majority of crimes are motivated by inferior economic position, by elementary need. And most of the remaining types of crime are produced by attitudes and sentiments engendered by class divisions.<sup>1</sup> The gangster merely expresses the dominant competitive power-psychology without the sanction of social superiority (see Louis Adamic's account of the development of a Capone type of racketeer in *Grandsons*). Our much-publicized public enemies are underdogs afflicted with the drives of the *entrepreneur*. And the fact that much public sympathy was on the side of John Dillinger in his escapades to evade the police indicates that most common people do not grasp any fundamental distinction between the Capones and the Rockefeller-Mellon boys. The venom released against public enemies by the capitalist press indicates that the Big Boys are wrathful because a few enterprising bottom dogs have been stealing their fire. In short: Crime is an inevitable outgrowth of capitalism; anti-social behavior remains anti-social, whether it be called the individual initiative of Morgan or the lawless racketeering of Capone.

In conclusion: the existence of economic disparities between classes, the ideology of the "cash nexus between man and man," are the prime social incentives to crime. The courageous social scientist must accept the necessity for the abolition of the acquisitive society, with all its legalistic and ideological strings. He must recognize, further, that the act of social transformation must be accomplished by those in whose interests it is undertaken: the working-class. The fundamental therapeutic principle is that of revolutionary social change. And from the historical viewpoint, the crime rates may well be taken as an indication that the underdogs are at long last beginning to bestir themselves: it is significant that as crime rates increase, so also do the purposive, directed activities of the working class—strikes, organization and political activity. Crime and revolt are two aspects of the same ferment, which spells doom for a capitalism grown reactionary.

Bernard K. WOLFE

# The Intellectuals and the Crisis—II

THE EVENTS since Hitler's victory, which have produced such profound changes in world politics, and, above all, among the labor parties, have had their repercussions in the ranks of American intellectuals. The impact of these events and the lessons to be drawn from them have propelled fresh strata toward the left and enabled others to find their way to a genuine revolutionary position. On the other hand, the advance of Fascism has created a resurgence of faith in the virtues of bourgeois democracy among the liberals and given rise to energetic efforts on their part to discover new methods of preserving them. Hitler and Mussolini have some of their strongest admirers in those conservative academic circles where intellectual life is weakest, but even in the faculty clubs of the universities unabashed advocates of the triumphs of reaction in Europe are difficult to find. This is in itself eloquent testimony to the retrogressive and viciously anti-intellectual character of Fascism and to the narrowly nationalistic sources of its inspiration and support.

## I.

For over a year after Hitler's conquest of power, the Communist International continued the policies which had brought disaster to the German workers. Their climax in the United States occurred in the riot between Socialists and Communists at Madison Square Garden in February 1934, where a meeting called by the New York Socialist Party and trade unions to demonstrate their solidarity with the heroic Austrian Socialists was broken up by the Stalinists, incited by their leaders to carry out "the united front from below" in action.

Factional warfare prevailed at the meeting. Speakers were howled down, fists flew, chairs were hurled, scores were injured, including Hathaway, editor of the *Daily Worker*. Broadcast over the radio and featured the following day in the bourgeois press, the brawl was a completely disgraceful performance for which the Stalinists, despite the provocations of the Old Guard Socialist leaders, were directly responsible.

This shameful incident brought to a head the growing dissatisfaction of a number of radical intellectuals with the adventurist policies of the Stalinists. Twenty-five, including John Dos Passos, Edmund Wilson, John Chamberlain, James Rorty, Meyer Schapiro, and Clifton Fadiman, sent an open letter of protest to the Communist party. Standing upon revolutionary premises and sharply distinguishing themselves for the Fascist victories and for working class disunity, they condemned the conduct of the Stalinists and the united-front-from-below policy that provoked it, and called for joint action of the proletariat in the struggle against reaction.

The *New Masses* took upon itself the burden of answering these critics. In defense of the united-front-from-below, the editors asserted: "If a leadership obstructs the natural gravity of the masses toward unity, there seems to be only one solution: to attempt to throw the masses together, despite the saboteurs on top. . . . This the communist party tried to do at Madison Square Garden." They ridiculed the right of these dissenting intellectuals to criticize the Stalinist leaders. "Just juxtapose a John Chamberlain to a Bill Foster, a Clifton Fadiman to an Earl Browder, and you will see the utter absurdity of these literati, politically illiterate, turned revolutionary pedagogues." They concluded by dividing the protestants into two categories, "the honest but misguided" and "the shady and stupid" (i.e., the politically salvageable and the politically suspect), and called upon Dos Passos in particular to dissociate himself from "the queer company" of "these generals

yearning for armies, these leaders minus experience, minus integrity, these revolutionary butterflies", etc. Dos Passos spiked this attempt to separate the sheep from the goats by replying that he not only stood by his protest but by the other signers, who, he pointed out, were the same people with whom he had signed an appeal a few months earlier to support the communist presidential candidates.

This act of protest resulted in the first organized break with Stalinism on a political basis among the radical intellectuals. The anti-Stalinist initiators of the protest split into two groups, one aiding in the formation of the American Workers Party, the other going over to the Trotskyists. They later rejoined each other when the two organizations fused into the Workers Party.

Significant as were the implications of this rupture with Stalinism, it proved to be an isolated phenomenon. The bulk of the radicalized intellectuals remained in sympathy with the communist party. The successes of the Stalinists in spreading their ideas among the lower middle class intellectuals have been as conspicuous as their failure to win the support of any significant section of organized labor. The ultra-left policies, which repelled so many class-conscious workers, were easily swallowed by the radical intellectuals, who were ready to accept the most radical conclusions in theory, especially since they were not required to stake their vital interests upon them.

The support of many of these fellow-travellers was obtained as much on a cultural as a political basis. During this period the Stalinists built around themselves a cultural movement of impressive proportions. A national network of literary organs, theatre and dance groups, and professional associations gave sympathetic intellectuals and professionals an opportunity to function in their professional capacities at the same time that it gave them the feeling of participating in the radical movement.

In the last few years the Stalinists have taken possession of commanding positions in one field after another on the cultural front. It proved to be easier to take over the leadership in the literary world than in the field of organized labor. While it is not our present purpose to examine the character of this movement so much as to note the extent of its influence, it is necessary to make four observations upon it.

First, the movement was conceived and permeated by the most rigid sectarianism, which not only demanded that works of art and their authors be politically orthodox, but that they conform to the specifications laid down by the official pundits of the party. The party line was to reign supreme in the creative arts no less than in politics; and the party spokesmen demanded equal authority in both. This false and anti-Marxist conception of the relation between the revolutionary party and the living cultural movement, it is interesting to note, has not been liquidated along with the rest of the policies of the third period. It has simply changed its form in accordance with the new political requirements. Whereas yesterday a novelist had to be one hundred and fifty percent a revolutionist in his point of view and in his portrayal of his characters on penalty of being rejected out of hand or stigmatized as a social-Fascist, today he need only have a kind word to say for bourgeois democracy and a harsh word for the Fascists to win commendation. Thus Sinclair Lewis has been miraculously transformed from a petty-bourgeois liberal writer, who turned his back upon the revolutionary struggles of the proletariat, into a literary hero of the Popular Front.

Second, the chief offspring of this harsh sectarianism was the false cult of proletarianism. While it is necessary to bring forward the ideas of Marxism in critical opposition to those of bourgeois ideologists in all spheres of theoretical activity, this is a far cry from creating a new class culture specifically proletarian in its content.

Rich and comprehensive cultures are not created at the command of any party overnight; they are the product of many generations of experimenting in all the diverse fields of cultural activity. It took several centuries for bourgeois culture to develop and flower in the arts and sciences. The bourgeoisie moreover had the means and the leisure to create or to foster the arts, and an urgent necessity to advance and utilize the sciences.

Prior to the conquest of power the proletariat has neither the resources, the time, or the opportunity to create a complete culture of its own. Not only must it strain its resources to the utmost in its economic and political struggles, but it is faced with the task of assimilating all the valuable elements in the culture of bourgeois society. The idea of the categorical necessity for the proletariat to fashion its own culture to replace that of their masters is based upon a false analogy with the historical development of bourgeois culture.

But there is an even more fundamental error in the notion of "proletarian culture". The historical mission of the working class is to establish socialism and the classless society, and to create for the first time in history a classless culture accessible to all, a truly human culture, which will absorb within itself all the cultural wealth of the past. The notion of a specifically proletarian culture is therefore a contradiction in theory, reactionary and Utopian in practise.

Its contradictions manifested themselves in the endless controversies carried on by the radical intellectuals amongst themselves and with such liberal critics as Henry Hazlitt and Joseph Wood Krutch over the interpretation to be given the concept of "proletarian" literature. Did it mean literature written by a proletarian, for proletarians, or about proletarians? Or did it mean literature written according to the revolutionary point of view? In their debates the Stalinists shifted uneasily from one of these means to another without coming to any conclusion; in practise, they used whichever one was suited to their particular purpose at the moment.

The proletarian cult was not only responsible for such sterile controversy in advanced literary circles and considerable theoretical confusion in the minds of radical intellectuals. It also had disastrous effects upon the artistic development of many writers and artists new to the revolutionary movement. Instead of broadening their sympathies and interests to include the lives and struggles of the working class, it narrowed them by demanding that their attention be concentrated solely upon them. Even more, the high priests instructed their acolytes what themes to choose, what treatment to give them, even what kind of ending they should have. Works which did not conform to specifications were held up as horrible examples or summarily thrown into the junkheap. This reign of terror on the cultural front paralyzed many promising talents and led them into blind alleys.

Although the proletarian cult has not been officially repudiated, it is being forced into the background. It is incompatible with the new line which tries to obscure all class divisions and exploit national traditions of liberty, justice, etc. The symposium on "Marxism and Americanism" in the latest issue of *Partisan Review and Anvil* is indicative of the new trend. Not one of the contributors, who include some of the most prominent of the Stalinist intellectuals, approaches the question from either the class or the Marxist standpoint. The tendency here as in the political arena is to smear

over fundamental class antagonisms and to submerge the red in the red, white and blue.

Third, despite the size of this movement, it has so far been almost exclusively restricted to the domain of arts. The sphere of the social sciences, philosophy, history, political economy, etc., which should be the special province of Marxist theoreticians, has been untouched by it. This is a manifestation of the extremely low theoretical level upon which the movement has developed.

Fourth, the Stalinist predominance on the cultural front is quantitative, but scarcely qualitative. Many of the more thoughtful of the radical literary figures—Dos Passos, Louis Adamic, Anita Brenner, etc.—are not Stalinist stooges. The ablest radical historian, Louis M. Hacker; the leading Marxist philosophers, Sidney Hook, James Burnham and Jerome Rosenthal, are anti-Stalinist. The new orientation of the Stalinists has for the time being enabled them to make even greater inroads than before among left intellectuals and professionals. But signs of revulsion are even now becoming noticeable among the most thoughtful of them.

## II.

While the radical intellectuals constitute the most aggressive element in contemporary American intellectual life, they are at best an active minority within it. The majority of American intellectuals are still liberals by conviction, however interested they may be in radical ideas. The intellectual changes which have taken place among representative liberal intellectuals are therefore of greater immediate importance for the decisive sections of the intellectuals than events among the radicals.

The advance of Fascism and the menace of a new world war has deeply disturbed American liberals. They are having nightmares in which every demagogue who catches the ears of the masses is represented as a Fascist Fuehrer. See Sinclair Lewis's latest novel *It Can't Happen Here*, or the pages of the *New Masses* passim, for reflections of the phantasmagorias Fascism has evoked in the imaginations of these people.

The easy faith in the omnipotence of bourgeois democracy and in its gradual growth toward a more perfect society, which sustained the liberals in the past, has been rudely shaken. As the vise of the class struggle begins to exert more pressure upon them both from the right and from the left, the liberal vanguard is rousing from its lethargy.

John Dewey's latest book, *Liberalism and Social Action*, indicates how far some leaders of American liberalism have been pushed by fear of reaction. Dewey still worships at the shrine of bourgeois democracy. He still condemns the Marxists for their "dogmatic" belief in the function of force as an instrument of social change, and opposes to the organized might of the working class the abstraction of "socially organized intelligence" materialized presumably in a middle-class party of reform.

But his faith in the old gods is beginning to weaken. He explicitly recognizes that force is one of the pillars of the existing social order, and goes on to concede, in words at least, the right of "an organized majority to employ force to subdue and disarm a recalcitrant minority." "The one exception—and that apparent rather than real—in dependence upon organized intelligence as the method for directing social change, is found when society, through an organized majority has entered upon the path of social experimentation leading to great social change, and a minority refuses by force to permit the method of intelligent action to go into effect. Then force may be intelligently employed to subdue and disarm the recalcitrant minority." (Page 87.)

A dogmatic rejection of the idea that the use of force can ever be "intelligent" or progressive has hitherto been the hallmark of

the American liberal. Properly interpreted, Dewey's general remarks would go far towards justifying the Marxist position in regard to the historical function of organized force. The revolutionary party, which is "the organized intelligence" and the will of the working class, demands nothing more than the right to employ force intelligently "to subdue and disarm the recalcitrant minority" of exploiters and their agents, who will inevitably oppose themselves to "the organized majority of the people who have entered upon the road of social experimentation leading to a great social change".

Dewey's political history, taken together with his qualification that "the exception is more apparent than real", indicates that he, for one, will never advance beyond the liberal standpoint in practice. But his admission that force can under certain circumstances play a progressive rôle opens a theoretical breach in traditional liberalism through which others can make their way towards the revolutionary position.

The ferment among American liberals created by their fear of Fascism presents the American revolutionists with a splendid opportunity to intervene and draw significant layers of the middle classes, and especially the best-trained professional and intellectual minds, to the side of the revolutionary movement. If Dewey, in his seventies, can open such a breach, how much can be done with the younger generations!

The road to the revolutionary movement is barred for these elements however, by two varieties of intellectuals now being assiduously encouraged by Stalinism. These are the "Stalinist liberals" and the proponents of the "People's Front."

The "Stalinist liberal" may be briefly characterized as one who holds that, although the dictatorship of the proletariat is an excellent thing for the benighted Russians, enlightened democratic America needs none of it. Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb, whose recent treatise, *Soviet Communism: A New Civilization?* is the current sensation among the liberal cognoscenti, are perfect examples of this type. Stalin himself has given such people his blessing in his declaration to Roy Howard that: "American democracy and the Soviet system can exist and compete peacefully, but one can never develop into the other. Soviet democracy will never evolve into American democracy, or vice versa." Organizations like the Friends of the Soviet Union are recruited from the ranks of these liberals.

Now it is certainly more creditable to be a friend of the first workers' state than a friend of Hearst. Nevertheless, it must be recognized that it is not a difficult matter to be a friend of the Soviet Union in the United States today, especially for those who need take no political responsibility for their actions. Even President Roosevelt, who bears the responsibility for carrying out the policies of American imperialism, is today, in his own fashion, an avowed "friend of the Soviet Union" and cables birthday greetings to Kalinin.

No one can tell in advance how loyal such fair-weather friends will be to the Soviet Union in more dangerous circumstances. But we do know this. It is one thing to be a friend of the Stalinist bureaucracy and quite another to be a real friend of the Soviet Union, just as it is one thing to admire the achievements of a victorious revolution from a safe distance and quite another to be an active revolutionist. There is a world of difference between those who simply praise the October Revolution of eighteen years ago and those who know that to preserve these conquests it is absolutely necessary to extend them throughout the world.

The Stalinist liberals, however, fail to make any distinction between defending the Soviet revolution and defending the Stalinist

exploiters of this revolution against the criticisms of devoted revolutionists. They undertake to defend, not only the Soviet Union against its real enemies in the reactionary camp, but also the Stalinist bureaucracy against their political opponents, the Trotskyists. They lecture the Trotskyists on the properly reverent attitude one should take toward the present régime in the U.S.S.R.; condemn them for being "unrealistic"; "sectarian"; and "firebrands"; and some even echo the monstrous Stalinist accusation that the Trotskyists are "the vanguard of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie." These apologists for Stalinism, who often affect to disdain politics as a dirty business, play, in effect, the most despicable of all political rôles in sanctioning the crimes committed by the Stalinists against the interests of the world proletariat.

Consider, for example, the part such people played in the Kiroff assassination. Comrade Trotsky devoted an article in a recent issue of this magazine to Romain Rolland's feeble efforts to cover up the crimes of the Stalinists in this connection. We can trace scores of American Oliveres for the Rollands of France. Did not the *New Republic* publish an editorial white-washing the bureaucracy's reprisals against the revolutionists, the shooting of scores of worker-communists without trial, the punishment of Zinoviev and Kamenev, on the ground that "the Russians" were accustomed to use violent methods in such matters and should not be judged according to the standards of the enlightened West? The use of such double-entry bookkeeping is characteristic of the Stalinist liberal's methods of shielding the Soviet bureaucracy against the rightful criticism of the Marxists—under the misapprehension that they are thereby protecting the Soviet Union against its foes.

The "Stalinist liberal" used to be the most serious obstacle to the revolutionary development of the liberal intellectual, is now giving way before the bourgeois-liberal proponent of the "People's Front". The thoroughly petty bourgeois and reformistic character of the new Stalinist line is demonstrated by the promptness with which the most advanced organ of liberal opinion has seized upon it. The January 8 issue of the *New Republic* featured a fervent plea for "A People's Front for America". The editorial called upon socialists and communists to forget their political differences; heal their old antagonisms; and join with all other men of good will to form an anti-Fascist front in this country on the French model.

The single requirements for a seat in this political omnibus is a professed opposition to Fascism. "Under these circumstances there is, it seems to us, only one test to apply to possible adherents to a united front: are you for fascism (under that or some other name) or against it? If you are against it—against maintaining or raising prices at the expense of wages, against suppressing labor unions, against militarism in the classroom—that is enough. It is better to win with the aid of people some of whom we don't like, than to lose and come under the iron-fisted control of people all of whom we dislike a great deal more. Whatever may have been the underlying motives of Stalin's famous speech in Moscow, what he said was true as applied to America today, against a common enemy you need a common army."

This appeal for a People's Front is based upon three assumptions. First, that Fascism is the chief danger threatening the American people today; second, that the Fascist nations are belligerent while the democratic nations are pacific in policy; third, that the way to prevent Fascism is by combining all classes in a common front against reaction. All three propositions are false to the core; all three are essential elements in the social-patriotic program of Stalinism; all three serve only to blindfold the American people to the real dangers before them.

We cannot here enter into a prolonged discussion of the People's Front. Providential as it may seem and plausible as may be its claims, all the teachings of Marxism go to prove that it is a snare and a delusion. Both war and Fascism spring out of the world crisis of capitalism; the struggle against them is inseparable from the revolutionary struggle for the overthrow of the present social system. The theory of the People's Front, however, is based upon a negation of the class struggle and a denial of the necessity for the proletarian revolution. Instead of preventing either Fascism or war, the policy of the People's Front can only smooth the path for their advance.

All historical experience stands witness to this fact. For this latest panacea, imported from Moscow and guaranteed to ward off the constitutional ills of capitalism, is nothing new. In the form of an alliance with the Kuomintang and Chiang Kai-shek, it led to the beheading of the Chinese revolution and the triumph of reaction in China in 1927; in the form of the Iron Front against Hitler, it brought disaster to the German workers in 1933. The same fate awaits the French and Spanish proletariat, if the Socialist and Stalinist leaders are permitted to play the same game through to the bitter end.

American liberals are today using the same arguments in favor of the People's Front as they formerly used for the New Deal. for the same purposes and for the same end. The division of labor that is growing up between them and the Stalinists in propagating these fatal doctrines makes it more imperative than ever to disclose their real nature and the dangers that flow from them.

## III

Since 1921, the Socialist party has remained in a state of intellectual sterility. With insignificant exceptions, it exerted no influence upon the living cultural movement nor attracted any important group of radical intellectuals to its banner. The Old Guard obsessed by the single idea of combating the ideas and the influence of the communists, had no further use for theoretical investigation; they were quite content with the moth-eaten social-democracy they had absorbed in their youth. The world-shaking experiences of the Russian revolution and the ensuing events made not the least dent upon their consciousness. The feeble flickers of intellectual life displayed here and there within Socialist circles beyond the precincts of the Rand School were fed by such doctrinaires as Laidler, who simply regurgitated for American consumption the platitudes of English Fabianism.

With the changes which have recently taken place within the Socialist party, there will undoubtedly be a tendency for radical intellectuals to be drawn towards it. However, the theoretical weakness of the Socialist party; the absence of a vigorous intellectual life, and its lack of a cultural apparatus equal to that of the Stalinists definitely lessen its attractive power. One of the main tasks of the left wing in the Socialist party should be the systematic encouragement of theoretical work in order to raise the theoretical level of the party; to draw closer those radical intellectuals who have broken with Stalinism, and thereby prepare to combat the false ideas of Stalinism on the cultural as well as the political front.

George NOVACK

## A Page of American Imperialism

AS LATE AS the year 1895 an English historian like Bryce was able to announce in his well-known work, *The American Commonwealth*, that the same thing could be said about American foreign policy as about the snakes in Iceland: there was no such creature.

In 1898 the United States was a world power conducting a colonial policy with the perfect consciousness of her major imperialist interests.

The factual history of this seemingly astounding transformation is very simple and quite transparent. But the American, i.e., capitalist school of historians persists in pretending that it was sheer coincidence that America entered the Spanish war to emancipate "little" Cuba and concluded it by a bloody subjugation of the Philippines. The liberal historian Beard (a very "critical" man) does not go beyond a mild surmise that a "number of active politicians had early perceived the wider implications of a war with Spain"; and he denies that there is any reason for even "believing that all who sat at the President's inner council table had at the time any such definite imperial design."

The Spanish-American war is vaguely explained, as a rule, by the hysteria drummed by the "yellow press" (Hearst, Pulitzer and Co.). Says a Professor at Clark University: "The newspaper press of the time inflamed popular passion till almost any lie received currency." (A.L.P. Dennis, *Adventures in American Diplomacy*, p. 63.) "Certain newspapers, notably those owned by William Randolph Hearst, fanned the flames." (L. B. Shippee, *Recent American History*, p. 238.)

But, of course, they all insist that there was no connection at all between a campaign in the press, and the policy pursued by the government. "No considerable group of people or politicians

talked of annexation or conquest." (F. L. Paxson, *Recent History of the U.S.*, p. 275.) A Harvard historian, Archibald C. Coolidge, remarks blandly: "It was not merely that the Americans had a natural sympathy for the insurgents as a people striving to free themselves from tyranny, but they were tired of a commotion at their very door." (A. C. Coolidge, *U. S. As a World Power*, p. 128.) And Chester Lloyd Jones ably sums up as follows: "At the end of the century the U. S. came into conflict with Spain the result of which made her a holder of both Caribbean and Asiatic colonies. This war, however, was a development of no conscious imperialism, and one but slightly, if at all, connected with the movement for increased colonial holdings in which the European powers had been engaged. (Jones, *Caribbean Interests of the U.S.*, p. 19.)

And to prove that the American people were acting from no selfish motives, Congress proclaimed that it had no annexations in mind, passing the Teller resolution to this effect, after a week's debate on McKinley's war message (April 18, 1898).<sup>1</sup>

The authority from Harvard tells us that "This self-denying ordinance was voted in a moment of excitement, and in all sincerity." (Coolidge, *op. cit.*, p. 129.)

And another authority swears, "This . . . resolution gave the war the appearance of altruism and was undoubtedly sincerely approved by the great majority of Americans." (A.L.P. Dennis, *op. cit.*, p. 75.)

<sup>1</sup> The text of the Teller resolution: "That the U.S. hereby disclaims any disposition or intention to exercise sovereignty, jurisdiction or control over said Island except for the pacifica-

tion thereof and asserts its determination, when that is accomplished, to leave the government and control of the Island to its people."



To introduce a slightly sour note into this symphony of excitement, altruism and sincerity, we quote from still another authority. Months before the battleship *Maine* was sunk (on September 21, 1897), one, Theodore Roosevelt, the then Assistant Secretary of the Navy, wrote to another gentleman not unknown to Harvard, Henry Cabot Lodge, that in the event of war: "Our Asiatic squadron should blockade and if possible take Manila." Lodge, replying a little later, remarks with satisfaction: "Unless I am utterly and profoundly mistaken, the Administration is now fully committed to the *large policy* that we both desire." (Our emphasis.) They at least seemed to know what was at stake, and how to get it.

As we already know, an uprising flared up in Cuba. Spain was very sorry, and very ready to conciliate. Suddenly the battleship *Maine* blew up in Havana harbor.

"Remember the Maine!

"To Hell with Spain!"

To hell with peace talk. The war was on.

No sooner were hostilities declared, than, strange to tell, a national uprising immediately flared in the Philippines—far, far away on the Pacific Ocean, and belonging to Spain. Through a mysterious coincidence, the American "Asiatic" Fleet happened to be nearby. Battleships and revolutions have an affinity. Since the Americans did not want to have their ships blown up, there was nothing to do except to attack Manila and blow up the Spanish fleet . . . although, as a newspaper wit remarked at the time, the American people "didn't know whether they [the Philippines] were islands or canned goods".

The American people were dumbfounded. "Astonishment bordering upon bewilderment seized the American public . . . that it [the war] should have reverberations in the Orient was beyond comprehension. Slowly it was understood that freeing Cuba was not a simple proposition." (L. B. Shippee, *op. cit.*, p. 244.)

Such a slow and complex proposition deserves a little attention. We shall try to establish a few facts about this happy coincidence. Everybody knows what Dewey did, once he got to Manila and fired another shot that "was heard around the world". But who got Dewey to Manila? Who timed the long, long journey so nicely? None other than our frank correspondent, the mere Assistant Secretary.

"The vessels on the Asiatic station had recently received a *new commander*, after a fortunate selection which was *less due to merit than to politics*. Assistant Secretary Roosevelt was responsible for the detail of George Dewey to the post. . . ." (F. L. Paxson, *op. cit.*, p. 279.)

Obviously, we are dealing with people who are fortunate in everything they do!

But let us hear more about Roosevelt's "own" actions: "*In advance* of the message of April 11 [McKinley's war message to Congress] he [T.R. himself] had taken the responsibility of ordering Dewey to proceed to Hong Kong there to clean ship and outfit, and thence in the event of war to proceed to Manila. . . ." (*Ibid.*)

When Dewey, who was appointed not so much on merit as because of "political considerations", arrived in Hong Kong, he was shocked by the news that the eventuality had become a fact. "Three days after the beginning of the war, on April 24, a British proclamation of neutrality made it impossible for Dewey to continue at Hong Kong. The war itself had brought into operation the orders he had received from Secretary Roosevelt." (*Ibid.*, p. 276.)

This is corroborated by L. B. Shippee who says: "In accordance with plans worked out largely [!!!] by Theodore Roosevelt, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Commodore Dewey commanding the Asiatic squadron, proceeded from his station at Hong Kong to the Philippines. There was little else to do: Dewey could not

remain at Hong Kong without being interned for the duration of the war; the only alternatives were making for a home post, thousands of miles away, or striking at and securing some position upon enemy territory. . . ." (*Recent American History*, p. 244.)

But Dewey apparently did more than he was instructed. For in addition to "cleaning ships, etc.", he somehow got in touch with Aguinaldo, who was the leader of the previous native revolt against Spanish rule. Dewey made a deal with Aguinaldo. There has been a considerable controversy over this deal. "Even today just what sort of arrangement was made between Dewey and Filipinos is in doubt." (L. B. Shippee, *op. cit.*, p. 257.) It is generally agreed that it was an unfortunate misunderstanding. Aguinaldo insists that Dewey had promised him independence for the Philippines. Dewey on his part violently denies this. True, a misguided historian like N. W. Stephenson asserts rashly that Aguinaldo set up a nominal republic which "Dewey recognized as if it were an actual state." (*A History of the American People*, p. 989.) But as Archibald C. Coolidge correctly points out: "The American government . . . gave Aguinaldo no promise whatever. Indeed, Admiral Dewey and the consul at Hong Kong could in no wise commit the administration in a matter of such importance." (*U.S. As a World Power*, p. 153.)

The entire trouble arose as a result of the fact that the negotiations were carried on by word of mouth through an interpreter. We can not do better than quote Archibald again: "There has been much heated discussion about the extent to which the Americans committed themselves to the support of Aguinaldo in their original compact with him. . . . In trying to reconcile the different versions of what was agreed upon, it must be remembered that the negotiating was done through an interpreter. Translations of this kind, with the best of intentions and every precaution are notoriously unsafe. . . . We have no proof that the words exchanged between Aguinaldo and Mr. Wildman in Hong Kong, in May 1898, were correctly rendered from one to the other. Who knows whether the interpreter even tried to be exact? And admitting he did, a misunderstanding is easy to conceive." <sup>2</sup> (*Ibid.*, p. 153.) One thing is clear: Aguinaldo was left with the consoling thought that "misunderstandings" of this sort must have played a considerable rôle in the history of capitalist expansion.

Thanks to this misunderstanding the Filipinos fought and died for the rule of the Yankee imperialists while thinking that they were fighting for their own independence.

Aguinaldo and his Filipinos were very badly needed. The American imperialists had a few difficulties to overcome before their plans could be smoothly realized. First, there were the dumb and pathetic "Populists" and "Democrats", who unfortunately had too many votes in Congress, and who had to be led by their noses carefully, lest they upset the applecart. They made enough trouble as it was with their "altruistic" revolution, which made Whitelaw Reid foam at his mouth. But worse yet, McKinley, the figurehead as President, was in a constant panic lest somehow the entire sincerity and altruism should pop into the open. He was constantly getting down on his knees and praying, while others, like Roosevelt, were working away like beavers to provide against every possible contingency. Small wonder that our frank Assistant Secretary lost his temper and barked: "McKinley had no more backbone than a chocolate éclair."

<sup>2</sup> The capitalist historians are greatly fetched by this explanation and do not tire of playing with it. "Probably, however, the Filipinos, forced [?] to carry on much of their intercourse through interpreters, allowed

their expectation to color their view of the agreement, since all Americans involved in the matter deposed that no promises of any kind were made." (L. B. Shippee, *Recent American History*, p. 257.)

True, Lodge kept hammering away, prodding and planning. Porto Rico was already secure, but the Philippines were not quite so safe. In May 1898 (and a merry month it must have been!) he writes to Theodore, who was then aching to become a real Rough Rider, that there was no hurry about Cuba but that substantial land and naval forces should be rushed to Philippines. (Cf., Beard, *Rise of American Civilization*, p. 375.)

But one cannot do everything at once . . . not even if one happens to be an imperialist *par excellence*, as all these gentlemen were. One has to wait for "consequences", and the "needs" that they engender.

"The immediate consequence of Dewey's victory at Manila was a need for an occupying army . . . the fleet was destroyed but Dewey had no troops to grasp the fruits of victory. . . ." Emilio Aguinaldo was brought to the islands (what foresight!) "for the purpose of keeping the revolt alive." (F.L. Paxson, *op. cit.*, p. 277.)

In short, no Filipinos "revolting"—no fruits to be plucked! But, fortunately they were there to fight. Dewey made sure of that by bringing Aguinaldo on a warship. He also supplied him with money and ammunition. Meanwhile, McKinley made speeches. Said he: "There is a very general feeling that the United States, whatever it might prefer as to the Philippines, is in a situation where it cannot let go". Meanwhile, Secretary of State Hay first proceeded to write remarkable diplomatic documents in which he said that the Philippine Islands must be allowed to remain with Spain, only to understand suddenly (on June 3, 1898) that this would have to be "modified" because "the insurgents there have become an important factor in the situation and must have just consideration in any terms of settlement". And finally, (thank God), Lodge's instructions were carried out. General Merrill set sail with "an advance guard of two regiments" and arrived at Manila with "instructions to ignore Aguinaldo and establish a provisional government under American auspices." (N. W. Stephenson, *A History of the American People*, p. 982.)

When we consider the difficulties under which this phase of American history was made, we stand aghast. One unforeseen difficulty after another! No sooner was Dewey really equipped to "grasp the fruits of victory", than the war unfortunately came to an end, that is to say, an armistice had been signed. (Lodge had warned that there was no hurry about Cuba, but even Roosevelt, it seems, was fallible.)

However, this was a mere technicality. Due to faulty communications the news did not arrive in time, and three days after the signing of the armistice, Merrill stormed Manila. Of course, the Filipino army was already there. But "Aguinaldo was induced to withdraw from Manila, pending the completion of the treaty." (*Ibid.*, p. 982.)

The inefficient Spaniards raised a howl, insisting that an armistice was an armistice, no matter what sorts of faulty communications obtained, let alone "misunderstandings". But the American government flatly refused to accede the demand that the *status quo* of August 12 be restored. However, it was ready to be broad-minded. The American government accepted the "principle" that the islands had not been conquered. The Spaniards collected \$20,000,000. But no doubt, the enlightened American Commissioners all felt that it was not the money but the principle that counted. This Commission was composed of Day (first Secretary of State under McKinley), Davis (Senator from Minnesota), Frye (Senator from Maine), and Whitelaw Reid (editor of the *New York Tribune*)—all these men are admitted even by capitalist historians to have been "avowed imperialists". No one was more qualified to settle the war than those who started it. Besides, no one else could be trusted.

It transpired during the negotiations that Aguinaldo and his friends had entirely false notions on many subjects, their own importance included. "The insurgents, moreover, represented a relatively small group." (L. B. Shippee, *op. cit.*, p. 252.) And F. L. Paxson is able to say with a sigh of relief and sorrow in retrospect that: "The date of victory at Manila marks the entry of the United States *against its will* upon an imperial course." (*Recent History of the U. S.*, p. 277.)

When the unenlightened Filipinos finally realized what had happened to them "against their will", they tried to turn their guns against the Americans. And the unwilling Americans proceeded to teach them a few things about American concentration camps and American methods of civilizing backward people. Aguinaldo himself was finally captured in February 1901. Perhaps by then he was no longer capable of becoming astonished. After all, accidents can happen. But these are merely the flowers, the berries are still ahead.

If it was not another misunderstanding, it was certainly at least an accident that during this self-same Spanish-American War a revolution broke out . . . this time in the Hawaiian Islands, also in the Pacific Ocean, but, it is true, not the property of Spain. Yet, on the other hand, of tremendous naval importance.

Coolidge, the historian, informs us that according to the opponents of imperialism in the United States, "the revolution by which the Queen had been overthrown was a usurpation of power by a handful of foreigners who would never have succeeded but for the landing of American troops" (p. 134).

The anti-imperialists were not merely muck-raking. In 1893, a Committee of Public Safety "largely [!!!] composed of Americans and having the support of the American Minister Mr. Stevens, seized control of the government in Honolulu" and overthrew Queen Liliuokalani. (A.L.P. Dennis, *Adventures in American Diplomacy*, p. 103.)

Said the Minister Mr. Stevens at the time (1893): "The Hawaiian pear is now fully ripe, and this is the golden hour for the U.S. to pluck it." The eloquent Minister was a connoisseur of fruit, but he was mistaken in his "golden hour". Cleveland was then president, a man of inadequate girth and vision—a "larger" man was needed to herd the recalcitrant petty bourgeois in Congress.

Said McKinley in 1898: "We need Hawaii just as much and a good deal more than we did California. It is manifest destiny." The accommodating press screamed about the designs of the Japanese (to say nothing of the Germans) on Hawaii. "Extravagant tales", comments one historian. Even more extravagant Congressmen yelled that American speculators had purchased \$5,000,000 of Hawaiian bonds at 30 cents on the dollar and it was they who wanted to annex Hawaii so that the United States treasury would have to assume the responsibility for the worthless Hawaiian paper. Of all creatures, the petty bourgeois is the most extravagant! Sober men (Republicans) pointed out that the "Hawaiian Islands were necessary to the defense of the Philippines which in turn were necessary to defend American interests in the Far East." (Beard, *op. cit.*, p. 375.) And sobriety carried the day.

"The annexation was carried out during the excitement of the Spanish War, not by treaty—for fear that the necessary two-thirds majority could not be secured in the Senate—but by joint resolution of the two Houses of Congress." (Coolidge, *op. cit.*, p. 135.)

As a matter of fact, it was impossible to secure the two-thirds vote of the Senate, and that is why recourse was had to the device of 1845. McKinley signed the "joint resolution of annexation" on July 7 (a few days after General Merrill had reached Manila).

All of which entitles American historians to say in chorus: "An-

other unforeseen [?] result of the war affected the Hawaiian Islands." (L. B. Shippee, *op. cit.*, p. 245.)

The Peace of Paris, December 10, 1898, liquidated completely the colonial empire of Spain, the empire that had been crumbling to pieces, while so many hungry mouths were slavering. American imperialists took practically everything: Cuba, Porto Rico, the Philippines (3,000 odd islands), Guam, etc. What an extraordinary and choice selection! An astounding harvest, plucked in one "Golden War"! "Internationally there was astonishment at the outcome." (L. B. Shippee, *op. cit.*, p. 245.) "To the greater part of Europe the war itself, and the course which it took came as an unpleasant surprise." (Coolidge, *op. cit.*, p. 130.)

They have good reasons to gloat. A single glance at a map is sufficient to make clear that here was no accidental colonial grab—like that perpetrated by the German imperialists in their day, or by Mussolini and his crew today—but a painstaking, fully considered, consciously planned and executed preparation of U. S. imperialism for its struggle for the richest colonial prize in the world—the outlets of the Orient fronting the Pacific Ocean.

"They gave the Americans a stronger strategic position in the Gulf of Mexico, and in the Caribbean sea, coaling stations in the Pacific, and a base of operations in the Far East." (Coolidge, *op. cit.*, p. 130.)

The Philippines are strategically located in respect to the most developed section of China, its southern section (Canton), just as Japan is located strategically in respect to Northern China and Manchuria. At the same time the Philippines provide a "base of operations" in the struggle for the Dutch Indies, and (whisper it!) India itself.

The Hawaiian Islands are a midway base *en route* to the Far East, of vital naval and military importance. Between the Hawaiian Islands, Asia and Australia there is nothing except the Islands of Fiji. Therefore, as Mahan, the American naval expert

states, "the Hawaii are of utmost importance". As far back as 1892, when England and France toyed with the idea of plucking the Hawaiian "pear", the U.S. government flatly declared that it would not tolerate the colonization of these islands by any European power, and would intervene with force of arms, if need be.

Porto Rico flanks the British and French possessions in the Antilles.

And as for Cuba—"the Pearl of the Antilles"—let us have an expert's appraisal of a jewel like that! "A glance at the map is enough to convince anyone of the unique importance of this island to the United States. Strategically it commands at one end the entrance to the Gulf of Mexico—the outlet to the huge Mississippi Valley—and at the other it fronts on the Caribbean Sea, and any *future isthmian canal*." (Coolidge, *op. cit.*, p. 124. In 1908!)

American imperialists could not take the bull by the horns and set to the task of solving the question of the Panama Canal, that is, of a direct route to Asia, unless they had first seized Cuba and Porto Rico, unless they had beforehand guaranteed their key harbors to the Orient, and had established their "interests in the Far East" that must henceforth be so preciously protected.

After the Spanish-American War, "it [the United States] was now in a situation, as well as in a mood, to take up the *canal question* with an energy it had never before shown." (Coolidge, *op. cit.*, p. 275.)

"The lessons of the Spanish-American War were clearly before the American people: a *canal* was an urgent necessity both from a naval and commercial point of view." (A. L. P. Dennis, *op. cit.*, p. 157.)

In the above article we have dealt with the ways and means whereby the American imperialists prepared for a big job. In the next article we shall deal with their methods of actually building the "big ditch".

J. G. WRIGHT

## Kathleen Ni Houlihan's Newest Savior

FOR CENTURIES Ireland has suffered the penalty of her status as England's first colony. Discontent with that high destiny has driven the lower orders to many a stormy revolt. They were defeated not only by the superior military forces of the British Empire; repeatedly the national revolutionary movement has been strangled by the men of property and their ideologues. These gentlemen flourished the sword when gestures cost little. But when revolution became a thing of flesh and blood—a ferocious gang of starvelings infected by "class" ideas of land and bread—the orators composed themselves. "Moral force!" became the battlecry of these hucksters, as ready to barter away the fate of a people as they haggled over trade. History has underscored their treason. When, for instance, the bourgeoisie took to arms against England in the post-1916 period—more correctly, deputized the working class to do the fighting—no thought of class strife was allowed to sully the escutcheon of Erin's unselfish patriots. Landless men, demanding the break-up of the rich cattle-ranchers' land into small tillage holdings, were forcibly restrained by the same Irish Republican Army that was fighting the British occupation.

Between the storms social quacks spun out elegant schemes as antidotes for unrest.

Peasant proprietorship, coöperative creameries, the hand of friendship to foreign investors, home rule, in our own day, social credit. And now, concocted this time in "revolutionary" quarters, the great panacea which is to effect the Poor Old Woman's final deliverance: the People's Front.

The People's Front indeed. Speaking in Irish accents, it is true (did not our communist spokesmen, indignant at the taunt of "foreigners", offer to match birth certificates with any of their traducers?), but the same People's Front which leads the masses to such dizzying successes in Jacobin France and which every day threatens to restore "democracy" in Hitler Germany.

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The communist party, preceded by the Revolutionary Workers' Groups, was launched here in 1933. Within the limitations imposed by the Stalinist régime, there was a vigorous note in its journal, the *Irish Workers' Voice*. The Groups were among the 12 Republican and labor organizations outlawed under the Coercion Act of the Cosgrave government in 1931. The Act was the most drastic of a series through which the Cosgrave *junta*, the ministerial arm of big business and cattle-ranching interests, sought to enforce the Free State constitution since the Treaty of Surrender in 1921. The storm of protest against the

brutalities of the Coercion régime swept Cosgrave from office in 1932. Triumphant-ly exploiting the coercion laws as election ammunition against Cosgrave, the De Valera party assumed control of Leinster House. The coercion law was suspended, Republican prisoners were freed. But within a year the national-reformist De Valera was demonstrating that coercion machinery was an indispensable equipment for any administration, cattle-grazier or small manufacturer, in the Free State.

In these circumstances, however, the Revolutionary Workers' Groups, choked from birth by the madness of the "third period", were compelled to drag in the wake of De Valera and his party of ambitious petty traders. In the second general election of 1933 they told their followers: "Vote Against Coercion! Vote for a Workers' Republic!" How? By supporting which party? The communists were unable to put forward a candidate. The answer, of course, was the "lesser evil". Vote for De Valera, though the double negatives were loaded with the usual face-saving "reservations".

The inaugural convention of the Communist Party of Ireland was formally convened in 1933. Diligently copying the writings of Lenin in the 1905 period, the newly-appointed beloved leaders of the long-suffering Irish drafted their manifesto. De-

spite its origin, it was not altogether devoid of Marxian knowledge. From the tragic history of Ireland's rebellions it deduced the indisputable truth that the bourgeoisie could not complete the democratic revolution. "No other class but the proletariat and no other party but the communist party can bring about the national and social liberation of Ireland," the thesis maintained. Similarly: "It is just because the chief task of the proletariat is socialism that it is capable of carrying the national fight with England to a finish." For the Bolshevik, this is the beginning of all wisdom. However, a scrupulous integration of these concepts with the entire manifesto would have removed certain ambiguities. Thus, the germs of the Stalinist theory of "stages", the static blueprint which must be strictly adhered to in the interests of an orderly development of the revolution, mars that section of the document which holds that

"The Irish working class will carry on the national independence fight to the end, attaching to itself the mass of peasant [?] farmers so as to crush the power of resistance of the English imperialists and overcome the unreliability of the Irish capitalist class."

And then:

"The Irish proletariat will bring about a socialist revolution, attaching to itself the masses of semi-proletarians in the population, so as to break the power of resistance of the capitalists and render harmless the unreliability of the peasants and the petty bourgeoisie."

Despite the shortcomings of this document and the politics derived from it, the earlier mistakes of the Irish communists (they had at first been serenely indifferent to any experiment with the national question), appeared as the most innocent misformulations in comparison with the fervent patriotism of the Seventh World Congress. But in 1934 the People's Front was still only a dream. The communist party, as impotent as other sections of the International, needed allies.

Their opportunity came in 1934. Revolt from the ranks was brewing in the Irish Republican Army, the national-revolutionary organization that had led the military fight against the British occupation and subsequently against the Free State Treaty forces. The conservative wing in the leadership of this force was soaked in the ideas of the petty-bourgeois who would win the country behind the back of society. Since England (i.e., the Irish Free State) would surrender by force alone, they argued, they must concentrate on armed uprising in the convenient future. To the demand from the ranks that the Army take action on social issues, allying itself with the struggle of the slum-dweller in the town and the landless man in the country, the military chieftains had one reply: "No politics! Let's gain national freedom first!" (A sophistry we shall encounter later.)

At the 1934 convention of the Army Peadar O'Donnell, George Gilmore and Frank Ryan, all outstanding veterans of the Anglo-Irish wars, sponsored a motion calling on the I.R.A. to organize a Republican Congress. The Congress should invite representatives from labor and republican

bodies and formulate a program which would link working class struggle with anti-imperialist activity. The motion won the support of the majority of the delegates, but was over-ruled by the bureaucrats of the Army Council. Thereupon Gilmore, O'Donnell and Ryan resigned. They were supported by Michael Price, who had unsuccessfully championed a motion that the I.R.A. should not disband until the Workers' Republic, the only guarantee of national independence, should be achieved.

Meeting at Athlone, the insurgents issued the call for the Republican Congress. They declared:

"We believe that a Republic of a United Ireland will never be achieved except through a struggle which uproots capitalism on its way. 'We cannot conceive of a free Ireland with a subject working class.' This teaching of Connolly represents the deepest instinct of the oppressed Irish nation."

*Republican Congress*, a lively journal, which interpreted these ideas, described itself as "the organ of the united committees of workers and small farmers, working for the united front against Fascism and for the Irish Workers' Republic."

The congress convened in Rathmines in the summer of 1934. And here the communist party made its weighty contribution. Two resolutions, the subject of a long and acrimonious debate, were presented at the Congress. Whereas, in the Athlone call the Congress organizers were guided by the thesis that the "Republic will never be achieved except through a struggle which uproots capitalism on its way"—at the Rathmines convention an alternative resolution was presented by that section of the leadership which maintained most fraternal relations with the Stalinists. They held that

"The Republican Congress is the leading formation of republican forces struggling for complete national independence. . . ."

"The Republican Congress declares the dominating political task to be the authoritative re-declaration of the Irish Republic."

Thus, in spite of qualifying clauses which paid appropriate tribute to the necessity of anti-capitalist struggle, the call for the Workers' Republic as a slogan of action through which alone national freedom could be won, was abandoned.

For their unseemly haste the advocates of the Workers' Republic were soundly berated in the columns of the communist *Workers' Voice*. But they were guilty of other crimes. They had the temerity to suggest that *none* of the parties at present constituted was capable of leading the people to freedom. They did not except the communist party from this charge and urged that the Congress carry on as a Workers' Revolutionary Party.

The *Voice* was outraged. In an arrogant editorial it declared that correct leadership for the people was vested in itself alone. Moreover, they insisted that the Workers' Republicans did not understand "the stage" of the movement. History must not be hurried, the stages must not be confused! Had not Stalin, the great strategist of victories which hogtied China's millions to the bloc of four classes, assuring the working class thereby their place before Chiang Kai-

shek's firing squads—had not Joseph the Great made the blue-print of national revolution?

So they argued. And at the Rathmines Congress, by a demagogic reference to the "national independence" resolution as the "united front", they did their share towards the bewilderment of the delegates. As if any revolutionary party was forbidden from using the technique of the united front! What Sean Murry and his friends of the *Workers' Voice* do not understand, of course, is that the united front is not an evangelical exhortation. It is a strategical weapon—with its uses strictly defined—in the class war.

"In its present stage," said Murray, "it would be disastrous to abandon the struggle for a free united Republic." Not that the Workers' Republicans had any intention of so "abandoning" the struggle. But, argued Murray, the mass of the rural population would back the fight for independence. "But not all the classes who support national independence will go so resolutely forward for the establishment of the Workers' Republic." (Our emphasis. M.A.)

Precisely! But did our Stalinist deputy draw the logical conclusions from this truth? Did he suggest that "those classes who support national independence" but who will not "go resolutely forward to the Workers' Republic" might knife *all* Republicans at the crucial moment? And did he indicate that the masses, by sedulously avoiding (at Murray's command) any attempt to interlock the national with the working class struggle for power were themselves preparing their own disaster? He did not. Instead he retarded a movement that was approaching a *class* solution of the national struggle. By endorsing the "democratic" resolution, he presented the bourgeoisie with an insurance policy against the calamity of the Workers' Republic.

It is significant that the delegates from Belfast—proletarian representatives from the most industrialized section of Ireland—were most "confused" over this issue. They wanted the Workers' Republic as a call to action. They were peremptorily commanded to march backwards. Ninety-nine stood for the so-called "United Front for the Republic"; eighty-four were against.

These promising pupils of the Great Disciple have pored over the correct excerpts from the writings of Lenin of 1905. They have parroted each phrase of *Two Tactics of Social Democracy in the Democratic Revolution*, like dutiful schoolboys they have incorporated paragraphs of this classic—correct in its day and age—into their "communist" manifesto. They know the Lenin of the Stalinist scrapbooks. But of the living Lenin, of the Lenin who unceremoniously scrapped his 1905 thesis (under protest from the oldest of "old Bolsheviks") when he saw that the Russian proletariat must "leap over" the bourgeois-democratic revolution to the dictatorship of the proletariat, these pedants know nothing. "No reservations on the national struggle," they say, as if Lenin had never written into the basic theses of the Communist International that the communists, while supporting national-revolutionary struggle, had definite reservations towards it.

So Stalinist influence won the day, inspired not by the stand of the industrial contingents from Belfast but catering to the sentiment of parish-hall politics. Subsequently the *Republican Congress*, its line now straightened by the cautious theoreticians, purged from its mast-head all evidence of any reckless haste towards the Workers' Republic. Henceforth the journal was the "organ of the united front of republican and working class forces, against imperialism and for the Irish Republic."

The communists, of course, quote most volubly from the writings of James Connolly, Ireland's greatest revolutionist. Yet, had they absorbed the core of Connolly's ideas, they would find that he too was guilty of "skipping stages". Far back in 1896 he wrote in *Erin's Hope, the End and the Means*:

"The Irish working class must emancipate itself, and in emancipating itself it must, perforce, free its country."

The attainment of national independence, therefore, is incidental to the struggle for socialism. "No revolutionist," Connolly added, "can safely invite the coöperation of men or classes whose ideals are not theirs and who, therefore, they may be compelled to fight at some future critical stage of the journey to freedom. To this category belong every section of the propertied class, and every individual of those classes who believes in the righteousness of his class position."

We do not, by this quotation, accuse the Stalinists and their sympathizers of presenting delegates' credentials to the shareholders of Guinness' Brewery or Harland and Wolff. What they did, however, was to soften the struggle, to fall back on the tawdry bourgeois shibboleth, invoked so monotonously whenever the lower classes tamper with the question of social freedom: "Ignore this talk of a Workers' Republic. Let's unite and get national freedom first."

\* \* \*

But Stalinist opportunism was still to bear its finest fruits. Like all sections of the Third International during the Abyssinian crisis, the Kremlin's office boys here dutifully supported the League of Nations, i.e., the British Empire, and screamed for "sanctions against the aggressor Mussolini". Only, mind you, because they were "for" Ethiopian independence. The stock resolutions swearing fidelity to the League were as popular here as elsewhere. With this ironic difference: The British Empire, passionately proclaiming its love of the oppressed in all empires but its own, found recruiting sergeants, with the help of Stalinist agents, in the very nation which to England has been a testing ground for every form of imperialist brutality.

Taking its cue from the *Workers' Voice*, the *Republican Congress* paper declared editorially: "We definitely support Mr. De Valera's stand on sanctions." (The Free State Minister had sided with England on this question.)

A paper that revives the war-cry of "defense of small nations" to justify its support of the British Empire (pardon—the League of Nations!) in Ireland deserves to die. It has. *Republican Congress* has

folded up. The promised monthly substitute never appeared and never will. But by a happy coincidence, virtually while *Republican Congress* was being waked, certain ladies and gentlemen—artists, doctors, poets and others of the liberal professions, be-stirred themselves. They also developed a sudden interest in "freedom". For the organized dissemination of their illusions they found a hospitable host—*The Irish People*.

The *People* was to be, so its anonymous editor declared in the first number, "a broad organ affording expression to the various progressive cultural and social movements". Such an enlightened editorship was not to be spurned and the progressives rushed into print. The *People* enjoys an impressive panel of contributors. Are they all committed to the republicanism of the "Congress" journal? Hardly. But, between educational discussions on Dublin's slum problem (written by a doctor, of course) and terse reports of anti-imperialist gatherings, the valiant liberals cry lustily: "Art Does Not Get a Chance in Ireland" (by Sean Keating, R.H.A.); "It was the Revolution of 1848 that Inspired Ibsen's First Play"; "Starving in a Garret is Immoral," says Harry Kernoff, as he "Surveys the Root-causes of the Lack of Artistic Appreciation." "Sam Butler, Iconoclast, Shook Victorianism Till the Stuffing Came Out," Mrs. Sheehy-Skeffington declares. A sociological tit-bit: "Thirty Thousand Families Starve in One Room"; "and this", add the godly editors, "in Christian Dublin."

But let us not think that prudent sociologists are not represented. Cautiously they feed spoonfuls of economic pap into the liberal kittens, so engagingly that Rathmines and Trinity College would never object. In a recent number Captain Denis Ireland regales us with a choice theoretical morsel. "Marx, Lenin and the Marxists", is the subject of the ambitious Captain's essay. He makes several reassuring discoveries: "The seat of government was removed from Leningrad back again to Moscow, thus ending the policy of Westernization initiated by Peter the Great. Old Russia, in belief, formally declared itself to be what in effect she had never ceased to be, a semi-Asiatic state—a fact often conveniently forgotten by Western European socialists and communists." Communism was "practical politics in Russia," the Captain discovers. Because of Soviets, the dictatorship of the proletariat, Marxian theory interpreted by Lenin and Trotsky? Not on your life! "Because . . . the seeds of communism had always existed in the psyche of the Russian peoples." And similarly: "Fascism became practical politics in modern Italy." Not, mind you, because capitalism was in collapse or because there was no centralized communist force able to raise authoritatively the question of state power and its importance in the transition to socialism. Not at all! Fascism became "practical politics in modern Italy for the simple reason that the germ of Fascism has lain hidden in the soil and atmosphere of the Italian peninsula ever since the foundation of imperial Rome."

"Such are the facts forgotten," says the stern pedagogue, "by the James Maxtons and Oswald Moseleys of the West, and all

those who seek to implant alien ideas in an alien soil." (A dig for you, Mr. Murray!) In a concluding plea for "realism", the *Irish People's* political contributor observes:

"When the long promised World Revolution failed to materialize no one abandoned the fallacies involved in its expectation more cheerfully than Lenin. . . ."

No comment from the editors, some of whom at least have participated in working class movements. This is a discussion organ, you see!

The journal's title, *The Irish People*, harks back to the *Irish People* of the Fenian days in the Sixties. Here the comparison ends: The Fenian organ of 1867 was a mouthpiece of a revolutionary nationalist bourgeoisie. "England's difficulty is Ireland's opportunity," it thundered. "England's enemy is Ireland's friend." And however circumscribed were the politics of the Fenians, their slogans and activity were at least invested with a certain revolutionary significance. It is precisely this revolutionary aspect of Fenianism and of the *Irish People* of 1867 that is forgotten by the *Irish People* of 1936. Hints of this were already apparent in the *Republican Congress*. England's difficulty, according to many carefully-timed "letters to the editor", must not be Ireland's opportunity. So much was not said in as many words in the editorial columns. But the meaning of ingenious arguments that stressed the dangers of the "England's difficulty" slogan was there for all to see.

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The communist party, the *Workers' Voice*, may disavow all responsibility for any statement in the *Irish People*. But, leaving aside the question of astute and indirect control (one of Stalinism's most profound contributions to the modern political strategy), one may ask: What are the *Workers' Voice* and the communist party doing for the education of the latest litter of liberals? Nothing—no education is needed because the liberals are striking (in all innocence, in the dark, perhaps), at the Comintern line. The proof is implicit in the new realism of the Stalintern. For "broad, people's fronts"; for non-sectarian support from university dons, parsons and priests; for attractive programs that will interest gentlemen of substance; for good democracies (such as the British Empire) against evil Fascist aggressors; for unity at any price.

The function of the *Irish People*, regardless of the intentions of some of its contributors, is to spread this "popular" platform, which means to take the sting out of republican activity, to forget that "the republic will never be achieved except through a struggle which uproots capitalism on its way".

Match communist propaganda with some of the later writings of men like Peadar O'Donnell and you see the similarity. The communists, who applauded the Left wing Republicans when they broke with the I.R. A. in 1934, who bitterly stigmatized (and how justly!) the conservative militarism of the Twomey-McBride faction in the Army Council, have taken the sour note from their discussions. Instead of encouraging a resolute fight against the policies cham-

pioned by Twomey and his associates—policies which brook not even the mildest association with working class struggle—the communists now are all sweetness and light. Gone are the fierce castigations. Instead we have snivelling pleas that “the breach must be healed”. Not the separation of the revolutionary from the conservative trend, but the fusion of both into an evanescent “unity”. And Peadar O'Donnell, discussing the situation in a recent number of the English periodical *Left Review*, points to the dismemberment of the Republican movement, attributing to Maurice Twomey much of the blame therefor. He indicts Twomey's hostility to day-to-day struggle for the social interests of the nationalist populace. What is his conclusion? That Twomey must be driven completely from all influence in political councils in Ireland? Far from it! “We must *rescue* Twomey from this isolationist policy,” O'Donnell says.

Among the founders of the Republican Congress movement, among some of those

who contribute now to the *Irish People*, are men and women who have participated courageously in the struggle for freedom. But courage alone is not the exclusive attribute of the revolutionist. That quality must serve a clear and unwavering program. In Ireland it means that “the working class must free itself, and perforce must free the nation” (Connolly). That slogan can be as powerful a call to action today as it was in 1896. And to the experience of the struggle in Ireland there must be wedded a clear understanding of international experience—of the bloc of four classes in China, of the reasons for the surrender to Hitler, of the liberalistic orgies of the Seventh World Congress. Above all the intelligent worker-Republican must know that the root of all this is the stifling theory of “socialism in one country”.

Let Ireland's fighters not be deceived by their Stalinist “educators” in Ireland. Stalin is already committed to the peaceful co-existence of the Soviet and capitalist systems. (When some of the founders of the Con-

gress were fighting in the I.R.A. against the British connection in '20 and '21, Lenin was insisting that “one or the other system must perish”.) Revolution may rudely upset the nicely-calculated trade relations between the Soviet Union and the capitalist world.

Russia must be assured of a calm and peaceful international world in which “socialism in one country” grows painlessly, hot-house fashion. Revolutionary activity in Ireland, especially when it is directed against “good democracies” like the British Empire, may, think the Stalinists, adversely affect the progress of the latest sausage-factory in the Uzbeks. Revolution is not popular either in the Kremlin or among its obedient office assistants in Dublin. Sooner or later the followers of the Republican Congress (already in the bag for the Stalinist People's Front) will discover this for themselves.

Maurice AHEARN

DUBLIN, April 1936.

## On Dictators and the Heights of Oslo

### A Letter to an English Comrade

DEAR COMRADE:

It is with great astonishment that I read the report of the conference of the Independent Labour Party in the [London] *New Leader* of April 17, 1936. I really never entertained any illusions about the pacifist parliamentarians who run the I.L.P. But their political position and their whole conduct at the conference exceeds even those bounds that can usually be expected of them. I am sure that you and your friends have drawn approximately the same conclusions as we have here. Nevertheless I cannot refrain from making several observations.

1. Maxton and the others opine that the Italo-Ethiopian war is a “conflict between two rival dictators”. To these politicians it appears that this fact relieves the proletariat of the duty of making a choice between two dictators. They thus define the character of the war by the political *form* of the state, in the course of which they themselves regard this political form in a quite superficial and purely descriptive manner, without taking into consideration the social foundations of both “dictatorships”. A dictator can also play a very progressive rôle in history. For example: Oliver Cromwell, Robespierre, etc. On the other hand, right in the midst of the English democracy Lloyd-George exercised a highly reactionary dictatorship during the war. Should a dictator place himself at the head of the next uprising of the Indian people in order to smash the British yoke—would Maxton then refuse this dictator his support? Yes or no? If no, why does he refuse his support to the Ethiopian “dictator” who is attempting to ward off the Italian yoke?

If Mussolini triumphs, it means the reinforcement of Fascism, the strengthening of imperialism and the discouragement of the colonial peoples in Africa and elsewhere. The victory of the Negus, however,

would mean a mighty blow not only at Italian imperialism but at imperialism as a whole and would lend a powerful impulsion to the rebellious forces of the oppressed peoples. One must really be completely blind not to see this.

2. McGovern puts the “poor little Abyssinia” of 1935 on the same level with the “poor little Belgium” of 1914; in both cases it means support of war. Well, “poor little Belgium” has 10,000,000 slaves in Africa, whereas the Abyssinian people is fighting in order not to become the slave of Italy. Belgium was and remains a link of the European imperialist chain. Abyssinia is only a victim of imperialist appetites. Putting the two cases on the same plane is sheerest nonsense.

On the other hand, to take up the defense of Abyssinia against Italy in no way means to encourage British imperialism to war. At one time this is just what was very well demonstrated in several articles of the *New Leader*. McGovern's conclusion that it should have been the I.L.P.'s task “to stand aside from quarrels between dictators”, is an exemplary model of the spiritual and moral impotence of pacifism.

3. The most shameful thing of all, however, only comes after the voting. After the conference had rejected the scandalous pacifist quackery by a vote of 70 to 57, the tender pacifist Maxton put the revolver of an ultimatum at the breast of the conference and forced a new decision by a vote of 93 to 39. So we see that there are dictators not only in Rome and in Addis Ababa, but also in London. And of the three dictators, I consider most harmful him who grabs his own party by the throat in the name of his parliamentary prestige and his pacifist confusion. A party that tolerates such conduct is no revolutionary party; for if it surrenders (or “postpones”) its principled position in a highly important and topical

question because of threats of resignation made by Maxton, then at the grave moment it will never withstand the immeasurably mightier pressure of the bourgeoisie.

4. By an overwhelming majority, the conference forbade the existence of groups inside the party. Good! But in whose name did Maxton put an ultimatum to the conference? In the name of the parliamentary group which regards the party machine as its private property and which actually represents the only faction that should have been sharply drubbed into respect for the democratic decisions of the party. A party which dissolves the oppositional groups but lets the ruling clique do as it jolly well pleases, is no revolutionary party. It will not be able to lead the proletariat to victory.

5. Fenner Brockway's position in this question is a highly instructive example of the political and moral insufficiency of Centrism. Fenner Brockway was lucky enough to adopt a correct point of view in an important question, a view that coincides with ours. The difference lies in this, however, that we Marxists really mean the thing seriously. To Fenner Brockway, on the contrary, it is a matter of something “incidental”. He believes it is better for the British workers to have Maxton as chairman with a false point of view than to have a correct point of view without Maxton. That is the fate of Centrism—to consider the incidental seriously and the serious thing incidental. That's why Centrism should never be taken seriously.

6. In the question of the International, the old confusion was once more sealed, despite the obvious bankruptcy of the previous perspective. In any case, nothing more is said about the “invitation” from the Third International. But the Centrist doesn't take anything seriously. Even when he now admits that there is no longer a

proletarian international, he nevertheless hesitates to build one up. Why? Because he has no principles. Because he can't have any. For if he but once makes the sober attempt to adopt a principled position in only one important question, he promptly receives an ultimatum from the Right and starts to climb down. How can he think of a rounded-out revolutionary program under such circumstances? He then expresses his spiritual and moral helplessness in the form of profound aphorisms, that the new International must come "from the development of socialist movements", that is, from the historical process which really ought to produce something some day. This dubious ally has various ways, however: he even got to the point of reducing the Lenin International to the level of the Second. Proletarian revolutionists should therefore strike out on their own path, that is, work out the program of the new International and, basing themselves on the favorable tendencies of the historical process, help this program gain prevalence.

7. Fenner Brockway, after his lamentable capitulation to Maxton, found his courage again in struggle against the undersigned. He, Brockway, cannot allow a new International to be constructed from "the heights of Oslo". I leave aside the fact that I do not live in Oslo and that, besides, Oslo is not situated on heights. The prin-

ciples which I defend in common with many thousand comrades, bear absolutely no local or geographical character. They are Marxian and international. They are formulated, expounded and defended in theses, brochures and books. If Fenner Brockway finds these principles to be false, let him put up against them his own. We are always ready to be taught better. But unfortunately Fenner Brockway cannot venture into this field, for he has just turned over to Maxton that Oh so paltry parcel of principles. That is why there is nothing left for him to do save to make merry about the "heights of Oslo", wherein he promptly commits a threefold mistake: with respect to my address, to the topography of the Norwegian capital and, last but not least, to the fundamental principles of international action.

\* \* \*

My conclusions? The cause of the I.L.P. seems to me to be hopeless. The 39 delegates who, despite the failure of the Fenner Brockway faction, did not surrender to Maxton's ultimatum, must seek ways of preparing a truly revolutionary party for the British proletariat. It can only stand under the banner of the Fourth International.

Leon TROTSKY

April 22, 1936.

## ✻ B O O K S ✻

### Living Marxism

THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL AFTER LENIN. By LEON TROTSKY. Translated by J. G. Wright. Introduction by Max Shachtman. li+ 357 pp. New York. Pioneer Publishers. \$2.00 [Popular ed.]. \$3.00 [Standard ed.].

The science of Marxism was not handed down from Sinai by Marx and Engels nor engraved for all time on the tablets of their works. The principles of scientific socialism set forth in their writings represented the experience of the revolutionary movement up to their own time. Marx frequently cautioned his disciples that these principles were not to be worshipped as dogmas but to be used as guides to revolutionary action. Like all scientific laws, they had to be elaborated, concretized and refined; they had to be tested repeatedly in the laboratory of history under the constantly changing conditions of the class struggle.

Marxism is, therefore, not a collection of petrified dogmas but a living, growing body of knowledge which has developed together with the revolutionary movement. The progress of the one is essential to the progress of the other. Without the benefit of the searchlight of Marxism, which illumines the road ahead, the working class would be condemned to grope its way forward blindly over a terrain full of pitfalls, to stumble again and again, and to risk breaking its neck before reaching its goal. Marxian theory alone can enable young parties to avoid the errors committed by their comrades-in-arms in other countries and to ap-

proach new situations forewarned of dangers and equipped with tested practical prescriptions for the solutions of their problems.

On this account the great leaders of the revolutionary movement have always been careful to protect the heritage of Marxism and to preserve the clarity and purity of its ideas. At first glance, Lenin's *The State and Revolution* has a scholastic, even a pedantic appearance. It seems to consist for the most part of a mosaic of commentaries on quotations from Marx and Engels, and of appeals to their authority against the revisers and perverters of their teachings. Yet Lenin had no superstitious reverence for authority or belief in the magic of sacred texts. No one was readier to question established authorities, even revolutionary authorities, or more ruthless in discarding obsolete ideas and slogans when conditions required.

Nor can anyone accuse Lenin and his followers of lacking capacity for political organization and action. The truth is that a scrupulous regard for the theoretical traditions of socialism, which he rightly regarded as the most precious possession of the party, was the chief source of the Bolsheviks' political success. Clarity of ideas and firmness of principle were the indispensable prerequisites for correct action in the class struggle. While he exercised an unceasing vigilance in safeguarding the theoretical heritage of the party, Lenin continually tested its theoretical foundations in the light of new experiences and changing conditions.

This book of Trotsky's resembles nothing

so much in Marxian literature as Lenin's work on *The State and Revolution*. The parallel extends even to the circumstances of their creation. Both were written in exile: Lenin's in Finland where he was in hiding from Kerensky's police; Trotsky's in Alma-Ata whither he had been banished by Stalin's G.P.U. Both were written in response to profound crises in the revolutionary ranks, both were inspired by the same motives and dedicated to the same ends.

Lenin sat down to write *The State and Revolution* during a lull in the development of the Russian Revolution with three main purposes in mind. First, he wanted to restore the revolutionary ideas in the arsenal of Marxism to their rightful place in the consciousness of the vanguard, to remove the rust which the leaders of the social democracy had allowed to accumulate upon them in the decades preceding the war, to sharpen their revolutionary edge and burnish them so brightly that no one could mistake their character. Secondly, Lenin wanted to show how these ideas had sprung out of the experiences of the revolutions of 1848, 1871 and 1905 and were being confirmed in the revolution of 1917. Finally, he put forward these ideas in order to arm the Bolsheviks ideologically for the struggles ahead and to rally revolutionists everywhere to the banner of the Third International.

Lenin did not complete his theoretical work; it was interrupted by the practical preparation for the October insurrection. But with the aid of these ideas Lenin and Trotsky succeeded in rearming the party, leading it to victory over the bourgeoisie, and founding the Third International.

Ten years later Trotsky was confronted with a similar situation and a similar task. Lenin had been dead five years; the leadership of the Communist party and the Communist International had fallen into the hands of Stalin and the Centrist bureaucracy. The vacillating, opportunist course of the Stalinists had resulted in cruel defeats of the revolutionary movement in Germany, China and elsewhere, and great dangers to the proletarian dictatorship within the Soviet Union. Just as Lenin directed his polemic against the masked revisionism of Kautsky on the burning questions of the state and revolution, so Trotsky had to direct a merciless criticism against the masked revisionism of Stalin. And just as those who sided with Lenin against the opportunists in 1917 formed the first cadres of the Third International, so those who identified themselves with Trotsky's ideas have since become the proponents of the Fourth International.

The specific occasion that called forth this work was the submission of Stalin-Bukharin's draft program to the Sixth Congress of the Comintern in 1928, which was subsequently adopted without serious changes. Trotsky's criticism of the draft program is divided into three parts. The first section deals with the fundamental premises of the program. Trotsky emphasizes the necessity of an international program, a program proceeding from an analysis of world economic and political conditions and not from the conditions or ten-

dencies of development in any one country.

Using this axiom as a point of reference, he points out some grave deficiencies in the draft, among them the omission of any extended discussion of the question of the relations between Europe and America, which has become the key question of imperialist politics since America's intervention in the World War. Trotsky's brief treatment of this question, a condensed version of the views expressed in greater detail in his hitherto untranslated collection of articles entitled *Europa und Amerika*, will be of special interest to American readers.

Trotsky focusses his main attention upon the two opposing theoretical tendencies which wrestle with each other in the document, the Stalinist innovation of "socialism in one country" and the Marxian theory of revolutionary internationalism. He demonstrates how a formal acknowledgment of international obligations is used to cover the introduction of nationalist conclusions, how every strophe in favor of international solidarity is immediately nullified by an antistrophe for national socialism, and predicts that the result can only be catastrophe for the Third International. He cites copious evidence to prove how alien the theory of "socialism in one country" is to all the traditions of the Bolsheviks and to the views held by Lenin, and even Stalin and Bukharin, up to the Autumn of 1924. To this revisionist theory, Trotsky opposes at every point the principles and program of the permanent revolution.

The power of Marxism lies not only in its ability to foresee the trend of events but to predict the consequences of a wrong political course. Trotsky sounds the alarm that the theory of socialism in one country must inevitably lead to the transformation of the parties of the Third International from the general staff of the world revolution into border patrols of the Soviet Union, to their progressive deterioration as revolutionary agencies, and ultimately to their collapse, whether the authors and proponents of this theory willed it so or not. The history of the Comintern since 1928 has completely confirmed this prophecy, nowhere so tragically as in Germany where the strongest section of the Third International outside the Soviet Union crumpled like a house of cards when the Brown Shirts seized power.

But the most striking exhibition of Trotsky's prescience is to be found in the final chapter on "The Theory of Socialism in One Country as a Series of Social-Patriotic Blunders". Thanks to the methods of Marxian analysis at his disposal, Trotsky was able to detect the germs of chauvinism when they made their first appearance in the organism of the Comintern in 1928. He predicted that if the source of these germs was not excised from the program and the parties of the Comintern inoculated against the theory of socialism in one country, the Third International would become the victim of the same social-patriotic disease that caused the collapse of the Second.

Eight years ago this contention must have seemed fantastic to many of those who remembered that Lenin's International had been forged in struggle against the

chauvinism of the social democracy. But politics has its own cruel logic. With the uninterrupted decay of the Comintern the disease infected every part of the organism until it broke out in malignant form after the German débâcle. Today the Stalinists have become rabid patriots. What was a brilliant theoretical deduction in 1928 has now become a political reality!

The second and third sections are devoted to a critical examination of the rôle of the Third International in the revolutionary struggles of the post-Lenin period from 1923 to 1928. These were years of great battles and great defeats of the proletariat in Germany, Esthonia, England and, above all, in China. The draft program maintained a singular silence on all these events, preferring to pass them by with only casual reference—and understandably so. For the principal cause of these defeats lay in the false policies of the communist leadership.

In a series of brilliant chapters Trotsky lays bare the errors committed by the leaders of the Comintern and reviews the results. These chapters constitute, not only the best available history of the communist movement for those years, but an invaluable field marshal's manual for all active revolutionists. Trotsky's discussion of the strategy and tactics of the word revolution in the imperialist epoch is unique in Marxian literature. The peculiarly convulsive character of the present period, the tasks it imposes upon the revolutionary leadership, the importance of the party, the reactionary nature of such two-class parties as the Farmer-Labor party—these questions and others of equal importance are discussed in indissoluble connection with the experiences of the post-war revolutionary movement and the tasks ahead.

The "Summary and Perspectives of the Chinese Revolution" deals with the problems of revolutionary strategy in colonial and semi-colonial countries as they have been illuminated by the experiences of the Chinese revolution. The lessons of the disastrous course followed by the Chinese Communist Party in that mighty mass movement retain their full force today when the colonial peoples are again arising in revolt in Cuba, Syria, Indo-China, Egypt, while the Stalinists have reverted to an even ore flagrant policy of collaboration with the colonial bourgeoisie, not only in China, but in all other colonial countries.

Here is published for the first time in English Trotsky's letter of appeal to the delegates of the Sixth Congress against his removal and expulsion by the Stalinist clique. In violation of his constitutional rights, it was never shown to any of the delegates. The document amplifies and underscores many of the topics touched upon in his criticism of the draft program, especially the question of the internal party régime in the Soviet Union.

The Sixth Congress marked the beginning of the sharp turn which found expression within the Soviet Union in the campaigns of industrialization and forced collectivization and—on the international arena—in all the insanities of the "third period". Trotsky warned the Opposition not to be deceived by the turn. Though forced by the pressure of an awakened pro-

letariat and the criticism of the Opposition, it was not a return to a firm Leninist line on the part of the Stalinists but a temporary manoeuvre which, unless the leadership was replaced, would sooner or later be succeeded by another swing toward the Right. So it has come to pass. Today we see the Stalinists again with hat in hand before Laval, Benes, the King of Greece, Chiang Kai-shek, and arm in arm with all the reformist heads of the social democracy.

The introduction by Max Shachtman carries forward the history of the Third International from the Sixth World Congress in 1928 to the Seventh in 1935, through the adventurist policies of the "third period" which ended so ignobly in the German débâcle, to the present official reversion to the old opportunist course on a broader scale. Although the book lacks an index, it has been excellently edited and sets a high standard for the forthcoming volumes in this series of Trotsky's *Selected Works*. The reader will find the numerous notes of considerable value.

G.N.

## Hearst

HEARST, LORD OF SAN SIMEON. By OLIVER CARLSON and ERNEST SUTHERLAND BATES. xv+312 pp. The Viking Press. New York. \$3.00.

IMPERIAL HEARST, A Social Biography. By FERDINAND LUNDBERG. xvi+406 pp. Equinox Coöperative Press. New York. \$2.75.

The story of Hearst is the story of money. Hearst's liberal critics have been if anything overburdened with "cold, brute facts of record" all of which go to prove that Hearst was and is a hopeless mediocrity. In every sphere of his life's endeavor, Hearst could only tag along at the tail-coats of others, imitating, cheating, lying, bungling, and making up for his frustrations with money. Even as an imitator he was never more than a second-rater. In journalism, his "least unsuccessful" field, he remained in the background so long as he only aped Pulitzer. He was able to establish himself as a force in American journalism, only after he had bought out Pulitzer's staff, lock stock and Brisbane. But his millions could not function with the same efficacy in other spheres. Hearst remained a failure in terms of his own ambitions in all spheres except one, namely, that of money.

Carlson and Bates summarize his career as follows in their biography: "A trickster in reform, a liar in journalism, a charlatan in politics, a hypocrite in morals—what was there left? The greatest of all. . . This single claim could not be denied by his worst enemies; he was one of the mightiest of all American captains of industry." (P. 279.)

In both of the above volumes, his liberal biographers attempt to strip Hearst of the covering of his millions, to strip him "of his stocks, bonds, and titles to castles, estates, and mines, his hirelings, servitors, beneficiaries, and banker-sponsors"—and then they hold up what remains to "scorn and ostracism". Indeed, were the facts presented in both biographies (which on the



whole are much the same) cut down one-half, or even one-tenth, a gruesomely revolting portrait would emerge.

But Hearst stripped of his millions is Hearst stripped of everything. What makes Hearst so significant a figure in contemporary America is precisely the fact that in his case no outstanding personal abilities, or qualities, either of art or nature, of vice or virtue, can intervene to becloud the essence of the tale. The story of his life is almost a chemically pure distillation of the history of American capitalism in its imperialist stage. In this respect the biographers of Hearst have failed to do him justice. They confine themselves to the routine pattern of "biographical writing".

Let us consider for a moment the "personal" balance-sheet of Hearst drawn by Carlson and Bates; in reform—trickery; in journalism—lies; in politics—charlatanism; in morals—hypocrisy. What is this if not a very mild generic portrait of American capitalism as a whole? Indeed, what other country can match our galaxy of tricksters, frauds and quacks in the sphere of reform? Why, Hearst was not even a professional in this sphere! What other country can boast of more expert liars in journalism? Or such charlatans (not like Hearst, but successful ones like, say both our Roosevelts) in politics? As for hypocrisy in morals. . . . There is a piety and a philistine's delight in "spice" that tinges even some of his "unofficial" biographers, in their references to Hearst's drab "immoral" ménage.

In short, Hearst is almost an ideal model for the purposes of "social biography". But Carlson and Bates only string together a loose collection of "shockers" in the old *Mercury* tradition. Lundberg makes a much more serious attempt. Says Lundberg, "Hearst's position in the American political life of the post-war period is meaningless unless he is evaluated as a cog interlocking with National City Bank, both internationally and nationally." (P. 310.) These words are profoundly true. The best section of Lundberg's book is the one devoted to the working out of the above thesis.

It is indeed a pity that Lundberg failed to draw to the full the conclusions of his own statement. For the essential point is: Hearst is in every way meaningless, socially, politically and economically, unless evaluated as a "cog" of American imperialism, both before and after the World War.

While his biographers both official and unofficial have been very painstaking in uncovering personal details, colorless and trite in the last analysis, they have egregiously blundered in respect to Hearst's "single claim". The real forces, the real roots that fed the trickster, the liar, the charlatan, and the hypocrite and turned him into an outstanding figure on the American scene—the real Hearst remains buried in a riot of meaningless details, which might be of service to a moralist but not to a biographer.

This absorption in "private" or "striking" details causes the biographers of Hearst to present him in far more important and powerful rôles than he actually played. Conversely, they overlook some of

the really important functions of this "cog" in the American imperialist machine.

We cite the instance of the Spanish-American War. In both of the above volumes Hearst is made out the chief-stockholder and director of the war.

While insisting (P. 92) that "it would, of course, be absurd to assign the whole responsibility for the Spanish-American War to Hearst", Bates and Carlson blithely add in the same breath (P. 93) that "without Hearst there would have been no Spanish-American War". And absurdly enough, in their chapter, "Owner of Spanish-American War" they turn it into William Randolph's private venture, fomented by him to increase his circulation! Lundberg even imputes to Hearst the blowing up of the Maine.

To assign to Hearst this decisive rôle in the imperialist venture of American capital is to vilify Hearst's real taskmasters. American liberals are generally inclined to underestimate their imperialist contemporaries and masters.<sup>1</sup> A little closer application to the study of modern American history is necessary for any would-be biographer of Hearst. Even from the standpoint of the rôle the newspapers played in fomenting the war, Hearst cannot be given precedence over Pulitzer. As a matter of fact, Hearst's journalistic efforts were for a time an obstacle in the plans of the real engineers of the Spanish-American conflict. Hearst was far too clumsy. To compare Hearst's rôle in this epoch of American imperialism with such figures as say, Whitelaw Reid, or to go higher up, Theodore Roosevelt, or Senator Lodge is to compare. . . . Marion Davies with Greta Garbo. The pother Hearst was able to raise with his millions during the Spanish-American War has somewhat misled his biographers.

On the other hand, Hearst and his associates played a much more important rôle in the chapter that relates to the Panama Canal than they did in the Spanish-American War. Carlson and Bates are quite unaware of this chapter in Hearst's career. Lundberg unfortunately devotes very few pages to this rather important link in the chain of American imperialism, but the little he does say is extremely illuminating.

Although it falls considerably short of its excellent title, Lundberg's biography is the better book of the two. But the social biography of Imperial Hearst still remains to be written.

KARANDASH

<sup>1</sup> Here is a sample of smug and "superior" history, as it is written by liberals: "William R. Hearst . . . almost solely for the private profit of William R. Hearst, succeeded in prodding this country into a wholly unnecessary war which resulted in riveting upon the nation the imperialist policy that has been followed ever since. . . . As late as 1898 American capitalists, never very intelligent in world affairs, were still for the most part quite unaware of the destiny. . . . Big business as a whole . . . was definitely opposed to it [i.e., the war]". (Carlson and Bates, pp. 92-99. My emphasis. K.)

## Genetics

GENETICS AND THE SOCIAL ORDER. By MARK GRAUBARD. 127 pp. Tomorrow Publishers. New York. \$ .75.

Genetics is a science of immense potential importance to society. The study of the part that heredity plays in determining the characteristics of plants and animals has already yielded a great quantity of practical and theoretical knowledge. The sterile controversies of the last generation over the relative importance of "heredity" and "environment" have today been replaced by the geneticist's painstaking experiments. Starting in 1900 with the rediscovery of Mendel's laws, the science of genetics has advanced from triumph to triumph until today it is one of the major branches of biology.

We can think of three ways in which genetics can affect "the social order". First, it provides one of the main tools for the control of plant and animal husbandry. The range and power of this tool is indicated by the fact that, even in a highly industrialized country like the U.S.A., 65% of the raw materials are agricultural products, and therefore subject to improvement through genetics. Second, the actual findings of the science provide abundant material for the refutation of reactionary race and false eugenic theories. Finally, the science of human genetics will tell us all we can know about human equality and inequality at the biological level.

The ability to reap the full benefits from the progress of the science of genetics depends as much upon the state of social development as upon the state of the science itself. The question of the relations between genetics and the social order therefore becomes one of paramount importance.

To take but a single example. Varieties of corn have been developed by genetic experiment in this country that can produce twice the weight of kernel formerly possible. Other varieties give double the weight of leaf and stalk per acre. Corn production could be increased still another 25-50% by the use of small amounts of fertilizer. Nevertheless, this information cannot be applied on any considerable scale under capitalism without creating tremendous economic dislocations and social suffering. Instead of utilizing available scientific knowledge to step up production and improve its quality, the corn crop must be reduced and pigs slaughtered to maintain farm prices and profits. If all that is already known about the genetics of corn, chickens and milch cows could be utilized by our agricultural experts in a planned fashion, enough land and labor could be released to produce plenty of milk, eggs, fruit and vegetables to take care of the miserable deficiency of these vital foods in the diet of the people. This is scientifically possible, but economically impossible under the present system. A 43% increase in egg production would ruin the egg market. The fact that it would provide everyone with enough eggs is beside the point, so far as capitalism is concerned.

Both the pure and applied branches of genetics would make tremendous strides forward under socialism. There are only

a few professors of genetics in England; there are only a few hundred in this country; but there are several thousand in the U.S.S.R. J. B. S. Haldane predicted in 1932, that while the U.S.A. led the world at that time in genetics, Russia would surpass us within ten years. The only direct research on the actual effects of natural selection (Darwin's chief mechanism in accounting for evolution) is now being done in Russia. The largest collection of wheats, including some 23,000 varieties, is at Dyetskoye Selo. The only systematic research into the origins of grains, fruits, nuts and fibers is the work of the school of N. I. Vavilov. In short, the study of genetics and evolution is being pushed in the U.S.S.R. as nowhere else in the world.

The backwardness of Soviet economy, combined with the advanced political régime compared to that of the capitalist countries, spurs the science forward. The need to develop the best wheat for each region, of getting the most milk from each kind of pasture, of replacing inedible with edible forage, are of such pressing social and economic importance that no effort is spared and no expense stinted to advance the science. Agrobiolgy, which is partially based on genetics, is progressing by leaps and bounds. "Pure science" is also being encouraged, not as a separate but as an allied enterprise. What is pure today may well be applied tomorrow.

Another field in which confusion has long reigned but which is now being clarified by the science of genetics, is the theory of race. Reactionary thinkers are elaborating doctrines of racial superiority and differences as ideological supports for reactionary classes and governments. Age-old hates and fears are being played on by quotations starting with the assurance that "science tells us". Half-baked scientists such as E. M. East, popular journalists such as A. E. Wiggam, Madison Grant, and Lothrop Stoddard occupy themselves, like the Nazi racists, with reinforcing and arousing race prejudices.

Modern genetic analysis in anthropology has reached one definite conclusion concerning the race question: that there is no such thing as a pure race because no so-called race breeds true to type. There is no group in the world today to which the term race has been applied that has not received significant infusions and mixtures from outside itself in historical times. Nor is there any group of humans that does not continually produce individuals differing among themselves so widely that the idea of a specific racial type has its meaning reduced to zero.

The third field in which genetics can be expected to have important things to say is that of human heredity. This science is extremely young. There are special difficulties in the way of its advance. Humans breed so slowly that an experiment with humans takes five hundred times as long as one with fruit flies. Controlled matings between humans are not practicable. Human families are so very small that hidden factors may not show. Most important of all, human beings are so sensitive to changes in their surroundings that it is generally impossible to weigh the effect of a genetic

factor, if the individuals who carry it are living in widely different surroundings. Complicated statistical procedures are being developed to circumvent the first three of these difficulties. Already about a hundred hereditary factors and the manner of their inheritance in humans are known.

A good book or series of books dealing with these three aspects of genetics from the Marxian standpoint would be a real contribution. How does Graubard treat them in *Genetics and the Social Order*?

In the first place, the whole field of applied genetics is completely ignored. There is not a single reference in the whole 127 pages to plant and animal husbandry. And yet this is the avenue through which the science of genetics most directly and immediately affects the social order. It is surprising that this friend of the Soviet Union takes no notice of the fact that the U.S.S.R. has more workers in this field than any other country.

Graubard gives an acceptable and fairly accurate popular account of the development of genetics following closely along the lines of such popular works as Dunn's *Variation and Heredity*. There is however a howling error in the description of the two kinds of cell-division on pp. 24-27 and a wrong diagram on p. 25. Since these are not in any of the texts Graubard relies on, it must be his own contribution.

Even more unforgivable is his evasive discussion of the race question. Although Graubard recognizes that the loose usage of the word in popular speech allows the racists to exploit it for reactionary ends, he does not directly counter their arguments. Instead he dodges the whole problem by the simple device of stating that the restricted meaning of the term in biology has no relevance in sociology.

Indeed he cannot attack the grounds on which the racists stand without thereby exposing himself. For he then proposes to substitute for the false and reactionary race theory the equally false and reactionary theory of nationality! "Fortunately," he tells us, "another unit has recently been suggested for genetics, a social unit, namely, nationality. . . . Nationality (sic) has been defined as a group of people occupying a contiguous geographic area, having a common economic life, common history, culture, language, tradition, hence a common psychological heritage (of a special kind)." How opposed this notion is to the class theory of Marxism is apparent.

This theory of nationality serves to motivate his treatment of human genetics and to make a bow in the direction of Stalinism. Having overlooked the progress of plant and animal husbandry in the U.S.S.R., he chooses to chatter about the liberated nationalities as follows: "As new scientific and cultural occupations were introduced to these liberated nationalities, it was found that the shepherds, peasants and workers, oppressed for centuries, contained among them the same number of biologically endowed poets, physicists, tennis champions, aviators, inventors, teachers, etc., as any other group with a hundred or two hundred years of industrial development behind it." This is interesting, if true, but Graubard brings forward no statistics to prove it.

There still remains a need for a good book on this subject written by a geneticist with some training in Marxism. A.B.

## Rosmer's Book

LE MOUVEMENT OUVRIER PENDANT LA GUERRE. De l'Union Sacrée à Zimmerwald. [The Labor Movement during the War. From the Sacred Union to Zimmerwald.] By Alfred Rosmer. 571 pp. *Illus.* Paris. Librairie du Travail. 45 frs.

Here is a book that just comes at the right time! What an invaluable source of historical information and revolutionary education! In truth our old friend Rosmer could not have found better use for his capacities and his knowledge, and the *Librairie du Travail* could not have published a book more urgently required at the present time.

The first thing that ought to be said is that it is an *honest* book. The Communist International is flooding the literary market with productions in which ignorance mingles with dishonesty. The productions of the school of Léon Blum and consorts are more "subtly", more "decently" false in appearance, but none the less so for that. These people have something to hide. They justify their past deceptions or prepare one for the future. With Rosmer there are no secret thoughts or hidden designs: he expounds that which was. Between his ideas and the facts there is no contradiction and he is naturally interested in expressing the whole truth. An extraordinarily scrupulous personal conscience—which is not, alas! a quality frequently found among Messrs. Writers—causes him to verify the facts, the dates, the quotations at first hand. Feuilletonist improvization is foreign to him. He penetrates into his material like an explorer.

But that is precisely why his book has a gripping interest. The historical sketch of the French labor movement after the Commune; the preparation of the imperialist war; the conduct of the various proletarian organizations before the war and at the moment it broke out; the epidemic treason of the trade union and parliamentary bureaucracies; the first voices of protest and the first acts of struggle; the attempts at international regrouping and the Zimmerwald Conference—these are the contents of a volume of almost 600 pages.

This historical work seems at the same time to be a malicious political pamphlet: in the pages of Rosmer's book the social-patriots, of the Second International as well as of the Third, can find ready-made almost all the falsifications that they are now putting in circulation to dupe the workers. Léon Blum, Marcel Cachin and their similars are now re-living a "second youth", more shameful and more cynical than the first. That is precisely why every serious proletarian revolutionist ought to read, more exactly, to study Rosmer's book. To be sure, the book, due to its size, is dear; but this obstacle should be overcome by gathering together in groups to buy a copy jointly. Every revolutionary organization ought to provide its propagandists with this book in order to arm them with facts and invaluable arguments. The rule should be

# The Press

## CHAMPAGNE COCKTAILS FOR COMMUNISM

[Writing in the London *New Leader* of May 8, 1936, Miss Jennie Lee gives her impressions of a visit to Paris during the recent national election.]

... By security, the great middle and lower middle class following of the People's Front thought in terms of their savings being unmolested and the value of the franc maintained. The security they voted for was protection against France's financial dictators and a government that could be trusted to have no truck with Herr Hitler.

Their point of view was put to me very vividly by a group of Parisian business men who had gathered in front of the Café de la Paix on Sunday evening, April 26, to hear the first of the election results. This meeting place is in the heart of the West End of Paris. The crowds look better dressed than any others I had seen in the city. They were evenly divided in their sympathies between the Right National Front and the Left People's Front. I watched, when a communist was announced as heading the poll in one district, how a group of well-to-do people gave every evidence of approval and called for champagne cocktails to toast the victory.

Later we got to talking. I congratulated them on their conversion to a revolutionary point of view. At that a lively discussion broke out. I had quite misunderstood the French political situation, they assured me. It was not they who had changed their minds. They were good Radicals, and hoped they always would be. But, on the other hand, the communist party had seen the error of its ways, and now has changed so drastically that it was possible for them to vote communist and still be good

established: nobody in our ranks who has not studied Rosmer's work ought to be allowed to speak publicly on the question of war.

These lines are not a critical evaluation of the book; else we would have pointed out also some points on which we are not in agreement or in full agreement with the author. At present we want only to draw the attention of all the internationalists to this work about which the press of the two patriotic Internationals is maintaining silence, just as it preserves an ignominious silence about every serious and honest production of revolutionary thought. With all the greater vigor and friendliness should the press of the Fourth International respond with this work.

Let us add in conclusion that the book is written in an excellent language—limpid, clear and precise—and is very well gotten out.

L. TROTSKY.

March 21, 1936

"Frenchmen". Good Frenchmen they defined as meaning support for law and order, national defense, the family and the franc.

One of them went a stage further. We are business men he said. We are opposed to Fascism. So are the socialists and communists. These people realize that they cannot fight Fascism without our help. We are willing to make a deal with them. If they keep their hands off our property we shall see that Hitler keeps his hands off France. That is, in practise, you will find what the People's Front will amount to.

Rightly or wrongly, this view of the policy and intentions of the People's Front is widely shared by every class in France. Some effort was made to raise a scare against the Left. But the scare fell flat. People simply did not believe that the People's Front had any revolutionary intentions. They expected it to carry on pretty much as its predecessors did with some modest efforts at social reform, some control of the Bank of France, active protection of all democratic rights, and a strong arms policy in relation to German aggression.

There is little doubt that the new government will begin cautiously. But there are slums and unemployed workers and bitter,

galling poverty crying to heaven for redress in France, as in every other part of the capitalist world.

No government that fails to tackle these problems energetically can hope to retain the confidence of the French masses.

The testing time for both socialists and communists is still to come. When the People's Front government of Radicals and Right wing socialists fails, as it must fail, the next move must be a great lurch forwards towards workers' power or a deadly swing backwards towards Fascist dictatorship.

Can the socialists and communists maintain a strong alliance and be ready to offer a convincing revolutionary lead when the opportunity is given them?

Or will any such opportunity be swept aside by the war tension between France and Germany reaching a breaking point sooner than the class antagonisms within France? If that happens, I prophesy that France, deeply peace-loving as it is, will shoulder arms to a man, and that communist, socialist, French Fascist and conservative, rich man, poor man, beggar man, thief, will one and all march off to the stirring music of the *Marseillaise* to the bloodiest war and biggest gamble in history.

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