

**THE NEW
INTERNATIONAL**

A MONTHLY ORGAN OF REVOLUTIONARY MARXISM

The War Crisis

By The Editors

The Popular Front's Flight from Spain

An Interview with Casanova

The Monopoly Investigation

By Dwight Macdonald

KRUPSKAYA by Leon Trotsky

Utopia from Oklahoma

By George Whiteside

IN recent issues this column has stressed the importance of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL to the Fourth International movement in England, Scotland, South Africa, Australia, the Central and South American countries, China and elsewhere. This is uncontested and something of which we are all proud. But we have also emphasized the necessity for NEW INTERNATIONAL supporters in the United States to make it possible to continue to send 1,000 copies of the magazine abroad. The foreign countries truly endeavor to do their share. Because help was needed in this respect, the month of March was set aside for the organization of affairs, entertainments, dances, house parties, etc., to raise money for THE NEW INTERNATIONAL. We regret to state that, as this is written—latter March—the results are likely to prove quite meager, far below expectations. There are contributing factors which made it hard for Party Units to organize such affairs at this time, but the facts are not changed thereby. To date the Upper West Side and Lower East Side Branches in New York City have turned in the small proceeds of their affairs: \$17.71 and \$5.44; Local Boston did well with \$20.27; and Local San Francisco has sent in \$5.00, but comrade Trimble says this is only a first installment—a bigger social to follow. Other affairs, however, have been or are still to be held, and no doubt some results will be forthcoming. Among these are: Needle Trades Br., New York City; Local Detroit; Lynn, Mass.; Youngstown; St. Louis; Washington, D. C. Certainly these are few enough. But there is still time for other, and important Party units to hold an entertainment and we hope this will be done. These benefits were to serve to carry some of the foreign NEW INTERNATIONAL accounts. For the first time in 16 months, unless more aid is forthcoming. It will not be possible to send the magazine to some of our economically weak foreign groups. Will the U. S. readers of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL help quickly to remedy this situation? It can and must be done.

Some Party units are arranging affairs, but for the purpose of liquidating their magazine debts. This desire to get their accounts in good order is laudable, certainly, but it is unquestionably possible for all Party and Y.P.S.L. units to cover their bundle bills through the sale of the magazine (if the literature activity is properly organized) and not to resort to affairs for this purpose. Enter-

THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

A Monthly Organ of Revolutionary Marxism

Volume V April 1939 Number 4 (Whole No. 31)

Published monthly by the New International Publishing Company, 116 University Place, New York, N. Y. Telephone: ALgonquin 4-8547. Subscription rates: \$2.00 per year; bundles 14c for 5 copies and up. Canada and Foreign: \$2.50 per year; bundles 16c for 5 copies and up. Entered as second-class matter December 9, 1937, at the post office at New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Editor's Comments.....	99
The Popular Front's Flight from Spain, by Casanova	101
The Monopoly Committee—First Year, by Dwight Macdonald	105
Utopia from Oklahoma, by George M. Whiteside ..	109
Wars—Defensive and Aggressive, by Gregory Zinoviev	111
Krupskaya's Death, by L. T.....	117
The Struggle for Ireland, by William Morgan....	118
The Economics of Cotton Farming, by Jerry Pytlak	120
Notes on the Jewish Question, by Charles Crompton	123
A Voice from Peasant India, by Jadumandan Sharma	124
The Task in Spain—1936, by Leon Trotsky.....	125
BOOKS:	
School for Dictators, by Dwight Macdonald.....	126
Inside Front Cover: At Home	
Inside Back Cover: Clippings	

tainments of varying description should be held to send donations to the magazine to aid our foreign comrades and to help make it possible for THE NEW INTERNATIONAL to be enlarged sooner. However, most of these cities have on the whole accomplished fine work in the circulation of the magazine, and it has been agreed to and arrangements accordingly made, that once these bills are out of the way, the magazine hereafter will be paid for promptly each month. We are sure this will be the case.

Now we propose to deal, in the remaining brief space left in this issue but also regularly in forthcoming issues, with a number of Party and Y.P.S.L. units in respect to what we regard as *inexcusable weaknesses and laxness* in circulation. Open discussion thereof will probably prove fruitful, plus correspondence and direct talks of a concrete nature to improve circulation—either bundle or newsstand sales or subscriptions. The March number is *completely sold out*—an edition of 4,500 copies. This, despite the fact that many Party and Y.P.S.L. units cut down on their bundles, and it also became necessary, because of non-payment of bills, to eliminate some units alto-

gether: something resorted to only in the interests of the very issuance of the magazine itself. True, there were also compensating *new and increased orders*. We are absolutely convinced that it is possible *now, TODAY*, for us to have a *bona fide circulation* of 5,500 copies at least, if but a few of the larger Party and Y.P.S.L. units respond to obvious possibilities for circulation, and don't just "leave it to George". Local New York, S.W.P.; the Y.P.S.L., New York; Los Angeles; Cleveland and other units will be dealt with in detail in coming issues. First, the Y.P.S.L., New York.

All things considered, the Y.P.S.L. of New York has been the most lax, indifferent, and casual of all Party or Y.P.S.L. units in the country toward the magazine. They have been disposing of so low a quantity of the magazine that we are almost ashamed to mention the amount. There have been 16 months of discussions, promises, frequent changes of agents, but a very large part of the Y.P.S.L. membership in New York apparently do not read THE NEW INTERNATIONAL. Granted that many at least read the magazine by probably obtaining some other person's

used copy. This is disconcerting, since at present certainly, THE NEW INTERNATIONAL serves as the main instrument for the ideological and theoretical development of the Fourth Internationalists in general, and above all for the YOUTH. The New York Y.P.S.L. is a very active, enthusiastic and loyal membership: but action must be accompanied, indeed preceded by knowledge and clarity. LEARN TODAY! to be better revolutionary Marxists tomorrow. This is why we stress upon every Y.P.S.L. member: read yourself and then circulate further THE NEW INTERNATIONAL, as well as your Challenge and the Appeal. If every member of the Y.P.S.L. in New York will take at least one copy, this will alone almost triple the magazine's circulation by the Youth in New York. But the New York Youth have ample and many opportunities to sell the magazine: in the schools, at public meetings—yes, among Y.C.L.'ers and other youth organizations: the time is ripe as never before, particularly since the increase in prestige of the New York Y.P.S.L. arising from their anti-fascist activities, etc. Less than 100 magazines have been disposed of by the Y.P.S.L. on the average, sometimes more, sometimes less. Some Y.P.S.L. units do good work: e.g., the City College, Day and Evening units. Some units dispose of no copies. Space is brief: the District Committee has now taken hold of the situation, and comrade Isadore Rader, Secretary, and comrades Miller, Dollinger, Portnoy and others promise immediate improvement and have taken specific measures accordingly. We, too, feel confident that, beginning with the April issue, the New York Youth will show substantial improvement in the circulation of the magazine.

Many things of interest to our readers and Y.P.S.L. and Party members, as respects the general progress of the magazine in numerous cities, have been passed by in this issue; they will be spoken of, we expect, in subsequent issues. Should some units feel slighted, let them be consoled that to be unmentioned is perhaps evidence that they are doing right well.

OUR IMMEDIATE GOAL: A CIRCULATION OF 5,500. IT CAN BE DONE! A reader in Leeds, England, writes:

"THE NEW INTERNATIONAL is the best magazine on revolutionary Marxism in the English language. It deserves the widest possible support and circulation, and I shall do all I can to spread its circulation in England."

American comrades! Echo answers what?

THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

A MONTHLY ORGAN OF REVOLUTIONARY MARXISM

VOLUME V

APRIL 1939

NUMBER 4

The Editor's Comment

**The Question Is No Longer, "Will There Be a New World Imperialist War?" but Merely, "Exactly When, and How, and with What Lineup, Will the War Start?"
And Now that We Are to Be Asked to Give Our Lives
For Democracy, It Is Well to Understand
What Millions Will Be Dying For**

WHEN, ON A MOUNTAINSIDE, prolonged action of the elements, alternate thaws and freezings, the beating of rains and flow of quiet springs, have loosened a great mass of rocks and earth, a trivial, seemingly chance event—a tree uprooted by the wind or a poised rock unbalanced by a twig—can start the avalanche which will devastate the valley. That the avalanche will come, this the student of the mountainside will know. But no man can predict with accuracy the exact moment of its descent. What we can know is that all major conditions are at hand, that we await only the small "accident" which completes the cause.

So, also, with a social avalanche, with war or revolution. It is only within rough limits that we can predict the precise date of the outbreak of a great war or revolution. We can know that the major conditions are all present, that a stage has been reached when a solution of the problems directly facing society can be reached only through war or revolution; but the moment of the first battle will depend also on the "accident", on an isolated border clash, an assassination, perhaps on the excited emotion of a neurotic statesman.

The world has now reached that stage, reached it six months or even a year ago. The question is no longer, "Will there be a new world imperialist war?" but merely, "Exactly when, and how, and with just what lineup, will the war start?" An appropriate order from Benes or Sirovy might have begun the war in September. Whatever the wishes of Daladier or Stalin or Chamberlain, it is not plausible that the battlefield could have been squeezed within the Versailles-made borders of Czechoslovakia. September passed, but the world soon understood that the peace of Munich was not salvation but another step toward the inferno.

What Makes World Wars

THE PEACE OF Versailles assigned political boundaries to the world in approximate correspondence to the relative economic and military strength of the great Powers at the conclusion of the last war. Pious phrases and legal formalities, distinctions among mandates and protectorates and colonies and dominions, should not deceive us. It is comparable to the ending of a hard-fought strike: the agreement finally typed out and signed is filled with neat legal phraseology, often with fine verbal tributes to indus-

trial harmony and the joys of collective bargaining; but the agreement simply records, in its own way, what was decided by the direct test of strength in the struggle. In 1918 Germany and Austria were smashed by superior arms, finances and economic resources. The provisions of the Treaty summed up what had already happened.

Today the political division of the world no longer corresponds to the relative economic, financial and military strength of the powers, nor to their imperious needs. Nor is there any longer room in the world for a half-dozen great powers. Times are sharper than in 1914, the cupboard emptier, the wolves howling more fiercely. There is not enough to go around. The battle is for survival, against national death; and someone must lose out. Already the altering of the Versailles balance has been plainly enough recorded. Japan takes Manchuria and moves into China; Italy, Ethiopia; Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia and Memel. Treaties, laws and moral ideals bow helplessly to the death struggles of imperialism.

How pitiful an illusion that the re-division of the world could be accomplished by negotiation, agreement, discussion! What is at stake is the life of the imperialist powers. Those that lose out now are wiped off the historical scene forever. Puppets and pawns—Manchurias and Austrias and Ethiopias and Czechoslovakias—can be forced to commit suicide. But the masters will fight to the end.

The avalanche is ready. We live in its path, waiting for the dislodged stone that will send it hurling down on our heads.

What Delays the War?

WHY IS IT THAT England did not go to war in September? Why did England adopt the line of appeasement—for it was England, of course, that was the major agent in shaping the course that led to Munich. All of the popular explanations—that Chamberlain is lacking in patriotism, that he is a "traitor to democracy", that there were not enough British airplanes, that Lindbergh spread tales out of school—are superficial.

England did not go to war because the British ruling class fears the war, because the British ruling class has everything to lose and nothing to win from the war. England is caught in a trap: it is threatened almost equally by not fighting or by fighting.

The main enemy of British imperialism is not Hitler.

He is a threat, a serious threat, true enough. But if it were only a question of Hitler, England would not have to be afraid. The resources in money, material and men upon which England, together with her easily obtainable allies, could count are enough to overwhelm Hitler.

But the main enemy is *within*, and it is that enemy which the British ruling class above all fears. The main enemy is the four-hundred-millioned masses of India, stirring restlessly, the tens of millions of African Negroes, the Arabian masses pounding at the gates of British power in the Near East, the people of Eire sending their Valentine bombs to the City, the peoples of the dominions who do not intend to fight forever for the London banks, yes, and the English workers who, in spite of the parliamentary traitors who officially lead them have not yet permitted a conscription law.

The Empire, the gouty, senile tyrant that is left of the triumphant giant who conquered the world in the virile manhood of capitalism, is breaking up from within. Chamberlain understands what is happening. He knows that the yoke of the war dictatorship is not strong enough, once the casualty lists begin mounting, the work hours stretching out, the bombs falling, the food growing scarce, to hold in leash those straining centrifugal forces.

Yes, India has given us a few months or a year of peace, to the English workers and the French workers and the workers of the United States. It has given us these precious weeks before the war dictatorship, in which we can still speak the truth publicly; time for some hundreds or thousands or tens of thousands more to learn what the war means, to prepare to meet it, to resolve to lead the way out of it through the overthrow of the whole system of wars. Philistines wonder, sometimes, what Marxists mean when they use their cold, abstract phrases about the alliance between the class struggle of the workers and the struggle of the colonial peoples for national liberation. This is what they mean. It is not that the hounded Indian peasant, fighting desperately for a bowl of rice against the whip of the British *Raj* and his native deputies, *thinks* about the American workers, not that the peasant has any conscious interest in the goal of international socialism. But the fight for life of the Indian masses is a fight against the war and the war-makers, against the system of imperialism from which wars issue. And the fight, open and threatened, of the peasants of India has been enough to delay the war; and will, after the war starts, be the first aid in transforming the imperialist war into a war of world-wide liberation.

When we reflect on these things, how openly does the hideous true face of social-patriotism show itself! The Stalinists and reformists, in the name of freedom and socialism, tell us to fight England's war against her rival, Hitler! What, then, do we say to the peasants of India, the African Negroes, the Arabian peoples? No: England's war is not our war. Our war is the war of the Indian masses, and that war is *against* England, against British as well as Hitler's imperialism.

Poor Little Poland (or is it Albania?)

ENGLAND WILL HAVE to fight. There is no other way. But the British ruling class still seeks to delay, to put off the day which begins the end of the British Empire.

Chamberlain, pursuing his tortuous course, makes a "new turn" in connection with the imminent crisis over Danzig and the Polish Corridor. And at once there follows a new somersault for all the columnists and editorial writers, all the reformists and liberals, for the whole crew which thinks that writing about history means commenting on the latest platitudes which are belched out of the most prominent shirt fronts. Chamberlain is no more the traitor of Munich. Almost, he is the Galahad-leader of the world battle for democracy. Good old Neville, he has learned since September. Doubtless he has been reading the *Nation* and *New Masses*, perhaps even the *Daily Worker*. These British Public School men, they have the right stuff in them after all, when the crisis comes.

Shortness of memory seems to be rather a social than a psychological disease. Men, unwilling or unable to face the world they live in, blot it out by forgetting each yesterday and feeding on the fantasies of tomorrow. We no longer wish to remember the stern British indignation once over Manchuria. We have forgotten those days of the sanctions campaign and all the brave moral nothings over Ethiopia. Yes, we have thoroughly forgotten those two days just before Munich when Chamberlain became for an evening the hero even of Heywood Broun, when his ringing denunciation of Hitler, his moving summons to the conscience of mankind drew all virtuous hearts to his side.

It is the same Chamberlain who speaks today that spoke at Munich; it is the same voice, the voice of the British ruling class, painfully maneuvering its way through the imperialist rocks, tacking now to windward, now to leeward, building toward the occasion when conscription and the war dictatorship will meet no effective resistance, seeking the most favorable moment for the launching of hostilities, testing for the most persuasive moral issues.

It is not excluded that a war will break out over Poland; in general, it is no longer excluded that war will begin tomorrow. But it is sure enough that Chamberlain doesn't want, doesn't intend to have a war this month over Poland. His current "Stop Hitler!" phrases are, for him, an easy prelude to still another Munich.

From both the military and the ideological points of view, Poland is not propitious. Just what would the defense of Poland mean from the military aspect? The shrewd Lloyd George underlined the military difficulty:

If war occurred tomorrow we could not send a single battalion to Poland. France could not. She would be confronted with fortifications which are infinitely more formidable than the Hindenburg line which took us four years to break through with casualties running into millions.

But what is going to happen to Poland while we are blockading Germany—a blockade for which she is much better prepared than in 1914-18—and while the French are breaking through very powerful fortifications?

France could operate only from the west; she would have to throw her armies against the Siegfried Line in an offensive strategy which all military commentators agree is the most costly and dangerous method of modern warfare, and would meanwhile be exposed on the Spanish and Italian frontiers. The British Fleet could, perhaps, blockade Danzig and the German ports; but in the first months this would prove little hindrance to the German legions.

The armies which would have to bear the full brunt of the defense would have to come from the east, from Poland

itself and from the Soviet Union, and perhaps from the south, from Rumania. This, true enough, might not be too displeasing to England. If her world could remain static while the mass armies of the Soviet Union and Hitler wore each other out, she could get ready to step in more strongly as decisive arbiter. But no wonder Poland, held in so gigantic a pincers, with her own territory sure to be the battlefield, is wary. And little wonder that the Soviet Union, remembering also her Eastern flank, is, in the words of Roy Howard's dispatch, "coy as usual".

And on the moral side, the Polish issue is no more savory. "Poor little Poland!" It sticks in the craw a bit. Not half so rich a flavor as "Poor little Belgium!" In every respect inferior to "Poor little Czechoslovakia!" Poland: the land of permanent military dictatorship; of hundred-thousand aced landlords and peasants living like cattle; of sweated, starving workers; of out-lawed parties and always-suppressed civil liberties; of pogroms and ghettos and endless persecutions. The goods are rather frayed and tarnished to be put over on the ultimate consumer. Even poor little Albania, which Mussolini now pushes forward, with its musical comedy king and his fortune-hunting sisters, might be preferable.

A SINGLE BRIEF note on Britain's valiant partner, who

now gets ready together with Britain to allow us to win our spurs, under their joint auspices, as martyrs in the cause of truth and freedom. Our comrade, the Spanish Bolshevik-Leninist, Munis, was imprisoned in Barcelona under a frame-up charge. Through a remarkable series of incidents, he and the others with him got out of the city just before Franco entered and made a perilous way to the border. (The story of this escape was published in the *Socialist Appeal*.) He was asked, "What was your impression after your entry into France?" He replied:

I had the impression of passing from one prison into another. Eight hours after having crossed the frontier I was shut into the concentration camp of Boulon. During two days I ate only a little bread given to me by some French workers whom we passed on the road. The soldiers gave us beatings with their gun-butts. For the first three nights I slept outdoors on the ground, in a driving rain. I went to the doctor with a fever of 104 degrees. What I managed to get from him was permission to sleep on straw in a little farm, big enough for ten people, where seventy women and children were crammed in. . . . I was also at Argeles and in other camps; conditions were even worse. No barracks. Everyone slept outdoors. No medical attention. An unbelievable food situation. A fifth, at most a quarter of the refugees got a little bread. . . .

Now that we are once more about to give our lives for democracy, it is well to know what we shall be dying for.

The Popular Front's Flight from Spain

Q. *How did you get out?*

Well, it was not so easy, not at all a de luxe trip. The French frontier is guarded by gendarmes and by Senegalese troops who do not speak French. They do not even let French citizens get by if they don't have a regular passport. As for Spaniards, they let the women, children and wounded through during certain hours, but the rest are pitilessly driven back. The sights on the roads leading to the frontier are horrible. This headlong exodus of women—some of them pregnant, of children, of wounded—some of them with a leg amputated, others hastily evacuated from hospitals in towns threatened by the fascist advance, this exodus on foot of exhausted men, women and children was a sight to make us tremble. However, our feelings are not easily stirred after what we have seen in Spain.

Naturally, the departure was carried out differently by Messrs. ministers, deputies, bureaucrats, leading functionaries, who already by Monday, January 23 (three days before Franco entered Barcelona) were rolling along in luxurious cars toward Cerbere and Perthus. Observing along the road the two means of transportation, we had a concrete demonstration of the class division within the Popular Front: the left bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisified bureaucrats, on their side, travelled in fine limousines or at the worst in small Citroens; on the other side the workers and peasants and rank and file militants walked on foot.

We were present at tragic farewell scenes between those who left and those who because of family obligations were compelled to stay behind: moments of hesitation,

We publish below selections from an interview with Casanova, for the past several years a leading member of the Spanish section of the Fourth International. Comrade Casanova, after having served on the Aragon front, later in the administration of a number of agricultural collectives and more recently in the munitions industry at Barcelona, escaped to France at the time of the fall of Catalonia.—ED.

quick, precipitous decisions, all under the constant threat of the fascist aviation which bombed and even machine-gunned the road. Sometimes it was necessary to stop suddenly, to hide in a ditch, to sleep on the road, to spend many nights with no information about the conditions at the front or the speed of the fascist advance; and all took place in the midst of general panic, of unprecedented disorganization and chaos. No newspaper was issued after Tuesday, January 24, the radio stations were not working, and up to the last we had hoped for a stiff resistance to the fascists. You will understand our disorientation. . . .

No, I have not come back "disenchanted" with Spain! Some may have come home "disenchanted"—the Stalinist volunteers, for example, who left with false ideas, who did not understand the meaning of events and who were kept in ignorance by the Stalinist leadership. But our international organization and our Spanish section predicted the logical consequences of the criminal policy of the Popular Front which opened the doors to Franco.

The Spanish tragedy is one more crime to the count of the Stalinist bureaucracy, which crushed the revolutionary movement, assassinated the best militants, and by its whin-

ing policy toward so-called democratic capitalism, demoralized the heroic workers of Spain. But this crime is also a lesson—dearly paid for, it is true—from which the workers of other countries will profit, first of all the French workers.

Q. The French workers were surprised to learn of the taking of Barcelona after the military authorities had proclaimed resistance to the death.

I understand your surprise and I shared it. All of us, the ex-volunteers awaiting repatriation and all the militants as well, were tragically shocked at the ease with which the fascist advance moved toward Barcelona. True enough, we had no illusions and we took full account of the tragedy of the situation, but nevertheless we expected a desperate resistance before Barcelona and we cherished in our hearts the hope that heroic Barcelona would be a second Madrid. So long as a single position remains out of the grasp of the enemy, a revolutionist does not have the right to consider the struggle lost. In an article, "Can We stop the Dêbâcle?" written five days before the taking of Barcelona, I presented a plan of action and rescue for Barcelona and the revolution. I put more or less as follows the opinions and slogans of the Bolsheviks: "Barcelona can be saved. The most industrialized region of Spain, the province of Barcelona with the industrial fortresses of Manresa, Sabadell, Tarrasa, is not yet in the hands of the fascists. It will not be. Barcelona must be fortified, transformed into an impregnable fortress. For working on the fortifications there is in Barcelona no lack of speculators and chair-warmers. It is time they were made to swing some pickaxes. 'Resist!' This is the slogan of our comrade, Munis, imprisoned for a year in the Carcel del Estado at Modelo and now at Montjuich under the vicious charge of assassination. Resist, as Garcia Moreno resisted, who stopped four Italian tanks single-handed. But our slogan, 'Resist!' is different from Negrin's. In order to resist, the working class must lift up its head, must regain confidence in itself, must constitute its Committees for the Defense of the Revolution and its own organizations independent of the bourgeois state power, as it did on July 19, 1936—but this time it must go further."

True, the situation was critical. The fascists were advancing as much as fifteen or twenty kilometers a day. Positions of the utmost strategical importance were systematically given up almost without struggle: like the fortifications constructed during eight months around Balaguer, those at Segre, the important position of Las Borgas Blancas whose conquest by the fascists permitted their march toward the sea and the encirclement of Tarragona, and, at the eleventh hour, the chain of mountains around Igualada, whose conquest opened the road toward Barcelona. We were witnessing a repetition of the March catastrophe on the Aragon front, only on a still vaster scale: treason in the high command; desertions to the enemy with defense plans; desertions to the fascists of entire corps of the carabinieri (left intact by the Stalinist and anarchist officials). But Barcelona still remained. Toward the sea, there were still the Saraf hills, which could have been made a resistance point. It is true that the main roads which lead to Barcelona cross a plain: one which comes from Villafranca de Pamadés and the other from Tibidabo,

the two joining about twenty kilometers from the city. But even if the fascists approached the city itself, there were still the mountains that surround the Catalan capital. Barcelona is surrounded by Montjuich and Tibidabo. We could have fortified these hills and transformed them into a line of defense at the very gates of the city.

Q. But they nevertheless say that, from a strategic point of view, Barcelona was indefensible?

That is a lie. True, we could more easily have defended Barcelona at the chain of mountains near Igualada or at the Saraf hills than at the gates of the city itself. But the town itself is more defensible than, for example, Madrid. Neither the undoubted superiority of the fascist armaments (a result of the passivity of the international proletariat, which had been put to sleep by the Popular Front) nor strategic reasons suffice to explain the fall of Barcelona, especially a fall so rapid and almost without a struggle. The fascists entered Barcelona after a brief battle at Hospitalet, a suburb of Barcelona on the side of the sea. . . .

Q. What, then, happened?

In brief: strategy and military technic are subordinate to policy, above all in a civil war. Barcelona was abandoned because there was no one to defend it, no one or scarcely anyone who was ready to give his life to defend it against Franco. That is the tragic reality.

Needless to speak of the government, the sinister "Government of Victory". Monday evening, three days before the entry of Franco, the government met. A communication read by Uribe, the communist Minister of Agriculture, informed us of the officially announced decisions and the measures decided upon: 1) To declare a "state of war" (martial law) in what remained of governmental Spain—that is to say, to try to muzzle the proletariat (though in reality it was powerless to do so); 2) To hold out in Barcelona. That was the official declaration.

Q. And the reality?

The reality? At the same time that they were making this announcement, Messrs. Ministers already had their bags packed, their furniture and a surprising quantity of mattresses were already loaded on trucks, and on that very day the aristocratic flight in Rolls Royces and Hispano-Suizas was beginning.

Filled with panic, the ministers wanted to appeal to the C.N.T. workers of Barcelona, in order that the workers would once more shed their generous blood and save the situation—above all the dangerous personal situation of the ministers. These gentlemen believed that the same trick could be repeated an infinite number of times. According to their view, the proletariat should normally be in chains, should respect bourgeois law, should continually do the ugly chores, should watch its militants mistreated, etc. At the moment of danger, one may loosen the chain a little and generously permit the proletariat to die for the defense of the legitimate government and the democratic republic. The proletariat, according to the scheme of these gentlemen, takes advantage of the happy occasion offered to it, mounts the barricades, offers up several tens of thousands of victims, and saves the situation. The fascist danger passes. One pulls the chain tight again and puts the

proletariat to work just as before. That is the plan. Ingenious, certainly, but the same trick succeeds only a limited number of times.

Seized with panic, then, the ministers sent a hurry call for Garcia Oliver (the anarchist leader) in order to have him put in charge of six military divisions and direct operations.

Q. But Garcia Oliver is not a military man!

I do not wish to recall to you the services which Oliver performed for the Spanish proletariat during those days of May, 1937, in Barcelona¹, but in any case he is above all an agitational orator. But he represented the C.N.T., in particular the F.A.I., and the ministers thought that summoning him would be to summon also the tens of thousands of militants of the C.N.T. But the Barcelona workers were demoralized. They remembered the days of May, 1937. To understand the tragedy of January 26, 1939, we must remember the tragedy of May 3-6, 1937. There is a logical connection between these two dates. By destroying the revolution, they lost the anti-fascist war.

The Stalinists provoked, organized the events of May 1937: that is to say, carried out the disarming of the proletariat, the destruction of its combat organizations, the assassination of its militants, etc. They instituted a régime of terror against the proletariat. All this was justified by the policy of the Popular Front: that is to say, "first to win the war," and to do this by winning the support of France and England. We now see the result. They did not win the good graces of the bourgeoisie of France and England; but while waiting for it, they disgusted and demoralized the Spanish, especially the Catalan, proletariat. It was the most effective way to lose the war.

True, the Barcelona workers understood that Franco was the worst evil, and, in spite of the fact that their confidence in Negrin was extremely low, they wished for the defeat of the fascists and the victory of the republican armies; but they no longer had any active participation in the struggle. After May, 1937, they no longer felt themselves to be the masters. And, besides, they no longer were.

They told the workers many times a day that they were not fighting for their social emancipation (God save us from such Trotskyist ideas!) but merely for a return to the democratic republic—which had nourished the fascist insurrection. That hardly favored a spirit of sacrifice or enthusiasm for the war; on the contrary it was the source of indifference toward it.

Q. But why were not the rank-and-file workers, the revolutionary workers of Barcelona, able to understand the imminence of the danger? They knew what was waiting for them in the event of Franco's victory: the ruin of all their hopes. We have so often insisted on the spontaneous character of the struggles of the Spanish and especially the Catalan proletariat, which is for the most part anarchist in tendency. Why did not the Barcelona workers act against the will of their leaders?

The "spontaneity" of the Catalan workers has, you see, limits, in spite of their impulsive temperament. They did everything to break their morale and their fighting spirit.

¹ Through his speech on May 4, 1937, which ended with the appeal, "Cease firing!", the anarchist Minister of Justice, Garcia Oliver, delivered the C.N.T. militants up to massacre by the Stalinists. The workers of Barcelona remember this speech clearly.

They preached calm and patience to them, and confidence in the leaders of the Popular Front and in the government, and above all they lulled them with illusions about the intentions of the English and especially the French bourgeoisie. They kept saying to the workers: "At the eleventh hour England and especially France will intervene and will not permit the German and Italian fascists to get a foothold on the Pyrenees, for we are fighting for the security of the democratic empires."

The summit of wisdom from the penmen and orators of the Popular Front, in their papers and meetings, was to remind Chamberlain and Daladier of their imperialist duties . . . which should have preserved the Spanish working class from fascism. These illusions, or rather these criminal deceptions, were above all propagated in particularly critical situations. At such times they exaggerated immeasurably the diplomatic tensions between the two "axes", and portrayed the international situation as if war between the democratic powers and the fascist powers were on the point of breaking out, as if the British fleet and the French army were going to intervene from one moment to the next. What was most serious was that they worked with all their strength to shut the eyes of the proletariat, and they succeeded.

A few examples to illustrate the myopia of the "realistic" leaders of the Popular Front: Several weeks ago they said at Barcelona that hundreds of French airplanes and tanks had arrived. They said this in order to bolster morale! Another example: Just a few days ago, before the fall of Barcelona, a foreign comrade, who was a left anarchist in a rather important post, asking me to keep it secret (the usual way of spreading news), told me that several French divisions had crossed the Pyrenees and were coming to help us. He had heard from a member of the Regional or perhaps the National Committee that these divisions had crossed the frontier.

In the Middle Ages, ascetics and saints saw the blessed Virgin in mystic ecstasies, and sometimes even heard her voice. In order to do so, it is true, they mortified their flesh. The leaders of the Popular Front, without any mortifications or ecstasies, got their visions of French troops coming to their rescue.

Unfortunately, these criminal fables were listened to, and put the proletariat off guard. Lenin once said that truths, even harsh truths, must be told the proletariat in order to educate it; but, after all, was not he also a Trotskyist?

Q. Let us be more concrete. The communist party, in spite of its policy, must have known the danger that threatened it. It was a question of saving its own skin. What did it do for the defense of Barcelona?

It kept repeating, of course: "They shall not pass!" But it did everything possible to let them pass. Its central slogan, advanced with a fury and a spirit worthy of a better cause, was: "Everything through Negrin's Government of Victory!" Through the government . . . which was packing its bags, or rather having them packed. Consequently, all independent initiative, every attempt, however timid, to set up independent workers' organizations which alone could have brought back confidence, was characterized as Trotskyist and fascist.

Frente Rojo, the organ of the communist party, published on Tuesday an appeal which was headed: "Everyone on the barricades! As on July 19th!" But the barricades remained in the columns of the paper. These heroes of the P.S.U.C. (Catalan section of the Third International) were capable of mounting the barricades only once. That was during the month of May, 1937, when they mounted them *against* the Barcelona workers, in order to chase the workers out of the Telephone building, the sacred property of American capitalism, and in order to help the bourgeois police machine-gun the workers.

It is true that if they succeeded, it was only because the C.N.T., or, more precisely, the leadership of the C.N.T., allowed them to.

Q. *You mention the C.N.T. The Barcelona workers are anarchist in their decisive majority. We do not understand why they did not act or at least try to act to save Barcelona. They have produced heroes, like Durruti and Ascaso, who are the pride of the international proletariat. What did the C.N.T. do in the tragic crisis?*

The C.N.T. is another story. True, Durruti, Ascaso, and thousands of anonymous heroes will, like the Paris Commune, be cherished forever in the heart of the proletariat; but as for the policy of these "anti-politicos", "anti-Statists", of the leadership of the C.N.T., that was grossly reformist, petty bourgeois and objectively criminal toward the proletariat and the revolution. It was of a kind to instruct the workers of the entire world (at this time of general ideological disorientation, when anarchist ideas can have a certain attraction for those who are disoriented) as to the value of the theory and especially of the practise of anarchism.

In the past, I mean in 1936 and 1937, these anti-Statists abolished and sometimes even burned money in the little villages of Aragon where they set up libertarian communism and the rule of love and freedom; but they never had the idea of laying a hand on the big banks. However, the Barcelona branch of the Bank of Spain was located directly across from the Regional Committee of the C.N.T. and the anarchist general staff; but the anti-Statists walked on tiptoe before big finance. They believe it to be a mark of original sin to talk about a workers' state or the formation and extension of workers' committees; but, on the other side, while continuing to speak of anarchism, they labor with order and method at the task of reconstituting the bourgeois state. During the month of May, 1937, they turned the Barcelona workers over to the Stalinist-bourgeois counter-revolution. During June of that same year, the bourgeoisie, having no further need of them and feeling itself sufficiently strong, dismissed them from the government.

Nine months later, in May, 1938, at a moment of danger (the smashing of the Aragon front), the bourgeoisie offered them the decorative and unimportant post of Minister of Public Instruction in the second Negrin cabinet; and, with a not at all anarchist haste, they accepted. The bourgeoisie knows that it is dealing with domesticated and well-trained animals. As a consequence, the C.N.T. and even the F.A.I. covered up the entire policy of social reaction of the Negrin government. Negrin's thirteen points (his program for the re-consolidation of the bourgeois re-

public), the counter-revolutionary decrees dissolving the proletarian organizations, were all covered up by the C.N.T. and the F.A.I. Moreover, even the formal distinction between the frankly chauvinist and reformist language of the Stalinists and socialists and the verbally revolutionary language of the C.N.T. disappeared during 1938. The press was "coordinated". *Solidaridad Obrera*, central organ of the C.N.T., pictured the conflict between British and German finance-capital as an ideological conflict between democracy and dictatorship; it daily praised Yankee imperialism, and Roosevelt as the apostle of peace; and naturally explained that the security of the empires required intervention in Spain, and gave lessons in patriotism to Chamberlain and Daladier.

For several months the regional committee of the C.N.T. was disoriented and did not know what slogan to adopt. It finally found out in November.

Q. *What was it?*

Here it is: A councillor's post in the Catalonian Generality must be given to the C.N.T. Honesty, justice and above all idealism toward the noble men carrying on constant battle against the dirty manoeuvres of politicians demanded satisfaction for the crying injustice committed after May, 1937, when the representatives of the C.N.T. were thrown out of the Catalonian Generality. Besides, the regional committee demanded a ministerial post, we read in *Solidaridad*, not for the low motives which characterize politicians—for example, to achieve a political aim or perhaps simply to enjoy a portfolio—but for altogether ideal reasons. . . .

As for me, vulgar materialist that I am, I do not altogether overlook the practical interest attached to the post of councillor to the Generality. It opens up certain pleasing perspectives, but as a slogan for a situation rather more than serious it is a bit thin.

In spite of the demoralizing effect of the policy of Negrin-Comorera, there would have been, even two weeks ago, several thousand workers at Barcelona ready once more to mount the barricades and to die, if need be, for the revolution. They were ready to join the regiments of the Libertarian Youth, but they had no confidence in the republican commanders who, whenever they got a chance, went over to the enemy. The appeals of the official bodies were not listened to. In the factories, for example, numerous measures of coercion were necessary to pull fake specialists into the army (technical specialists, needed in the factories, were exempt from military service).

A single illustration: The National Committee of the Libertarian Youth, which was affiliated with the National Committee of the C.N.T., observing that the youth affiliated with the Libertarian Youth were slow to enlist in the official regiments, published a very characteristic communication. In this, the National Committee assured its young members that they need have no fear to enlist in the governments regiments of mixed volunteers because the National Committee had a representative in the organization committee of the regiments! This "assurance" did not convince the youth, who were waiting in vain for a voice that would inspire them with confidence.

In brief, the C.N.T. left its adherents at the final hour without slogans and without a plan of action.

PARIS, Mar. 1939

CASANOVA

Reading from Left to Right:

The Monopoly Committee--First Year

IN A FEW WEEKS the Temporary National Economic Committee, popularly known as the Monopoly Committee, will celebrate its first birthday. Its work has had the personal approval of the President, who was given direct control of \$400,000 of its \$500,000 initial appropriation, and who recently let it be known he hoped Congress would grant the Committee the \$2,000,000 more it will need to complete its work through 1940. I think it is worth devoting this month's column to a consideration of just what this Committee, so impressively sponsored, so lavishly publicized, has done in its first year of existence.

Congress set up the Committee in response to a special message from President Roosevelt suggesting "a thorough study of the concentration of economic power in American industry and the effect of that concentration upon the decline of competition." As further defined by Congress and by its own members, the Monopoly Committee's scope takes in every aspect of our economic life, from employment and wage levels to holding companies and branch banking. Twelve men are on the Committee: two reactionaries and one New Dealer from the House; one reactionary (King of Utah) and two wobbly liberals (Borah of Idaho and O'Mahoney of Wyoming) from the Senate; and six representatives from various executive agencies, most notable being Thurman Arnold (Justice), W. O. Douglas and his alternate, Jerome Frank (S.E.C.), Garland Ferguson (Federal Trade Commission), and Isidor Lubin (Labor). The Committee's executive secretary is Leon Henderson, chief economist of W.P.A. and one of the leading leftish intellectuals in the Administration. Altogether, the Committee rates remarkably high in brains, the low level of the congressional contingent being more than outweighed by the calibre of the delegates from the executive departments. (It will be understood that this judgement is not absolute, but on the scale of American bourgeois politics today.)

It was Secretary Henderson who best summed up the question which the twelve wise men are trying to answer: "Why have we not had full employment and full utilization of our magnificent resources?" From time to time in our history, other such committees have struggled with this question: the Trust Investigation of 1900, the Armstrong Committee of 1906, the Stanley Committee of 1911, the Pujo Money Trust Investigation of 1912, the Industrial Commission of 1916. Each of these tried to answer this simple question, and each failed, for the same reason the Monopoly Committee is failing, because each tried to work out a solution within the bounds of capitalism.

The Monopoly Committee, however, is failing in a different way from any of its predecessors. In their attacks on the monopoly octopus, all these committees have fought the battle not of the proletariat, but of the petty bourgeoisie, driven bankrupt by the onward march of the trusts, eternally exploited and hornswoggled as an investor

by the big bourgeoisie who pull the strings of the system. The older committees, in an era when the basic stability of American capitalism was not questioned, lustily attacked the enemy, exposing vast quantities of dirty linen and even extorting a few minor concessions. But by now it is clear that our capitalism as a whole is none too secure, and that minor reforms will not be enough. A slashing onslaught in the old trust-busting style might be more than the rickety old structure could stand—and so the Monopoly Committee adopts a tone of sympathy rather than of indignation toward the monopolists it questions. When capitalism is really sick, the petty bourgeoisie shows its basic class solidarity with the big bourgeoisie. If the Monopoly Committee has not yet gone very far beneath the surface and shows no signs of wanting to do so, it is not for lack of brains or money. It is simply that it doesn't dare to.

"Our Interests Are Really the Same"

From the moment of its creation, the Monopoly Committee began assuring the business community that its intentions were of the friendliest. "This is not a punitive expedition," Chairman O'Mahoney kept repeating. "I don't believe in centralized planning." By the end of August, the American Bar Association, the U. S. Chamber of Commerce, and the National Association of Manufacturers had all offered their "cooperation" to the Committee. (The N.A.M., indeed, carried cooperation so far as to announce that it was spending \$50,000 of its good money on a patent study which it hoped would "aid" the Committee.) Until the hearings began, many in both the right and the left camps maintained that all this talk of "cooperation" was a *ruse de guerre*, that once the Trojan Horse was inside the citadel of monopoly, from its belly would come pouring forth an army of trustbusters thirsting for Wall Street blood. But now the Wooden Horse is inside the walls of Troy, and from it have issued not Greeks but—more Trojans. General Johnson, one of the most clamorous Cassandras of the right, recently admitted he had entertained unjust suspicions of the committee, that it really was "cooperating" in splendid fashion. And Arthur Krock, the *N. Y. Times'* bitterly conservative political editor, a few weeks ago expressed the hope that "Senator O'Mahoney will keep it as thoughtful and restrained as he has thus far—or postpone it indefinitely if the crackpots and political maneuverers break their leashes. . ." But no one on the Committee particularly wants to break his leash. As Chairman O'Mahoney remarked, speaking of their attitude toward the industrialists and bankers who testify before them: "We of the Committee might just as well be sitting on the other side of the table. Our interests are really the same." You could hardly ask for anything plainer than that.

After seven months of preparation and false starts, the Committee began its hearings with a series of lectures by

economists armed with charts and pointers. These were so dull as to clear out half the spectators the very first day. There was nothing new in the data presented, but it is worth setting down a few of the major items. The Committee learned that the total loss in national income since 1929 is \$293,000,000,000 or seven times the present national debt; that wages in 1929 were \$63,000,000,000, dividends \$16,000,000,000, as against 1938 totals of \$54,000,000,000 for wages and \$15,000,000,000 for dividends; that 54% of the nation's families have incomes of less than \$1200 a year; that even if production climbed back to 1929 levels, there would still be 7,000,000 unemployed; that the total loss of working time in the last nine years comes to one year and two months per worker.

Love Feast

After three days of charts and pointers, the Committee got down to business. It took up first the burning issue of—patents. The automobile barons were summoned to the stand to tell a beamingly sympathetic Committee (and, through the press, the rest of the American people) how enlightened their patent policies are. Edsel Ford said his father's company swapped patents with other companies. "Fine!" said the Committee. President Macauley of Packard said that *his* company paid and collected royalties. "Bully!" said the Committee. The manager of the Automobile Manufacturers Association, to which everybody except Ford and Packard belong, said that the members pooled their patents. "Splendid!" cried the Committee. The A.M.A. manager noted also that this pooling arrangement applied only to patents taken out before 1930, because the companies naturally wanted to cash in on their new gadgets before letting society, and their competitors, have the benefit of them. This bit of vulgar economic self-seeking the Committee passed over in delicate silence. They were plainly interested in the more idealistic aspects of the automobile business. They had a particularly good time spinning technocratic dreams with the genial Charles F. Kettering, chief engineer for General Motors, who put on for them his Homespun Inventor act. "If we could only have an inventions congress here," sighed Mr. Kettering, "in which we had business men and economists and representatives of government and could sit down and say, 'Now what are the most probable things that we can do?'" "So far as I am concerned," warmly responded Chairman O'Mahoney, "the principal purpose of these hearings is to provide a forum for just such a conference with respect to our national economy. And may I say to you, Mr. Kettering, that I feel very much stimulated by your testimony this afternoon?" No wonder the trade magazine, *Steel*, commented on "last week's love feast of automobile executives with the Monopoly Committee in Washington." *Steel* also reported that when Edsel Ford showed annoyance at the continual popping of photographers' flashbulbs, one of the Senators on the Committee admonished him: "This helps to sell automobiles as well as politicians, you know."

Empire in Glass

For its horrible example of a "bad" use of patents, the Committee was careful to pick a comparatively small in-

dustry, and even so to pull its punches. But the general effect was gruesome enough, all the same—and the one piece of good old-fashioned muckraking the Committee has allowed itself to date. It seems that a company no one has ever heard of, the Hartford-Empire Co. of Hartford, Conn., owns the patents on the machinery which last year produced 67% of the nation's glass containers, including most of our fruit jars and almost all our milk bottles. It is a very nice business, indeed. Throughout the depression, Hartford-Empire's revenues rose steadily year by year, touching 48% on invested capital in 1936 and 68% in 1937. What did it do to reap this rich reward from society? It does nothing so obvious as make bottles. It doesn't even make the machines that make the bottles. It merely controls the patents without which no one can make these machines—and, consequently, no one can make milk bottles. It pays another company to make to its order these machines, which it then *rents* to such bottle makers as it thinks advisable. By never *selling* its machines, Hartford-Empire keeps complete control of the whole process in its own hands.

The Hartford patents are on the "gob" process. The only other important process, the "suction" method, is controlled by the big Owens-Illinois Glass Co. Last year, 29% of the nation's glass containers were made either by Owens or by companies licensed by it, leaving just 4% of the industry for the "independents". Hartford and Owens work amicably together, united by various contracts. Corning Glass, the other big glass company, controls Hartford-Empire through a series of intervening companies. As President Levis of Owens remarked to the Committee: "Everybody in the glass business is pretty friendly." Everybody on the inside, that is. What happens to brash outsiders who try to buck Hartford's patent empire was told in detail to the Committee. As was the long tale of Hartford's suppression of such advances in the art of glassmaking as do not seem to be to its commercial advantage.

"In some cases," concluded Chairman O'Mahoney cautiously, "the evidence seems to indicate that the original intention of the patent grant as stated in the Constitution to promote the progress of science and the useful arts, has been obscured."

Parents—and Publicity

The automobile industry was not the only one to cash in on the excellent sounding-board offered by the Committee's hearings. A Mr. Farnsworth who has a radio and television company told the Committee in detail how he had discovered the basic principles of television at the age of fourteen. A Mr. Baekland, inventor and promoter of the plastic, Bakelite, was induced to admit, also in detail, that Bakelite would be ideal for certain airplane parts now made of inferior materials. Dr. Coolidge, director of General Electric's research laboratories, proclaimed the virtues of his firm's "Invisible Glass" (with samples for the Committee members). The Capital wits began to say that if the Committee couldn't get a further appropriation from Congress, it might finance itself by charging business men so much an hour for the use of its witness stand.

Except for the job on Hartford-Empire, such muck-

raking as the Committee did in the patent field was purely involuntary and accidental. It was quite by chance, for instance, that Dr. Jewett, head of the Bell Telephone Laboratories, happened to mention a vacuum radio tube which lasts 50,000 hours, as against the 1,000-hour life of the tubes now sold for use in home receiving sets. His laboratories invented this in 1923, and the parent company, American Telephone and Telegraph, has been using it in its business ever since. Although Dr. Jewett said this tube could be adapted to use in home sets, it has never been put on the market. Neither Western Electric, a subsidiary of A.T. & T., nor R.C.A., nor General Electric—who have cross-licensing agreements on patents with A.T. & T.—have shown any interest in giving the public this 50-times better tube. (Mr. Lubin of the Committee said he was “terribly upset about this long life tube”.) When some one asked Dr. Jewett why these great companies had not put the tube on the market, he replied bluntly: “It isn’t commercially to their advantage to do it.”

Life Insurance Gets Another Whirl

The liberal-reformists gallop off to their crusades on the most dashing chargers, to the accompaniment of martial airs. But closer inspection reveals that the hoofs of their spirited steeds are firmly anchored, that the exhilarating motion is due to the revolving of the merry-go-round, while the humble source of the thrilling music is the steam calliope in the center. By this time, the reformers have covered a good deal of territory, always, of course, in a circular motion. The same problems, the same “solutions” crop up decade after decade, as the merry-go-round completes its appointed rounds. But if the law of motion of reformism is circular, that of capitalist accumulation leads in all too straight a line to monopoly, state capitalism, and fascism. The reformists are grappling today with the same monsters they failed to slay thirty years ago, but, while the dragon-slayers are no bigger, the dragons have grown in the interim to really terrifying proportions.

Which is a somewhat ponderous prelude to the investigation of life insurance companies which the S.E.C. is conducting for the Monopoly Committee. Because of the appalling size of the major companies, and because 64,000,000 Americans hold some sort of life insurance policy, this is the key study of them all. But the repetitive nature of these things is already apparent. The classic insurance investigation, the one on which the S.E.C. inquiry is frankly modelled, was that conducted by Charles Evans Hughes in 1905-6 for the Armstrong Committee of the New York State Legislature. The Armstrong Committee uncovered a remarkable amount of dirt—there was a remarkable amount there—and stimulated some drastic changes in the control and business methods of the great insurance companies. The committee reached two major conclusions: (1) insurance companies in 1906 were too big and wielded too great financial power for the good of the nation; (2) this power was autocratically used by a small group of insiders to advance their own interests, without any control either by their policy-holders or by society in general. Thirty years later, the S.E.C. is making precisely the same discoveries about the insurance busi-

ness, only on a larger scale.

In 1906 there were 136 legal reserve companies, with \$2,900,000,000 in assets. Today there are 308, with \$26,250,000,000. In 1906 the three biggest companies had half a billion assets apiece. Today, New York Life has \$2,500,000,000; Prudential has \$3,500,000,000; and Metropolitan, which had \$176,000,000 in 1906, has amassed the incredible total of \$5,000,000,000. (Every day of the year, including Sundays, Metropolitan finds itself with \$2,000,000 it must invest.) At the end of last year, 49 of the biggest insurance companies owned 23% of all railroad bonds, 15% of all industrial bonds, 14% of all city mortgages. Last year the ten biggest companies alone bought 55% of *all* corporate bonds and notes issued. “No useful purpose,” the Armstrong Committee noted of the insurance companies, “will be served by their becoming larger.”

After the Armstrong investigation, many big companies went “mutual”, that is, they reorganized themselves so that their policyholders were also their owners. But this has turned out to be mere eyewash. Control is still gripped tightly by a small inner circle of financiers. The S.E.C. finds that in recent years, in the twelve biggest mutual companies, the percentage of policyholders who even bother to vote for “their” trustees in elections runs from .01 to 2.51. There is no case on record of an “independent” (of the management) candidate being elected in a major company, and only five cases on record since 1906 of an independent candidate even being proposed. The Metropolitan had an especially high percentage of ballots cast in its elections. A dozen Metropolitan agents told the Committee that it was common practice for them to write in signatures on ballots themselves without bothering the policyholders.

As for the business conduct of the “trustees”—ironical term—the S.E.C. already has found much the sort of evidence the Armstrong Committee uncovered. Al Smith used his trusteeship in N. Y. Life to extort fuel oil orders for his Meenan Oil Co.; Mutual Life’s deposit at Bankers Trust jumped from \$150,000 to \$1,500,000 when President Colt of Bankers Trust went on its board; Guaranty Trust rejoices in *five* Mutual Life directors, and also in \$23,400,000 of Mutual money on deposit; etc., etc.

The insurance hearings have been adjourned until the S.E.C. completes its survey. The ineffable Chairman O’Mahoney hastened to do his usual whitewashing job: “Nothing whatever was developed at the hearings to reflect upon the integrity or the ability of the men who administer these huge organizations.” Whitewashing is still fairly easy; the surface has hardly been scratched.

Douglas Gets His Brass Ring

The chances that the S.E.C. will dig really deep into the life insurance situation have probably been lessened by the “elevation” (read: sterilization) of its chairman to *the* Supreme Court. For Douglas is courageous, honest, and energetic—insofar as those qualities are consistent with a reformist philosophy. Much too bold and energetic, indeed, for both Wall Street and the White House in this era of appeasement. It goes without saying that Douglas accepted the nomination at once. This is another aspect of the

reformist merry-go-round. The crusaders who ride its painted steeds, every now and then capture a brass ring which entitles them, not to another ride as in most merry-go-rounds, but quite the contrary—to dismount from their warhorses and take it easy in some comfortable berth of extreme honor. Thus Douglas takes the seat of Brandeis, who, thirty years before him, also viewed with articulate alarm the insurance monster—until he presently got *his* brass ring and retired to the Supreme Court. And the fiery prosecutor of the Armstrong Committee, whose bristling red whiskers used to strike terror to the most insolent insurance mogul, has long since found his berth as chief justice of the same august tribunal.

There is another sort of brass ring, less dignified and secure but more rewarding in other ways, which the riders on the reformist merry-go-round often snatch off. This is a job with one of the wicked corporations the crusader has been tilting against. A curious example of this sort of thing came to light during the Monopoly Committee's hearings on the Hartford-Empire patent racket. The Committee's counsel produced an extremely damaging memorandum from the company's files, which bluntly announced its "three main purposes in securing patents" to be: (a) to prevent duplication of our machines; (b) to block the development of other machines; and (c) to get patents on all possible improvements of competing machines so as to prevent their reaching an improved stage. The author of this memorandum was a certain Herbert Knox Smith, who was secretary and chief counsel for the company until his death in 1931. Mr. Smith had also been Commissioner of Corporations under Theodore Roosevelt, and as such had supervised a still celebrated series of reports on the tobacco trust, the meat trust, the steel trust, and so on. Apparently, he had learned so much about monopolistic methods while he was fighting the trusts that he was practically invaluable, in his later years, to a company like Hartford-Empire.

Hobson's Choice

The Committee, of course, is split between its reactionary and its progressive wings. But this split is not very serious because the progressives are both more numerous and more articulate than the reactionaries. The really significant division, which is largely responsible for the inconclusive fumbling of the Committee to date, has appeared in recent weeks as the Federal Trade Commission has been taking over the witness stand. It soon became obvious that the progressives are deeply split among themselves. The F.T.C. leads the old-fashioned trust-busters, who take the classic anti-monopoly position: enforce the anti-trust laws and restore free competition. The New Deal brain-trusters—Douglas, Frank, Henderson, Lubin, Arnold—are all for regulation rather than trust-busting. They seem to be working towards some sort of revived N.R.A., which would permit business to "organize" itself, subject to state control, exercised through commissions composed of representatives of business, labor, consumers, and the government. Already, Thurman Arnold and his chief, Attorney General Murphy, are reported to have worked out some such scheme for enforcing the anti-trust laws.

It must be granted that the neo-N.R.A. advocates are more brilliant and sophisticated than their opponents.

They are more aware of the post-war changes in American capitalism, and the inevitable direction of its development. They hope, of course, to be able to confine the drive of monopoly capitalism safely within the bounds of reformism. But objectively, their proposals would make it easier for monopoly capitalism to take over complete and direct state power and install fascism. Sincere anti-fascists though they are—now—their program represents the slow swing of the middle classes behind big business in time of capitalist crisis and decay. It is the program of the White House and "business appeasement". And so it is not surprising that the F.T.C. finds itself pretty much isolated on the Monopoly Committee. It, too, is fighting the battle of the petty bourgeoisie, but from a position which is by now definitely of the past. The fight was lost when America came out of the World War the most powerful monopoly capitalist state in the world.

But the F.T.C. is effective on the Committee far beyond the support its program gets. For one thing, it has had twenty-five years of experience in trying to regulate business, and it knows a great deal more about business than any of the brain-trusters do. For a large part of its raw material, the Committee is dependent on the F.T.C. And since the F.T.C.'s view of American business is realistic, and even cynical, the Committee finds itself constantly confronted with data which proves just what it doesn't want to prove. Furthermore, the F.T.C., in its stodgy way, is able to poke holes in the thesis of the brain-trusters without much difficulty. Its officials refer to the N.R.A. as an example of what happens when business is given self-regulatory powers. And they are constantly making such remarks as: "The abandonment of free capitalism here as in other nations will require the abandonment of democracy." Or: "Monopoly constitutes the death of capitalism and the genesis of authoritarian government."

The Frank-Henderson-Arnold wing is equally effective in rebuttal. They have little difficulty showing that a return to pure competition would be impossible, and, even if possible, socially undesirable because of the nature of many industries. They can point to a long record of futility and impotence in trust-busting. The first great period of trust-forming began in 1898, eight years after the Sherman Anti-Trust Act was passed. The second big era of industrial combination began in 1922, eight years after the Clayton Act was passed and the F.T.C. was created.

The fact is that the middle classes, for which both wings of the Committee speak, are confronted by Hobson's choice. They can either struggle against monopoly capitalism—and ultimate fascism—with the antiquated and ineffective weapons offered them by the F.T.C. Or they can follow along after the President and his brain-trusters, whose program of regulation and "appeasement" is practical and effective today precisely because tomorrow it will offer the least resistance to fascism. The only hope of the middle classes lies in a program, the revolutionary struggle for socialism, which the Monopoly Committee cannot be expected to take into account. Without that alternative, the choice confronting the middle classes, and their Monopoly Committee, is Hobsonian indeed.

Dwight MACDONALD

Utopia from Oklahoma

AT LONG LAST the much-abused "little man" of the American hinterlands, as well as his equally abused city cousin, has discovered a savior. Perhaps it would be more correct to say that the savior has re-discovered himself, and that his faithful following of many years, composed chiefly of the petty bourgeoisie of city and country, de-classed intellectuals, muddled wish-thinkers of every description, and just plain nuts, with now and then a new addition to the fold, are once more rallying loyally to their Messiah and his latest scheme for the painless conquest of Utopia—and, incidentally, for boosting the subscription figures of the *American Guardian* of which he is editor and publisher!

This rejuvenated Messiah, as the reader may have guessed, is none other than our old friend, the one and only Oscar Ameringer of Oklahoma City. And though he modestly styles himself as "Dean of the American labor press", one will search in vain through his newest scheme (which is basically little more than a rehash and unification of his many previous ones) for any indication that he looks to *labor* for its realization. Quite the contrary. "The American Foundation for Abundance" proposes to put its program into effect by the mutual cooperation and support of *all* good men, *regardless of class*; in fact, the program itself, as well as the propaganda for it in the pages of the *Guardian*, carefully avoids so much as mentioning the fact that there are such things as classes and conflicting class interests in our society. Nay, more. All who enlist under the banner of the A.F.A. must pledge themselves in advance, in the membership application, to "support" *only* those political candidates, "*irrespective of party*", who agree to sponsor and vote for the "National Abundance Bill" if elected—and who "are *certified* as trustworthy by the trustees of the A.F.A."! Shades of Joseph Stalin! The three "trustees" solemnly choose themselves for the job, charter themselves and the "Foundation" under the laws of Oklahoma, calmly proceed to formulate program and policies, and to appoint "regional managers", "organizers", etc., without so much as a "by-your-leave" from the poor saps who have paid three dollars a head for membership in the organization. Yet all these men (don't laugh!) are "democrats" and vigorous exponents of "democracy".

But it is in the "Program" itself, and in the official propaganda for it, that one encounters petty-bourgeois reformism and rotten liberal opportunism carried to the *nth* degree. Every literate American already knows that in the United States there is an abundance of "natural resources, machine equipment, labor power and scientific knowledge", if properly utilized, to provide plenty for everyone. Hence the problem facing the American masses today is not one of *what*, but *how*; not merely an abstract recognition of the possibility of "Abundance for All", but a consciousness of the concrete policies necessary for its attainment coupled with a determination to carry them out in action. And it is precisely on this decisive point that the A.F.A. glaringly reveals, not only its intellectual and political bankruptcy, but the wholly demagogic nature of

its proposed "solution" as well. With "potential plenty" as a bait, Ameringer & Co. seek to trap the confused masses into a movement that is even more rottenly reformist and opportunistic than those of the ordinary Social Democratic and Popular Front variety. Consequently, the final disillusionment and demoralization of those who fall for Oscar's latest brainstorm promise to be even greater, with an inevitable result that it will be a dozen times more difficult ever to rally them to a genuine Marxist program and to militant, aggressive *class action*. The illusions of class-collaborationism, abstract democracy, and narrow nationalism, are the bane of the revolutionary movement and the chief obstacles in its path; yet, except for its bait of "Potential Abundance", the A.F.A. "plan" offers literally nothing else.

It naturally follows that the position of Marxists toward the "plan" as a whole, as well as that of the working class generally, can only be one of sharp opposition. Its petty-bourgeois illusions and "classless" approach to a problem that can only be resolved on the basis of the class struggle must be ruthlessly exposed and branded for what they are, a shameless betrayal of the workers. Its narrow nationalism, as opposed to world-wide class solidarity (and even in its propaganda the A.F.A.'s *only* recognition of the international aspect of the problem has been a gingerly and discreet sanctioning of "national defense"!), must be brought to light and revealed to the masses for the patriotic trap it is. The A.F.A. is brazenly publicized as the *only* movement that can head off revolution and thus sidetrack the bitterness of the class struggle. (The February 24th special edition of the *Guardian* carries as an eight-column streamer across the top of the front page, in red letters, the typical Ameringer slogan: "The Best Bulwark Against Revolution is Three Square Meals per Day.") At the same time, the organization's founders blatantly herald *their* "program" as the only one that can stop the growing menace of fascism. But nothing is truer than the Marxian axiom that an organization must be judged, not by what it *says* about itself, but by what its program and policies lead to in practice. And measured by this infallible criterion, the program and policies of the A.F.A., just as those of any other Popular Front, big or little, can only help to pave the way *for* fascism.

No matter how backward we may justly consider the great majority of the A.F.A.'s present supporters, or realistically discount the highly exaggerated claims of its press-agents that it is "sweeping the country like wild-fire", etc., it is nevertheless true that the *Guardian* has over 43,000 subscribers scattered throughout the country, most of whom will rally, as they are already rallying, to this latest "call" of their self-appointed Messiah, that the A.F.A. even now has branch organizations in 37 states (small and insignificant though they may seem to many of us as yet), and that it is already appointing "regional managers" and "organizers". Nor does *all* of its support come from the petty bourgeoisie and unorganized workers. The organization, and especially its ideology, is gain-

ing ground with worker and unemployed elements, even to the extent of penetrating some of the lesser but bona-fide *labor organizations*. It would likewise be a mistake for us to kid ourselves with the consoling idea that Townsendism, Ham and Eggs, Epic, and other suchlike schemes are dead. For in the "great open spaces" west of the Mississippi, all of them, or but slightly revised versions of them, continue to thrive and flourish like the proverbial green bay tree. And precisely because it is so much more "all-inclusive" than any of them, the A.F.A. is also potentially much more dangerous as a mass movement. Marxists cannot afford themselves the luxury of the attitude that it will merely enjoy a "brief little hour of glory" and then sink into oblivion. That is something we cannot *know*. Simply because its program rightly sounds fantastic and absurd to us is insufficient reason for assuming that it will not "catch on", permanently, through the vast stretches of Oscar's beloved "hinterland" at least, unless it is actively combatted and undermined at the start. And those of us who know the confused psychology of the masses of those "hinterlands" are painfully aware that the time may be ripe, perhaps even rotten ripe, for just some such all-embracing crackpot scheme as that of the A.F.A.

In short, the Marxists simply cannot afford to merely shrug their shoulders and attempt to pass up the A.F.A. as of no consequence. The question posed by its existence and growth must be faced, as must also its proposed "solution" to the larger question of potential abundance. The launching of the movement by Ameringer (who is nobody's fool) just at this time, and the readiness of large sections of the population (no matter how backward) to fall for it, are definitely "straws in the wind" that it is at least highly dangerous for the revolutionary forces to ignore.

There is even some reason to fear that the A.F.A. itself, especially in view of its kindly solicitude for the lesser crackpot movements toward whom its only criticism thus far has been the gentle admonition that they "fail to go far enough", and in view of its wholly bureaucratic set-up and entire absence of internal democracy, *may* eventually become part of the mass movement of a purely American brand of fascism. For it needs to be recalled that *successful* fascist movements have been no strangers to radical phraseology and beautiful ideals. It also needs to be realized that there is no reason to assume that American fascism will merely copy the same *outward forms* that were utilized by its cousins in Europe. The odds are almost overwhelming that the native movement will do nothing of the kind. Nor is it as fantastic as it may seem at first to predict that the "purely American brand of fascism" may well march to power with paeans to democracy upon its lips—or that the A.F.A., if it does not eventually become that movement itself, may nevertheless succeed in organizing a mass base that may later be utilized for that purpose.

Though the foregoing perspective may seem absurd to many of us at the present time, there is at least nothing absurd about the self-evident fact that the program and policies of the A.F.A. are practically without parallel for wholesale blatant reformism and unprincipled opportunism. And herein, of course, lies its *present* and *immediate*

danger from the standpoint of the revolutionary movement. In short, whatever may be our subjective attitude toward the A.F.A. and its ultimate importance, it presents us *now* with an objective threat and a challenge. For Ameringer's beloved "hinterland", and his deluded petty-bourgeois followers of town and city, do have power, a tremendous lot of it (though it would probably be more nearly correct to say they wield a dangerous "balance of power" in these United States), and the importance of this fact can only be minimized by Marxists at their own risk and at the risk of the revolution itself.

It is difficult for one who is unfamiliar with the A.F.A. program and propaganda to actually realize its purely Utopian character, or its definite threat to the revolutionary movement.

As Ameringer ambiguously asserts: "We are neither for nor against capitalism—we want \$50.00 a week for every American family." To be sure, his propaganda teems with indignant attacks on the "godless scarcity system"—but oddly enough (or is it odd?) *nowhere* is this "godless scarcity system" identified as the *capitalist* system! But in order to boost "our" present national income from its 68 billion dollars a year to the 138 billion that "our" resources make possible, the second plank of the A.F.A.'s program proposes "to re-purchase (no explanation as to why the "re"—G.M.W.) the banks and all industries of a public utility character'. All taxes would be abolished and replaced by a "National Fixed Overhead to be included in the fixed prices of all goods and services". The proposed \$50.00 a week minimum, including 3% interest on the unpaid balance and 5% of the principal yearly to the former owners, would be paid by "the distribution of bi-monthly checking accounts through a national, publicly-owned and operated banking system". And over all: "To secure the realization of this program by the election of enough members to Congress in 1940, *irrespective of party*, pledged to sponsor and enact the National Abundance Bill which embodies these aims, so that this program of Abundance-for-All may be inaugurated in 1941." (The pledge to "support" only such candidates as "are certified as trustworthy by the trustees" is a part of the A.F.A. membership application.)

Do the "trustees" themselves, comprising, in addition to Ameringer, Michael Shadid, M.D., of the Community Hospital at Elk City, and William Edward Zeuch, Ph.D., also of Oklahoma City really believe that the means they ballyhoo can actually accomplish the professed aims of the organization? Nonsense. All three of these self-appointed "trustees" are *intelligent* men. But it's a great combination none-the-less! Oscar, as the typical demagogic "man of the peepul," supplies the necessary "local color" and "common touch," while Doc and the Professor provide the no less desirable "intellectual tone."

The March 10 issue of the *Guardian*, quite appropriately, quotes the following juicy tid-bit from Herr Hitler's *Mein Kampf*: "If you wish the sympathy of the broad masses then you must tell them the crudest and most stupid things." Another book, by no means Marxist, nevertheless supplies a very fitting reply to these demagogues: "They are condemned by the words out of their own mouths." George M. WHITESIDE

Wars--Defensive and Aggressive

The War of 1877-1878 As a Transition To a New Era

WE HAVE ALREADY SAID that the war of 1870-1871 was the last great national war in Europe to which—proceeding from the interests of socialism and of democracy—the criterion of the aggressive and defensive wars, in the historical sense of these terms, could be applied.

And the war of 1877-1878? Was it not a national war too? This question may be answered with a Yes and a No.

For the Serbs, Bulgarians, Rumanians, *etc.*, it was a question of national independence and the war, for them, bore a national-emancipatory character. The echo of the national struggle was heard in all the events of 1876, 1877 and 1878 on the Balkan peninsula; national uprisings followed military clashes. On the other hand, however, all the events occurred under the sign of the imperialist race between Russia and England. These two Great Powers made the small Balkan peoples their tools, although it was a life and death question for the latter. This was most clearly discernible from the Berlin Congress. Imperialist England, basing herself on her sea power and exploiting the antagonism between Russia and Austria, forced Russia into a revision of the St. Stephano Treaty. To the Berlin Congress in 1878—like a swarm of crows—rushed the diplomats of the European Powers, bent on chiselling the juiciest possible morsels for their governments. England obtained the Island of Cyprus, Russia took Bessarabia again and received Batum, Ardagan and Kars in addition. Austria obtained a protectorate over Bosnia and Herzegovina. Bismarck, as "honest broker", was promised various advantages for German trade in the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus. Russia got most of all; the Sultan had to "cede" more than 30,000 square kilometers. It first became known later on that France was then secretly guaranteed Tunis by England. Thereupon, in 1881, France, with Bismarck's permission and England's tacit support, seized Tunis. Cyprus for Tunis, Tunis for Cyprus! The Bulgarians and Serbs were fighting for their national independence; that gave France cause enough for stealing Tunis in Africa! One of the best proofs that, as early as the war of 1877-1878, imperialist motives played an enormous role—at least among the principal stage-managers of the drama.

What has the struggle for genuine national independence to do with the imperialist raids which England and the other imperialist Great Powers undertook in this war?

The Bulgarian peasant of course put his heart and soul into this war. He was really fighting for national emancipation. The unheard-of pressure exercised by the Turks had called forth a strong national movement. The economic and cultural subjugation was especially aggravated by the pressure exerted in religious affairs. When the Bulgarian soldiers heard the church-bells of the field churches built by Karl of Rumania, they went into ecstasy. These church-bells were like manna from heaven to them.

The Turks had prohibited the Bulgarians for many years from having bells in the churches. To the Bulgarian peasants, the sound of the bells was a harbinger of emancipation from the Turkish yoke. But the real directors of the affair—the imperialists of England, France, *etc.*—had an interest in a quite different sound, the sound of money, of gold which was to be squeezed out of the traded-off territories. National unity in itself interested them very little. The result of the war was that the Serbian people was suddenly split into four parts: the Serbian parts of Turkey and Austria, Montenegro and its own land. The Bulgarians were divided into two parts. So were the Rumanians. The bourgeoisie of the Great Powers, without the slightest compunction, completely split up the small peoples who had joined the struggle for their national independence.

The war of 1877-1878 showed that even in so remote a corner of Europe as the Balkan peninsula, the Great Powers immediately intervene, and the elements of the national struggle are finally completely lost in their imperialist world struggle. The criterion of defensive and aggressive wars was historically outdated. A new era dawned in which, according to the whole state of things, such a criterion had lost all meaning. The war of 1877-1878 constituted the transition to this new era. In subsequent wars, the national element played a certain rôle. But this rôle was an entirely subordinate one. We are ready to admit that even in the war of 1914-1916 there are remote corners of Europe where the national element still plays a small rôle—the national element in the Austro-Serbian conflict. But that is only an episode, a small detail which alters nothing in the imperialist character of the war.

The diplomatic-strategical estimation of the wars of defense and aggression could never serve democracy as a criterion. The examples of the Italian and the Franco-German wars show that. So do the wars of the Twentieth Century. Examples: the Balkan war of 1912 (*i.e.*, the war of the Slavic peoples against Turkey) and the second Balkan war of 1913 (*i.e.*, the war of the Slavic peoples among themselves). If the criterion is applied from the diplomatic standpoint, entirely different results are attained. It was not the Turks who declared the war—the *status quo* was in their favor—but the Slavic peoples. Could democracy therefore take the part of Turkey, which was allegedly attacked? Of course not! In 1913, Bulgaria started the war, not Serbia. *Bulgaria* was—in diplomatic respects—the directly guilty party (we disregard here the rôle of Russia). Could democracy draw the conclusion from this that it must take the part of Serbia against Bulgaria?

With the beginning of the new era, the old yardstick has become obsolete also in *historical* respects. For the whole environment, all the conditions, have become different. Once Wilhelm Liebknecht maintained that in case of an aggressive war, democracy is under obligation to support those who are defending themselves; he compared the aggressive party with a simple thief and robber who breaks

into someone else's house to carry off something which the proprietor of the house himself requires. Now it is different. In the imperialist epoch wars are conducted by a whole series of consummate thieves and robbers *for the division of the wealth (and lives) of third persons*. There is nothing for honest people to do in this case but to find the shortest way of rendering harmless *all* these thieves, the whole gang. When two house-breakers are quarreling over the spoils—what honest man worries over which of the two was the first to violate the thieves' code of morals? It is positively ridiculous to speak here of the criterion of a just war of defense. . . .

Modern Slaveholders

In a certain sense, *all* the wars of the non-European peoples, who have been turned into mere *objects* of imperialist policy, are "just" wars of defense. These peoples are divided arbitrarily. Dissections are performed on their living bodies. The European imperialists trade them off like cattle. The imperialist Great Powers of Europe divide whole continents among themselves.

When Wilhelm II, shortly before the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese war, sent Nicholas II the famous telegram: "The Admiral of the Atlantic Ocean salutes the Admiral of the Pacific Ocean"—what did this mean politically? It meant that the German imperialists were proposing to the Russian Czar and the Russian imperialists to suppress all the peoples of Asia on the condition that the Czar and the Russian capitalists do not prevent the German imperialists from suppressing and exploiting all the peoples of Africa. It was a proposal to divide the slaves among the slaveholders.

The population of the colonies means nothing but beasts of burden to the gentlemen imperialists. A small example: In 1904 occurred the uprising of the Hereros in the Southwest African colony of Germany. The hapless native population could no longer stand the pain and torment to which they were subjected for years by the merchants of civilization sent by Wilhelm II. The German merchants plundered the population and reduced it to beggary. The German officers and gendarmes beat and killed the unfortunate Hereros—women and children were pitilessly mistreated—in the interest of maintaining "discipline". When the Hereros rebelled, Wilhelm sent down new regiments. *Half* the male population of the colony was killed. The Hereros and their families were driven by the thousands into the burning, waterless desert, where they died of thirst. . . .

Ten years have passed since these inhumanities; the Germans feel the shortage of working forces in that colony—and now they are sorry: How "inexpediently" we acted, they say, why did we so senselessly murder off so much toiling cattle? One of the most prominent representatives of German imperialism, Paul Rohrbach, writes in 1915 in his book, *Unsere koloniale Zukunftsarbeit*, the following cynical words:

When the uprising [of the Hereros] broke out, its suppression was not left to the then Governor Leutwein and his experienced old officers. Instead a commander-in-chief was sent down who had no notion that—in the later word of Dernburg—the natives are the great economic asset of an African colony. A war of extermination was declared against the Hereros and something

like half the people perished in the foodless and waterless desert. Likewise did all the cattle fall victim to the inexpedient (!) conduct of the war. Of course the rebels had to be punished and, above all, disarmed, but to exterminate half of them was as absurd as it could possibly be. The dangerous labor shortage now prevalent in Southwest Africa derives mainly from the conduct of the war of 1904-1905. It is responsible for the present slowing down of the economic development of the colony. (Paul Rohrbach, *Unsere koloniale Zukunftsarbeit*, Stuttgart, 1915, pp. 29f.)

Aren't these the words of a slaveholder?

The imperialists of *all* countries treat the peoples who are the objects of their imperialist exploitation as slaves. Naturally the slaves rebel against their tormentors and naturally the strivings of these peoples for freedom and independence become stronger the more often they have the opportunity to conduct a war of defense against their oppressors.

The socialists must recognize these wars of the colonial peoples against their European imperialist rulers as just wars of defense. And that quite independently of who is the immediately aggressive party.

The Boer War from the Standpoint of Aggression and Defense

In 1877, the English imperialists declared the Boer Republic a part of England. For many years, they employed all sorts of violent measures until—basing themselves upon a petition of 2,500 (!) Boers who were supposed to have begged voluntarily for incorporation into England—the English imperialists decided to act more energetically. At first the Boers submitted. In 1881, however, they assembled enough forces and, under the leadership of Kruger, Praetorius and Joubert, they attacked the English army which suffered a heavy defeat. That was the first act of the Boer drama. The Boers began once more. On October 9, 1899, the government of the Boer Republic sent the English government an ultimatum consisting of four points: 1. the conflict must be decided by a court of arbitration; 2. England must withdraw her armies from the frontier; 3. all reserves sent to South Africa from June 1 onward, must be recalled to England; 4. the armed forces being sent on warships must not be landed anywhere in South Africa.

Without waiting for any of the formalities connected with the consideration of the ultimatum by the English House of Commons, the Boers attacked the English troops. They were the aggressive party and England, formally, the defender. And the English proclaimed to the entire world that their war was a just one, they had been assaulted, *etc.* In spite of this, the Boer war was a just war on the part of the Boers and the world proletariat took their part.

Why? Because the Boer people was fighting for its independence.¹ English imperialism, however, was fighting for the capture of the diamond fields discovered in Kimberley in 1867.

For decades the English imperialists had oppressed the Boers, exploiting them politically and economically. In 1896 the English representative in South Africa, Jameson, launched a cavalry attack upon the Boers, during which many innocent citizens lost their lives. He declared later

¹ This did not prevent the Boers from exploiting a part of the natives.

that he was forced to act in "self-defense". In reality, however, the English rifles had gone off a little sooner than was suitable for the plans of the English government. It was compelled to act as if it was dissatisfied with its representative. He was turned over to a court, given thirteen months in prison, but was then pardoned because of "poor health". This was just as hypocritical a comedy on the part of the English imperialists as the famous telegram of sympathy which Wilhelm II sent the Boers on the occasion of the event. The English and the German imperialists played with the Boers like a cat with a mouse.

Hence the war of the Boers against the English was outwardly a war of aggression—in reality, a just war of defense.

The Abyssinian War Considered from The Same Standpoint

Or a second example: Abyssinia's war against Italy in 1896.

Since 1881, Italy had been taking over one Red Sea territory after another. The gold, ivory, rubber, coffee, cotton and other fields increasingly whetted the appetite of the Italian imperialists. On May 2, 1889, Humbert, King of Italy, succeeded in tying down Menelik to a treaty which brought Abyssinia into complete economic dependence upon Italy. In 1894-1897, Kassala already also belonged to the Italians, who then sold it to the English for cash money. The Italian imperialists felt themselves more and more "at home" in their Eritrean colonies. But in order to guarantee these colonies for good, the Italian Premier Crispi took care to strengthen constantly the Italian army stationed there. In 1896 he decided to increase it by 10,000 men. Thereupon Menelik, without waiting for the 10,000 new Italian soldiers, attacked the Italians with an army of 90,000 men and on March 1, 1896 inflicted a complete defeat upon them at Abba Kapima. In December the Italian-French-English treaty was signed, recognizing the independence of Abyssinia and establishing only the principle of the "open door".

Thus Abyssinia was the *first* to declare the war on Italy in 1896. Outwardly, therefore, Abyssinia was the aggressive party, but in reality she was conducting a just war of defense against the Italian imperialists.

China and the Great Powers

Let us consider China. This country has especially excited the appetites of the Great Powers. Let us dwell upon her in some detail.

As a classic example of the wars of suppression of the period which directly preceded the imperialist epoch, there is the war which England conducted against China in 1840-1842 over the buying of opium.

English trade in China was a monopoly of the English East India Company. In the interests of its enrichment, the company adapted itself fully to the orders of the Chinese authorities; the latter looked down upon the "barbarians" from the West and were of the opinion that the "barbarians" had the right of trade in China only thanks to the special grace of the Son of Heaven. The English capitalists resisted such a conception of their rights.

On April 22, 1834, the monopoly of the English East

India Company was abolished by the English Parliament (Wilhelm Schuler, *Abriss der neueren Geschichte Chinas*, Berlin, 1912, p. 128). England made an effort to acquire the right of free trade in China.

As early as 1834-1836, matters almost reached the point of military conflict over the question. England attempted to settle down in China; she had the conception that according to the prevailing international law the non-Christian peoples in general were not all equal. That is how a defender of English policy, Eitel, explains England's conduct (*The History of Hong-kong*).

In this already tense situation, the conflict over opium trade played a decisive rôle.

The opium trade reached an enormous scope in China. At the beginning of the Nineteenth Century, the number of annually imported opium cases reached 4,100, that is, twenty times as large as twenty years earlier. In 1820, 10,000 cases were imported, in 1830, 18,000 cases, in 1835, 30,000 (*Loc. cit.*, p. 134).

Against this trade in opium, which was most harmful to the Chinese population because it promoted dipsomania, sickness and degeneration, the Chinese government made emphatic protest. Smuggling was severely punished. The Chinese commissioner, Liu, confiscated and destroyed 20,283 cases in 1839. In spite of this, the Indian opium crop continued to be imported into China.

Liu proceeded to more incisive methods. He forced all Englishmen to withdraw to Honk-kong. And although Liu proposed quite acceptable conditions for the opium trade to the Englishmen in November 1839, England nevertheless decided to launch a war.

The war began. On January 26, 1841, the English occupied Hong-kong. The cruelty of the English knew no bounds. The Chinese offered desperate resistance to the "inferior beings against whom gods and men rebelled". The Chinese would not allow themselves to be captured alive by the English. In Chinese camps about to be occupied by the English, the Chinese, before surrendering to the superior forces of the English, killed their wives and children and then committed suicide. The Chinese regimental commanders—officers and generals—preferred to do away with themselves, to burn on a funeral pile, rather than fall into the hands of the English. So great was the cruelty of the English and so great the hatred of the Chinese.

England of course triumphed over unfortunate China. The peace was signed in Nanking on August 29, 1842. The Island of Hong-kong passed into the hands of the English in perpetuity on the basis of the peace treaty. Canton, Shanghai and other ports were made free for English trade. The system of monopoly was abolished. England gained the right to send her consuls to China. China paid \$21,000,000 for the destroyed opium, for war indemnity, *etc.*

Therewith began the great European expeditions against China.

The peace of 1842 improved the tense relationships between England and China only for a short time. China was unable to offer resistance to the assault of the European Powers. The impending partition of China was openly discussed in the European press. Napoleon III

joined hands with the English imperialists. In 1856-1860, China was forced into a war against England and France. The hatred of England mounted higher. A conspiracy was uncovered in Hong-kong which aimed at poisoning all the Englishmen resident there. The plan failed only because the food (sandwiches) contained too large a dose of arsenic. So great was the embitterment of the Chinese. The English insisted upon an extension of their rights in China. They began a new war, bombarding and destroying whole cities. In 1858, they dictated to China the peace of Tientsin. England succeeded in having something like ten more Chinese ports opened up to English trade. The trade tariffs were altered in England's favor, the right to send an English ambassador to China was recognized, China paid indemnities, *etc.* One of the points of the peace treaty (7.) read: the term "barbarians" may no longer be applied to any English subject. (*Loc. cit.*, p. 172.)

Such are the methods by which the imperialists restored their "honor" and thus did they retort to the notion about their "barbarism".²

The second imperialist power acted in the same way. Atrocities which the Chinese committed against French officials were avenged by the French troops in such a way—just before the conclusion of the peace—that 200 castles and temples and a very valuable library were burned. Then they dictated a peace to the Chinese in Peking which was in harmony with that of Tientsin and in some points even worse.

In November 1860, General Ignatiev forced China not only to confirm the treaty of Aigun but in addition to cede the whole territory east of the Ussuri to Russia.

In 1880, Japan took possession of the Chinese island of Tsiukin.

In 1895, Russia extended her possessions in China still farther, and flirted with Korea; England took for herself Port Hamilton, an island South of Korea.

In 1884-1885, China was forced to fight against France which had stolen the whole southern part of Cochin-China. In July 1885, China signed the peace, promised not to interfere in the relations between France and Annam and paid a large indemnity.

In July 1886, Burma finally passed into English hands and in 1890 China was forced to recognize England's protectorate over the Himalayan state of Tsikim. (*Loc. cit.*, p. 227.)

In 1894, the Sino-Japanese war broke out. The German imperialists were happy that the killing of two missionaries offered them a pretext: they threatened China with a war and thereupon received Kiaochow on a 99-year lease. *Kiaochow for the heads of two missionaries.* The German imperialists would not be averse to making such an advantageous deal every month. In 1899, Italy too attempted to squeeze something out for herself, but China had the strength to show her the door.

The imperialist Powers not only expropriated China, not only continued to regard her as an object of imperialist

raids, but in addition they intervened in the *domestic* affairs of China, playing a counter-revolutionary rôle and supporting the Chinese reaction. There are ample instances of this.

At the beginning of the Fifties, an insurrectionary movement began in China which became known under the name of Taiping. This movement, which bore a somewhat religious character (it recalled the movement of the Anabaptists), was directed at the same time against the ruling Chinese dynasty. The movement continued to gain adherents and was borne from town to town. A regular state of war existed between the troops of the dynasty and the Taipings. The dynasty was preparing a most sanguinary defeat of the rebels. The troops of the imperialist Powers, however, deemed it their duty to support this bloody work. An especially sorry rôle was played by the soldiers of the noble Great Power, France, in the dispersal of the rebels from Shanghai in 1855. After they had surrendered, 1,700 rebels were executed, with the cooperation of the Great Powers. As reward, France demanded and received an extension of her settlements.

Russia also took part in the repression of the Chinese uprising of 1858—as equivalent of her Amur undertakings.

But the Taiping movement lasted into the Sixties. The troops which had remained loyal to the Chinese government, found it increasingly difficult to put an end to the movement. The Chinese reaction found itself compelled ever more frequently to appeal to the European Great Powers. And they came gladly to its aid—naturally, not without corresponding "compensations". In 1862, the English and French troops undertook to "purge" the 60-kilometer zone around Shanghai of the rebels. In February 1862, the French incorporated 900 soldiers, the English 1,000 into the Chinese regiments lead by Li Hung-chang. Together with him, they fought the rebels.

The tradition of this "counter-revolutionary" policy of the Great Powers in China was continued by imperialist Germany during the Chinese Revolution of 1911. In his book, officially marked for recognition by the German authorities, Schuler narrates that in the North of China, Tsingtao offered protection to all the highly-placed officials and the nobility who were able to save their lives and their possessions in this sure shelter. Curiously enough, the author complains that during the uprising the revolutionary Chinese press constantly fanned the hatred against the Germans because of their "alleged" support of the dynasty with weapons, munitions, *etc.*

Can one wonder after all this that the hatred of the European Powers is great in China? Can it be maintained—without hypocrisy—that Europe was forced to answer the outbreaks of Chinese fanaticism with "defensive wars"?

In 1899, the Ta Tin Tin (Society of the Great Knife) arose in China. In 1900, the secret league of the "Great Fist" (the English called the members of this society Boxers) arose which set itself the aim of fighting the Europeans and driving them out of China. There were excesses. The Chinese attacked the European consuls, killed, for example, the German consul von Ketteler, *etc.* Thereupon the European governments sent troops to

²The European Great Powers illustrated their antipathy to "barbarism" in 1901 when they concluded a "peace" with China following the Boxer uprising. After this peace treaty, a number of Boxer leaders were beheaded. In addition, the Chinese government was forced by the "Great Powers" to abandon the corpse of the already dead leader Li Bing-hook to public disgrace. It is clear that where such things were demanded, Point 7 of the above treaty was absolutely essential. . . .

China, which committed cruelties in comparison with which the deeds of the Boxers looked like innocent child's play.

But what caused the Boxer movement? The fact that the imperialists of all countries fell upon China like a pack of hungry wolves.

In 1894, China conducted a war against Japan over Korea. The Japanese triumphed and dictated the peace to the Chinese in Shimonoseki. The European imperialists promptly interfered in the affair. The spoils of their Japanese companion left them no rest. After the Peace of Shimonoseki, Japan was allotted Formosa, Port Arthur and a billion in indemnity. Korea was to become independent. Russia, France and Germany united against Japan. To throw sand in the eyes, it was stated that the intervention was caused by the declaration of independence of Northern China. In reality, both Russia and Germany felt only the lust for booty. In Germany too imperialism had raised its head. Germany decided to lay claim to Kiaochow. . . : On May 4, 1895, Japan was forced to return Port Arthur and Liaotung to China. For this "friendly service" the four Great Powers were rewarded as follows: Germany received Kiaochow on a 99-year lease, and it was taken over by the Japanese in 1914. Russia received Port Arthur on a 35-year lease, England "leased" Weihaiwei, France Kwang Chu-wan.³

Thus was China divided and plundered by the European imperialists. Naturally this caused a just indignation among the Chinese people, which adopted desperate methods in its defense from the robbers. No honest person can contend that the European governments conducted a just war of defense in 1900 during the Boxer war. And the fact that the consuls of the European governments were attacked by the Chinese, alters nothing of the facts.

The Island of Cuba

Wars conducted by peoples against imperialists upon whom they are dependent, are *just wars of defense*. Imperialist wars against colonial peoples are *unjust wars of aggression*. Wars that the imperialists fight among themselves have the aim of dividing or re-dividing slaves and are therefore to be condemned; neither of the two sides is conducting a "just war of defense".

Let us consider as an illustration of the last case the war of Spain against the Island of Cuba and the war of America against Spain for the Island of Cuba.

The Island of Cuba was from times immemorial oppressed by Spain. In 1868-1878, a series of uprisings took place on the Island of Cuba. The Island was granted the same autonomy that all Spanish provinces possess. Beginning with 1881, Cuba sent 30 deputies and 14 senators to the Spanish Cortes. In 1888, slavery was abolished. In 1895, a new uprising broke out in Cuba; war began against Spain. Spain mobilized an army of 200,000 men which distinguished itself by inhuman cruelty. In spite of this Spain could get nowhere. Then America intervened in the situation. For the North American imperialists it

³ Only the poor Austrian bourgeoisie failed at that time to squeeze anything out of China. Austria was then occupied by other things. All her attention was directed at carrying out the policy of Count Andrassy. Austria was thinking only of conquests in the Balkans. But the German-Austrian bourgeoisie is bitterly angry to this day because Austria did not then exploit the opportunity to plunder China. See, e.g., Professor Otto Hoetzsch, *Oesterreich-Ungarn und der Krieg*, 1915, p. 19.

was a question of preparing the United States for participation in the struggle for the Pacific Ocean coasts. In addition, the Americans had sunk large sums of money into various enterprises in Cuba. Above all, the large reserves of tobacco, coffee, sugar, etc., in Cuba, the Philippines and Puerto Rico had long ago made the Americans restless. On April 23, 1898 Spain received an ultimatum from the President of the United States, McKinley. War breaks out between America and Spain. America triumphed and took from Spain (by the Paris Treaty of December 10, 1898) Cuba, the Philippines and Puerto Rico. The Monroe Doctrine⁴ won and with it the moneybags of the American imperialists. Although America proclaimed everywhere that it was fighting for liberty and independence, it now refused to grant the Philippines freedom. In 1900-1901, uprisings broke out intermittently in the Philippines and were suppressed by the Americans with the bloodiest means. Cuba obtained her autonomy and a republican constitution in 1901; whereas the Philippines were permitted to convene a National Assembly only in 1907, and all its decisions must first be confirmed by America.

Now the question is: Who is the aggressor party here, who the defender? Who conducted a just war and who an unjust? The answer is clear: Both parties, both the Spanish and the American imperialists, conducted the unjust war of two slaveholders for the possession of slaves. It would be ridiculous to examine *which of them* was aggressor and which defender. Only the *third* party conducted a just war of defense—the oppressed peoples of Cuba and the Philippines who fought for liberty and independence—against the Spanish and American slaveholders.

Morocco

In the ten years between 1895 and 1905 we see five great imperialist wars: the war between China and Japan for Korea in 1895, the war between America and Spain for Cuba in 1898, the war between England and the Boers for the diamond fields of Transvaal in 1899, the war between all Europe and China in 1900, because the Great Powers wanted to impose their railroads on China and enrich themselves at China's expense, and finally the war between Russia and Japan for the right to exploit Manchuria in 1904.

All these bloody wars did not bring the victors any particular territorial expansion: Manchuria continued to remain with China, China formally retained her independence, South Africa constitutes a politically autonomous state, Cuba becomes an "independent" republic. In spite of this, however, the victors nevertheless carried off their spoils: railroads, loans, customs duties, concessions, etc., became the possessions of the imperialists of that "fatherland" which bought its victory with streams of blood.

A second typically imperialist conflict was the one over Morocco, which even before 1914 almost led to a world war.

The industrial race between German and English capital forced imperialist England to seek an alliance with her

⁴ The Monroe Doctrine is the doctrine of a President of the United States: North America must not permit any Power to have any possessions in the vicinity of the American coasts.

old foe, France. In 1903 Edward VII paid a visit to France. What was the real cause of this visit? At that time that German-French syndicate was almost concluded. The German imperialists sought a *rapprochement* to the French and were prepared to "cede" a part of the Bagdad Railway. The Germans needed French capital. The German-French syndicate was founded. Arthur von Gwinner, director of the Deutsche Bank, was named President. For Vice-President, Vernes, colleague of the Rothschilds in the Compagnie du Nord and the Compagnie du Midi, member of the Council of the Union Parisienne Bank and the Banque Ottomane, member of the Salonica-Constantinople Railroad Company, etc. Behind M. Vernes stood Rouvier & Co.

Edward VII appeared in Paris as the agent of the English imperialist bourgeoisie, in order to prevent the Franco-German syndicate. He succeeded, and paid with Morocco. The French imperialists renounced all claims to Egypt and left it to the English, receiving from the latter—Morocco. *Egypt for Morocco, Morocco for Egypt!*

This machination was presented to the "people" as an "Entente cordiale" (a "heartly alliance" in which it was not so much the heart that played a rôle as the purse).

Because the French imperialists abandoned all cooperation with the German imperialists, the English imperialists left the former the monopoly over the railroads, the ports, telegraphic system, public works, etc., of Morocco.

The German imperialists, however, began brandishing their bayonets. They threatened to kindle a world war unless they received their share of Morocco. The conference in Algieras found itself compelled to make certain concessions to the German imperialists. A certain percentage of the Moroccan loans was allotted to them and a sufficient sphere of influence for the import of capital, etc., guaranteed.

Although a peace is thus concluded, it is not of long duration. Europe is only a hair's-breadth removed from a world war. Both the German and the French and English imperialists want this war. It is postponed, but only because Germany is not finished with her naval armaments, the French decide upon 3-years' military service, etc. War may break out any day. Even then all the belligerents would have shouted that they had been attacked, that they are conducting a defensive war, etc. But in reality it would have become only an imperialist war, a war of a few cliques of finance capital for the not yet divided spoils.

Tripoli

Or let us take the Tripolitan war of 1911, which may be considered, along with the Turkish Balkan wars of 1912-1913, as the overture to the World War of 1914-1916. This war is a classic example of how deceptive and useless the criterion of the defensive war can be.

In September 1911, Italy quite unexpectedly sent Turkey an ultimatum: Italy has displayed till now—in case you did not know it—a most unusual patience and moderation, but Turkey absolutely refused to consider the "legitimate Italian interests" in Tripoli. Hence "Italy finds itself compelled" to occupy Tripoli. Turkey had not yet found the time to reply to this ultimatum when, on September 30, 1911, the bombardment of the forts of Tripoli was

begun by the Italians. This war too was of course declared to be a "just" war by the Italian imperialists. The whole apparatus at the disposal of bourgeois dominion was set in motion in order to evoke a patriotic spirit among the Italian people. And not without success. A genuine enthusiasm and spirit of enterprise gripped the whole Italian people who rallied unanimously around its king and his government. Even the larger part of the socialists (of the *social-reformists*, to be more accurate; Bissolati & Co. were expelled from the Italian Socialist party for this re-learning to the point of social-chauvinism) did not stand aloof from this enthusiasm and were ready for self-sacrifice. This is how the well-known historian of German foreign policy, Count Reventlow, describes the state of things in Italy at the beginning of the war for Tripoli.

And what was the actual meaning of the Tripolitan war, what was the real foundation of this whole affair?

The war was purely imperialistic, and the whole conflict was closely bound up with the race of two competing imperialist trusts.

From the moment when the *rapprochement* between England and France, directed at Germany, became noticeable, England began to feed Italy with promises. Right after Fashoda England promised Italy Tripoli. Now France was also prepared, for the pain it caused Italy in seizing Tunis, to "cede" Tripoli to Italy in the name of the "solidarity of the peoples of Romanic culture". In 1899 and in 1902, England and France formally gave Italy a note for Tripoli. For the success of their imperialist trust, they had to distract Italy from the Triple Alliance at any price. To this end, the Italian imperialists had somehow to be bribed. They paid—as usual—with others' possessions. Tripoli belonged neither to France nor to England. France had cast her eye upon it only because it lay in the vicinity of her own possessions.

After the "Entente cordiale" between the imperialists of England and France (1904), the Italian imperialists thought they already had Tripoli in their pockets. The "Entente cordiale", however, was, as we see, concluded under the motto: Egypt for Morocco. Expanded, the motto read: *For Egypt—Morocco, for Morocco—Tripoli.*

After the conference in Algieras (1906), at which Italy, in appreciation for promised Tripoli, already openly supported England and France against her "ally", Germany, the imperialists of Italy were of the opinion that they had "honestly" earned Tripoli and considered themselves the masters of this colony.

When Italy declared war upon Turkey in 1911 because of Tripoli, the situation became a most difficult one for Germany. For Italy and Turkey were officially Germany's allies. To come out against Italy meant for Germany, first, to push Italy still further to the Triple Entente, and secondly, it would immediately provoke a world war for which Germany was not yet sufficiently armed. To come out against Turkey meant to drive the Turkish "ally" into England's arms, for the Turks had become convinced that Germany was unable to defend them and that their fate rested entirely in England's hands. A most difficult situation. Imperialist Germany squirmed like an eel and finally enacted the comedy of neutrality. At this price, Germany bought the continued existence of the Triple Alliance with Italy's participation—after Italy had taken Tripoli from

the Turks.

The war for Tripoli was, as the reader sees, a link in the chain of imperialist conflicts. Turkey concluded peace with Italy at Lausanne on October 18, 1912, at a time when a new war had already begun in the Balkans. Here too the imperialist Great Powers were the stage-managers. The knot became ever more complicated until the inevitable occurred in 1914.

The Tripolitan war was a *typical* imperialist conflict, produced by the imperialist lust which has branded the whole epoch.

Now the question is: How far could the socialists and democrats get in these cases with the old criterion of defensive and aggressive wars? Italy was the aggressor. Did we therefore have to sympathize with the other party, recognize that Turkey was conducting a "just" war? In that case we would have been nothing but a plaything in the hands of German imperialism! Take the part of Italy? Then we would have become a tool of the other imperialist trust! Imperialist Italy stood with one foot in the camp of the Triple Entente, with the other in the camp of the Triple Alliance. The Italian imperialists stretched out their right hand to the imperialists of England and France, but continued with their left to hold the hand of the German imperialists. *Who then was defending himself, who was the aggressor?*

It was only an episode in a whole chain of imperialist policy of two trusts of states, *both* of which attacked the weaker and the unarmed, *both* of which divided the world and plundered whole continents. Only the national uprisings of the native population, directed at both imperialist coalitions, could be characterized as "just". Of the two coalitions, however, neither conducted a just war. The theory of the defensive war is—when applied to this war—senseless, a hollow phrase. In reality it serves only the duping of the peoples by their imperialist governments, which have transferred the ideology of the national liberation wars to an entirely different era. . . .

That is how things stand with all the conflicts and wars of the imperialist period. In the collisions of the imperialist cliques of all these countries, there cannot be, from the historical standpoint, an aggressor party and a defender party. *All* of them attack those peoples whom they single out as their booty. All of them seek in imperialism their salvation from the socialist danger.

That is why it would be absurd to apply the criterion of "just" wars of defense to the imperialist wars of the Great Powers. (*To be concluded.*)

HARTENSTEIN, SWITZERLAND, Aug. 4, 1916

Gregory ZINOVIEV

Krupskaya's Death

IN ADDITION TO being Lenin's wife—which, by the way, was not accidental—Krupskaya was an outstanding personality in her devotion to the cause, her energy and her purity of character. She was unquestionably a woman of intelligence. It is not astonishing, however, that while remaining side by side with Lenin, her political thinking did not receive an independent development. On far too many occasions, she had had the opportunity to

convince herself of his correctness, and she became accustomed to trust her great companion and leader. After Lenin's death Krupskaya's life took an extremely tragic turn. It was as if she were paying for the happiness that had fallen to her lot.

Lenin's illness and death—and this again was not accidental—coincided with the breaking point of the revolution, and the beginning of Thermidor. Krupskaya became confused. Her revolutionary instinct came into conflict with her spirit of discipline. She made an attempt to oppose the Stalinist clique, and in 1926 found herself for a brief interval in the ranks of the Opposition. Frightened by the prospect of split, she broke away. Having lost confidence in herself, she completely lost her bearings, and the ruling clique did everything in their power to break her morally. On the surface she was treated with respect, or rather with semi-honors. But with the apparatus itself she was systematically discredited, blackened and subjected to indignities, while in the ranks of the Y.C.L. the most absurd and gross scandal was being spread about her.

Stalin always lived in fear of a protest on her part. She knew far too much. She knew the history of the party. She knew the place that Stalin occupied in this history. All of the latter-day historiography which assigned to Stalin a place alongside of Lenin could not but appear revolting and insulting to her. Stalin feared Krupskaya just as he feared Gorky. Krupskaya was surrounded by an iron ring of the G.P.U. Her old friends disappeared one by one; those who delayed in dying were murdered either openly or secretly. Every step she took was supervised. Her articles appeared in the press only after interminable, insufferable and degrading negotiations between the censors and the author. She was forced to adopt emendations in her text, either to exalt Stalin or to rehabilitate the G.P.U. It is obvious that a whole number of vilest insertions of this type was made against Krupskaya's will, and even without her knowledge. What recourse was there for the unfortunate crushed woman? Completely isolated, a heavy stone weighing upon her heart, uncertain what to do, in the toils of sickness, she dragged on her burdensome existence.

To all appearances, Stalin has lost the inclination to stage sensational trials which have already succeeded in exposing him before the whole world as the dirtiest, the most criminal and most repulsive figure in history. Nevertheless, it is by no means excluded that some sort of new trial will be staged, wherein new defendants will relate how Kremlin physicians under the leadership of Yagoda and Beria took measures to expedite Krupskaya's demise. . . . But with or without the aid of physicians, the regime that Stalin had created for her undoubtedly cut short her life.

Nothing can be further from our mind than to blame Nadezhda Constantinovna for not having been resolute enough to break openly with the bureaucracy. Political minds, far more independent than hers, vacillated, tried to play hide and seek with history—and perished. Krupskaya was to the highest degree endowed with a feeling of responsibility. Personally she was courageous enough. What she lacked was mental courage. With profound sorrow we bid farewell to the loyal companion of Lenin, to an irreproachable revolutionist and one of the most tragic figures in revolutionary history.

March 4, 1939

L.T.

The Struggle for Ireland

BOMBS ARE EXPLODING AGAIN in Ireland and England. Under the very nose of the Home Office in London, under monument of English kings in Belfast, beneath prisons walls where thousands of Irish patriots have served time, and under customs houses along the Ulster border, loud and sudden blasts usher in the twenty-third anniversary of Easter Week. And no mere memorial, these explosions. They serve to remind the world of the fight for national independence by a people who have relentlessly fought for seven hundred years against the most powerful and most ruthless oppressor of all colonial peoples—the ruling class of the British Empire.

Easter Week! The very words are magic to all Irish patriots and revolutionists. And yet, to some they are without meaning, while others who lack a clear understanding of this event—which is to Ireland what the Paris Commune is to France—the heroic and historic attempt of the Irish people to free themselves from the bloody and desperate grip of Great Britain is considered either a wild adventure of poets and dreamers or a “putsch” undertaken by idealistic nationalists. It was neither. One need only examine a few of the hundreds of available documents plus the published opinions of both Lenin and Connolly to realize that Easter Week was a manifestation of the serious crisis of imperialism, a crisis which in 1917-1918 led to the collapse of several imperialist states and to the Russian Revolution.

Perhaps it is because Ireland, despite its revolutionary significance in the international scene, has not greatly figured in the historic drama of Marxism, that little attention is given to its present possibility as a force in the struggle against imperialism. The decline of the revolutionary labor movement in Ireland and the rise of isolated acts of violence against the Crown are important factors which must be carefully investigated and understood by all revolutionary socialists. Ireland with its complicated conditions and special difficulties must be examined by any who wish to further the interests of colonial peoples as against the powerful and crafty might of Great Britain.

The British ruling class for centuries managed to keep not only the outside world but also England ignorant of conditions in Ireland and thus was able to isolate the Irish fighters for freedom. It is for this reason that the writings of James Connolly must be unearthed to shed light on the fact that in Ireland there lived and struggled a Marxist who today takes his place beside the honored pioneers of socialism. Connolly was a Marxist who stood head and shoulders above his contemporaries in the labor movement of the British Isles, and he not only understood but gave his life in a vigorous attempt to carry out the basic theories of Marx and Lenin. His contributions to the working class of Ireland include not only the Marxist analysis of the history of labor in Ireland, *Labor in Irish History*, and his keenly critical articles in the *Irish Worker*—the official organ of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union—but also the tremendous lessons of the Dublin strike of 1913 and the rebellion which he organized and directed. His death remains a symbol of the effectiveness of his courageous

and brilliant leadership. Propped up in a wheel-chair (his wounds would not permit him to stand) he was shot by order of a frenzied and terrified capitalism.

Connolly's ideas and the 1916 Rebellion can only be grasped in the light of Irish history, and it is important to read what Marx and Engels and Lenin had to say concerning the nature of conditions there in relation to the international situation. These leaders of the world revolutionary movements of their time each saw what Connolly so naturally and quickly understood. They were Connolly's guides and they confirm the correctness of his tactics and approach.

Engels visited Ireland in 1855 and again in 1869. His description of Ireland on his first visit is classic. “Gendarmes, priests, lawyers, officials, landlords, in numbers to gladden the eyes, the complete absence of any industry, so that it would be difficult to understand how all these parasites live, were it not for the corresponding contrast of the peasants' poverty.” He noted the fine ruins, dating from the Fifth and Sixth century right up to the 19th century, the most ancient ones, churches and castles, the most modern ruins—peasants' huts. Traces of the awful famine of '46 were still seen in the deserted villages which stood alongside the beautiful parks of the landlords. As a result of famine, emigration, evictions and executions, Ireland was a desert. “The country has been completely ruined,” he wrote to Marx, “by the English wars of conquest from 1100 to 1850. (In fact the wars and martial law have lasted for all that time.)” Even the native Irish landlords, he noted, in their fine parks are living in decay and semi-poverty, in eternal fear of the Encumbered Estates Courts and the auctioneer's hammer.

In his first work, *The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1848*, he described the condition of the Irish peasantry on the eve of the famine. The overdivision of the land, the consequent soaring rents, double, treble, quadruple those paid in England, all for the benefit of the landlord, an army of agricultural proletarians, 75,000 more in Ireland than in England, although more than twice as much land is cultivated there than in England. From Spring until the harvest the wife and children roam the roads while the husband seeks in vain for work in England. . . .

Engels immediately saw through the myth of English “democracy”—English “freedom”.

In 1846 the industrial middle class of England forced the aristocracy to repeal the Corn Laws and establish Free Trade. They at once turned to Ireland and there demonstrated that they had assumed not only the rôle of the former exploiters but had improved on the methods. Ireland was reduced to a poverty which is beyond description. The *enforced famine* reduced the population from 8,222,664 to less than three million inside of five years! Marx gives us a true and horrible picture of this wholesale depopulation of a country.

The Irish tenant farmers before 1846 provided the bulk of the wheat consumed in England, being protected against competition by the general tariff system then in force which went mostly to native landlords. This came to an end with

the Corn Laws. The peasant's wretched tenant-farm could not compete with the great feudal estates of Europe or the young and strong capitalist farming of the United States. The native landlords, almost identically with the English landlords, stopped tilling and turned the land into pasturage. The evicting of tenants began.

Marx in an article written in 1855 for the *Neue Oder Zeitung* described this terrible scourge which cleared Ireland of its peasantry more effectively and quickly than the famine and the plague. "This revolution consists in the Irish agrarian system yielding to the English, *the system of small tenantry is being replaced by big tenantry*—just as the old landlords are being replaced by *new capitalists*. The chief stages making way for this change are—the famine of 1847 which killed about one million Irish, the emigration to America and Australia, which has already torn another million souls out of Ireland and which continues to uproot fresh millions; the unsuccessful revolt of 1847 . . . the Act of Parliament which condemned to auction the property of the indebted Irish nobility. . . ."

This revolution, Marx considered, reached its climax in the '60's when Ireland was finally converted into "England's largest pasture". In the first volume of *Capital* he gives a detailed analysis of the years 1861-1865, which gave rise to the economic basis of Fenianism, a mass movement with an agrarian socialist tendency directed against the monopoly of the land by the landlords. And for Marx and Engels the Irish question was the agrarian question, the exploitation of the peasant masses by a foreign landlord-capitalist oligarchy. They followed the question very closely and anxiously watched for developments which, in every case, they had predicted. Marx had pointed out early in the '50's, in the German and American press, that the process by which the landlord raised the rent whenever the tenant improved the property actually amounted to the tenant paying the landlord interest on his, the tenant's own money. They concluded that only the expropriation of the landlords by the nationalization of the land, could solve the agrarian question. The program for the Irish revolution, Marx considered, should contain three simple points—self-government and independence from England, an agrarian revolution, protective taxes to help build up again the industries destroyed by the English.

Connolly, a few days before the uprising of 1916, is reported to have said that the socialists would not understand motives. He knew only too well the attitude of the Second International on the question of colonial revolts. The social democrats were not concerned with struggles of the small nations and the colonial slaves of the mother countries. They argued that the proletariat was disinterested in the fate of nationalities as such. The proletariat was international, they said, and the revolution would solve all questions of national minorities, oppressed nationalities, *etc.* Against this view Lenin argued with all his ability. He pointed out that this kind of internationalism was a sham and that the question of oppressed nationalities was a class question. And in his arguments Lenin referred particularly to the example of Ireland. Although much had changed in Ireland since the death of Marx, Lenin was able to analyse the changes and the quick developments which had given rise to new conditions and new class currents. The sudden growth of the Irish working class and its indepen-

dent class action in the great strike of 1913 in Dublin, the "Home Rule" bosses like Murphey, Sinn Feiners like Griffiths, the representatives of the capitalists and the priests, formed a common front with the British Home Office and its armed police against the Dublin workers.

This strike was the beginning of proletarian Ireland, and the lessons of the strike will never be forgotten by Irish workers. It was here that Connolly resolved to organize the rebellion for national independence. Here all revolutionists saw plainly the line-up of forces. The Irish bourgeoisie now were satisfied to rule with the aid and blessings of England, with their own priests, with their own police and with the British navy not far away. Home Rule became a farce in the face of the changed situation. Independence was the only answer to the demands of the trade unions for decent wages. And independence could be won only by a full realization of the exact meaning of the terror and organized violence used by Murphey to smash the strike. The strike became a minor revolution in many aspects—armed conflict between workers and police, barricades in the workers' districts, occupation by union men of strategic locations within the city, arrival of armed forces to assist the local police and the hired strike-breakers and clear, defined lines of combat with all the trade unions and workers and their wives and children on the one side, and the united armed forces of the State on the other. And when the strike was smashed, Connolly knew that only the immediate organization of armed companies of workers by the unions, only preparations for another attempt—larger in scope and bolder—would lift the workers from the demoralization and increased poverty which followed the defeat of the strike. Almost at once Connolly and Captain White set about to organize the Irish Citizen Army.

Connolly as a revolutionary fighter against imperialist war was greatly disappointed in the Second International. He felt as though all connections, slim as they were, with the outside world were broken when it voted to support the war. Added to this was the treachery of the Irish bourgeois and petty-bourgeois Nationalists. When, during the World War, the headquarters of the Transport Workers Union—Liberty Hall—in Dublin was decorated with a huge banner which read, "We serve neither King nor Kaiser!", the Home Rulers, Redmond and his wing of the I.R.A. were busy giving full support to England, including as many recruits as they could muster, for the slaughter to make the world safe for democracy. Connolly, as if in answer to this betrayal of Ireland's cause, wrote in *The Workers' Republic* studies of risings and street fighting in Moscow in 1905, Paris in 1830 and in 1848, the rising in the Tyrol in 1905, and guerilla warfare in India, revolutionary struggles in Mexico and similar events. Once at a meeting of officers of the Irish Volunteer Army he was asked how he happened to know so much about military tactics and he replied, "You forget that revolution is my business." He preached open revolutionary defeatism. He looked forward to the pending struggle not merely as an Irish affair: "Starting thus, Ireland may yet set the torch to a European conflagration that will not burn out until the last throne and the last capitalist bond and debenture are shrivelled up on the funeral pyre of the last war lord."

Easter Week was crushed. The betrayal of the bourgeois leadership and the failure of many to comprehend the bold

step taken by Connolly, the separation of the rural areas from the city, the failure of the British workers to respond, especially the cynical opposition of the British Labour Party leadership which voted for resolutions of solidarity but confined their activity to mere voting, all added to the weight and might of the Army of Occupation.

And there followed the policy of building Ulster, in the North, to compete with Ireland and to divide the nation. England has built Ulster into an industrial fortress to offset the agrarian South. Today England is attempting to bring about complete separation and division.

Divide and rule is an old, old policy. Ulster stands in the path of national independence, and until this question is settled once and for all, England still rules. England does business with Ulster to the detriment of Dublin. And Roosevelt has signed a separate trade treaty with Ulster. But never before has the unity of the people been stronger. It requires the full attention of an Army of Occupation numbering more than 65,000 soldiers and police to keep order in Belfast and Londonderry. In the public streets crowds gathered to burn in public bonfires thousands of Britain's "Conscription Books" while collections are taken for the I.R.B.

The I.R.B. is an outgrowth of dissatisfaction with De Valera. The Irish Republican Army has given birth to the Irish Republican Brotherhood. This new organization refuses to accept the leadership of men who have betrayed their cause. They are assuming full responsibility for the present wave of bombings. While the Stalinists are denouncing them as agents of Hitler, blood-brothers of fascists, the Irish Republicans go about their business. The

reenactment of D.O.R.A.—the old Defense of the Realm Act under which men are arrested for what they *might be thinking*—does not cause a moment's hesitation. While the Stalinists are busy trying to recruit for the defense of British "democracy" and heaping slander and abuse on all who cannot quite grasp the point—especially in Ireland—the revolutionists are preparing for the next battle with capitalism.

While fully understanding that without the combined forces of the Irish working class and the English workers and the revolutionary forces in the colonies, national independence cannot be won completely, we cannot simply dismiss the current bombings as useless or reactionary. They are not mere isolated acts of violence committed by distraught and frustrated individuals. They are, on the contrary, carefully planned and carried out according to an *organized* plan devised by revolutionists who themselves admit that bombs are merely the first step in the renewal of the struggle. These men know and are planning for the necessary steps to unite the forces of opposition. The bombs are serving to draw attention to the Army of Occupation now in Ireland and the return of the suppression which preceded the last war. Revolutionists everywhere must rally to the support of the movement to wrest freedom and independence from the "greatest landlord in Europe" and thus by striking a blow at the heart of the largest imperialist power in the world, release the forces of revolution in every colonial country before the war engulfs all humanity in a fight to destroy itself for the profits and power of capitalism.

William MORGAN

The Economics of Cotton Farming

THE CONCEPT "American agriculture" is, unfortunately, little understood in the radical movement. To some, the American farmer is predominantly an individual or corporation owning hundreds, or even thousands of acres of land; to others the "American farmer" means an agricultural laborer roaming up and down the South, Southwest and West; to still others the words "American farmer" mean little concretely. It is the aim of this study to present a structural, economic and sociological analysis of cotton farming in order to clear up widespread misconceptions and to present a basis for political discussion.

* * *

Cotton is the most important American commercial crop.¹ In 1937 the United States produced 18,746,000 bales from about 34,000,000 acres, which had a farm value of about \$784,106,000.

Geography and Acreage

The Cotton Belt begins in Southern Virginia, runs southward through North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia, then turns westward through Alabama and Mississippi, branching north and cutting the corners of Tennessee and southernmost Missouri, finally continuing west-

ward through Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma and Texas. Even in New Mexico, Arizona and California small amounts of cotton are grown.

The Cotton Belt thus lies between 37° and 25° North latitude, a stretch of some 300 miles, and runs 1,600 miles from the Carolinas to western Texas. In southern Texas sowing begins in March, in the rest of the Cotton Belt it begins in April. Picking begins in Texas in the second week in July, elsewhere in September or October.

The nine chief cotton-producing states, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Mississippi, Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Texas and Oklahoma, and Tennessee contain 2,723,501 farms, of which 1,606,733 are tenant farms. Within the huge area of the Cotton Belt about 125,000² acres are devoted to cotton farming alone, almost as much as to all other crops together. According to Johnson, Embree and Alexander (*The Collapse of Cotton Tenancy*, p. 33), 30% of the cotton lands are owned by insurance companies and banks. T. J. Woolfer Jr., however, in his study of cotton tenancy (*Landlord and Tenant on the Cotton Plantation*, p. 11) estimates that about 10% of the cotton acreage is owned by insurance companies, banks and large corporations.

Woolfer considers tracts of 260 acres or more planta-

¹ The farm value of corn exceeds the farm value of cotton by about 100%, yet the gross cash income from cotton is about three and a half times as great as the gross cash income from corn.

² This includes not only cotton crop acreage, but also corn acreage, pasture and woodland and acreage temporarily uncultivated.

tion size, since 260 acres was about the lowest limit of sample plantations found in his study; yet even farms as small as 50 to 100 acres may have tenants. Of all tracts, only 12% in 38 typical plantation counties were 260 acres and over. Eight percent were between 175 and 260 acres. Nineteen percent ranged from 100 to 175 acres. Twenty-five percent were between 50 and 100 acres and 36% ran from 3 to 50 acres. Practically all of the last group were one-family farms.

Not infrequently large owners rent additional land; 14 percent of all of the acreage over 260 was thus operated, and each owner involved had a total of four plantations. Nine percent of the landlords, whom Woofter canvassed (*op. cit.*, Appendix, Table 10) were semi-absentee, visiting the plantation once a week; 6% were absentee living more than ten miles away and visiting less than once a week, 31% devoted more than a quarter of their time to other occupations. In most cases they were merchants.

In 1910 there were over 200,000 land-owning Negroes in the South, 124,000 of whom were in the seven southeastern cotton states. In 1934, 74% of the Negro landlords owned less than 100 acres. Twenty-two percent owned 100 to 160 acres, and only 4% owned 260 acres and over. A Georgia sampling showed that the average Negro holding was one-third the size of the average white holding. Almost invariably the tracts were of poorer land and in outlying sections.

Surrounding the plantations are the farms of small individual owners and the tenant farmers not attached to plantations. Their average size, according to the *Report of the President's Committee on Farm Tenancy* (U. S. Government Printing Office, Table 2) is only 91 acres, smaller than the average in eight other regions and larger only than the average in the tobacco region. The average size of all of the full owner-operated farms, including plantations, is 119 acres³, whereas the average of all tenant-operated farms is but 65 acres. On 442 plantations sampled by Woofter, the tenants had an average crop acreage of 25 per family. The average crop acreage in the Upper Delta area was 17, in the Lower Delta 15, and in the Arkansas River area, 14.

From these figures it is already possible to draw one important conclusion. Plantations 260 acres and over are relatively few in number. In some areas, they are physically negligible—although as we shall see later they mould the entire economy of the Cotton Belt; in other areas, they comprise about 10.8% of all tracts.

Soil Erosion

The Department of Agriculture has estimated that 50,000,000 acres of farmland have been completely ruined by soil erosion; another 50,000,000 are in nearly as desperate a condition; on 100,000,000 more the top-soil is washed away; and on still another 100,000,000 acres erosion has definitely started. Thus an area equivalent to one-ninth of the United States has been seriously affected by unscientific farming and the toll of nature. On 100,000,000 acres of such land live 500,000 families.

In the seven southeastern cotton states 10,900,000 acres are completely destroyed, and another 11,000,000 are in a

desperate condition, according to a survey of the Soil Erosion Service. There are two reasons for such wide depletion in these states. First, diversified farming in the South has been unknown until recently. The plantation system is based on a single cash crop which has a broad commercial market. Profits must be quickly and easily realizable. A worth-while program of crop diversification in the interest of soil fertility would seriously undermine the system unless accompanied by adequate compensation. Second, the feeding roots of the cotton plant are nearer the surface than the roots of most commercial crops. This causes great destruction of the humus with consequent leaching and washing.

Number and Ratio of Operators

After the Civil War came the shift from slave to hired labor. This was followed almost immediately by half sharecropping, because the impoverishment of the landlord made it impossible for him to pay wages.

Woofter estimates that in 1860 there were about 1,100,000 males engaged in all types of agriculture in the seven southeastern cotton states, excluding those working on home farms. By 1930 this figure had risen to 2,100,000, which represents an increase of 91%. Negroes increased by about 28,000, or 3%, as against a white increase of 940,000, or nearly 300%. The increase in white owners amounted to about 50%. Thus whites outnumbered Negroes, and by 1935 the ratio was about five to three among tenants alone.

For the year 1930 Johnson, Embree and Alexander classify cotton operators as follows:

Full owners	820,244
Part owners	173,815
Managers	10,466
Cash Tenants	205,385
Other Tenants	1,402,176
Total	2,612,086

By 1935, the number of tenants in the Cotton Belt had increased still further, although the number of farms operated by them in the entire South had decreased by 2%. Vance (*Regional Reconstruction: A Way Out for the South*) places the number of tenant families at 1,790,783 of whom 1,091,944 were white and 698,839 Negro, a total of over 60% of all farmers. The *President's Report* with figures compiled from U. S. Census data of 1935, gives a still higher ratio, 65.1%. These cotton tenants, furthermore, constitute 41.4% of all tenant farmers in the United States.

Types of Tenancy

There are three major and one minor type of tenancy in the Cotton Belt:

1) *Cash Renting*: The landlord furnishes the tenant only with real estate and fuel at a fixed rental to be paid either in cash, which is most often the case, or its equivalent in crop value. The landlord usually pays the real estate taxes and the money cost of the upkeep. The tenant furnishes labor, work stock, feed for work stock, tools, seed, fertilizer, and receives all income after his rent is paid. The landlord only exercises supervision to prevent depletion of the land and deterioration of improvements. This type of tenant is slightly better off than most. A

³ As compared with an average of 153 acres for all farms in the United States.

definite agreement on the amount of rent to be paid makes him independent. The landlord has no lien on his crop and he can market it wherever he chooses;

2) *Crop-Share Renting or Share Tenancy*: The landlord furnishes real estate, fuel, and in addition, one-fourth or one-third of the fertilizer. He usually pays the real estate taxes and the money cost of the upkeep. The tenant furnishes labor, work stock, feed for work stock, tools, seed and three-fourths or two-thirds of the fertilizer. The landlord receives one-fourth or one-third of the crop, very often one-fourth of the corn and one-third of the cotton, the tenant receiving the balance;

3) *Share Cropping*: The landlord furnishes real estate, fuel, tools, work stock, seed, feed for work stock and one-half of the cotton and two-thirds of the corn, the balance going to the cropper;

4) *Standing Rent* is a rarer form of payment which is most prevalent in Georgia and South Carolina. The peculiarity is that the landlord receives a fixed amount of the crop *regardless* of how large or small the tenant's crop may be. Thus the landlord is free from the risk of loss due to bad seasons or bad management. It must also be mentioned here that under the last three arrangements the return to the tenant is always minus "interest" on indebtedness, and minus a so-called "cost of supervision".

There are, of course, many variations of the three basic types. In some cases renters may sub-rent to share croppers. In other cases, displaced tenants may be found on the plantation who are allowed to use very small patches of land without charge for home production purposes.

The overwhelming majority of the leases run for one year. A few landlords give one year leases containing an automatic renewal clause with optional termination dates three to nine months prior to the end of the lease.⁴ The fewest number of leases are in written form. Except in the case of renters, the landlord keeps all records and handles the sale of all crops. Manipulation of records is not uncommon, and in cases of dispute it is easy for the landlord to boot any recalcitrant tenant off the farm.

All improvements affixed to the soil become the property of the landlord at the expiration of the lease. This is not only anchored in the statutes of all the cotton states, but also holds at common law. In a few states, removable fixtures may be taken away by the tenant. The President's Committee estimated that in the year 1929 the average annual expenditure per farm was \$108 for fertilizer and \$199 for feed. At the end of the year, one-third of all the tenants in the United States moved, leaving unexhausted fertilizer, lime and manure, and receiving no compensation.

Thus the tenant has no incentive to improve his farm. He who labors to restore the soil, who repairs fences and builds roads, ditches, and terraces, is merely inviting the landlord to raise the rent.

Credit

"Credit supports agriculture as the rope supports the hanged," said Louis XIV. This is true of the 80% of the American farmers who own or operate tracts of 174 acres or less, and particularly true of small southern tenant farmers who borrow at usurious rates. It is, of course,

⁴ The contract remains in force from 15 to 21 months. At the date of optional termination either the landlord or the tenant may give notice.

not true of the owners of large plantations and the so-called "outdoor cotton factories".

Prior to 1916, mortgages and long-term loans were financed through mortgage brokers or commercial banks. Rates of interest were relatively high, amounting to 8% or more. Initial equity requirements and renewal fees were also high. In addition, there were no provisions for gradual amortization, so that the borrower had to make his own arrangements to meet the lump sum payment. Furthermore, there was no advance assurance that the borrower would be able to renew his loan.

In 1916 the government established a Federal Land Bank System, whereby interest rates were substantially reduced and loans granted up to 50% of the value of the land and 20% of the value of the farm buildings. In 1935 loans by the Land Bank Commissioner were extended to 75% of the value of the farm. As a result of this policy some 19,322 farms were purchased during the year ending September 30, 1936.⁵

It can readily be seen that only the very fewest of cotton tenants could purchase a farm under such credit requirements. The pitifully low figure given for purchases of farms for the year ending September 30, 1936 is a clear indication that not even tenants outside the cotton area possessed the equivalent of a 25% equity in a farm. The President's Committee stated that "not all" of those purchasing farms as a result of these loans in 1936 were tenants; "some" were owners purchasing additional land, and "others" were non-resident operators.

The trend of the mortgage debt among southern landlords is important, as it is a graphic illustration of the decline of capitalism. In the seven southeastern cotton states in 1910, the mortgage debt was less than \$166,000,000; in 1928 it rose to \$637,597,000; in 1935 it fell to \$502,528,000. From 1928 to 1938 the trend seems on the surface to have been reversed. The drop in long term indebtedness in 1935 is due, however, to over three-quarters of a million foreclosures and bankruptcy sales⁶ which took place from 1931 through 1935, and also to government intervention since 1933 whereby about \$150,000,000 additional capital was put into the capital structure of the Federal Land Banks.

Nearly 50% of the 646 landlords interviewed for Woolfer's study had long-term debts averaging more than 40% of the appraised value of the land, buildings, animals and machinery. (*To be concluded.*)

⁵ According to the Report of the President's Committee, the combined number of tenant farm holders and full-owners is 6,812,350. This does not include part-owner and manager farms.

⁶ This does not include voluntary sales and transfers to avoid foreclosure.

Jerry PYTLAK

¶ We beg the indulgence of our readers for the delayed appearance of this issue of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL. Between the March and April issues the management of the review found it necessary to change from one printer to another at short notice. The delay was caused by the unavoidable shift. However, even at the risk of leaving less than the usual time between issues for distribution, a special effort will be made with the May issue to catch up on our date of appearance and to continue with following issues until a timely frequency is restored.

Notes on the Jewish Question

IT IS TIME TO TAKE a clearly defined position on the Jewish question. The purpose of the following theses is to open a discussion and to establish those points which are controversial and those which are not. A short, sketchy presentation of the entire problem appears to be a lesser evil than any danger which may arise from the misunderstanding of any particular points.

* * *

1. The Arab world which has been divided by the imperialist powers into colonies and puppet states and which is economically and socially still in the chains of pre-capitalist relationships, is in the process of awakening.

2. The national, bourgeois movement toward unification of the Arab world — from Morocco to India — is “historically legitimate”, to the extent that any such movement on the part of colonial peoples toward independence and unification is legitimate.

3. The position of the Fourth International on the Pan-Arabian national movement is made clear by a comparison with the position of the Left Opposition (Bolshevik-Leninists) on the national, Chinese revolution.

If the progressive force of the national revolution of the colonial peoples is not made to serve the world social revolution, then it will be utilized by the most reactionary fascist forces.

4. (a) The “Jewish Homeland” is an artificially created, alien body in the national organism of the awakening Arabian nation.

(b) This alien body has been systematically developed for about a decade.

(c) It arose as the result of the dirty deals of big capitalist, Jewish nationalists with the Turkish government, feudal landlords and imperialist powers. It has rested from the very beginning on a racist ideology, on mythically religious and even on historical claims.

(d) Even apart from its origin this “Homeland” must inevitably become a plaything of imperialist interests as long as imperialism exists, particularly as it lies at the intersection of most important imperialist interests. Its origin is the result of Great Britain’s interest.

(e) *It is entirely impermissible in discussing the Jewish question to consider Palestine alone. This country is a part of the awakening Arab world in spite of arbitrary or “historical” boundaries.*

5. The Jewish colonists in Palestine are different from the natives chiefly in that the former, as a distinct entity, are supplied with the capital which the Jewish petty and big bourgeoisie of the whole world has collected for them. This capital gives the Jews, aside from their purchases of land, a far greater supply of the means of production as well as a higher culture. Both result in a far greater productivity of labor of the Jews in Palestine and therefore in the economic and social decay of the Arabs who have little capital and are compelled to produce according to obsolete methods. It is of secondary importance whether this decay is *absolute*, i.e., an objective decline in real

income or only *relative*. The latter is precisely the criterion of national oppression!

It remains to be established to what extent Jewish groups have no or only a small share in the fruits of this high productivity of labor as conditioned by capital. An attempt to establish this would have to proceed from a comparison of their standard of living with that of the Arabs!

The question of the Arab bourgeoisie which is developing slowly and in a struggle with the capitalist Jewish colonists remains undiscussed here.

6. Every genuine socialist movement will have to establish itself in the eyes of the Arabs by a program of dividing the land, machines and other advantages which result from the greater supply of capital of the Jews.

7. (a) Until very modern times the Jews were a caste entrusted by feudal and guild-regulated society with important social functions — trade, finance and handicraft outside of the guilds.

(b) They had all of the characteristics of a nation but one: they did not form a self-contained organism with class stratifications, but were parts of the societies of other peoples.

(c) They lost both the characteristics of a caste and their quasi-national characteristics to the extent that capitalist democracy conquered.

(d) For this reason they maintained these qualities in Eastern Europe, where the law of uneven development left to the socialist revolution the complete execution of the democratic revolution.

8. (a) The dissolution of the Jewish quasi-nation into the surrounding peoples which was begun by the democratic revolution, was a progressive process. It was not completed by bourgeois democracies and, like all democratic tasks not completed by the long overripe social revolution, *it was reversed by Fascism.*

(b) *By means of the fascist anti-Semitic wave the big and petty bourgeoisie sacrifices part of itself to free the remainder from a certain amount of competition.*

(c) The section sacrificed is distinguished in Central Europe from the remainder essentially by more or less insignificant residues of custom and religion and also by observable racial differences.

9. Jewish nationalism is just as reactionary as anti-Semitism: both attempt to turn the wheel of history backward and to create a new nation out of hardly discernible national residues. Both have the same racist ideology: the creation of economically, socially and culturally unified nations according to the principle of *community of blood*. (The slogan “The Voice of Blood” is a creation of the Zionist Martin Buber, not of the Nazis.)

10. For the productive forces freed by the social revolution the historical nations will prove to be units economically and culturally too small. There will not be the slightest need for the preservation, much less the regeneration of such national or quasi-national units such as the Jews were.

In this sense the social revolution solves the Jewish question by the disappearance of the Jews through assimilation, of course, without the slightest compulsion.

11. Until that time there remains, beyond self-understood help for all victims of Fascism, nothing to be done but the ceaseless work of education of the Jews toward

the understanding that only the social revolution can save them from physical annihilation by fascism. *The effect of this propaganda will not be strengthened but only weakened by the failure to take a clear position on Jewish nationalism and an unambiguous attitude toward Pan-Arabism.*

Charles CROMPTON

A Voice from Peasant India

THE small village of Reora—one among the 700,000 villages of vast peasant India—lies in the District of Gaya, a remote part of the British province of Bihar. The peasants of this village are making history by lighting the torch of agrarian revolution in India. For months now their struggle—conducted under the slogan of land to those who till it—has been a living example to the 330,000,000 peasants of India.

We are publishing these extracts from statements made by Jadunandan Sharma, peasant leader of Bihar and a member of the Congress Socialist Party of India, because we believe they will become significant documents when the story of the origin of India's agrarian revolution will be written.

The first extract tells of the bitter feudal oppression lying behind the peasant movements now shaking the length and breadth of India. The second is an equally bitter indictment of the reactionary, Gandhist ministry that now rules over Bihar province—I among 8 such ministries that do the bidding of the British slave-masters. Comrade Sharma describes how this ministry, which is merely another form of a Popular Front, bends its untiring efforts towards the appeasement of the Bihar landlords and capitalists, while striking double blows at the workers and peasants.

The *kisans* (peasants) of Bihar province are the best organized of India. About ½ million belong to the *Kisan Sabha* (peasant union) and this solid mass can rally 5 million other peasants in their support. Practically all the *kisans* are tenants, working for landlords. They pay \$85,000,000 rent to these landlords each year. Interest charges on their well-nigh unbelievable debt of one-half a billion dollars amount to \$100,000,000 yearly. Cultivation of their small tenant farms requires another \$85,000,000 annually. Thus, the total expenditure of the Bihar *kisans* amounts to \$270,000,000 per year. The maximum total income they may expect according to British official reports is \$250,000,000 per year—a deficit of \$20,000,000. And the peasants still have to meet British land taxes and find some means of livelihood! Here in a nutshell is the problem of the Indian agrarian revolution—the eternally growing burden of debt, interest and taxation with its accompanying poverty, starvation and backwardness.

We must emphasize that the description of the Reora land struggle is *but the beginnings* of that which must come. Yadunandan Sharma reflects the growing militancy

and consciousness of the peasant masses. And even he lags behind the peasant himself for he has yet to slough off completely the reactionary, passive doctrines of Gandhi. As for the peasant masses, they have long shown their readiness to join with the revolutionary workers of India and carry out precisely what the peasant masses of Russia did in 1917.

ED.

THE IRON WHEELS of the *zamindari* (landlord) system have been relentlessly crushing the helpless peasants of the village of Reora—Gaya District—for the last 40 years. In spite of rent payments, their land—the only source of their livelihood—was being wrested from them. The granaries of the present chairman of the Gaya District Board, Rameshwar Babu, were being filled up with whatever they produced. The greater portion of the small share of produce the *kisans* got was taken away by fines and *farkanas* (feudal dues). To keep their bodies and souls together they had to take figs, and fruits of peepal and banian trees to supplement the scanty share left to them. They had to make provision for their food by selling their small girls to old men. Those who challenge this cruel truth should come with me to visit the childless widows who, as a result of their marriage with old men are bemoaning their lot in several villages of the district.

Being emboldened by this, Rameshwar Babu once, in the case of a *kisan's* refusal to give cow's milk, went to the length of ordering his hirelings to go and milk the *kisan's* daughters!

There was an awakening among the *kisans* of Reora and they became determined to break asunder the chains of slavery by which Rameshwar Babu bound them. The government was informed of this and it stopped cultivation of the paddy crop—the staple crop—by promulgation of orders under Section 144, Criminal Code. . . . The harvest was destroyed by wild bears, jackals and dogs.

* * *

[Then the landlords, aided by the Congress ministry with its police and Gurkha (native) soldiers, launched their campaign against the peasant union. They began dispossessing the *kisans* from their lands. Babu, the leading *zamindar*, tried to claim the entire area for himself. The ministry declared martial law at the first action of the peasantry and sent in armed troops.

But the *kisans* refused to vacate their lands. Negotiations yielded no tangible re-

sults and the time to cut the paddy crop approached. In defiance of the Congress ministry, which was pursuing exactly the same tactics used by the British bureaucracy during the 1932 Civil Disobedience movement, the peasants on December 20, 1938 cut their crops. Immediately comrade Sharma, together with 34 other peasant leaders, was arrested. Below is the statement made by Jadunandan Sharma, in the court of the Senior Deputy Magistrate, Gaya district.]

* * *

I have been shut behind the bars at a time when events are fast moving. . . .

History tells us how human society came to be divided into classes and how a microscopic minority asserted itself by hook or by crook, over the vast human majority and took control of all the resources which are essentially necessary for mankind as a whole. The result of this has been horrible. The vast majority has been deprived of all its rights, its privileges and is facing starvation, poverty, misfortune, calamities and disease while the microscopic minority is enjoying and merrymaking.

Both forces have come to grips. This is what we find in the world today, this is what we find in our country today. The state—which is the political organization and power of the vested interests—comes to the aid of the property-owners. This is why when the hungry fight for their bread, the state police and all its resources come forward to crush and suppress them. Hunger marchers get *lathis* and bullets instead of bread.

As a result of national awakening in this country a movement for complete independence started. British imperialism resorted to repression. It is still vividly before our eyes how all sorts of weapons were used to suppress the movement. We have not forgotten the *lathi* charges, shootings, arrests and similar measures adopted then. A worker in Bihar was put under the sand alive and murdered.

When it became clear that the movement was not to be crushed, the statesmen and advisors of British imperialism suggested another method, and a weapon was forged—the weapon of reform. This weapon was forged to keep the British hold intact. With reservations and special powers in the hands of its representatives, the Viceroy and the provincial Governors, it gave only those rights to the ministers which they could exercise only as trustee of the interests of the British imperialists.

An example of agrarian *satyagraha* [mass civil-disobedience] will confirm this.

Before the formation of the ministry, *satyagraha* was resorted to by the *kisans* of Bakhawara, Subbazzpur, Tarad and Sanda. The provincial government had to give way and the *kisans* got rights over their lands. British imperialism with all weapons at its disposal, could not resist the *satyagraha*. The picture changed with the introduction of Provincial autonomy. The representatives of the people—those representatives who were brave fighters for the cause of the country and who had sacrificed a lot and suffered incarceration—were now in power. Responsibility for so-called law and order rested on their shoulders. During their regime labor strikes were suppressed, peasant movements were crushed, honest Congress workers were arrested on frivolous grounds and some were even charged with theft!

And in Reora—Reora where the problem of *Bakasht lands* [i.e., lands claimed by the landlords from tenants who have held them for innumerable years] is a problem of life and death with the *kisans*—the *kisans* who have been put under the *zamindari* yoke for over 40 years, have tried all avenues of law, negotiation, persuasion and have failed. Their *satyagraha*—their last weapon—was resorted to after everything else met with governmental repression.

The *zamindar*—Rameshwar Babu—who was adamant and unreasonable from beginning to end received full support of the authorities. The *kisans* who had a right and just claim were branded as thieves for cutting the crops which they had sown. Some of them were arrested with me and my volunteers. The argument that Provincial autonomy gave Indians power 'has proven wrong. Imperialism has proven itself correct by experience. In Reora, ministers were in a mood to release me and others arrested but the District Magistrate [British] refused to be a party to my release or that of my comrades and the ministers had to bow to the wishes of a civilian. This is the picture, the true picture of Provincial autonomy.

As I am a *kisan* worker I shall not fail to mention the agrarian movement in the province and especially in the Gaya District. The growing discontent and acute *zamindari* exactions began to tire the patience of the *kisans*. The only source of their existence—the land—was being converted to *Bakasht*, rent was increased, illegal taxes were being realized without any check and the *kisans* were forced to give free labor to the landlords.

Just then the Gandhi-Irwin pact was made and a truce declared. Some of the political workers interested themselves in the peasant problem and as a result a movement was started. Organization was a natural outcome and the real *Kisan Sabha* [peasant union] came into existence.

The *Sabha*, being the class organization of the *kisans*, aimed at the interests of the landlords, but it was never blind to the facts existing around it and while declaring as its goal the abolition of the *zamindari* system and exploitation, it confined its activities to the immediate and more pressing demands of *kisans*. . . .

Then the Faizpur agrarian program (consisting of various radical reforms) was adopted by the Congress and a solution of some acute and immediate problems once again appeared hopeful. The *kisans* with one voice supported the Congress candidates and secured a Congress majority in the Assembly. The joy of the *kisans* knew no bounds when the Congress ministry was formed. The Congress ministers, working under limitations and in the state structure of the vested interests, capitulated to the British *zamindar* and capitalist interests and the Faizpur program was thrown in the background. Legislation began to be made in the name of the tenants but they were actually making the existence of *zamindars* and their system secure. *Kisan* workers and *kisans* were made prey as before to all governmental repressions. The old things repeated themselves in more intensified form and to this the sections on theft and the like were also added.

Now I come to the *Bakasht* question. Over 100,000 acres of land in my district have been turned into *Bakasht* by fair and foul means adopted by the *zamindars*.

An example will prove quite convincing. The Reora *kisans* have been in possession of their lands and their possession is recog-

nized by all. But the law as it is constituted has no benefit for them. What is there left for the *kisans* then? The government stands for the *zamindars*—for the *kisans* it is only a weapon to dislodge them, to expropriate them. What was the choice left to the *kisans* but to fight with their lives to save their lives! *Satyagraha* started as a result. The fight for the existence of the hungry and the dying met governmental repressions. The *kisans* were terrorized by Gurkhas and police, before they started *satyagraha*. The terror had no effect and the *kisans* moved forward. We were then arrested for theft and the *kisans* were also not spared. It was freely argued that the arrests were made in the sacred name of law and order. One will laugh at the idea when one finds that the upholders of law and order have not been able to come to its rescue in Reora. The whole village is doing the same as was done by the few who have been arrested. . .

Jadunandan SHARMA

* * *

[Sharma was given a six months jail sentence. Meanwhile, the struggle in Reora continues, with the *kisans* still in possession of their lands and their crops.]

The Task in Spain--1936

The letter reproduced below was written by Leon Trotsky to a Spanish comrade before the outbreak of the civil war in July 1936. It dealt with the tasks of the Bolshevik-Leninists in Spain. Notwithstanding the date on which it was written—or rather precisely because of that!—the letter is exceptionally noteworthy for its analysis of the developing situation at the time and for its forecast of the fate which would inevitably overtake the policies of the Popular Front, and the working class or any section of it which adopted and practised it. The recent catastrophe was not unforeseen!—ED.

THE situation in Spain is once more revolutionary.

The development of the Spanish revolution is taking place at a slow rhythm. In this way the revolutionary elements have obtained a fairly long interval in which to take shape, to rally around themselves the vanguard, in order to measure up to the task at the decisive moment. At present we must say openly that the Spanish "left communists" have allowed this extremely favorable interval to pass by completely and have revealed themselves as in no way better than the socialist and "communist" traitors. Really, there has been no lack of warnings! All the greater is the culpability of an Andres Nin, of an Andrade, etc. With a correct policy the "Communist Left", as a section of the Fourth International, might have been at the head of the Spanish proletariat today. Instead of this, it vegetates in the confused organization of a Maurin—without program, without perspective, and without any political importance. Marxian action in Spain begins with an implacable

condemnation of the whole policy of the Andres Nins and Andrades, which was and remains not only false but criminal.

What does the removal of President Zamora signify? It signifies that the political evolution is once more passing into an acute stage. Zamora was, so to speak, the stable pole of the leading summits. In different conditions, he played the same rôle that Hindenburg played in Germany during a certain period; it was at the time when the reaction (even the Nazis), on the one side, and the social democracy on the other, placed their hopes in him. The Bonapartism of modern times is the expression of the extreme exacerbation of class contradictions in the period when these contradictions have not yet lead to the *open* struggle. Bonapartism may find its point of support in the quasi-parliamentary government or else in the President "above the parties"; that depends only upon the circumstances. Zamora was the representative of the Bonapartist equilibrium. The exacerbation of the contradictions lead to each of the two principal camps wanting first to use and then to rid itself of Zamora. The right wing not having succeeded in this in its time, it is now the "Popular Front" which does it. However, that signifies the beginning of an *acute revolutionary period*. The profound effervescence of the masses as well as unintermittently violent explosions prove that the workers of town and country and the poor peasants along with them, deceived over and over again, are pushing with all their strength, again and ever, towards the revolutionary solution. And what rôle does the Popular Front play in face of this powerful movement? That of a gigantic brake, built and set in motion by traitors and servile

scum. And only yesterday Juan Andrade signed the thoroughly infamous program of this Popular Front!

After the removal of Zamora, it is Azaña who, hand in hand with the new President of the Republic, must be charged with the rôle of a stable Bonapartist pole, that is, try to raise himself above the two camps in order all the better to direct the weapons of the state against the revolutionary masses who lifted him into power. But the workers' organizations remain completely caught in the nets of the Popular Front. The convulsions of the revolutionary masses (without a program, without a leadership worthy of confidence), thus threaten to throw the doors wide open to the counter-revolutionary dictatorship.

That the workers are pushing forward in the revolutionary direction is proved by the development of all their organizations, but especially by that of the Socialist party and the socialist youth. Two years ago, we posed the question of the entry of the Spanish Bolshevik-Leninists into the Socialist party. The Andres Nins and Andrades rejected this proposal with the disdain of conservative philistines: they wanted "independence" at all costs, because it assured them tranquillity and committed them to nothing. Yet, adherence to the Socialist party in Spain would have yielded, in the given conditions, infinitely better results than, for example, in France (on the condition, of course, of avoiding the big mistakes committed by the leading French comrades). Meanwhile, Andrade and Nin have fused with the confusionist Maurin, in order to run together at the tail of the Popular Front.¹ The socialist workers, however, aspiring to revolutionary clarity, have become the victims of the Stalinist deceivers. The fusion of the two youth organizations (socialist and Stalinist) signifies that the mercenaries of the Communist International will abuse and destroy the best revolutionary energies. And the "great" revolutionists, Andres Nin and Andrade, stay on the sidelines to conduct with Maurin a wholly impotent propaganda for the "democratic-socialist" revolution, that is, for social-democratic treason.²

¹The "turn" made by *La Batalla* towards the Popular Front cannot inspire us with any confidence. You cannot say on Monday that the League of Nations is a band of brigands, on Tuesday invite the voters to vote for the program of the League of Nations, and explain on Wednesday that yesterday it was a question only of an electoral action and that you are now going to resume your real program. The serious worker must ask himself: And what are these people going to say on Thursday or Friday? Maurin seems to be the very incarnation of an agile, superficial and versatile petty-bourgeois revolutionist. He studies nothing, he understands nothing, and sows confusion all around.

²Marx wrote in 1876 on the incorrectness of the term "social democrat": socialism cannot be placed under the control of democracy. Socialism (or communism) is enough for us. "Democracy" has nothing to do with it. Since that time, the October Revolution has demonstrated vigorously that the socialist revolution cannot take place within the framework of democracy. The "democratic" revolution and the socialist revolution find themselves on two opposite sides of the barricades. The Third International confirmed this experience theoretically. The "democratic" revolution in Spain is already made. It has known a resurrection by the Popular Front. The personification of the "democratic" revolution in Spain is Azaña, with or without Caballero. The socialist revolution must be made in the implacable struggle against the "democratic" revolution, with its Popular Front. What then does this "synthesis" of the "democratic-socialist" revolution mean? Nothing at all. It is only an eclectic gallimathias.

Nobody can know what aspect the next period will take in Spain. The tide which has brought to power the clique of the Popular Front is, in any case, too powerful to ebb in a short time and to abandon the field of battle to the reaction. The genuinely revolutionary elements still have a certain interval at their disposal, not too long, to be sure, to take stock of themselves, to gather their forces and to prepare the future. This concerns, in the first place, the Spanish partisans of the Fourth International. Their tasks are as clear as day:

1. To condemn and denounce mercilessly before the masses the policy of *all* the leaders who take part in the Popular Front.

2. To understand fully and to bring clearly before the eyes of the advanced workers the pitiful role of the leadership of the "Workers Party of Marxian Unification" [P.O.U.M.] and especially of the former "left communists", Andres Nin, Andrade, etc.

3. To rally around the banner of the Fourth International, on the basis of the "Open Letter".

4. To join the Socialist party and the United Youth, in order to work there as a fraction in the spirit of Bolshevism.

5. To create fractions and nuclei in the trade unions and other mass organizations.

6. To direct their main attention to the spontaneous and semi-spontaneous movements, to study their general traits, that is, to concern themselves with the temperature of the masses and not that of the parliamentary cliques.

7. To be present in every struggle in order to give it clear expression.

8. To insist always on the masses forming their committees of action, elected *ad hoc* (juntas, soviets) and to enlarge them constantly.

9. To oppose the program of the conquest of power, of the dictatorship of the proletariat and of the social revolution to all the hybrid programs (*à la* Caballero or *à la* Maurin).

There is the only real road of the proletarian revolution. Another road does not exist.

April 12, 1936

Leon TROTSKY

B O O K S

School for Dictators

THE SCHOOL FOR DICTATORS. By Ignazio Silone. Harpers. \$2.50.

In this book Silone has written his masterpiece—a political satire that can be mentioned in the same breath with Aristophanes, Swift, and Voltaire. Nothing, indeed, is too much to be said for the book, except what the jacket blurb *does* say: "A master of prose attacks with bare fists the most absorbing single problem of our day. . . ." Silone uses almost every other weapon on fascism, from slapstick drollery to the most severely restrained irony, but his attack is effective precisely because it is not delivered with bare fists. His literary style is an admirable synthesis of the classic and conversational—dense but not heavy, closely wrought but always lucid. He is learned in political history and fertile of ideas, but he knows how to be easy and unpretentious about things, never parading his learning or insisting too much on his ideas. His book, in short, combines the virtues of good prose and good conversation.

Although the theme of *The School for Dictators* is modern politics, it will not do to seek from it any positive conclusions. Nor does his book tell us anything about politics we didn't know already. In fact, it is often superficial and confused in its specifically political analysis. Its importance, like that of the earlier *Bread and Wine*, is that it applies a set of values—humane, honest, and intellectually sophisticated—to the political phenomena of today. To guard and cherish such a human norm, independent of political parties (though not of political tendencies), is a valuable function

of the intellectual. I might add that the politicians of the left can gain from this book some excellent insights not only into the real nature of fascism but also into certain deficiencies of their own programs.

I have never been as much impressed by Silone's novels as perhaps I should be. They have seemed to me to be episodic, even at times tainted with journalistic trickery—as in the abrupt "black-out" endings of certain chapters. The characters have often seemed one-dimensional and all too obviously designed to point the moral. In this book, however, these weaknesses become virtues. The stylization of the three principal persons in the dialogue is appropriate to the satirical intent, and the form is episodic as good conversation must be, one idea touching off another. I have been told, by the way, that Silone had planned to carry the dialogue much further, but was persuaded by his publishers to let this much appear now. If this is true, we may hope for another volume.

In another way, too, *The School for Dictators* seems to me an advance over the novels: in its subject matter. *Fontamara* had the qualities and the defects of a poster: it was an intellectual's attempt to present, from above and outside, the most primitive sort of peasant life, simplifying its values towards a propagandist end. *Bread and Wine* opened up the focus, including the intellectual as well as the petty bourgeois and the peasant in its scope. Much the most interesting parts, to me, were the conversations between Don Benedetto and Don Paolo. These conversations have now expanded to become the body of the present book, a progression I find all for the best. Silone, after all, is an intellec-

tual, a man of ideas, representing a high development of modern consciousness, and here he deals directly with the central themes of his intellectual experience. The easy play of his mind in this book is as natural as *Fontamara*, for all its effectiveness, was mannered. This raises the question why so few of the "creative" writers of today occupy themselves with politics as a theme. (Brecht's novel, *A Penny for the Poor*, is another, though less successful, attempt to treat such subject matter.) There seems to be a blight on the novel and the short story today. I suggest this is partly because politics has come to occupy so much of our consciousness that what for so many generations has been called "creative" writing has come to seem tangential to the central issues. And I suggest that the political themes which preoccupied Dryden, Pope, Swift, Voltaire and the other great eighteenth century writers may once more regain their supremacy in this century, whose intellectual atmosphere is in many ways similar. *The School for Dictators* may prove to be a seminal work in this respect

Dwight MACDONALD

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Clippings

[A. Taret, in *La Lutte Ouvrière* (Paris, March 17, 1939), comments on the 18th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in Moscow early last month.]

WE DO not yet know the composition of some delegations; but the partial figures are sufficiently significant and doubtlessly give the picture of the whole.

The delegates to the Moscow regional conference, the most important of those that preceded the Congress, were divided as follows: 43 People's Commissars and substitutes, 104 deputies to Supreme Councils, 16 "Heroes of the Soviet Union", 141 decorated with various orders (Stakhanovists for the most part), 108 officers and political commissars of the Red Army, 61 factory directors, 21 plant superintendents and foremen, 47 intellectuals.

The division in the various delegations is analogous to this one: People's Commissars (some of them delegates from several districts at the same time), party functionaries, generals and officers, factory directors, writers, Stakhanovists.

The Congress, therefore, represents only the Soviet bureaucracy and the privileged minority created by Stalin. Nobody could expect anything from these "delegates" but an enthusiastic and unanimous approval of the policy of the "great leader of the peoples".

One observation: the man who was the "most faithful collaborator of Stalin", who enabled the latter to attain the perfect

"homogeneity" of the party, bloody Yezhov, is not cited in the first reports of the Congress. Even if he was a delegate, he was not put on a single one of the directing organs of the Congress.

Does this mean that his system has passed conclusively into the discard? Not at all, for the inaugural speech of Molotov, the report of Stalin, the speeches of Beria, Yezhov's successor, and of Voroshilov, emphasized that the "service of information" remains at the basis of the "general line".

Another observation: the state of the party. Stalin indicated in his report that the party now numbers 1,600,000 members, or 270,000 less than at the 17th Congress. Now, for the past two years (admission to the party was prohibited between the 17th Congress and September 1936), 180,000 new members were admitted into the party. In other words, between the 17th and the 18th Congresses, 450,000 members were expelled from the party!

This shows the scope of the opposition that the Stalinist regime has had to overcome right inside the party itself.

Other data serve to supplement this: they concern the "rejuvenation" of the party cadres. According to Stalin's report, 500,000 young members of the party had been placed in leading posts of the party and the state.

Stalin explained himself with a fairly cynical candor on this "rejuvenation": "Among a part of the old cadres, there is sometimes a tendency to grow hypnotized over the past, to become immobilized because of it, to refuse to see what is new. The young cadres possess . . . the sense of the new, a valuable quality. . . ."

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